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The banner, shown courtesy of the Schwind Collection to Pēteris Cedrinš, is the personal banner of prince Avalov, commander of the West Volunteer Army (Западная добровольческая армия), a White Russian anti-Bolshevik and pro-German force created by Germany Gen. von der Goltz in August 1919 merging the rest of German Freikorps in the Baltic States and some Russian POWs with the Special Russian Corps raised in November 1918 by Gen. Graf Fëdor Arturovič Keller and by Cossack Gen. Pavel Bermondt, later Prince Avalov, both Knights of the Russian Branch of the Sovereign Order of Saint John of Jerusalem (SOSJJ). The Corps lent allegiance to Kolchak's white government and later to a Latvian puppet government supported by Berlin, and. fought against both the Bolshevik and the Latvian democratic government supported by the Entente, being disbanded in December 1919. The Banner front shows the imperial coat of arms. On the reverse, the Black Maltese Cross with Crown of Thorns memorializes General Graf Keller, murdered by the Bolsheviks

http://www.theknightsofsaintjohn.com/History-After-Malta.htm;

http://www.vexillographia.ru/russia/beloe.htm;

http://lettonica.blogspot.com/2007/11/bear-slayers-day.html (Pēteris Cedrinš, *Bear Slayer's Day*, 11 November 2007). Cedrinš posted the image of the Flag's recto on wikipedia commons.

Strategic Studies and the Military: Insights from a Quarter Century of Teaching

by Constantinos Koliopoulos
(University of Piraeus – Hellenic National Defense College)

Abstract. This essay reflects the author's quarter-century experience of teaching Strategic Studies at Greek higher military colleges. His former officer-students number in the thousands, ranging from former NCOs who rose to Second Lieutenants and Midshipmen, to high-flying Colonels and Navy Captains who rose to Chiefs of General Staff. The curriculum is firmly grounded within the Realist paradigm of International Relations and pays due respect to classical strategic theorists such as Thucydides, Sun Tzu, and Clausewitz. The lectures are steeped in illustrative historical examples, but are always juxtaposed with contemporary strategic issues, hence are practical in character. All in all, the essay offers a blueprint for teaching Strategic Studies to (Western) military officers.

Keywords. Strategic Studies; International Relations; Military History; Military Colleges; Military Education.

Military colleges are by definition keen on the study of strategy, namely the use of military (and other) means in order to achieve one's political ends in the face of actual or potential conflict. In an earlier work I told the story of how a coherent curriculum of Strategic Studies was introduced into the higher colleges of the Hellenic Armed Forces – and flourished there.[1] That earlier essay dealt mainly with the administrative aspect of that endeavor, in its specific Greek context. In the present essay, I want to focus on the general academic content of that curriculum (with special emphasis on the place of International Relations and History therein) and how it has been appreciated by the officer-students. Given that the training and the experiences of the con-

1 Constantinos Koliopoulos, «The Pedagogy of the Discipline: Teaching Strategic Studies at Higher Colleges of the Hellenic Armed Forces», in Andreas Gofas, Giorgos L. Evangelopoulos, Marilena Koppa (Eds.), *One Century of International Relations, 1919-2019*, Athens, Pedio Publications, 2020, pp. 415-422 (in Greek).

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temporary Greek officers are not vastly different from those of their colleagues in other Western countries, this presentation can help us arrive at more general conclusions regarding the present relationship between the (Western) military and the discipline of Strategic Studies – and conceivably come up with some tips for successful teaching of Strategic Studies to military officers.

After presenting the background of the officer-students involved and giving an outline of the curriculum, the essay moves on to the nuts and bolts of teaching. Finally, there is an attempt to assess the overall impact of the endeavor.

The officer-students

The top tier of officer-students that have been taught by me are those attending the National Defense College, the highest Greek military college. Normally they are Army and Air Force Lieutenant-Colonels and Navy Commanders (OF-4), and Army and Air Force Colonels and Navy Captains (OF-5). Graduation from the National Defense College (or an equivalent foreign college) is a prerequisite for reaching general or flag rank. Consequently, the students are heavily exposed not only to Strategic Studies, but also to a variety of subjects pertaining to international politics. Among the National Defense College students, there is also a select group that attends the postgraduate program on Strategic Security Studies. I have been teaching at the National Defense College since 2003, being responsible for the Strategic Studies curriculum since 2007, while also being heavily involved in the Strategic Security Studies postgraduate program since its inception in 2014.

Below the National Defense College are the various war colleges. After some structural reorganization and quite a few changes of nomenclature during the last two decades, the system currently consists of a Supreme Joint War College with students at the rank of Army and Air Force Major and Navy Lieutenant-Commander (OF-3, with some OF-4s as well), and the separate Army, Navy, and Air Force War Colleges. The latter normally comprise a Command and Staff College, plus a variety of lower schools. The students of the Command and Staff Colleges are Army and Air Force Captains and Majors, and Navy Lieutenants and Lieutenant-Commanders (OF-2, OF-3). I have taught in all those war colleges, save the Command and Staff College of the Army War College, for about a quarter century.

The lowest tier of officer-students that have been taught by me are to be found

in two lower schools of the Air Force and the Navy War College respectively, namely their special training schools for former non-commissioned officers (NCOs) that have been promoted to Air Force Second Lieutenants and Navy Midshipmen (OF-1). My involvement with those schools began in 2008 at the Air Force and in 2010 at the Navy War College.

Finally, in order to give as complete a picture as possible, let me present a few personal details of the officer-students. Their ages range from late thirties to early fifties. They are mostly male, sometimes overwhelmingly so. Some classes of Midshipmen were wholly male, though the gender balance has recently been redressed. The Strategic Security Studies postgraduate program has consistently been a hundred percent male; the female officers that attend the National Defense College belong mainly to the medical or economic services, hence they most probably do not think that this program would assist them careerwise. The officer-students are by and large Greek and Greek Cypriot. The odd foreign officer-student used to pop up at the service War Colleges, but I have not seen one for several years. Small numbers of foreign officer-students regularly attend the National Defense College, which also hosts a special International Program (not dealt with in this essay). Finally, the interservice colleges, namely the National Defense College and the Supreme Joint War College, comprise about seventy percent Army officer-students, with the remainder divided roughly equally between Navy and Air Force officers (the student-body of the National Defense College may also comprise a handful of law enforcement officers and civil servants, but the present essay will not deal with them).

What emerges from the above is the sheer magnitude of the officer-student sample and the enormous experience that has been gained in the process, both by the professors and the staff of the colleges themselves. With each tier's officer-students averaging more than a hundred per year (with the exception of the Strategic Security Studies postgraduate program, which averages about twenty students per year), the overall sample runs into the thousands. Besides, the great majority of ambitious career officers of the Greek armed forces go through the military college system described above (excepting those who choose to study at foreign military colleges). As a result, among senior officers of all services, Chiefs of General Staff included, it is nowadays difficult to find someone who has not been taught Strategic Studies by me at some stage of their career. In other words, the sample is large enough and inclusive enough to allow general conclu-

sions regarding the attitude of the Greek military officers toward the teaching of Strategic Studies in their various colleges.

Another corollary is the great longevity of the curriculum. According to an age-old principle that applies with particular force in military colleges, "if you do something people do not like, someone will stop you." Modifications have certainly been made, but the core curriculum has remained by and large unaltered. Thus, it can be argued that the curriculum itself and the methods by which it has been taught have passed muster and might be more widely applicable.

The curriculum

The Strategic Studies curriculum begins with an introductory lecture that defines the concept of strategy, analyzes its characteristics, and outlines its levels (i.e. grand strategy, military strategy, operational art, and tactics).[2] The next lecture deals with the key concepts of deterrence and compellence, that is how one can achieve their political objectives (maintenance or change of the status quo) with the *threat* of force, as opposed to the actual use of force.[3] Sometimes there follows a lecture on the causes of war, unless that subject is covered at the International Relations section of curriculum.[4]

After that, the courses delve deeper into strategic theory. The next two lectures deal with Clausewitz' *On War* and *The Art of War of Sun Tzu*.[5] The audiences being Greek, Thucydides could not be absent from the curriculum.[6] His text is used both as an example of the methodology of strategic analysis, and as an archetype of the strategies of annihilation and exhaustion (respectively, the strategy that aims at the destruction of the enemy armed forces through battle, and the strategy

2 Among others, see Athanasios G. Platias and Constantinos Koliopoulos, *Thucydides on Strategy*, London-New York, Hurst-Columbia University Press, 2010, pp. 1-21.

3 For the classical analysis of the subject, see Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 1966.

4 For a useful textbook, see Seyom Brown, *The Causes and Prevention of War* [second edition], New York, St. Martin's Press, 1994.

5 Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* [edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret] Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1989; *The Art of War:* Sun Zi's *Military Methods* [trans. V. H. Mair] New York, Columbia University Press, 2007.

6 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* [trans. R. Warner] London, Penguin Books, 1972.

that uses one's military force to inflict economic damage on the enemy), as the German historian Hans Delbrück dubbed them many centuries later.[7]

The last part of the curriculum deals with more context-specific strategies, namely naval, air, and nuclear.[8] The same applies to the penultimate lecture, which analyzes the theory and practice of guerrilla warfare.[9] Finally, the curriculum concludes with the examination of current strategic developments, especially in conventional warfare.[10]

This curriculum forms the backbone of the Greek officers' education on Strategic Studies. To be sure, most of the time it is taught in a partial or condensed form. Only the National Defense College, and especially its post-graduate program in Strategic Security Studies, can afford to devote the necessary time to cover the whole curriculum. In fact, that college goes even further. Thus, not only does the specific National Defense College curriculum go into greater detail on subjects already covered in the core curriculum (e.g. the issue of war termination[11]), but also deals with broader strategic issues (e.g. strategic aspects of European integration[12]). The National Defense College curriculum reaches its pinnacle (and moves beyond Strategic Studies proper) with the annual crisis management exercise.

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7 Hans Delbrück, *History of the Art of War*, 4 vols. [trans. Walter J. Renfroe, Jr.], Lincoln, NE, University of Nebraska Press, 1975-1985.

8 For useful primers on those subjects, see respectively L. W. Martin, *The Sea in Modern Strategy*, London, Chatto & Windus for The Institute for Strategic Studies, 1967; Martin Van Creveld, *The Age of Airpower*, New York, PublicAffairs, 2011; Fred Holroyd (Ed.), *Thinking About Nuclear Weapons: Analyses and Prescriptions*, Beckenham, The Open University, 1985.

9 The towering achievement in the relevant literature is Walter Laqueur, *Guerrilla Warfare: A Historical & Critical Study*, New Brunswick, NJ, Transaction Publishers, 1998. However, an update is obviously overdue.

10 An authoritative source is United States of America, Department of the Army, *ADP 3-0, Operations*, Washington, DC, Army Publishing Directorate, 2019.

11 For a concise analysis, see Michael Handel, *War, Strategy and Intelligence*, London, Frank Cass, 1989, pp. 455-484.

12 See, for instance, Costas Koliopoulos, «From Imperial Backwater to Strategic Minefield: the Mediterranean and the EU», in Ewa Latoszek, Magdalena Proczek, Malgorzata Dziembala, Anna Masloń-Oracz, Agnieszka Klos (Eds.), *European Security and Stability in a Complex Global Order – The Case of Neighbourhood Policy*, Warsaw, Warsaw School of Economics and Dom Wydawniczy ELIPSA, 2017, pp. 235-249.

The teaching

Let us begin with a methodological issue that will also shed light on the place of International Relations within higher military education. One might conceivably think that the curriculum presented above is rather conservative and even old-fashioned. Nevertheless, it seems that it could hardly be otherwise. To start with, this curriculum has stood the test of time; military officers have been studying the likes of Clausewitz and Sun Tzu for centuries, while nuclear strategy has lost none of its topicality, long after the end of the Cold War. In addition, the eminently practical character of military education means that various theoretical quests that have become popular in social studies have not fared particularly well in the field of Strategic Studies. In particular, the so-called "professional establishment,"[13] which definitely includes military officer-strategists, have largely gone about their business unconcerned with approaches like critical theory, feminism, postmodernism, and the like.[14] For better or for worse, the officer-students, though not lacking intellectual curiosity, tend to regard such approaches as irrelevant at best.

All in all, the officer-students operate solidly within the Realist (or Thucydidean) paradigm of International Relations, as exemplified by the classic works of, among others, Thucydides, E.H. Carr, Hans Morgenthau, Kenneth Waltz, and John Mearsheimer.[15] This paradigm postulates a world of nation-states that, in conditions of international anarchy (i.e. the absence of a world government), rationally define and pursue what they consider to be their national interests (normally defined in terms of relative power), thus making international politics in-

13 This was the term used by Professor Ken Booth to refer to an article by John Chipman in *Survival*, the quarterly journal of The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS); Ken Booth, «Strategy», in A.J.R. Groom and Margot Light (Eds.), *Contemporary International Relations: A Guide to Theory*, London, New York, Pinter Publishers, 1994, p. 117. Chipman would later become Director-General and Chief Executive of the IISS.

14 See, for instance, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Armed Conflict Survey 2023*, Abingdon, Routledge for The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2023.

15 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, cit.; E.H. Carr, *The 20 Years' Crisis, 1919-1939* [second edition], London, Macmillan, 1962 (first published in 1939); Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* [Seventh edition, revised by Kenneth W. Thompson and W. David Clinton], New York, McGraw-Hill, 2006 (first published in 1948); Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, Reading, MA, Addison-Wesley, 1979; John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, New York, W.W. Norton, 2001.

herently conflictual (even though gainful cooperation is not ruled out).[16] Thus, it is only natural that, being trained to wage war in defense of their nation-state, the Greek officer-students feel very much at home within the Realist paradigm and tend to regard other paradigms of International Relations with skepticism. This has to be taken into account when introducing officer-students to international politics. In other words, unless one has to teach a full-fledged course on International Relations theory, they had better stick to the trusty old Realist paradigm.

This is not a narrow-minded military attitude that can and should be corrected by supposedly enlightened and sophisticated civilian professors. On the contrary, it is the attitude that necessarily characterizes a practically minded strategic community, directly or indirectly connected with the making of security policy. Thus, the late Colin Gray, a leading – civilian – professor of Strategic Studies with apparently considerable influence on U.S. security policy, has long ago resolutely stated that "power politics" (a synonym for Realism) is the only approach that provides an understanding of the essential character of international politics, castigating other approaches as irrelevant to what is really going on in the international arena.[17]

Once within the bounds of the Realist paradigm, the officer-students are capable of nuanced understanding and analysis. They seem to be equally at home at all three levels of analysis (individuals, state structures, international system – also known as first, second, and third image respectively).[18] Many of them have first-hand experience with "the politics of policy making."[19] They have encountered many an ambitious leader, military or civilian, and are definitely no strangers to interservice or interagency rivalries. Therefore, not only do they readily understand any explanations of international phenomena and strategic decisions that

16 For a concise and authoritative presentation by a leading exponent of the Realist paradigm, see Robert G. Gilpin, «The Richness of the Tradition of Political Realism», in Robert O. Keohane (Ed.), *Neorealism and Its Critics*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1986, pp. 301-321.

17 Colin S. Gray, *The Geopolitics of the Nuclear Era: Heartland, Rimlands, and the Technological Revolution*, New York, Crane, Russak & Company, Inc., 1977, pp. 2-3.

18 Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1959.

19 Roger Hilsman, *The Politics of Policy Making in Defense and Foreign Affairs*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice Hall, 1993; see also Graham Allison – Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* [second edition], New York, Longman, 1999.

are based on first- and second-image analyses, but they also share invaluable relevant experiences with the class, resulting in some fascinating lectures and plenty of novel insights for their professors and their colleagues alike. The professors may pass on this information to future classes of officer-students, thus acting as an informal depository of institutional memory.

Third-image, structural analyses are also familiar to officer-students and easily understood by them. The concept of the balance of power, both in its static dimension (that is, the current balance of power) and its dynamic one (that is, the future trends in the distribution of power) requires little explanation for Greek officer-students, since the Greek armed forces have for decades been taking pains to counterbalance the growing Turkish military power. In the same vein, the officer-students find Thucydides' explanation of the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War on structural grounds, namely that the growth of Athenian power scared the Spartans and compelled them to go to war,[20] very easy to understand and explain – without necessarily condoning Sparta's preventive war.

It has been correctly pointed out that Strategic Studies can be narrow enough to focus on military means (viz. largely technical analyses of weapons systems), and broad enough to focus on political ends (viz. wide-ranging international political analyses dealing with grand strategies of potentially global reach).[21] Contrary to what one might expect, the officer-students are more interested in the broad political-strategic issues than in the narrow military-technical ones. A probable explanation is that, by the time they reach War College and especially the National Defense College, the officer-students are already experienced tacticians; the Air Force and Navy officers highly so, since the less-than-peaceful Greek-Turkish relations impose on them quasi-operational conditions in the Aegean Sea and the skies above it. Thus, in direct proportion to their career ambitions, the officer-students are eager to move on to the next level and deal with strategic issues. There is also a more immediate practical concern that urges those OF-5s to delve into Strategic Studies and its kindred disciplines of International Relations and History: the possibility of securing coveted positions abroad, either in international organizations such as NATO or the EU, or as defense attachés in Greek diplomatic

20 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, cit., I 23, p. 49.

21 Lawrence Freedman, «Strategic Studies», in Steve Smith (Ed.), *International Relations: British and American Perspectives*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1985, pp. 29-44.

missions all over the world. At any rate, the officer-students realize the need for a holistic approach in their military education, hence they develop a keen interest in international politics. Still, military strategy is easily their primary concern.

The result is a real treat that any professor of Strategic Studies would very much appreciate. Teaching strategy to classes of vigorous, ambitious, intelligent officer-students with plenty of practical experience, leads to lively, high-level interaction that leaves both professors and officer-students much better off intellectually. This interaction reaches its zenith in the small classes of the postgraduate program on Strategic Security Studies, or other small-group seminars; round-table discussions give freer rein to the mind and ensure full class participation, further increasing the quality of the interaction and thus producing enormous dividends for everyone concerned. In addition, the honor of training the next generation of military leaders of one's country, providing them with practically useful knowledge and ways of thinking, gives a professor a sense of fulfilment hard to achieve through other teaching activities.

The focus is different in the somewhat curious case of OF-1s that have risen from the ranks of NCOs. Their preferences differ rather sharply from those of the graduates of cadet officer schools: these former NCOs are far more interested in international politics than in military strategy. This became particularly acute in the Naval War College. As a result, the curriculum had to be adjusted accordingly, giving the Midshipmen more of what they wanted. It is useful to point out that their opposite numbers at the Air War College have avoided this predicament altogether, since their college authorities have prudently refrained from including any course on strategy in their curriculum. Instead, these Second Lieutenants were assigned a three-hour Introduction to International Politics, which soon after was increased to four hours on popular demand – once again signifying their heightened interest in international politics.

Why would this happen? After all, one would expect that international politics would lie further from the purview of former NCOs than military strategy. However, there are other factors at play in my opinion. People are political animals and international politics is still – politics. For virtually all of those former NCOs, this War College course has been their first exposure to an intrinsically interesting subject, about which they hear every evening on the news. Moreover, these officers will never become Generals or Admirals (the very highest they can reach

is OF-5, shortly before retirement), so they probably see no reason to bother too much with strategy, beyond an introduction to basic strategic concepts. I believe that here lies another lesson for military educators.

Having dealt with the position of International Relations vis a vis Strategic Studies within the academic curriculum of higher military colleges, let us do the same with History. At the very last years of the 20th century, during my first lectures at the Naval War College, my former teacher and later colleague Professor Athanasios Platias gave me a valuable piece of advice: "First give them [the officer-students] the theory, then an ancient example, and then a contemporary example. They are bound to get at least one of the three. If they get none, they ought to find another profession!" That was it! The abstract theory, though always necessary, must be supplemented with concrete examples, both historical and contemporary.

What kind of historical examples? The word "ancient" should not be taken at face value; it merely reflected the fact that at that time we were working on Thucydides' *History*, trying to restore it in its rightful place as a textbook on strategy.[22] In this context, "ancient" means any old (that is, non-contemporary) example from a period with which a particular group of officer-students happen to be familiar. For Greeks it is classical Greece or Byzantium; for Italians it may be ancient Rome or the Renaissance; for Spaniards it may be the *Reconquista* or the heyday of the Spanish Empire; and so on for other nations. At any rate, Clausewitz himself has declared that ancient examples can be legitimately used if one can do without detailed knowledge of their actual conditions, which is often the case with strategic analysis.[23]

Thus, we have inevitably come across Clausewitz's celebrated treatise on the use of historical examples in what in Clausewitz's time was called the art of war and nowadays is called – Strategic Studies.[24] Clausewitz argued that historical examples can be used in four possible ways: 1. to explain an idea (abstract exposition being too dreary); 2. to show the application of an idea; 3. to support a statement (in this case, they merely have to prove that some phenomena or effects are indeed possible); 4. to deduce a doctrine (by a detailed presentation

22 Platias and Koliopoulos, *Thucydides on Strategy*, cit.

23 Clausewitz, *On War*, cit., bk. 2, ch. 6, p. 174.

24 Clausewitz, *On War*, cit., bk. 2, ch. 6, pp. 171-174.

of a historical event). Only in the last instance would Clausewitz demand rigor and detail in a historical example; after all, novel and debatable theories must rest on most solid foundations. Thus, since it is very rare for a lecture such as those outlined above to make overly bold theoretical claims, the historical examples used therein are normally bound to fall within the first three categories outlined by Clausewitz. In practice these categories are often intertwined (for instance, explaining an idea and showing its application often amounts to much the same thing), so there is no point in further elaborating upon them, beyond pointing out their essential difference from the more ambitious, rigorous, and detailed examples of the fourth category.

Still, even though the illustrative historical examples of the first three categories can be less rigorous and detailed than the fully-fledged historical works of the fourth, this does not mean that violence to the facts should be tolerated in order to prop one's pet theory. Even tiny little factual mistakes suffice to completely invalidate a theoretical proposition.[25] To make matters worse, the historical record is rife with misinformation (or even *dis*information), making virtually any historical example potentially suspect. To cite one instance among many: about two decades ago, fairly convincing evidence emerged to the effect that the so-called Schlieffen Plan (the supposedly brilliant German military strategy that would direct the German army at the outbreak of the First World War) did not actually exist, but was a post-First World War fabrication.[26] If this novel analysis is correct, countless books and articles and lectures based on this particular historical example are automatically invalidated, in spite of having been produced in good faith and having been in circulation for about a century. What is one to do? Mistakes are unavoidable of course; I myself have been guilty of them, and in one memorable instance I stood corrected by my officer-students (see below). However, deliberately misleading one's students, let alone the academic community, is another matter. It seems that, at the end of the day, there is no substitute for a scholar's personal integrity. Unfortunately, the latter seems to be in shorter supply

25 See Constantinos Koliopoulos, «International Relations and the Study of History», in Robert A. Denemark (Ed.), *The International Studies Encyclopedia*, Oxford, International Studies Association with Wiley-Blackwell, 2010, vol. VII, p. 4510.

26 Terence Zuber, *Inventing the Schlieffen Plan: German War Planning, 1871-1914*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002; Terence Zuber, «Letter to the Editor», *The Journal of Military History*, 70, 2 (April 2006), pp. 584-585.

than previously assumed. Judging by the severe "replication crisis" that currently plagues several fields in the natural sciences (claimed experimental results that fail to reproduce when other scientists replicate the original experiments), academic deception and record falsification is nowadays not confined merely to the likes of the British historian David Irving.[27]

The officer-students themselves, especially from OF-3 and above, have an interesting attitude toward History and its place within military education. They have been taught at least some military history at their cadet officer schools, but I have sensed a general disappointment, especially among Army officers, with the way the subject was taught. Probably they were put off by too great an emphasis on rote learning of minor details. They are still keen on the use of History for educational purposes, but on two conditions. First, they are fed up with tactical details and instead are eager to get the bigger, strategic picture. Second, they much appreciate the juxtaposition of historical examples with contemporary concerns. Perhaps some professional historians will find this attitude objectionable, since they (justifiably) pride themselves of their attention to detail and are often (though not always) reluctant to draw lessons from history for contemporary use.[28] Be that as it may, within military education it is the needs of the military profession that have to take precedence.

As was mentioned above, all officer-students, especially the graduates of cadet officer schools, have fair knowledge of military history, that is Greek ancient and modern military history, plus the two world wars. Often, their professional interests lead them to expand and deepen their knowledge, so at the rank of OF-4 their overall knowledge has accordingly developed from "fair" to "good." Occasionally, one encounters real History aficionados among them. They may or may not hold postgraduate degrees in History, but in historical matters they are forces to be reckoned with and do not hesitate to voice their own opinions and even point out mistakes of their professors.

27 For a recent example of false scientific claims, see Dan Garisto, «Superconductivity scandal: the inside story of deception in a rising star's physics lab», *Nature.com*, 8 March 2024, online. For the shenanigans of David Irving, see Richard J. Evans, *Telling Lies About Hitler: The Holocaust, History and the David Irving Trial*, London, Verso, 2002.

28 See Koliopoulos, «International Relations and the Study of History», cit., pp. 4509-4512 and David Hackett Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies*, New York, Harper & Row, 1970, pp. 157-160.

This has actually happened to me recently, in a highly relatable episode. While exemplifying the relation between war and politics, I mentioned an instance from the First Balkan War (1912-1913). The story went that the Commander-in-Chief of the Greek Army, Crown Prince Constantine, and his redoubtable staff officer Ioannis Metaxas, after beating the Ottomans near the Greek-Ottoman border (then standing at mount Olympus) and entering the present-day Greek province of Macedonia, supposedly tried to head north toward Monastir (present-day Bitola, North Macedonia) with a view to destroying the Ottoman forces concentrating there, thereby refusing to pursue the crucial political objective of Salonica to the northeast. Prime Minister Venizelos was beside himself with rage and was compelled to send Constantine an angry telegram ordering him to rush to Salonica before the Bulgarians. In other words, this was another example of a narrow-minded military leadership that focused on an immediate military objective and failed to discern the far greater political objective for which the war was actually fought. Or so I thought. However, as an Army Colonel and an Air Force Lieutenant Colonel were quick to point out, this celebrated episode never actually took place. All that Constantine (and Metaxas) did, was point out that the Greek Army's wheeling to the northeast would expose its left (or northwest) flank to some danger from the Ottomans in Monastir. All the rest (Constantine's determination to move toward Monastir, his concomitant refusal to move toward Salonica, and the angry telegram by Venizelos), were sheer inventions of Venizelos's propaganda machine – with some record falsification involved. Nevertheless, these fabrications have somehow become accepted historical facts in Greece, finding their way in respected literature and even entering high-school textbooks – where I happened to encounter them as a schoolboy and absorbed them as the truth.[29] However, as the two aforementioned officer-students pointed out, Venizelos tried to substantiate his claims by invoking a number of ostensible telegrams that actually have never been found in the archives. I promised the class that I would check the record (the diligent duo had suggested some sources, whereas I also had some indirect access to relevant archival material), and at my next lecture a few days later I announced that the two officer-students were right, and their professor had been

29 For an otherwise good book, written by a renowned author close to Venizelos, which reproduced and popularized these fabrications, see Spyros Melas, *The Wars 1912-1913*, Athens, Mbiris Publishing House, 1971, pp. 135-139 (in Greek).

a decades-long victim of disinformation.[30] All in all, this episode speaks volumes of the seriousness with which at least some of the officer-students approach the study of military history, and of how their study improves the academic quality of their colleges – and their professors.

A few more things about teaching officer-students. They are indeed not much different from other audiences; indeed, they are much akin to postgraduate university students. The British Professor (and wartime intelligence officer) R. V. Jones seems to have hit upon the two universal principles for successful teaching: you must believe that you have something interesting to say to your audience, and you must put yourself in the shoes of your audience.[31] Strategic Studies is by definition an interesting subject for officer-students. Putting myself in their shoes was somewhat more difficult; my studies and my national service as an Infantry Sergeant definitely helped, but I still had work to do. In this respect, another authoritative piece of advice that I was given early in my career came in handy: Ioannis Drymousis, then a promising Navy Lieutenant Commander who would later become Chief of Naval General Staff, suggested that I should use "more Greek and more naval examples." Indeed, calibrating one's examples according to the audience's service helps establish a special rapport between professor and officer-students. This works especially well with foreign officer-students. Well-chosen examples (preferably victorious!) from their countries' history assist the integration of the foreign officer-students with the class and increase their appreciation of their professors' erudition – and consequently of the education provided by the host college. Continuing the theme of putting oneself in the shoes of officer-students, let me point out that taking some pains to learn the correct military terminology is an investment that repays – a trick that always works is to ask the audience "how do you [i.e. military officers] say this?" It is also very important to calibrate one's curriculum to the level of the audience. An overly ambitious curriculum is bound to fail. Air Force Brigadier General Zacharias

30 It transpired that the record had been set straight and the fabrications had been conclusively exposed at least as early as 1961; see P. Panagakos, *Contribution to the History of the Decade 1912-1922*, Athens, self-published, 1961, pp. 36-49 (in Greek). The truth was known among the Greek military (see Ioannis Politakos, *Military History of Modern Greece*, Athens, Supplementary Publications by the Publications Directorate / Army General Staff, 1980, pp. 38-39 (in Greek)), but was drowned in a sea of disinformation.

31 R. V. Jones, *Most Secret War: British Scientific Intelligence 1939-1945*, London, Coronet Books, 1979, p. 489.

Kartsakis, a particularly perceptive Commanding Officer of the Air War College, put it graphically: "I'm afraid lest we feed steak to the baby." Hence, both professors and colleges should curb any urge to show off by teaching and assigning too advanced material to their hapless officer-students.

We conclude this section with some remarks about non-academic aspects of teaching. Contrary to popular belief, the officer-students show no prejudice whatsoever against civilians. This is probably the case in all Western countries, though not necessarily elsewhere in the world. There is also no prejudice toward women professors; they are accorded due respect and are eligible for the highest honors military colleges can bestow. Age is an asset, as is to be expected in an institution that values seniority. Still, it is not a prerequisite for success. In the first ten years of my career probably all my officer-students were older than me, but I have clearly not been disaffected by this. Nowadays, I also see younger colleagues thriving in military colleges. Thankfully, most of the time professors stand or fall on their merit; I have seen undeserved successes, but no undeserved failures. One final thing: professors in military colleges must show respect and be decorous – the military, both staff and students, will reciprocate. Behavior that is considered disrespectful is never forgotten and rarely forgiven.

The impact [32]

It is difficult to assess the impact of the teaching of Strategic Studies at military colleges. Military officers receive many intellectual inputs throughout their career, the education in Strategic Studies being but a small part thereof. Apart from that, a state's defense policy and military strategy are shaped by many factors, especially in peacetime (e.g., domestic politics, economic constraints, etc.). Therefore, absent the trial of war, not only is it difficult to evaluate a particular defense policy, but it is also unclear how much an ostensibly successful defense policy can be credited to a military leadership's strategic insight. Finally, strategic mastery on the part of a state's military leadership is not an insurance against defeat in war; in both world wars Germany boasted renowned military strategists, but still ended up badly defeated.

32 This section draws from Koliopoulos, «The Pedagogy of the Discipline», cit., pp. 420-421.

Be that as it may, the strategic insight of the contemporary Greek military leadership, formally educated in Strategic Studies, is clearly far greater than in the past. Greek military strategic thought arguably hit rock bottom in 1974, immediately prior to the Turkish invasion of Cyprus, when in a meeting between top military brass and Foreign Ministry cadres a senior military officer excoriated the diplomats with the immortal words "But don't you take into account the help of Virgin Mary?"[33] Things did not improve much for some time after that. In the early 1980s, then Chief of Air Force General Staff Lieutenant General Nikos Kouris (who later rose to Chief of National Defense General Staff and Undersecretary of Defense) seemed not to realize that the mere presence of U.S. troops in Greece would act as a deterrent to Warsaw Pact aggression – instead, he merely expressed his disappointment at their lack of serious warfighting capabilities.[34] On the other hand, a few years ago the Chief of National Defense General Staff, Army General Constantinos Floros, gave a profound presentation of current Greek military strategy, exemplifying in the process its deterrent and defensive components.[35] General Floros has received the Strategic Studies education outlined in this essay, graduating from the National Defense College in 2009. His dissertation, supervised by the author of these lines, was a strategic analysis of the wars of Alexander the Great.

Anecdotal evidence confirms the positive impact of the teaching of Strategic Studies, as outlined above, on Greek officers. Obviously, the impact is not uniform. An Army Colonel, shortly before graduating from the National Defense College told me that "I do what I was doing before, but now, with the historical examples that I've heard here, I feel surer for what I'm doing." As an Air Force Colonel graphically put it, this teaching "changes one's trajectory a few degrees compared to where they would otherwise go; more degrees for some, fewer degrees for others." The impact seems especially great on Army officers. Army Colonels have told me that the National Defense College "teaches one to think

33 Georgios Gennimatas, *Even with a borrowed pen, History is written*, Athens, Kaktos Publications, 2022, p. 28 (in Greek).

34 Nikos Kouris, *Mission Accomplished*, Athens, Livanis Publishing Organization, 2010, pp. 54-55 (in Greek).

35 See, Athanasios Platias & Christos Hatziemmanouil (Eds.), *Greek Grand Strategy: Conversations with the Country's Leadership,* Athens, Eurasia Publications, 2022, pp. 102-133 (in Greek).

strategically" and has shown them that "there is another level beyond the tactical." The consensus was that they have found the teaching of Strategic Studies to be of practical use in their service, something that I have been told by senior general and flag officers. Maybe they just wanted to be nice to their former professor. Still, having graduated from their college or even having retired from the service, they could afford to be brutally honest. So perhaps they meant what they said.

Conclusion

In view of the above, it seems that Strategic Studies can be beneficially taught in military colleges, at least from a certain level upward – at least OF-2, OF-3 being a safe bet. The curriculum outlined in this essay is not exclusive; military colleges with more time and material resources in their hands can expand it, which they probably already do. Still, I do believe that, if the teaching of Strategic Studies is to be successful, that is practically useful, then the basic components and the methodological foundations of that curriculum must be always in place. They may not be particularly fashionable, but they are essential.

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