



## The Principles of War in the 21st Century: Strategic Considerations

William T. Johnsen, Douglas V. Johnson II, James O. Kievit, Douglas C. Lovelace Jr., Steven Metz

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For nearly two centuries, the principles of war have guided practitioners of the military art. During the last 55 years the principles of war have been a key element of U.S. Army doctrine, and recently they have been incorporated into other Service and Joint doctrines. The turn of the 21st century and the dawn of what some herald as the "Information Age," however, may call into question whether principles originally derived in the 19th century and based on the experience of "Industrial Age" armed forces still hold. Moreover, despite their long existence, the applicability of the principles of war at the strategic level of warfare has not been the subject of detailed analysis or assessment. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to stimulate a debate on the importance of the principles of war at the strategic level of warfare and on their continued relevancy in the Information Age. To this end, the study proposes a revised set of the nine principles of war that may be applied at the strategic level of warfare and are believed to conform to the conditions and demands of the 21st century. This study represents a first examination of a complex and relatively unexplored field of study. Many may differ with the ideas presented or quarrel with a particular phrase or choice of words. Additionally, each of the principles undoubtedly merits a more detailed investigation than present length constraints allow. We encourage readers, therefore, to take up the debate and contribute to an exchange of views on this important subject.



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