

Now: Technology and Strategy

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WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will focus on the history of military technology. By exploring an area where technology is so impactful, we can notice patterns and learn ways to quickly and effectively integrate technology into our lives. We'll start by looking at just one of the ways today's U.S. military is using the latest technology to hold a strategic advantage over potential enemies in other nations: military communications. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. Technology and Strategy

"To me, machine learning, which is a variant of AI, will be the most important impactor of national security in the next decade."

Will Roper, mathematician and physicist



BEFORE YOU START

How has technology improved military communication over time?

1. Technology and Strategy

Before electronic communications were invented, the military—like everyone else—had to rely on messengers. These might have been fast runners (like Pheidippides, the legendary Greek messenger who ran 26.2 miles from the Battle of Marathon to Athens in 490 BCE in the precursor to the modern marathon), or they might have been fast riders on horseback. They might even have been carrier pigeons, like those that troops stuck in battlefield trenches used to communicate with faraway military leaders in World War I.

Today, the U.S. military takes advantage of technology that allows people to communicate almost instantaneously. Now soldiers carrying out top-secret missions can be in touch with strategic advisors and commanding officers, which enables them to be guided by information from satellites and unmanned drones.

We can see a prominent example of technology in action if we look back to 2011, when President Barack Obama and his national security team watched live footage from drones that were hovering over Osama bin Laden's compound during the U.S. operation against the Al Qaeda leader. With tools such as drones, GPS tracking, and videoconferencing, it's clear that military technology has come a long way since the carrier pigeons of World War I.

Security is a critical part of the military's work. The United States is a vast country with many ports and

airports. To keep these areas secure, the military needs a coordinated strategy for finding and confiscating weapons or contraband. Sensors are an important technology because they make these efforts more accurate and efficient, helping the military improve surveillance and intelligence operations. Importantly, sensor technology enables many of these operations to be done remotely, which keeps more soldiers out of dangerous situations (Howard, 2008).

Technology has been changing the nature of war for a long time. Let's now look at some other historical examples of how technological innovation and agility have helped the United States during conflicts.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned that changes in military technology have altered U.S. military strategy.

Technology and strategy go hand in hand, because the ability to communicate instantaneously affects how military leadership can plan and execute tasks. Examples like sensor technology show how military actions have become more accurate and efficient than in the past.

Best of luck in your learning!

Source: Strategic Education, Inc. 2020. Learn from the Past, Prepare for the Future.

REFERENCES

Howard, Courtney E. (2008, February 1). *Smart Sensors*. Military & Aerospace Electronics.

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