

When Fiction Foretells the Future of Warfare

By Samantha Bey

Last summer, retired naval aviator Captain George Galdorisi, had just released two anticipated books: *AI at War: How Big Data, Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning are Changing Naval Warfare* (U.S. Naval Institute Press) and *Fire and Ice* (Braveship Books). Since both books – non-fiction and fiction, respectively – addressed the future of warfare, we decided to circle back a year later to see how the ideas he presented were playing out today.

The bottom line in *AI at War*, explained Galdorisi, is that “Our national, military and intelligence community efforts are synced up to leverage big data, artificial intelligence and machine learning to make our military weapons systems smarter and more effective and to also help our warfighters make better decisions faster than our adversaries.”

Galdorisi pointed to a number of recent documents and statements by senior U.S. security officials underscoring the importance of these technologies in bolstering the U.S. military. The most comprehensive report on this subject is the Final Report of National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence, co-chaired by former Google CEO Eric Schmidt and former Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Work. The Commission emphasizes the importance of AI to the U.S. military directly: “We can still defend America and our allies without widespread AI adoption today, but in the future, we will almost certainly lose without it.”

“Few people outside of military and intelligence communities have done a thorough read of this 756-page report,” explained Galdorisi, “but it represents a call to action to provide the U.S. military with an unfair advantage on the battlefield. In a recent speech at the Reagan National Defense Forum, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin captured the importance

of these technologies to the U.S. military and expressed our goal to ‘successfully lead the AI revolution.’”

Galdorisi explained that, of all the things AI can do for the U.S. military, rapid and effective decision-making is of the utmost importance. “There is near-universal agreement that AI is exploding, but humans have leveled off. The highest promise of AI is bridging this gap,” he said. “In other words, the human cognitive bandwidth will emerge as the most severe constraint on the battlefield, therefore we need AI to help humans do what they can’t do unaided in the fast-moving battlefield.”

“If there is one thing we want big data, artificial intelligence and machine learning to do, it is to ensure that U.S. warfighters are equipped to make better decisions, faster, with fewer people and fewer mistakes. At the end of the day, we want to provide our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines with the ability to outthink their adversaries,” he explained.

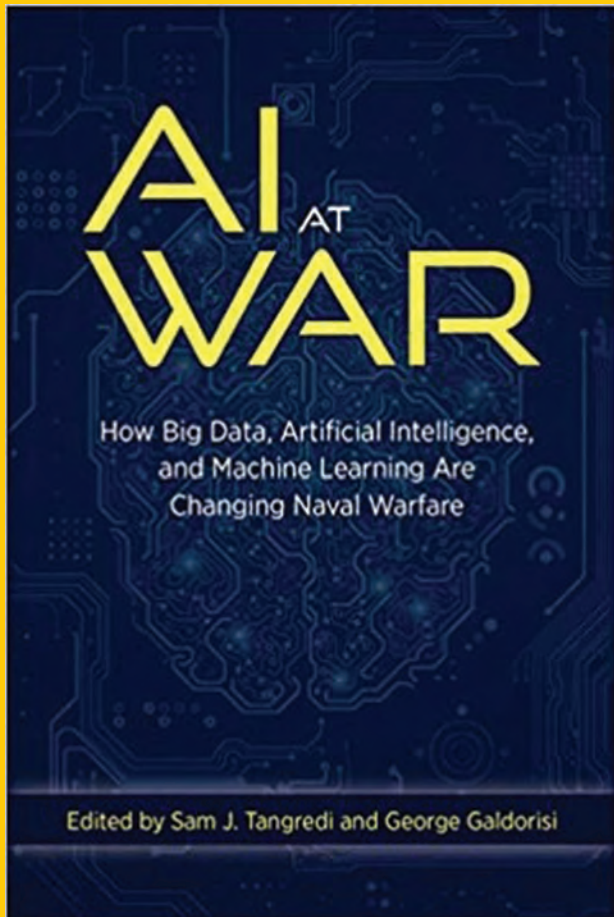
Galdorisi does offer some notes of caution. “Before we rush headlong into adopting AI for the U.S. military,” he said, “we need to recognize a few things. First, AI isn’t a condiment that you sprinkle on platforms, systems, sensors and weapons to make them better. Their insertion must be done purposefully and thoughtfully. Second, the public needs to be reassured that the military will not lose control of its robots and have them go rogue.”

Galdorisi’s second recent novel, *Fire and Ice*, is a thriller focused on the geopolitical clashes created by a modern-



day Russia at its vindictive worst, with Vladimir Putin emerging as arch-villain and attempting to hold Europe hostage to his designs of having Russia reach its former “glory.”

Several major plot points in the novel include Vladimir Putin wanting to reassert his dominance over former Soviet republics, his use of energy to hold all or most of Europe hostage to his demands, his use of cyber-warfare to disrupt his adversaries, his willingness to invade a peaceful country and his use of the worst kinds of atrocities to terrorize civilian populations.



The book is a fictional, written in 2019/2020, eerily prescient of current world events. "The only difference in the plot lines and this year's events in Ukraine was that I used Belarus as the invaded country rather than Ukraine. I felt that Ukraine had been over-used by other FICINT (fictional-intelligence; a genre that imagined future warfare scenarios based on the reality of high-end combat and real-world intelligence rather than fantasy) and military thriller writers; I chose Belarus wanting to give the reader something different," Galdorisi explained.

"Clearly, those of us writing in the FICINT genre are trying to do two things: tell a good story, and help the U.S. military imagine – and thus be prepared for – future warfighting scenarios."

Galdorisi explained that as today's geopolitical tragedy plays out in Europe and threatens to engulf the world in a wider war, the very scenario he imagined in *Fire and Ice* is now the one world leaders are facing.

Both his non-fiction and fiction novels have readily imagined and addressed real-world military scenarios, and it fuels his passion for writing.

Galdorisi plans to release a new book on AI, and is also helping a former military veteran write his memoir. He'll also continue his Rick Holden thriller series with an upcoming sequel to *The Coronado Conspiracy, For Duty and Honor* and *Fire and Ice*. "I'm also thinking about an entirely new fiction series," he said, "so stay tuned."

In addition to writing books, Galdorisi likes nothing more than connecting with readers. You can follow him on Facebook and Twitter, and learn more about his books, blogs and other writing on his website, georgegaldorisi.com.[👑]

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