



# Military Innovation in the Rise and Fall of Great Powers: Lessons for America

*Benjamin A. Taylor*

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A military's ability to adapt its organization, doctrine, and technology strategy to meet the threats of its time influences the state's capacity to maintain great power status. This thesis uses a historical overview of military innovation among great powers throughout history to draw lessons for the U.S. military today. In this heuristic analysis, it is determined that great powers that integrated between and among their various elements of national power were able to maintain their positions better than those that did not. The study transitions from a descriptive to a prescriptive mode, concluding with the caution that, if the U.S. military does not begin to transform itself from a Cold War organization to an adaptable, resilient force for the future, it could hasten America's loss of global power. Measures that the U.S. military should take to innovate organizationally, doctrinally and in terms of technology strategy are prescribed. Finally, and most importantly, this study finds it essential to foster a climate and institutional culture receptive to innovation.

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