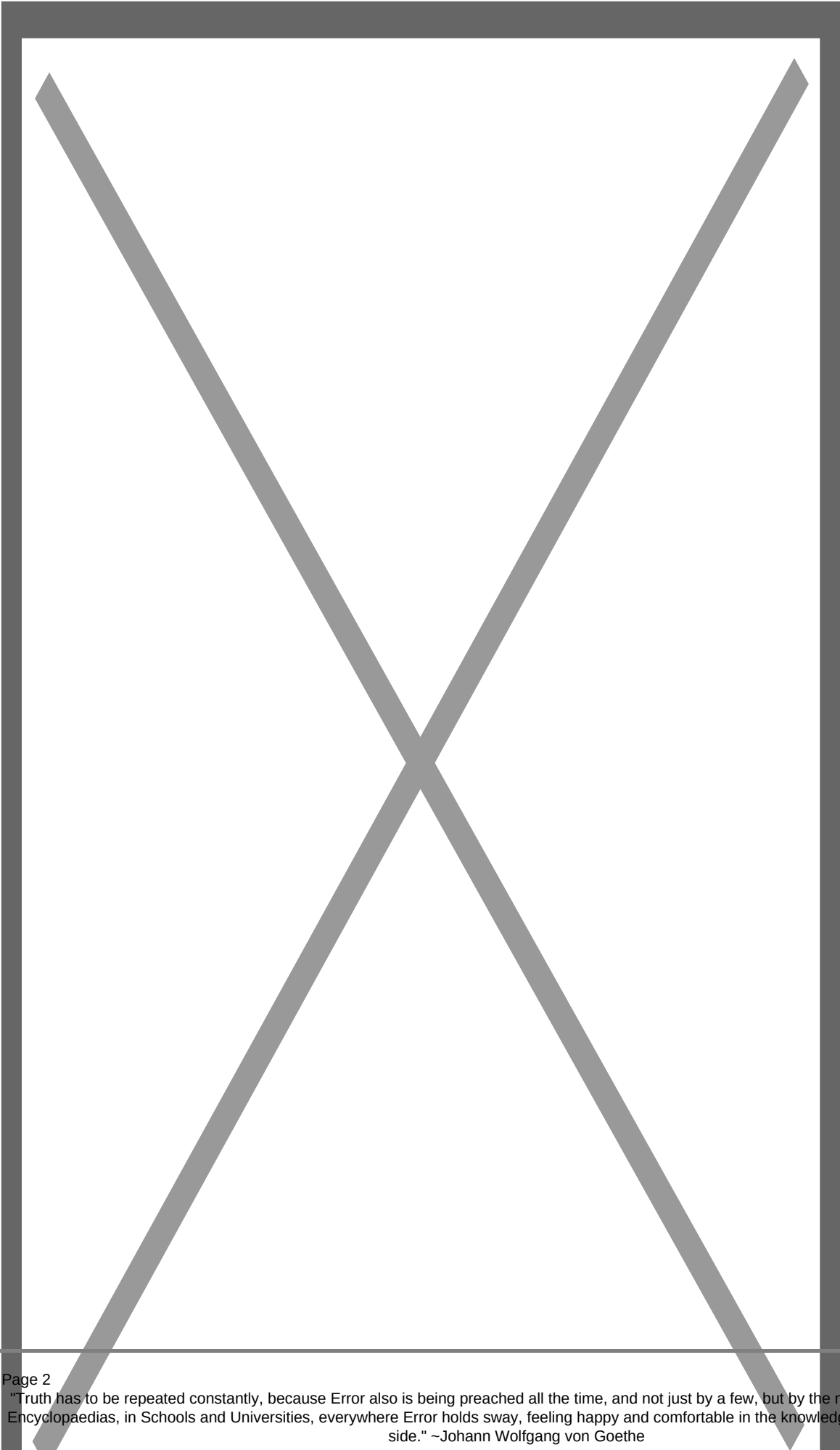


"Disobedience is the true foundation of liberty. The obedient must be slaves." ~Henry David Thoreau

Herman Kahn's escalation ladder

Description

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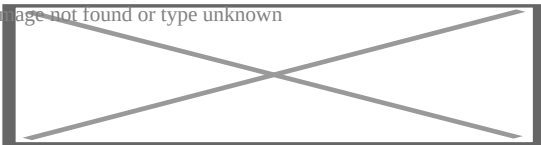
Echevarria II, A. (2021). Herman Kahn and Escalation. In *War's Logic: Strategic Thought and the American Way of War* (Cambridge Military Histories, pp. 93-110). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/9781316135730.008

Summary

Chapter 5 analyzes the thinking of Herman Kahn, who dared to think the unthinkable. It describes his "America," which again was that of the golden age of the middle class, but which also overlapped with the sense of malaise that plagued the 1970s. Like the limited war theorists, Kahn agreed military instincts needed to be curbed, and he attempted to counter uncertainty by arguing, largely in vain, that escalation itself was also a bargaining process with systematic waystations or steps embedded along its path. This chapter discusses his model of war's nature, which, like those of Brodie, Osgood, and Schelling, privileged war's political dimension, though he gave policy more agency than did they.

www.cambridge.org/core/books/abs/wars-logic/herman-kahn-and-escalation/19C080FABFE3FCD66358C5AF1366486A

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Outside physics and statistics, works written by Kahn include:

- 1960. [*On Thermonuclear War*](#). Princeton University Press. [ISBN 0-313-20060-2](#)
- 1962. *Thinking about the unthinkable*. Horizon Press.
- 1965. *On escalation: metaphors and scenarios*. Praeger. [ISBN 1-41283004-4](#)
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- 1970. *The emerging Japanese Superstate: challenge and response*. Prentice Hall. [ISBN 0-13-274670-0](#)
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- 1983. *The Coming Boom: economic, political, and social*. Simon & Schuster; Hutchinson. [ISBN 0-671-49265-9](#)

- 1984 *Thinking about the unthinkable in the 1980s*. New York: Simon and Schuster. [ISBN 0-671-47544-4](#)
- *The nature and feasibility of war, deterrence, and arms control* (Central nuclear war monograph series), (Hudson Institute)
- *A slightly optimistic world context for 1975–2000* (Hudson Institute)
- *Social limits to growth: "creeping stagnation" vs. "natural and inevitable"* (HPS paper)
- *A new kind of class struggle in the United States?* (Corporate Environment Program. Research memorandum)

Category

1. General

Date Created

3. February 2023

Author

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