

# Homer Lea & The Decline Of The West

-Thomas Flemming, American Heritage

Early in the century a young American accurately predicted Japan's imperialism and China's and Russia's rise. Then he set out to become China's soldier leader.

In October 1941 Clare Boothe Luce, the playwright, journalist, politician, and wife of the magazine tycoon Henry Luce, had dinner with half a dozen army officers in their quarters on top of an ancient Spanish fort beside the harbor of Manila. The main topic of conversation was the threat of war with Japan. Everyone assumed that if hostilities began, the Philippines would be target No. 1 of the Japanese war machine.

Col. Charles A. Willoughby, who would go on to glory of sorts as one of Douglas MacArthur's most devoted staff officers, drew a map of Luzon on the tablecloth and traced arrows at Lingayen Gulf and Polillo Bight pointing toward Manila. "The main attacks will probably come here," he said.

"You're not giving away military secrets?" Mrs. Luce asked.

Willoughby laughed. "No. Just quoting military gospel—according to Homer Lea."

Mrs. Luce was not the sort of woman who liked to admit any gaps in her knowledge. But she was forced to ask, "Who is Homer Lea?"

Willoughby said he was a self-appointed "general" who had written a book in 1909 predicting a war between America and Japan—a war that America could lose because of chronic unpreparedness. Lea had described with meticulous detail exactly how the Japanese would capture the Philippines and, if they were sufficiently audacious, Hawaii and the entire West Coast of the United States.

"I read him at West Point," one of the officers said. "Damned convincing, militarily."

Willoughby advised, "Next month, when you get home, brush up on the general."

Back in New York Mrs. Luce did not give a thought to Homer Lea until the bombs fell on Pearl Harbor and newspapers began printing maps of the Japanese assault on the Philippines. Then she saw the "sinister little arrows" on the maps showing the Japanese landing in Lingayen Gulf. The invaders drove from there and Polillo Bight across Luzon in a pincer movement toward Manila. Mrs. Luce went to the public library and found *The Valor of Ignorance* by Homer Lea. It had been taken out three times since its publication in 1909.

By the time she finished the book, the Japanese had occupied Manila. In his book Homer Lea had predicted that they would capture the Philippine capital in three weeks. It took them twenty-six days. Lea had declared that it was pointless to try to defend the islands with twenty-one

thousand white and native troops, the garrison in 1909, or even with three times that number. MacArthur's fifty-five thousand men were soon smashed by two hundred thousand Japanese invaders.

With a ferocity that chilled Mrs. Luce's blood, Lea insisted that unless the Philippines assembled a great mobile army, only a substantial fleet, based just outside Manila, could save the country, and the flaccid, pacifist democracy called the United States of America would never build one. In 1941 the U.S. Asiatic Fleet had only 1 heavy cruiser; 2 light cruisers, one of which, the Marblehead, was "old enough to vote"; 13 overage destroyers; and 29 submarines. Against them the Japanese had committed 10 battleships, 10 aircraft carriers, 18 heavy cruisers, 18 light cruisers, 113 destroyers, and 63 submarines.

Mrs. Luce found another Lea book, *The Day of the Saxon*. It held an equally gloomy prophecy. It predicted that the "Kingdom of the Saxon"—Great Britain—was doomed because her people, sapped by pacifism, had lost the martial spirit that had built their empire. Britain's global enemies—Germany and Japan and Russia—would reduce her to impotence in one or two terrific wars. Then Germany and Japan themselves might be equally humbled, leaving the English-speaking world defenseless, beyond the undependable power of the United States, against the third great player of the global game, Russia. That was to be the subject of a third book, which Lea never wrote: *The Swarming of the Slav*.

Mrs. Luce stared at the picture of Homer Lea in the frontispiece of *The Valor of Ignorance*. She saw "a plain-faced boy, certainly in his early twenties, with a hard, wide mouth, intense wide eyes, a wide brow with long lank hair parted unevenly in the middle." The boy was wearing a uniform with gold epaulets, and his tunic was covered with medals. It was a foreign uniform and looked doubly strange in concert with the "strong young American face."

Mrs. Luce's mind would have been even further boggled had she been able to see beyond the carefully posed picture to the reality of the man in the uniform. He was a hunchbacked dwarf, who stood barely five feet high. The luminous eyes with which he gazed so boldly at the reader were virtually useless. The general was almost blind.

Who was Homer Lea? In 1942 a spate of articles, including one by Mrs. Luce, attempted to answer this question with only moderate success. Forty-six years later the question is again worth asking and answering more carefully. Although history has once more attenuated the memory of this strange genius, his greatest contribution to his country is still being played out, not in the Philippines, which was never more than a sideshow in Lea's geopolitical thinking, but in the heartland of Asia, China.

When he was barely twenty years old, Homer Lea perceived what Henry Kissinger and Richard Nixon saw plainly seventy-five years later. A strong China friendly to the United States was the key to balance of power in Asia and in the world, the best hope of blocking Japan's and Russia's expansionism. But the China Homer Lea saw from the California of his youth was a pathetic victimized nation, the prey of every plundering power, from Britain to Germany to Russia to Japan. It was his study of China that convinced Lea of the folly of pacifism. Throughout China's long history the founder of every dynasty had been a soldier, and the man who overthrew every

dynasty had been a soldier. China's prostrate condition in the twilight of the Manchu dynasty cried out for another soldier to renew its national vigor by re-creating its martial spirit.

With a confidence verging on mystical faith, Homer Lea decided to be that soldier.

Lea, born in Denver in 1876, had been a normal baby. But he was dropped when he was only a few days old, and his spine and his brain were badly damaged. The spinal injury left him a hunchback, and the brain injury subjected him to terrific headaches and periodic bouts of blindness. His entire physique suffered. He looked—and was—extremely frail.

In spite of these limitations, or perhaps because of them, Lea evinced a passionate interest in military matters. By the time he entered Occidental College in Los Angeles in 1894, he could discourse for hours on the campaigns of Hannibal, Caesar, Alexander the Great, and Napoleon. With this predilection he combined an equally intense interest in China. He told one friend this fascination began with a dream in which he saw himself as the “Martial Monk,” a historic figure who defended China at the head of a great army.

It was not so surprising for a Californian to be interested in China. The state still seethed with debates about the “yellow peril” and the need to limit Chinese and Japanese immigration. The capture of the Philippines in 1898 made the United States a major player in the Far Eastern balance-of-power game. But it was unusual for a young white man to seek friendships among the Chinese in Los Angeles's Chinatown. Lea did, and when he transferred to Stanford University, he used San Francisco's larger Chinatown to increase his network of friends and admirers.

Lea could talk brilliantly about military matters—and add a touch of moonshine. His paternal grandfather had fought for the Confederates. Lea expanded his exploits (for which he had been murdered by Union supporters) into high rank and glory. Some say he hinted that he was a descendant of Robert E. Lee.

Forced to abandon his college career because of smallpox and eye trouble, Lea devoted even more time to his Chinese friendships. China was much in the news. The young emperor, Kuang-hsü, had launched a “Hundred Days of Reform” program in late 1898 and had been deposed by the reactionary dowager empress, Tz'u-hsi, and a junta of court nobles who felt their privileges were being threatened. The emperor's advisers, the Confucian scholar K'ang Yu-wei and his disciple Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, had been forced to flee for their lives, and many of their followers had been beheaded.

Young Chinese-Americans had responded by organizing the Chinese Empire Reform Association, which raised money to finance a rebellion against the dowager empress and restore Kuang-hsü as a constitutional monarch. Lea was initiated into this society and into the Chih-kung-tang, the Chinese branch of the Freemasons, one of the most powerful secret societies in the Orient. His Chinese admirers encouraged Lea to recruit a small group of Americans, including some veteran soldiers, to assist the uprising. In the spring of 1900, K'ang Yu-wei sent

an urgent cable from Singapore for funds; Lea was reportedly entrusted with sixty thousand dollars and sent to Canton.

While he was at sea, a series of rebellions gathered force in China. The rebels who struck first and got the most publicity (in fact, all the publicity in the West) were the Boxers, who veered between hatred of the ruling Manchus and hatred of “foreign devils.” With some guidance from the dowager empress, the Boxers finally settled on the latter, assassinating missionaries and businessmen and besieging Western diplomats and their families in their compound in Peking. Western nations swiftly organized a relief expedition that fought its way to the Heavenly City and dispersed the Boxers.

Virtually unnoticed by the Western press, two other groups chose this seemingly propitious moment to revolt in southern China. One was led by the followers of K’ang Yu-wei; the other by a man with more revolutionary goals, Sun Yat-sen. He wanted to overthrow the Manchus and create a republican government in China. Although the two leaders disliked and distrusted each other, they temporarily joined forces. Into this maelstrom of confusion and violence Homer Lea plunged.

At first he was sent to Kwang-tung Province, to organize an army. There, according to reports from the American consul in Canton, the revolutionists were recruiting five hundred men a day. The alarmed Manchu viceroy had added fifteen thousand men to his army. When Lea heard that the dowager empress had fled Peking with the emperor Kuang-hsü still a prisoner in her entourage, the young American concocted the daring plan of pursuing her, rescuing the emperor, and putting him on the throne. He set out for Hankow, where he hoped to find K’ang’s forces and be given enough men to accomplish this feat.

Before he got there, K’ang’s rebellion unraveled. Some local secret societies revolted prematurely, and the Manchu viceroy in Hankow seized most of the rebel leaders and summarily executed them. When Lea reached Hankow, their heads were displayed on the city’s walls, and he wisely retreated into the hills. Meanwhile, Sun Yat-sen’s men were giving a much better account of themselves along the East River, south of Hankow. Lea joined these troops in at least one major battle, the capture of Po-lo, a city some seventy miles south of Canton. On this battlefield Lea acquired a Manchu officer’s sword as a trophy of war. Lea apparently acquitted himself with distinction. As one Chinese said, “he had eyes that could bury you nine feet under the ground, if you disobeyed him.”

For a while Sun Yat-sen’s forces looked like winners. They captured the city of Waichow, and the American consul in Canton soon reported they controlled the entire East River valley of Kwang-tung Province and had thirty thousand men under arms. But the Manchu military machine had been modernized in the 1890s, and the imperial troops counterattacked ferociously, cutting off the rebels from communication with the coast. A new government in Japan reneged on prior promises of ammunition and supplies, and the rebels soon disintegrated as a fighting force. Once more the leaders fled; those captured were swiftly beheaded. Homer Lea escaped; according to legend, he reached Hong Kong by disguising himself as a French missionary.

Back in California, Lea published an article in the San Francisco Call that was given the title “How I Was Made a General in the Chinese Army.” When the Manchu government’s consul denounced him as a fraud, the director of the Chinese Empire Reform Association vigorously backed him. He said Lea had been given a rank equivalent to lieutenant general and had traveled throughout China, inspecting and organizing thirty thousand troops in an army that now totaled four hundred thousand, determined to put the reform emperor back on the throne. There was obviously a good deal of propaganda in these numbers. The reform army existed mostly on paper, although the reform association was real and was supported by thousands of Chinese around the world. The reformer K’ang Yu-wei still had a far greater reputation among these people than Sun Yat-sen.

Lea spent much of the next two years recovering from his Chinese adventure. When he surfaced again, he had a new mission: training a cadre of officers who would lead the Chinese Reform Army. With the help of Ansel O’Banion, a former top sergeant in the 4th Cavalry, who had served three years in the Philippines, Lea set up the Western Military Academy. On weekends and evenings Lea and O’Banion drilled and instructed about sixty young Chinese. Prominent citizens of California served as “trustees” of this illegal organization, which Lea expanded to other cities. O’Banion recruited other army veterans to serve as drillmasters.

Soon the Western Military Academy was headquarters for the C.I.A.—the Chinese Imperial Army. It was organized into four regiments, with three companies in Los Angeles. Lea’s militance was on display when one of the leaders of the Chinese opposition, the scholarly Liang Ch’i-ch’ao, came to Los Angeles. When he visited the academy, Lea ordered two of his noncommissioned officers to seize the local merchant with the longest queue. While Liang watched, wide-eyed, O’Banion cut off the man’s queue, a symbol of subservience to the Manchus. Thereafter Lea urged queue cutting to numerous Chinese audiences and, according to O’Banion, often inspired mass amputations.

“He had eyes that could bury you if you disobeyed him,” said a Chinese who saw Lea in battle.

The United States government soon began investigating the academy for possible violations of the neutrality laws. Lea responded with a bold show of innocence. To emphasize the purely scholastic character of the Western Military Academy, he persuaded local officials to let fifty of the students march in the 1905 Tournament of Roses Parade.

When K’ang Yu-wei visited America in 1905, Lea accompanied him to Washington for an interview with President Theodore Roosevelt. They frankly described the military training that the C.I.A. was giving Chinese-Americans. Roosevelt’s attorney general was trying to shut down the whole operation, but “Teddy” nodded his approval and said it was “bully.” The government’s investigations faded away.

Lea gradually became disillusioned with K’ang and Liang. They were too Confucian for his martial spirit. K’ang spent most of his time during these years writing his extraordinary Book of the Great Community, which envisioned an era when nation-states and wars would vanish. Liang made brilliant speeches but could not bring himself to recommend a violent revolution to rescue

China. The last straw was K'ang's appropriation of several hundred thousand dollars raised by Chinese reformers. The money mysteriously vanished into Mexico in 1905.

Lea now committed himself openly to Sun Yat-sen, whom he had met in Japan after the failure of the 1900 uprising. Sun was determined to repudiate China's Confucian past. His hero was Abraham Lincoln, and his credo was government of the people, by the people, for the people, which he rendered in Chinese as "the people are to have, the people are to rule, the people are to enjoy." O'Banion smuggled Sun into America for another meeting with Lea in 1905. In 1907 Lea journeyed to French Indochina and served as Sun's English secretary in an invasion of South China from Annam. After some hard fighting the town of Chen-nan-kwan, which contained an important imperial arsenal, was captured. But the arsenal's shelves were bare. Once more the revolutionists ran out of ammunition, and they were forced to retreat with Manchu forces in pursuit. The Peking government protested to France, and Sun and Lea were promptly expelled from Annam.

Returned to the United States, Lea began writing *The Valor of Ignorance*. By the time he met Sun again in 1909, the book was ready for publication. Although it did not sell widely in the United States, it was praised and attacked with remarkable vigor. In essence Lea maintained that the history of the world was the history of warfare. He asserted there had been only 234 years of peace in the previous 3,000 years. Only a state of maximum military preparedness could guarantee a nation's survival. It was suicide to rely on the valor of ignorance, as the United States was doing in 1909.

The book had a warmly approving introduction by Lt. Gen. Adna Chaffee, the commander of the American relief expedition to Peking. Field Marshal Lord Roberts, chief of the British imperial general staff, praised the book extravagantly. There were other, even more surprising admirers. Lenin kept it on his desk during his exile in Zurich and told one visitor, "This book will someday be studied by thousands of readers." Lenin said Lea "understood more about world politics than all the cabinet ministers now in office."

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Gen. Hans von Seeckt, who rebuilt the German army after World War I and later fought in China, said: "This Lea is astounding. I have rarely encountered a writer who made one feel so strongly that he carried the burden of a whole continent on his shoulders." Other admirers ranked him with Thucydides, Caesar, and Karl von Clausewitz for the way he revealed the "inner essence of war."

Pacifists in England and America, a formidable intellectual phalanx in 1910, were not impressed. David Starr Jordan, the president of Lea's alma mater, Stanford, denounced him in a furious essay, "The Impudence of Charlatanism." He described Lea as an "ambitious little romancer trying to make the most of his short life, limited physique and boundless imagination." Others took him seriously. William James challenged some of Lea's assertions in what many consider his finest essay, "The Moral Equivalent of War." Most literary critics were apathetic. Only the *Literary Digest* admired *Valor*, calling it "a daring and startling book ... which every American would do well to ponder." Hearst papers, which liked to inflate the bogey of the "yellow peril,"

took up the book and made it sound as if Lea had said the Japanese would attack the day after tomorrow. The net effect was a deflation of Lea's reputation.

While he was being praised and damned in public, Lea was committing himself heart and soul to Sun Yat-sen's revolution. The Chinese leader met with Lea in California in 1909 and for several months sent him a stream of memorandums about his revolutionary plans. To help raise money, Lea signed over the copyright of *The Valor of Ignorance* to Sun and arranged for the book to be translated in Japan, all profits to go to the cause. Lea was not a wealthy man, and Japanese interest in the book was intense. This was a genuine sacrifice and proof of his seriousness.

Lea was in close touch with General Chaffee, who had recently retired as chief of staff of the U.S. Army. Chaffee was soon persuaded to put his influence within the U.S. government behind Sun. To prove his friendship, Sun offered Lea the purloined secret plans of the Japanese general staff, in thirty thick volumes. Even then, Sun, who had spent considerable time in Japan, had no illusions about the Japanese. They had helped torpedo his 1900 rebellion and were committed to a policy of keeping China weak and divided. Sun was hoping that the United States would see the value of backing him in the mounting power struggle in the Far East, but the U.S. State Department, with a wooden-headedness that characterized its dealings with China for a century, ignored these overtures.

Lea and O'Banion continued to train cadets at their academy, and O'Banion smuggled into the United States 250 sons of Chinese officials who were secretly supporting Sun. However, the crucial need was not men but money. One of Sun's memorandums to Lea called for a budget of \$3,630,000. Sun had never acquired K'ang's skill at raising funds. Many overseas Chinese still clung to the hope that the country could be reformed without a violent revolution. Inside China, meanwhile, one revolt after another flared and was crushed. Some were begun by Sun's followers; others, by adherents of more violent and anarchistic doctrines.

In August 1910, Sun wrote Lea from Penang, Malaya, giving him detailed information on the military situation in China. The Manchu government was tottering. The army was losing its nerve, and the revolutionary forces were adding recruits daily. Timing now was crucial, along with money. Sun had exerted all his influence to prevent a premature revolt in the Yangtze Valley. Three months later Sun was begging Lea to raise even a tenth of the money they needed. The revolutionists inside China were growing very impatient.

In another memorandum, Sun designated Lea his chief of staff and gave him full powers to negotiate an "Anglo-Saxon alliance" with the American and British governments. In return for their assistance he promised them most-favored-nation status in China. He agreed to place the Chinese navy temporarily under the command of British officers and to accept a British political officer in his entourage.

Unfortunately Lea's health was deteriorating. Bouts of blindness made it almost impossible for him to continue work on his book, *The Day of the Saxon*. An acquaintance recommended a consultation with a specialist in Wiesbaden, Germany. From there Lea went to London, where he

was cordially received by his admirer Lord Roberts. But Roberts was as unpopular as Lea among liberal politicians of the day. They scoffed at his repeated calls for preparedness for war with Germany. The general could not persuade either British bankers or Foreign Office diplomats to back Sun Yat-sen. The most Lea could obtain was a promise of nonintervention.

In China, meanwhile, the revolutionists could no longer be restrained. A series of uprisings exploded on October 10, 1911. Lea cabled Sun, who was traveling in the United States, and urged him to come to London for intense negotiations. Sun did but found that he could do no more than Lea to remove British prejudices against his movement. The “George Washington of China,” as Sun is sometimes called, decided instead to sail for home and take command of the revolution. Shanghai, Suchow, and Hankow had fallen to the rebel armies. An urgent telegram from Shanghai begged Sun to return and “unite us.” He asked Lea to accompany him.

Lea’s doctors warned him that the journey would cost him his life. He ignored them and sailed for Shanghai with Sun. On the voyage he completed *The Day of the Saxon*. In Penang and Singapore he received at least as much publicity as Sun Yat-sen. The editor of the Singapore Free Press called him the “‘Von Moltke’ of the revolution” and predicted that his presence at Sun’s side would do much to persuade Western bankers to back the revolutionary regime. This statement was not an exaggeration in light of the celebrity Lea had become in Japan. *The Valor of Ignorance* had been published in a translation entitled *The Valor of Those Who Venture to Kill a Tiger with a Single Hand and Who Dare to Wade a Fathomless River*. The book had sold eighty-four thousand copies in a single month.

In Hong Kong Lea conferred with the American consul and worked out a cable that was sent to the U.S. State Department with Sun’s approval. It described Sun’s plan to form a “consolidated provisional government.” Homer Lea was to handle negotiations with the Manchus, who would be offered protection and pensions if they agreed to abandon power. Sun would then call a constitutional convention to draft a “modified American plan” republic. The consul reported that Lea’s influence with Sun was great and “controlling ... in matters of relations with other powers.” There is no record of Washington’s replying to this unique opportunity to create a democratic China.

Sun and Lea sailed on to Shanghai, where they discovered the harsh realities of revolutionary turmoil. Most Chinese greeted them with cheers, but many leaders of the Revolutionary Alliance (which would soon become the Kuomintang, or National People’s Party of China) growled with disappointment when they learned their George Washington and his American Lafayette had brought no money with them. One American on the scene reported that Lea was resented by officers who had been involved in recent fighting. Lea sensibly did not try to assert command of the revolutionary cadres; he said his function as chief of staff was to pass on Sun’s orders to the army. Sun took care to give very few of these, although he urged his followers to expel prominent Manchus who had joined the party at the last moment.

The reformer K’ang Yu-wei remained outside China, still playing Hamlet— or Confucius. No other Chinese leader had Sun’s prestige. At a conference of representatives from the southern provinces who had declared their independence, Sun was named provisional president of China. With Homer Lea still at his side, he journeyed to Nanking on New Year’s Day 1912. While



cannon roared and fireworks popped, he took the oath of office as China's first provisional president. Lea was the only white person present at the ceremony.

As president Sun faced formidable problems. He still had no money. The Manchus, backed by a powerful army under Gen. Yüan Shih-k'ai, still controlled northern China. Sun offered Yuan a deal. If he would join in expelling the Manchus, Sun would step aside as president and back him for the job. There is considerable evidence that Homer Lea thought this policy was a mistake. His early connections to the reform movement had convinced him that China, a nation where change was accepted slowly, if at all, required the continuity of the monarchy to keep the country unified. But he remained Sun's loyal lieutenant and made no public objection to the maneuver.

Yüan Shih-k'ai was one of the most devious politicians in Chinese history. He trumped Sun's offer by persuading the dowager empress that the country demanded the Manchus' abdication. On February 12, 1912, in an elaborate ceremony in the great palace hall, the empress mounted the dragon throne, and the abdication edict was presented for her imperial seal. As she wept bitterly, the members of the imperial cabinet signed it and conferred on Yüan Shih-k'ai full power to organize a republican government.

It was the beginning of the end of Sun's hopes for a united China. Yüan Shih-k'ai and his army instantly became the dominant force in the nation. Trapped by his promise, Sun had no choice but to step aside as president in Yüan's favor. Yuan soon revealed that power, not republican government, was his only goal, and China's social and moral confusion only whetted his ambition. The abrupt end of the Manchus' 268-year reign left the country stunned and bewildered. Westerners told tales of seeing cultured, wealthy Chinese burst into tears when they heard the news of the abdication, turn their faces to the north, and knock their heads on the floor.

On the day before the abdication, in an uncanny symbiosis that may have been brought on by prophetic foreboding, Homer Lea collapsed with a stroke in Nanking. It left him paralyzed and blind—a mirror image of China. A grief-stricken Sun spent the night after his resignation from the presidency at the bedside of his friend and counselor. In April 1912 Lea returned to California. He died there on November 1, 1912, two weeks before his thirty-sixth birthday.

Five days after Lea's death Sun paid him mournful tribute in an article in the China Press: "Mr. Lea was physically deformed but he possessed a wonderful brain. Although not a military man, he was a great military philosopher. He was a thoroughly sincere man and devoted his whole energy to the Chinese Revolution."

Pacifists condemned Lea, but he didn't glorify force. He just considered wars inevitable.

Since Homer Lea's days of prophecy and valor, China has been united in the way he predicted it must—by military force. It has become a crucial factor in the struggle for world domination that Lea foresaw so eerily in 1909. Perhaps his chief legacy to his adopted country—and to his own country—is the words Lea spoke to the republican leaders of China on the day Sun Yat-sen began his brief tenure as president: "It is an unfortunate truism that peace is but a fleeting respite

between wars. ... I therefore charge you not to rest upon the laurels of your victory. ... You will face many enemies from without but you will face your worst enemy from within your own borders and ranks. ... I refer to those insidious scourges of mankind, public ignorance, indifference and apathy which—acting singly or collectively—have always bred that moral corruption that precedes the destruction of great nations.”

Although pacifists condemned Homer Lea as a militarist, he had nothing in common with the glorification of force trumpeted by Kaiser Wilhelm’s Germany or its Fascist imitators in World War II. Lea was not an imperialist, urging America to acquire an empire by conquest. Nor was he an ideologue. He was indifferent to politics. He foresaw Russia’s present global role almost a decade before the Communist Revolution. In Lea’s cold-eyed view there will always be rich nations and predators, ready to challenge one another’s hegemony. War is an inevitable part of this historical process, unless the balance of power makes its cost prohibitive. Militance, not militarism, was Lea’s creed; preparedness, his axiom. How to sell these ideas to post-Vietnam America remains a puzzle that gives admirals and generals sleepless nights.