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Sommario/riassunto	This book is a comparative study of military operations conducted by modern states between the French Revolution and World War I. It examines the complex relationship between political purpose and strategy on the one hand, and the challenge of realizing strategic goals through military operations on the other. It argues further that following the experience of the Napoleonic Wars military strength was awarded a primary status in determining the comparative modernity of all the Great Powers; that military goals came progressively to distort a sober understanding of the national interest; that a genuinely political and diplomatic understanding of national strategy was lost; and that these developments collectively rendered the military and political catastrophe of 1914 not inevitable yet probable.