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## Book Reviews

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# Book Reviews

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● **Dereliction of Duty: Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, The Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Lies that Led to Vietnam.** By H. R. McMaster. New York: Harper Collins, 1997. 446 pp. \$27.50.

(This title is reviewed sequentially below by three contributors.--Editor)

**Reviewed by Brigadier General Douglas Kinnard, USA Ret., Ph.D.,** Emeritus Professor of Political Science, University of Vermont, and author of *The War Managers*.

"Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth?" -- John 18:37, 38

By July 1965 the United States was involved in a full-scale war in Southeast Asia with ambiguous policy objectives against an enemy we did not understand, and with a strategy not yet fully developed. This book is a case study of how we got there, beginning with Lyndon Johnson's assumption of the presidency in November 1963.

Why another book on this subject at this hour? According to the author, "Recently declassified documents . . . shed new light on the subject. . . . The discoveries astonished me, and I felt compelled to share them with others." The author, H. R. McMaster, is a serving Army officer, and this book is an outgrowth of his doctoral dissertation at North Carolina. His research is extensive, and there are new materials here--the papers of General Wallace Greene, Marine Corps Commandant from 1964 through 1967, for instance. How much these materials form, change, or reinforce one's previous views is, of course, an individual matter, depending in large part on what one knew before.

There were, arguably, some 17 key Washington decisions that were of major influence on the American involvement in Indochina, from Truman in 1945 to Ford in 1975. McMaster's narration is built around examining and interpreting four of these decisions, made early in the Johnson Administration: the August 1964 Tonkin Gulf Resolution; the February 1965 decision to conduct air strikes against North Vietnam; the March 1965 decision to introduce American ground troops into Vietnam; and the July 1965 decisions to introduce substantial US forces while not mobilizing the reserves. In describing each decision, the author details the often conflicting views and goals of President Johnson and his principal advisors, especially the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

On the whole, LBJ developed his national security policy outside of the National Security Council (NSC) environment and relied heavily on Defense Secretary Robert McNamara. With the exception of Maxwell Taylor during his brief tenure as LBJ's Chairman, the Joint Chiefs did not have routine access. If the Commander in Chief preferred to do business this way, that was his prerogative. I raise this point because one of McMaster's themes is that the Joint Chiefs did not fulfill their role as principal military advisors to the President. Technically he is wrong on this, for they did fulfill their role, but not in the way they would have preferred. McMaster is correct though in emphasizing the potential significance of this lack of rapport between the Commander in Chief and his senior military advisors in a war that ended up costing 58,000 American lives. How a greater rapport would have changed things, if at all, will have to remain in the realm of counterfactual musing.

Written in a lively style, *Dereliction of Duty* is interspersed with the author's impressionistic and frequently harsh judgments on key personalities and their modus operandi. As the book's subtitle implies, no one is spared. Whether these judgments are made with a full understanding of the context of the times and an appreciation of the ambiguities inherent in the national security process is a separate question.

Illustrative of the above is the case of Maxwell Taylor. The author is especially critical of his performance as JCS Chairman during the early part of the Johnson presidency. What McMaster seems not to take into account in his

assessment is that the position of Chairman, as contrasted to a service Chief, is in every meaning of the term a political appointment and always has been, conventional wisdom to the contrary notwithstanding. McMaster is somewhat less critical of Taylor's actions during his 1964-65 tenure as LBJ's Ambassador to the Republic of Vietnam, when Taylor ineffectually opposed the introduction of American ground forces. However, in both roles the author posits Taylor's position on issues as being more decisive on outcomes than was actually the case. The failure of Taylor in Vietnam decisionmaking lay not in what he did, but in what he failed to do.

Space permits comment on only one of the four key decisions, alluded to earlier, covered in this book: the July 1965 decision to introduce major US forces while not mobilizing the reserves. By this point in the war, the problem facing the President was that without a substantial ground commitment of American forces, South Vietnam would fall. McNamara supported a 44-battalion commitment to be accompanied by a call-up of 100,000 reserves. LBJ was unsure whether to call up the reserves or not, but in the end his political instincts played the determining role. He decided against a call-up and the attendant national debate it would engender.

On 27 July 1965 at a special meeting of the NSC, the President explained why he wanted to avoid calling up the reserves. The key moment came when he turned to JCS Chairman Earle G. Wheeler, Taylor's successor, and said, "Do you, General Wheeler, agree?" Wheeler nodded his agreement. Everyone in the room knew Wheeler objected, and that the Chiefs wanted a wartime footing with a call-up of the reserves.

In a chapter titled "Five Silent Men," McMaster tells the story. He is correct in his judgment that Wheeler's inability to stand up and be counted on such an important issue when his responsibilities required him to do so was indeed a dereliction of duty. The effects of this decision not to call up the reserves were significant: the depth of American involvement was concealed from the public until about 1967; and in time the need for forces in Vietnam brought on a disintegration of US forces in Europe and the United States.

Major McMaster has written an important, well-researched, provocative book, which is frequently unsparing in its judgments on key personalities. The period covered is the most critical one in the evolution of our Vietnam tragedy--without doubt the greatest failure in American foreign policy and strategy in our century. Though not without its flaws, some of which I cited earlier, the book presents most effectively a central case in contemporary American history and should help future decisionmakers understand such basic issues as the policy-strategy match--or mismatch--as well as problems of civil-military relations.

Twenty-two years ago the last American involved in the war ignominiously left Vietnam from the roof of our embassy in Saigon. Shortly before, the CIA station chief sent a final message: "It has been a long and hard fight and we have lost. The severity of the defeat and the circumstances of it would seem to call for a reassessment of the policies which have characterized our participation here. Those who fail to learn from history are forced to repeat. Saigon signing off." McMaster has done his part to help us learn from history.

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**Reviewed by Dr. Paul F. Braim (Colonel, USA Ret.),** professor of history at Embry Riddle University, who served four tours in Southeast Asia and two in the Pentagon during the Vietnam War.

In a book that will reopen many old wounds, H. R. McMaster presents a compelling argument that President Lyndon Johnson and his civilian and military assistants deceived the American people about the US commitment to the Vietnam War. McMaster asserts:

The war in Vietnam was not lost in the field, nor was it lost on the front pages of *The New York Times*, or on the college campuses. It was lost in Washington, D.C., even before Americans assumed sole responsibility for the fighting in 1965 and before they realized the country was at war. . . . [It was] a uniquely human failure, the responsibility for which was shared by President Johnson and his principal military and civilian advisors.

Covering the years 1963-66, the author states that LBJ regarded the Vietnam problem as an unwanted, secondary

demand on resources that he wished to devote to enacting his Great Society domestic program. Concerned that increasing US support might bring China, or even the Soviet Union, into the war on the side of North Vietnam, LBJ struggled covertly to bring about a condition favorable to US and South Vietnamese interests through the cautious employment of minimal military means. He was further worried that increasing US participation in the war would adversely affect his prospects for election and later reelection. From these constraints grew the politico-military strategy for Vietnam which McMaster terms "graduated pressure" (and which many who suffered this non-strategy knew as "incremental escalation"). Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and his "whiz kid" civilian assistants in the Department of Defense developed new theories of war to resolve the Vietnam problem, while rejecting military advice about which they knew or cared little. According to these self-anointed prophets of the secular religion called "systems analysis," military forces should be managed like a business. (Thirty-plus years later, this reviewer fears that the US military now may be facing the rise to dominance of a new quasi-religious cult defined by the hieroglyphics of the Information Age.)

As the security of the Republic of Vietnam declined rapidly during 1964, LBJ and his advisors concluded that North Vietnam was directing and supporting the war in the South, and that graduated pressure would have to be brought to bear on the North to end the war. The US Air Force was more than ready to prove that air strikes could provide a surgical means to show US determination to prevail. The mysterious Tonkin Gulf clashes gave LBJ the excuse, and congressional approval, to strike on the fringes of North Vietnam's military power. In 1964, DOD civilian bureaucrats directed minutely controlled air strikes against minor military installations south of the 20th parallel, primarily to signal an increasing US resolve to the North Vietnamese--to communicate the intent to punish aggression without causing significant damage. When the North Vietnamese ignored or refused to receive these discreet military signals, McNamara reluctantly escalated the US commitment by deploying US ground forces to Vietnam, admitting privately that he wanted to send only enough air and land combat power to achieve a stalemate. McNamara, and his boss LBJ, deliberately lied to Congress about the nature of this buildup, understating the totals and the purpose. Despite the inexorable escalation of force by both sides, demanded by the logic of the Vietnam battlefield, there was no intention to win, nor even hope of winning, on the part of the Johnson Administration. In fact, as early as 1965, civilian "strategists" in DOD considered several scenarios to distract international attention in the event they decided to withdraw US forces from Vietnam.

According to McMaster's research, the Joint Chiefs of Staff tried to develop a winning strategy during this period; they were hampered by political restrictions, by interservice rivalries, and by the cumbersome military planning system. LBJ had an abiding distrust of military men, and for the most part he regarded their advice with contempt. He and his close associates excluded the JCS from their ad-hoc groups that managed the war ever more meticulously. McMaster acknowledges that ingrained military subservience to civil authority constrained the Chiefs from open disagreement with their bosses. The JCS ranted in "the tank" (the JCS conference room) against the non-strategy under which the war was being conducted; yet they accommodated themselves to the limitations imposed, with the comforting observation that their military services, and the commitment to Vietnam, were expanding however slowly. LBJ personally calmed the more vocal among the Chiefs by confidential promises of future increases in each of their services. The gradual politicization of the senior military leadership, and their public endorsement of a non-winning strategy, is a principal theme of the book. Calling the JCS "five silent men," McMaster judges these Chiefs to have abrogated their constitutional responsibilities.

General Maxwell Taylor, Chairman of the JCS and later US Ambassador to the Republic of Vietnam, appears in this book as a military dilettante, more politician than soldier, and strongly opposed to this commitment of US forces. Taylor is charged with consorting secretly with McNamara to dilute the recommendations of the JCS to be more acceptable to LBJ, to Congress, and to the public. General William Westmoreland, Commander-in-Chief of the US Military Assistance Command in Vietnam, is viewed as having only a minor influence on his civilian superiors, but he comes through the book as more clearly attuned to the requirements of the battlefield than all of the civilian-military gaggle that directed the war from Washington. Westmoreland's strategy of attrition is seen as a consequence of the tight restraints under which he was forced to fight the war. This reviewer, during his final service in Vietnam, concluded that at least one of these senior military officers, faced with this near-criminal miscommitment of US military power by Washington politicians and bureaucrats, should have had the courage to fall on his sword rather than continue the charade at war. A few considered so acting; none did.

Taking up this book, this reviewer was inclined to address it as another compendium of information that is already well known. Nearly every officer in the Pentagon knew that reports from and about Vietnam were massaged as they went up the chain, from the time of President Kennedy's "Camelot" onward, to show continued progress. Military planners grew used to being told what recommendations would be politically acceptable before undertaking studies and papers. What was not generally known, and what readers learn from the massive accumulation of facts in this book, is how rotten was the skullduggery at the center of power. LBJ does deserve some exculpation from condemnation for his early decisions because he was limited by his inheritance of "Kennedy's War," and because he was under the influence of Kennedy's advisors.

McMaster's scathing condemnations are likely to upset a number of military officers, especially coming, as these assertions do, from a serving Army major and US Military Academy graduate who fought with distinction in the Gulf War; however, he buttresses his accusations by tightly reasoned, well-referenced summaries of primary papers. This book is an excellent addition to the growing record of inadequacies in senior leadership during that time of America's travail. McMaster's direct charge: Dereliction of duty by LBJ and his intimate advisors, and culpability by senior military leaders, in their commitment of our nation's most scarce and precious resource--our young soldiers--into a war under restrictions that produced high casualties and ultimate defeat for the United States. This provocative book brings the accused, alive and dead, before the bar of public justice. This reviewer's verdict: Guilty as charged!

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**Reviewed by Dr. Steven Metz**, Henry L. Stimson Professor of Military Studies, US Army War College.

Vietnam continues to provide a diorama of American national security strategy. During an examination of US involvement there, an array of issues emerges, develops, mutates, and becomes intertwined. Vietnam distills the American strategic culture and offers both a prism on our past and a window to our future. H. R. McMaster's *Dereliction of Duty*, which examines the strategic decisions that led to the US involvement in Vietnam, reflects this layered complexity. It is a challenging book but one with rewards and insights.

*Dereliction of Duty* is a searing indictment of all the senior leaders who shaped American policy toward Vietnam in the early 1960s. McMaster argues that the character and personality of Lyndon Johnson and his key advisers "rendered the administration incapable of dealing adequately with the complexities of the situation in Vietnam." This led to "arrogance, weakness, lying in the pursuit of self-interest, and, above all, the abdication of responsibility to the American people." Johnson did not understand the conflict in Vietnam or, initially, care much about it but rather considered it a distraction from electoral victory and passage of his domestic legislative agenda. As a result, he made what turned out to be crucial decisions with little thought and delegated most responsibility for crafting American strategy to Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. McNamara was willing to run the war effort but had no experience in military strategy and thus conceived what McMaster considers a dangerously wrong-headed approach in which military action was a means of political communication and the level of force was gradually escalated to try to force Hanoi to end its support for the Viet Cong. In this environment, the Johnson Administration never framed clear strategic objectives, but stumbled along the road toward greater involvement in the war, concentrating only on the pace of escalation rather than the ends to be attained.

According to McMaster, things were no better among senior military leaders. Those who should have rectified the strategic shortcomings of the President and Secretary of Defense did not. Despite the fact that his strategic theory laid the groundwork for American involvement in Vietnam, JCS Chairman (and later US Ambassador to Saigon) Maxwell Taylor was, in McMaster's estimation, so determined to serve the political objectives of the civilian leaders that he virtually abandoned the strategic acumen developed during a long and illustrious military career. In the end, Taylor seemed less an officer than the Administration's emissary to the US military. The other service Chiefs were divisively parochial and unable to understand the strange new form of conflict they faced in Southeast Asia. As a result, they were easily deceived or bypassed by the politically skillful McNamara and other civilian policymakers.

While *Dereliction of Duty* might set new standards for stridency in its criticism of America's entry into Vietnam, it does not offer radically new ideas, evidence, or concepts. It is, rather, a powerful case study of the approach to national security that predominates in the US officer corps and other conservative segments of the American public. In a sense,

McMaster has taken precisely the tack on Vietnam that one would expect of a very bright, passionate, and articulate US Army officer. For instance, McMaster implies that national security should be above or at least quarantined from "normal" politics. He clearly sympathizes with those service Chiefs who were unable or unwilling to link Vietnam policy with other concerns such as Johnson's reelection and the passage of the Great Society legislation. He condemns military leaders like Maxwell Taylor who did think in such terms. In this, McMaster runs counter to the post-Vietnam tendency within the American military which teaches strategic leaders to consider the wider political context in which military decisions are made (even though not necessarily framing strategic advice in terms of domestic politics).

Another important aspect of McMaster's approach is what might be called an "absolutist" perspective on the use of force which posits a clear distinction between peace and war. This too has a long and deep tradition in the American ethos. For an absolutist, the objective in war is to use overwhelming force to impose your will on the enemy. This idea, reflected today in things like the "Powell doctrine," stands in contrast to the "realist" approach that began to permeate American statecraft during the first decade of the Cold War. Represented by people like Henry Kissinger, Robert Osgood, and Maxwell Taylor, realists argued that in a bipolar, nuclear-armed world, force and statecraft must be inextricable. A nation should have the ability to apply force flexibly and with restraint, supporting diplomacy, which is, in every situation short of full-scale war, the principal effort. Military operations, to use a phrase that McMaster condemns, are a form of political "signaling."

The debate between the absolutists and the realists has shaped American policy for decades and will continue to do so. The schism is deep and probably irreconcilable. McMaster, unfortunately, simply assumes without explanation that McNamara's attempt to use gradual escalation to dissuade North Vietnam from supporting the Viet Cong was wrong-headed. It is possible that it was not the strategy of gradual escalation and signaling that was flawed, but the fact that the diplomatic dimension of the strategy was ineffective because it never made Hanoi fully aware of what its strategy would cost. The ultimate failure of the United States does not disprove the realist position, but simply shows that the military component of a strategy can work only in conjunction with effective diplomacy. This is the position later taken by Nixon and Kissinger. From this perspective, the culprit during America's entry into Vietnam was less McNamara than Secretary of State Dean Rusk.

As *Dereliction of Duty* unfolds, McMaster's position seems to evolve. In the earlier section, he implies that if the Joint Chiefs, with their absolutist perspective, had not been excluded from policymaking, American strategy would have been different. That is probably true, but it does not mean that the outcome would have changed. The Chiefs were just as confused by insurgent people's war as McNamara and the other civilian strategists--a point made clear in Andrew Krepinevich's book *The Army In Vietnam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1986). Later McMaster moves closer to the position associated with Under Secretary of State George Ball. This holds that the Saigon government was unsalvageable, and the costs and risks of US involvement always outweighed the benefits. The only logical action was thus to cut American losses and disengage. Throughout the book, though, McMaster subscribes to an "all or nothing" approach to the use of American military power, with decisive force or disengagement as the only alternatives.

Ultimately *Dereliction of Duty* does not add substantially to the literature on Vietnam. But this is probably unimportant since its real value is as a catalyst for debate on broad national security issues. After all, the question of who or what was to blame for the American failure in Vietnam is ultimately less important than whether something similar could happen again. Could the United States again stumble inadvertently into a war that no one wanted? While the Vietnam experience raised American sensitivities to this possibility, it has not been precluded. The institutions and procedures designed to prevent inadvertent war or disguised military escalation, such as the War Powers Act, are weak. Today the memory of Vietnam provides a brake on inadvertent war, but this will fade in coming years.

A second vital question is whether the United States could ever again take a dangerously astrategic approach to national security as the Johnson Administration did in Vietnam, making decisions having profound strategic implications without considering the strategic objectives or assessing possible long-term effects. There has been some institutional and attitudinal progress on this front. The President is required to publish a national security strategy to show Congress and the public the relationships among specific issues. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff publishes a national military strategy to indicate the role armed force plays in the national security strategy. The problem is that these documents tend to be more compilations of current policies and descriptions of recent events than strategies in the true sense. So far, neither has provided a clear, long-term vision for the United States or suggested

how the application of resources might be phased to attain strategic objectives. Both the national security strategy and the national military strategy are thus strategies in name more than in fact and do not provide an adequate brake against stumbling into disasters.

On the bright side, recognition of the need for broad strategic thinking has become ingrained throughout the military. Requisite skills are taught, particularly at the war colleges. But while a few mid-level civilians do attend the war colleges, the tendency to think strategically is much less evident among civilian policymakers. There are certainly exceptions in key places, whether the Department of Defense, the National Security Council, or Congress, but the fact remains that civilian leaders tend to have less formal training in strategic thinking than their military counterparts and enter positions of power from career backgrounds that may or may not have stressed conceptual and long-term thinking. This means that the mistakes of 1964 could be replicated if senior policymakers have no sense of strategy while remaining unaware of their shortcomings. Ignorance and confidence make a deadly combination.

It might be slightly more difficult today for civilian policymakers to ignore military advice in the same way they did during the crucial decisions leading the United States into Vietnam. The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reform Act amplified the role of the JCS Chairman as the President's primary military adviser and requires the Chairman to communicate dissenting positions from the other Chiefs to the President. But, as McMaster shows, it is possible for a President and Secretary of Defense to select a Chairman based more on his affinity for Administration policies than his inclination to articulate the judgment of the uniformed military. In the end, the only safeguard remains the willingness of the individual service Chiefs to sacrifice their careers and power to go public with disagreement over Administration policy. As McMaster and writers such as Mark Perry (*Four Stars*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989) have shown, during the Johnson Administration the Chiefs felt that they could have the greatest effect on the Administration's Vietnam policy by avoiding public dissent and working within the system. This proved wrong then and, potentially, could prove so again in the future. Americans would like to think that their leaders, whether military or civilian, will sacrifice positions they have worked a lifetime to attain in the name of principle, but this can never be assured.

Another vital question that emerges from *Dereliction of Duty* is whether the United States could again stumble into a form of armed conflict that it does not understand. The Department of Defense and the military services have instituted a wide range of programs to examine emerging forms of conflict, whether military involvement in counter-narcotrafficking, humanitarian relief operations, cyberwarfare, or some other yet-to-be-determined threat to national security. "Out of the box" thinking is taught throughout the military services. It is not clear, though, whether this has truly been institutionalized. The conceptual foundation of all the services remains rooted in traditional state-on-state war. Even understanding a new form of conflict does not assure effective strategy. Witness the 1966 Army-sponsored study by Andrew R. Molnar, *Human Factors Considerations of Undergrounds in Insurgencies* (Washington: American Univ. Center for Research in Social Systems, 1966). This was a profoundly astute assessment of organizations like the National Liberation Front in Vietnam and is still used by the US military to teach insurgency and counterinsurgency today. But it had little discernible effect on US strategy when it was released. By the time the US military did come to grips with revolutionary people's war toward the end of the 1960s, the strategic die was already cast. This suggests that senior military leaders must not only cultivate creative thinking within their services, but must also accept the challenges it poses to their own *weltanschauung* and be willing to accept it at the appropriate time rather than after the bankruptcy of old concepts is complete. It is not clear whether current and future strategic leaders can do this. In today's US military, creativity is respected but not institutionalized.

Finally, *Dereliction of Duty* is also useful as a basis for reexamining the absolutist approach that McMaster takes. Can or should there be a firewall between national security policy and other political issues in the United States? Most military officers probably think so, but most civilian political leaders do not. What is the solution? Should American strategists eschew the use of force for political signaling and only resort to military activity when they are willing to apply decisive force?

At times, the indignation that pervades *Dereliction of Duty* becomes grating. Like an efficient prosecuting attorney, McMaster provides reams of evidence proving the fatal character flaws of Johnson, McNamara, Taylor, and most of the other key players who led the United States into Vietnam. But in the end, the book's enduring value will be less as an addition to the vast literature on Vietnam than as a gateway to the future of American national security strategy.

Today's military leaders should read the book and look forward to McMaster's next one.

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● **The Lessons of Modern War, Volume IV: The Gulf War.** By Anthony H. Cordesman and Abraham R. Wagner. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1996. 1022 pp. \$98.00. **Reviewed by Jeffrey Record**, author of *Hollow Victory*, *A Contrary View of the Gulf War*, and the forthcoming *The Wrong War, Why We Lost in Vietnam*.

David Hackworth properly calls *The Gulf War* the "Encyclopedia" of the conflict. Anthony H. Cordesman and Abraham R. Wagner have compiled in this, their fourth volume of Westview Press's formidable series, *The Lessons of Modern War* (the first three cover the Arab-Israeli conflicts of 1973 to 1989, the Iran-Iraq War, and the Afghan and Falklands wars), the most thorough and documented analysis yet published of the Gulf War's lessons--and non-lessons. Published five years after a euphoric President George Bush prematurely halted Operation Desert Storm, *The Gulf War* takes full advantage of the extensive official and unofficial studies of US political and military performance during the Gulf crisis of 1990-91 as well as the mountains of technical data on the performance of major military technologies during the war itself. The book is must reading both for students of the Gulf War and for those seeking to fathom war's future course.

*The Gulf War's* thousand pages--this is not light reading though it is well written--assess the strategic, tactical, technical, and human lessons of the conflict. The authors examine such topics as the so-called revolution in military affairs (RMA) as it unfolded in the Gulf, strategic intelligence, competing American and Iraqi military cultures, US political decisionmaking and military command structures, limited war conduct and termination, offensive air power's role, deception and tactical surprise, bomb damage assessment, operational tempos, limits of amphibious warfare, stealth, space, realistic training and simulation, readiness, morale and motivation, and the record of dozens of weapon systems. The authors do not hesitate to plunge into areas of still often heated debate: the US failure to trap Iraqi forces in the Kuwaiti theater of operations; the White House's unilateral termination of hostilities (a truly extraordinary decision given the fact that it was made in the middle of a stunning battlefield victory still in progress and in the absence of any Iraqi request for terms) and failure to think through the kind of Iraq it wanted to emerge from the war; the role of light forces in major regional contingencies; reserve force effectiveness, especially Army National Guard combat brigades; friendly fire; the Patriot missile's performance; the Scud hunt's disappointing results; and the Pentagon's refusal to count Iraqi casualties.

If *The Gulf War* exhibits one prominent weakness (other than its outrageous price), it is the same weakness that dogs all books on the subject: the unavailability of Iraqi military archives and political decisionmaking documentation other than the few glimpses provided by defectors and Iraqi exile groups. The assumptions and reasoning behind Saddam Hussein's strategically incompetent behavior throughout the Gulf crisis remain largely matters of speculation, though the very well-informed Cordesman and Wagner offer as convincing a set of explanations for that behavior as any found in the literature. For example, it is now almost certain that Saddam, right up to the launching of the ground component of Desert Storm, believed that the United States lacked the fortitude to make the blood sacrifices he thought he could impose on US forces.

Because space precludes a comprehensive review of the book's monumental analytical expositions, let us focus on several significant general guideposts for thinking about future wars that *The Gulf War* establishes explicitly or implicitly. The first is perhaps the most important: The much ballyhooed RMA is not likely to soon, if ever, dissipate Clausewitzian friction in war. Notwithstanding the presence of some impressive if still immature RMA technologies on the battlefield (whose effects were heightened by extraordinarily favorable strategic and operational conditions), coalition military operations in the Gulf War were plagued by faulty strategic intelligence, crummy weather, wretched bomb damage assessment, command miscommunication, human physical and mental imperfections, and unexpected Iraqi behavior. The latter included the ability to maintain a robust and survivable Scud threat and the attack on Khafji, of which Cordesman and Wagner write: "One can almost always achieve surprise by doing something stupid, but surprise alone is scarcely victory." Indeed, if *The Gulf War* is not enough to convince technology fetishists of the RMA's inherent limits, they should read Barry Watts' recent *Clausewitzian Friction and Future War*, the most important treatise on military affairs penned by an American since the end of the Cold War.

The second guidepost is the extreme improbability of ever repeating the measure of Desert Storm's success. Few armies in history have enjoyed such favorable warfighting conditions as did coalition forces in the Gulf in 1990-91,



including what Cordesman and Wagner have aptly characterized as a "relatively apolitical battlefield." This battlefield was characterized by a manifestly dangerous and evil threat whose defeat was both legitimized by the United Nations and achieved in circumstances that permitted swift and decisive military operations involving remarkably little collateral damage. Moreover, because Desert Storm proved yet again the futility of Third World attempts to best the West at its own game of high-intensity conventional warfare, it has served to inflate the attractiveness of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, and guerrilla warfare to the likes of Iran, North Korea, and other rogue states otherwise helpless in the face of conventional Western military power. It is no coincidence that in 1993, a two-bit warlord in Mogadishu succeeded in ejecting US military power from Somalia seemingly as effectively as had that same military power ejected the "world's fourth largest army" from Kuwait just two years earlier. The combination of Saddam's defeat and Mohammed Farah Aideed's victory not only calls into question the realism of the two-nearly-simultaneous-MRCs scenario as a basis for US force planning. It also emphasizes, as does *The Gulf War*, the vital importance of understanding foreign military cultures and styles of warfare--a lesson we ought to have learned for good in Vietnam.

The third guidepost is that "force quality is becoming progressively more important than force quantity." This seems like a no-brainer at a time when military establishments seem headed back to the relatively small but highly professional armies of the pre-Napoleonic era. But the Pentagon, schooled in mass industrial warfare and having yet to recover from McNamara's beatification of quantitative analysis, is still preoccupied (as it was during the run-up to the Gulf War) with enemy force size at the expense of a proper appreciation of the much more instructive intangible elements of military prowess that Martin van Creveld examined in his seminal 1982 work, *Fighting Power: German and US Army Performance, 1939-1945*.

*The Gulf War's* fourth guidepost is the continuing poor record of conventional deterrence. At no time during the sequence of events that prompted Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was Saddam given to understand the limits of US tolerance of his international behavior; the Bush White House was still coddling the dictator two years after an Iraqi defeat of Iran that should have prompted the United States to drop Baghdad as an ally of convenience. Cordesman and Wagner note that Americans have traditionally tried to see in and make of such allies of convenience--Stalin's Russia, Diem's South Vietnam, and Saddam's Iraq--something they are not and can never be: genuine and reliable friends. Regrettably, the lessons of failed conventional deterrence in the Gulf in 1990 seem lost on the Clinton Administration and the new China Lobby, which not only have failed to recognize that the Soviet Union's demise has exhausted China's strategic value to the United States (it is now Chinese, not Russian, military power that needs balancing), but also have failed to lay down clear and consistent markers regarding the limits of acceptable Chinese behavior across the Taiwan Strait and in the South China Sea.

*The Gulf War* is an indispensable addition to any library on modern war.

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● **Revolution and War.** By Stephen M. Walt. Ithaca, New York: Cornell Univ. Press, 1996. 365 pages. \$35.00. **Reviewed by Brigadier Gavin Bulloch (UK, Ret.),** Directorate General of Development and Doctrine, UK Ministry of Defense, and author of the British army publication *Counter Insurgency Operations*.

Stephen Walt's book is novel in that it breaks some fresh ground into the causes and connections between revolution and war. He works on the assumption that there are definite links between the two and has fashioned an intellectual theory, based on empirical historical experience, to provide the bricks and mortar for his theoretical construction. The results are worthwhile and although they will need further rigorous evaluation before more conclusive judgments can be made they nevertheless provide a clear and unambiguous foundation for such examination.

Walt argues that wars have followed revolutions more frequently than not, and that this is because there is a pattern in all this activity rather than mere coincidence. He sets out his theory in the first chapter and then goes on to test the theory against case studies of revolutions in seven different examples ranging over the course of some 200 years (from the French Revolution in the 1770s to the Chinese Revolution in the 1940s). The professor argues his case well both in setting out the theory to be tested and in applying intellectual rigor and scrutiny to each of the case studies chosen. The conclusions would point toward acceptance of the theory. While I am satisfied that he has provided positive argument for the theory, I am left with the feeling that it is not complete enough to arrive at the sort of QED finality provided in a mathematical theory.

Professor Walt brings forward some well-known factors regarding the linkage between revolution and war; he introduces as well fresh and telling points of his own. Walt notes that war occurs through the operation of many different factors, principally the changing of power and authority in a region, the aggressive nature of states, and a risk calculation of the offensive-defensive balance of power pertaining at the time in the region. Revolution will affect all three to greater or lesser extent. Professor Walt's objective is to explain why revolutions increase the level and danger of misunderstanding and lead to rivalry and tension about security concerns. In effect the uncertainties created provide a change in the balance of threat perceived by all parties involved and hence the incentive and encouragement for wars to follow revolutions. It can be argued that not enough case studies have been evaluated to give the appropriate trends necessary to make any worthwhile conclusions, and there will always be some genius who seems to disprove the theory, normally with only one example. While I believe that Stephen Walt has gone a long way toward proving his theory with the examples chosen, he may perhaps justly be accused of using too small a time frame to work his case.

Where the argument surrounding the theory is not so strong is in those instances and case studies which do not fit into his theoretical matrix--i.e., those revolutions that did not subsequently become involved in wars because of particular circumstances. These clearly need further investigation. Walt may well be right, but this has not been proved beyond reasonable doubt.

I have indicated that more evaluation is needed. This is because it may be possible to argue the reverse way around-- wars can cause revolutions. Are the factors that Walt has used the same as their mirror image? Maybe, but not necessarily so. Would the Russian revolution have occurred without the First World War? War may well produce the ingredients for subsequent revolution. The Greco-Turkish War of 1922 and its dire economic consequences for Greece sowed the seeds of communism within Greece soon after, climaxing in the eventual civil war that devastated Greece during and after the Second World War. These situations and others need evaluation against the assumptions of Walt's theory.

The next point to raise is what constitutes a revolution? While insurgency and military-style revolutions quite rightly dominate the foreground in this discussion, other forms of revolution can be equally effective in altering the balance-of-threats argument used extensively in the text. The industrial revolution in England gave rise to subsequent capabilities for Britain well beyond the requirements of a smallish island state with a medium-sized population. *Parameters* is full of articles and discussion about the "revolution in military affairs," which can be interpreted as military language for the global spread of information technology. Surely economics, science, and technology have just as much effect on the balance of threats as an unambiguous grab for power by a revolutionary group. In modern times ideological persuasion, such as nationalism and communism, can probably be replaced by religious fervor; from past experience, the latter can bring out extremes of behaviors and have a baleful effect on the balance of threats within a geographical region.

In this context, the demise of the Soviet Union may well be seen as a revolution of a different kind. Is this going to spawn a large number of small wars or not? The Great Powers have not so far reacted in the way that Walt's theory would indicate, and yet the theory is not disproved as a result. It is because of this type of dilemma facing Western nations that Stephen Walt's book is timely, relevant, and most useful. His theory and its evaluation have no doubt already contributed a great deal to those whose task is to fashion state policy; it should prompt wide debate in the academic community at large.

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● **Lights, Camera, War: Is Media Technology Driving International Politics?** By Johanna Neuman. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996. 327 pages. \$23.95. **Reviewed by Patrick Duddy**, a member of the senior Foreign Service with the United States Information Agency

When any recent diplomatic initiative or US military deployment has been preceded by significant media attention, commentators often suggest that the "CNN factor" has been at work. When the policy initiative or deployment involves a region or issue not clearly or traditionally thought to bear directly on American interests, they argue that the media's attention may have forced our leaders to involve the United States in matters we would have handled differently or avoided altogether absent the drumbeat of on-the-scene, live-before-the-dust-settles media scrutiny.

Johanna Neuman, foreign editor of *USA Today*, in her useful and highly readable study, *Lights, Camera, War: Is Media Technology Driving International Politics?*, undertakes "to calm the techno-hysteria of many in the diplomatic, political and journalistic communities" who would suggest that the new technology has allowed the media to usurp the leadership role of government, to rob diplomacy of the time necessary for reflection or consultation, and to induce a pathological aversion to risk in the American body politic. The new media technology has indisputably had an effect in recent years; Neuman puts it into a historical context that senior policymakers in the foreign affairs and defense communities will find refreshing.

Several assumptions underlie Neuman's argument. First, she asserts that any new development in media technology "is rarely as powerful in the hands of journalists as it is in the hands of political leaders who can summon the talent to exploit the new invention." In a word, leadership still trumps press coverage. Second, she notes that advances in communications technology have a democratizing effect. Media coverage widens the circle of interested parties whose acquiescence, if not approval, must be secured before certain kinds of diplomatic or military initiatives can be advanced. Finally, Neuman argues that the suspicion and resentment with which some leaders view the media's new capabilities today precisely mirror the reaction in some quarters to earlier advances in communications. Especially with respect to the management of foreign affairs, Neuman argues, "Whenever a new media invention intersects with the worlds of diplomacy and journalism, the same pattern recurs. The enthusiasts boast that the new medium will revolutionize the world. The critics lament that it already has. Neither is completely wrong, nor completely right."

Neuman acknowledges that the immediacy afforded by satellite television coverage of breaking news has had an effect on policymakers. She argues, however, that earlier leaders, both military and civilian, had to learn to cope with similarly inconvenient developments in media technology. Her evidence is impressive and she starts at the beginning, reminding us that Gutenberg's printing press allowed one man to produce in a day what he formerly would have needed a full year to accomplish. Neuman dates the emergence of the public as a factor in governance from the spread of literacy made possible by Gutenberg's invention. This was a fiendish development for some leaders at that time. More to the point for her argument, the reaction to Gutenberg anticipated the pattern which has repeated itself to some degree with every subsequent advance in media technology.

Neuman's discussions of the importance of the telegraph, telephone, photography, radio, and television are all arresting and vividly illustrate her thesis. She shows how each advance accelerated the dissemination of information and widened the circle of those with knowledge of events beyond the horizon. The telegraph was to the 19th century, she points out, what satellite television is to our own age. Neuman's book, however, is more than a simple chronicle of technology's long march. Her discussion of each technological step forward is accompanied by an examination of its implications for leadership, diplomacy, and the military. A central theme throughout is that adapting to new technology is, in every age, a test of leadership. Czar Nicolas II feared the telegraph and forbade its use but failed to see or adapt to the analogous threat of film. By the late 1930s, Franklin Delano Roosevelt defended the hours he invested in preparing for his radio broadcasts by contending that they "were the most important dates on his calendar." The point for Neuman is that capable leaders grasp the importance of new technologies and make them work for them and the national interest, however they define it. Unsuccessful leaders don't.

Neuman rejects the assertion that today's media drive international politics. She recognizes and documents the ways that modern communications put an unwelcome pressure on diplomats. She asserts, however, that by shrinking the time leaders have to react to developing crises, the media have contributed to the creation of an environment that puts an ever greater premium on judgment and adaptability, qualities that have always distinguished great statesmen. While her anecdotal evidence in support of this point is not always irrefutable, it is on balance convincing.

Neuman reminds us that military thinkers, unlike members of the diplomatic community, usually have embraced new technologies. At the same time, she characterizes the tension in US military-media relations since the Vietnam War as essentially a matter of distrust. She notes that in Grenada, Panama, and the Gulf War the US commanders tried to control media access to the theater of operations. She clearly believes that the reasoning behind this approach was based more on the military's suspicion of the media's ability or willingness to report accurately than an inability to cope with media technology. Though she does not say so explicitly, she implies that the military's hostility toward the media may be rooted in the military's lack of faith in their political leaders' ability to sustain a policy in the face of public criticism.

Control of the media has always depended to a degree on the acquiescence of the press and public. That, Neuman suggests, will be harder and harder to secure in the future, especially given the potential of the internet to make virtually anyone with a modem or a cellular phone a reporter. More realistic, she contends, is the attitude of the US Marine who explained the Marine Corps' effectiveness in dealing with the press by observing that soldiers today simply have to consider the media a feature of the battlefield--like weather or terrain: "When it rains, you work wet."

In the final analysis, Neuman argues that the newest media technologies simply continue to fuel democratizing trends that have been in evidence since the earliest communications advances. The result has been a growing empowerment of the public, sometimes at the expense of policy elites. This empowerment, she argues, was inconceivable before the invention of the printing press, but absolutely predictable since. In this century, it has made public diplomacy as important as private negotiations. Neuman rejects the notion that the new media technologies have added an unprecedented element to the management of national security affairs. CNN, she reminds us, is no more potent today than Edward R. Murrow's wartime broadcasts from Europe were half a century ago. Leaders can and do still lead. Newman shows convincingly that the history of our century is replete with examples of effective leaders who have used new communications technologies to advance the national interest. The media, she argues, drive international affairs only when there is a vacuum of political leadership.

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● **When Soldiers Quit: Studies in Military Disintegration.** By Bruce Allen Watson. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1997. 216 pp. \$59.95. **Reviewed by Jonathan Shay, M.D., Ph.D.,** author of *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character*.

Company and field grade officers need to know about rout, shirking, and desertion; unfortunately they will come away from this book no wiser, despite its title. *When Soldiers Quit* offers itself as "historical sociology" of "aberrant behaviors . . . [which] result from the social disintegration of the units involved." These examples comprising the introductory chapter show that the reader's footing is slippery: the 1745 rout of Royal forces at Prestonpans, Scotland, invites us to expect an examination of rout in the later pages, but it's the *only* example of rout and very thinly explained; the British retreat in Spain during the winter of 1808-09 perhaps illustrates a rout that didn't happen; and the 1099 massacre of Jerusalem Moslems and Jews during the First Crusade declares the theme of three of the book's six chapter-length case studies: massacre of noncombatants. The other two of them were *ordered* by the leadership on the ground--the Sand Creek massacre of Cheyenne in 1864, and My Lai, Vietnam, 1968. The remaining case was not sanctioned. In this instance, British troops, having broken through the defenses of San Sebastian in 1813 and run riot in the town, had lost their direct leaders in the battle. A chapter subtitled "The Disintegration of a Division," is about the surrender--by its commanding general--of most of the 106th Infantry Division in the Ardennes in 1944. It has little to do with the theme of social integration, but is instead a case of defeat, for the usual well-studied military reasons, by a successful surprise attack.

This leaves the chapters on the Sepoy (1857) and French army (1917) mutinies. An American senior officer commanding a multinational contingent might profitably remember the story of the Moslem and Hindu Sepoys, if ever tempted to dismiss cultural considerations from his mind as "touchy-feely." This is not to say that senior officers need to be universal experts; rather, it emphasizes the importance of timely, trustworthy forecasts of cultural reactions in an operational area, which can be as mission-critical as weather forecasts. Watson's well-told story of the pig and/or cow grease on the Enfield rifle cartridges in the Indian mutiny should at least remind officers to seek such input and to take it seriously. Such reminding is the virtue of stories.

Meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation, powerlessness, and alienation--these are Watson's sociological indicators of unit disintegration. They are well suited to explain famous combat refusal--more like a strike than a rebellion, Watson points out--in parts of 54 of the 100 French divisions at the front in 1917. His indicators sit less comfortably on most of the other examples.

The strong point of this book also may be its weak point; Watson tells his stories well, but in a sort of omniscient historian's voice. The chapter on My Lai opens, "The French returned to Indochina after World War II . . ." as if that had some direct relevance to what Charley Company did in My Lai 4. Why not start with the invention of the

helicopter, or the social and economic reasons that Vietnamese hamlets were of a size, or why they happened to be sited as they were? Instead, such an authorial voice may give the *illusion* of knowledge without its substance. Officers looking to the author's stance in this book for insight to inform their commitment--No My Lais in my unit!--could imagine themselves helpless to prevent massacres, as if My Lai were some ancient disease spore lying dormant in the soil. This is a toxic message. Watson, as a storyteller, needs to take responsibility for his voice.

Every military professional should know these historical stories, but I regret there is limited insight here for the officer who already knows them. When soldiers enjoy positive qualities of community in face-to-face relationships in their units (horizontal cohesion), have competent leaders who are loyal to the substance of the military task and to the men and women in their charge (vertical cohesion), and have tough, relevant, prolonged, and progressive training (which makes for competence, confidence, and cohesion), they don't quit in battle. When their junior leaders know their stuff, know their troops, and know their bosses are committed to their success *and will not abandon them*--they don't quit either.

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● **Psychological Operations: Principles and Case Studies.** Edited by Frank L. Goldstein and Benjamin F. Findley, Jr. Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.: Air Univ. Press, 1996. 364 pages. \$21.00. **Reviewed by Colonel Frank J. Stech, USAR,** Special Operations Staff, US Atlantic Command, and Adjunct Professor, US Army War College. In his civilian career, Dr. Stech is Principal Scientist for Mitretek Systems in Washington, D.C.

The good news first: Two chapters in this anthology, Laurence Orzell's "Psychological Operations in Action: Poland's Underground Media" and Colonel Dennis Walko's chapter on psychological operations (PSYOP) in Panama, stand out as original, worthwhile contributions. Orzell writes with deep understanding of the commonplace, detailed substance of Solidarity's propaganda: the rallies, demonstrations, "leaflets, handbills, and other ephemera" that can make or break an underground campaign. Walko served as commander of the 1st PSYOP Battalion during Operation Just Cause in Panama and describes the day-to-day challenges and multiple dimensions of running a major psychological operation. These two case histories bear careful reading by professionals in the field.

Unfortunately, the remainder of this anthology is disappointing. The editors intended the book to be a "fundamental guide to psychological operations . . . philosophy, concepts, principles, issues, and thought," but the bulk of it sheds little light on any of these, despite the contributions of many of the PSYOP community's past and present luminaries. There is no philosophy of PSYOP. The section on "nature and scope" attempts to explain principles without reference to PSYOP's psychological, sociological, and cultural roots. Casual history and opinion stand in for social science theory, an unfortunate practice not uncommon in military education that leaves other scholars unimpressed.

The editors' choice to recast the present tense of older essays into past tense is also problematic. One regrettable result of this is to make the late Colonel Fred Walker's 1989 assessment of Soviet PSYOP seem badly misguided. Of concern then, Soviet campaigns can hardly be seen today as indicative of the United States' "losing trend in exerting world influence." Another regrettable result is in Major James Keifer's essay, which implies there has been little PSYOP support for counterdrug operations; in fact there has been a great deal since his essay was written, particularly in Southern Command and Atlantic Command, where such efforts were needed most. Why older chapters (some go back to 1969) were republished at all is not explained. With the exception of General Richard Stilwell's essay on "Political-Psychological Dimensions of Counterinsurgency," these are not classics in any sense, and they make the volume seem out-of-date.

There are virtually no references in chapters on "concepts, principles, and thought" to the literature on propaganda. Greater familiarity with this literature would have helped several chapters. Much of the writing here also entails little application of history and will, I fear, be consequently dismissed by nonmilitary students of PSYOP and propaganda. Several chapters also will strike nonmilitary readers as too focused on "insider" issues, on the vicissitudes of decisions about PSYOP master plans, force structures, tables of organization, and doctrinal foci. These "inside baseball" perspectives will be too narrow for many potential readers. Even so, they don't address many of the deeper, mechanical concerns of military insiders: are the forces and systems structured and postured for future threats, or are they ready for the last war? The first nine chapters of *Psychological Operations* are basically a Pentagon-style recounting of plans and policies. As such they don't illuminate the greater context of the PSYOP game or reveal its true inner workings.



Three chapters deal with Soviet PSYOP, disinformation, and propaganda. All of these subjects have been better covered elsewhere, however, and the contributions here do not update these topics with respect to the Russians or the other countries of the former Soviet Union. The book does include a few recent PSYOP case studies (e.g., Vietnam, Panama, the Gulf War), but there is no framework for addressing the cases, their treatment is uneven, and most cover ground previously and better plowed by others. Some of the case studies contradict others. Unfortunately these opposite perspectives are neither reconciled nor used to illuminate PSYOP successes and failures. The PSYOP practitioner thus finds small aid here for plying his or her trade.

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● **Man Without A Face: The Autobiography of Communism's Greatest Spymaster.** By Markus Wolf with Anne McElvoy. New York: Times Books, 1997. 367 pp. \$25.00. **Reviewed by Colonel Richard S. Friedman, USA Ret.,** who served in World War II as an intelligence NCO with OSS, was later in his career the senior US intelligence officer at NATO headquarters in Brussels, and since retiring from the Army has served as a senior analyst, assistant national intelligence officer, and staff operations officer with the Central Intelligence Agency.

American biographer Fawn M. Brodie has asserted, "A man's memory is bound to be a distortion of his past in accordance with his present interests, and the most faithful autobiography is likely to mirror less what a man was than what he has become." This applies certainly to Markus Johannes Wolf. Now retired from the defunct intelligence service of a nation that no longer exists, Markus Wolf offers his autobiography, having previously published a memoir about his family and friends in his youth, and a gourmet cookbook. Writing probably offers a more dignified livelihood than driving a Berlin taxicab as a number of his former officers are doing. Before he was 30, Wolf became director of the *Hauptverwaltung Aufklärung* (HVA), Chief Intelligence Directorate of the *Ministerium für Staatssicherheit*, the Ministry of State Security or East German Security Service. When he was retired nearly 35 years later, this formidable intelligence organization singularly reflected Wolf's ability and leadership.

Markus Wolf in his introduction says,

Our sins and our mistakes were those of every other intelligence agency. If we had shortcomings, and we certainly did, they were those of too much professionalism untempered by the raw edge of ordinary life. . . . It is not easy to tell the story of this intelligence war from what was our side of the vanished Iron Curtain so that it will be understood by those who have spent their lives on the other . . . . I seek no pardon as a representative of the losers. I hold to my beliefs, although they have been tempered now by time and experience. But I am no defector, and this memoir is not a confessional bid for redemption.

The autobiography summarizes personal history previously covered in Wolf's earlier book, *Die Troika* (Düsseldorf: Claussen, 1989), in German. *Man Without A Face* takes the reader through Wolf's experiences in Moscow, his service in the Red Army at the end of World War II, and at the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials. Establishment of the German Democratic Republic in 1956 with Wolf as head of the Foreign Intelligence Service begins the more significant part of the story.

The reader will learn, from Wolf's viewpoint, of espionage cases once front-page items. A number of major successes and failures of the HVA are related, sometimes in considerable detail, with the author's consistent discretion that ensures there will be no surprises or startling disclosures. Markus Wolf presents his views of what good intelligence should be, the meaning of treason, and a judgment of what intelligence meant during the Cold War. According to Markus Wolf, "Intelligence is essentially a banal trade of sifting through huge amounts of random information in a search for a single enlightening gem or illuminating link."

One example demonstrates an important point of the book, the case of Klaus Kuron, a senior counterintelligence officer of the *Bundesrepublik* who secretly volunteered to work for the HVA. Wolf says, "Kuron was a big fish with a faultless reputation who occupied a position at the very heart of counterintelligence, whose penetration is what secret services dream about. If we could secure his services, we would be able to gauge the level of Western knowledge about our operations and could adjust our defenses accordingly." Wolf describes Kuron's recruitment and his

motivation:

He was unembarrassed about his treachery, describing the frustrations to his career. His was a paradigm of unfulfilled ambitions of a type that fester throughout any civil service. . . . Some traitors, at least in their own minds, preserve for themselves the illusions that they are serving two masters when they enter the pay of their enemy while still working for their own country . . . . [B]y the time Kuron made contact with us, he had lost any sense of identification with his own service. There was nothing left but hatred for it. . . . The only parallel for Kuron I can think of is Aldrich Ames, who provided the same sort of unstinting service for the KGB. In one important area Ames had a similar psychological profile. Like Kuron he considered himself undervalued and unrewarded by the CIA, convinced that he was worth more money and attention than they paid him.

Wolf closes his history by pointing out,

A lifetime spent in intelligence is a mixture of glory in our occasional successes, misery when our best work is ignored, and the daily banality of working within any bureaucracy whose principal task often is delivering unwelcome news to its political masters. I find it hard to imagine that the high professionals we faced in the Cold War feel very differently about the course of their lives, except of course that their side won . . . . The intelligence services contributed to a half century of peace--the longest Europe has ever known--by giving statesmen some security that they would not be surprised by the other side.

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● **Spec Ops: Case Studies in Special Operations Warfare, Theory and Practice.** By William H. McRaven. Novato, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1995. 391 pp. \$27.95. **Reviewed by Dr. Douglas V. Johnson II (LTC, USA Ret.)**, a research professor with the Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College.

So many books about special operations are simply tales of derring-do that a work which proposes a framework for analysis, and then applies that analytical tool with complete objectivity and consistency, is a breath of fresh air and a genuine joy to read and study.

William McRaven introduces us to his analytical device in the opening chapter "The Theory of Special Operations," with a certain humility and tentativeness uncommon to this genre. He states, "I developed the theory primarily to explain the tactical success of special operations forces, but what does the theory tell us about special operations forces in general?" He bases his theory on an integration of Clausewitz and selected principles of war. At the heart of his analysis is the idea of "Relative Superiority," which is "a condition that exists when an attacking force, generally smaller [in the case of special operations in particular] gains a decisive advantage over a larger . . . enemy." But he points out that timing is likewise crucial to the utility of this advantage. He then applies his theory in the analysis of a series of eight well-written case studies. Where the device works and helps explain the success or failure of the mission, well and good, but the author demonstrates remarkable integrity by admitting that there are situations in which the device does not seem adequate. How often have we been confronted by analyses of aberrant events which are produced through the most tortured, elegant explanations, when Occam's razor should be the rule.

McRaven's theory of special operations states, "special operations forces are able to achieve relative superiority over the enemy if they prepare a simple plan, which is carefully concealed, repeatedly and realistically rehearsed, and executed with surprise, speed, and purpose." Within this theory and its graphical depiction is an "area of vulnerability," which is critical for any operation. McRaven discusses ways to reduce this key element, such as seeking ways to shorten the exposure of the attacking force. In the Italian attack on the British fleet at Alexandria Harbor, Egypt, this factor was reduced by simply deciding on a one-way trip--the attackers planned to exfiltrate the operational area ashore rather than expose the special ops submarines through the necessity of a pickup.

The author concludes, "The theory validates the need for a standing special operations force that is trained, equipped, and supported at the best possible levels. This is not parochialism. . . . Can a special operation be successfully conducted without a standing force? Absolutely, but the price for establishing and training an ad hoc organization is

time. And the more time expended during a political crisis . . . the less the chances of success."

Practitioners and students of special operations would do well to examine the utility of the author's analytical device as a possible planning tool. It appears to be more than adequate.

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● **Alien Wars: The Soviet Union's Aggressions Against the World, 1919 to 1989.** By Oleg Sarin and Lev Dvoretzky. Novato, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1996. 243 pages. \$24.95. **Reviewed by Steven D. Feller**, Director of Publications, Hussar International Research Group, New York City.

In their book *Alien Wars*, Oleg Sarin and Lev Dvoretzky set out to describe in detail "wars conducted by the Soviet Union for the benefit of irrational politicians and their equally crazy plans." The work is divided into ten chapters, organized geographically, with each chapter focusing on a selected major conflict. *Alien Wars* begins with a description of the Soviet intervention in the Spanish Civil War and, moving through Stalin's political miscalculations in World War II and his subsequent postwar adventures, provides an evaluation of Soviet interference in Vietnam, the Middle East, Cuba, Eastern Europe, and Afghanistan. *Alien Wars* concludes with a somewhat out-of-place historical overview of Soviet arms sales.

In their examination of world conflicts involving Soviet troops or material assistance, the authors' stated aim is to "provide provocative material previously only hinted at by foreign observers." To this end--and to their credit--Sarin and Dvoretzky are quick to question the accuracy of official interpretations of events, and instead make use of recently declassified archive material. Unfortunately, the authors are only partially successful in their efforts. In attempting to provide an overview of Soviet aggression over seven decades, they effectively limited themselves to providing a relatively general account of Soviet actions. And while the inclusion of combat details and personal narratives of Soviet "volunteers" reminds the reader of the tragic and personal costs of Soviet interventions in foreign wars, it doesn't compensate for significant historical inaccuracies--such as reference to KGB activities in the Spanish Civil War and in the 1939 attack on Finland, when it was actually the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs, or NKVD, which played this role until the Committee for State Security was formed in March 1954.

More generally, the book's stated objectives and the conclusions drawn from the selected case studies are overly simplistic. At different points in *Alien Wars*, for example, the authors assert that the Kremlin's ultimate goal was to incorporate Spain into the Soviet empire, and that Kim Il Sung and Ho Chi Minh were dictators who "strictly towed the Kremlin's line"--arguably not an entirely accurate interpretation of events. A more technical and less substantive criticism concerns the use of a first-person narrative style; persistent references to "our leaders," "our country," and "our past" were confusing and redundant. Awkward grammar further detracts from the book.

*Alien Wars* presents the story of the various military interventions attempted by the USSR against states either to gain territory or to bring whole countries under Soviet influence through "the sacred religion of Communism." Throughout their work, both Sarin and Dvoretzky seem personally outraged that such a thing actually occurred, but this discrepancy between peaceful rhetoric and militarist tendencies should come as no surprise to any serious reader of world affairs. That the Communist Party leadership "adhered to other principles that justified any action of proletarian internationalism," and that this "reckless and criminal international `assistance' contributed greatly to the ruination of the Soviet economy," are similarly unsurprising conclusions. In sum, *Alien Wars* is neither provocative nor especially revealing in its examination of Soviet actions.

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Reviewed 3 November 1997. Please send comments or corrections to [carl.Parameters@conus.army.mil](mailto:carl.Parameters@conus.army.mil)