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## Book Reviews

Parameters Editors

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# Book Reviews

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● **Arts of Power: Statecraft and Diplomacy.** By Chas. W. Freeman, Jr. Washington: United States Institute of Peace, 1997. 140 pp. **Reviewed by Major General William F. Burns (USA Ret.),** Distinguished Fellow, US Army War College, and former director, US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency.

In his prefatory remarks to this book, Ambassador Richard H. Solomon concludes that Ambassador Freeman's work is seminal and necessary. Seminal because it goes to the heart of diplomacy and international negotiations and necessary because it provides an essential update to the few existing classical works on the subject. Freeman's lucid presentation, logical flow of ideas, and practical conclusions make this a thought-provoking manual for the professional diplomat as well as a guidebook for the student of diplomacy--or even the casual reader interested in current international topics.

Many of us who have experienced the pressures and frustrations of international negotiations would have gained perspective if we had had his book on our night stands. For example, practicality and conciseness shine forth from the following:

A wise state yields gracefully to what it cannot resist, while attempting to wrest every advantage from unavoidable adjustments to emerging realities. Such a state controls the timing and manner of its concessions to other states. It thus gains benefits for giving up earlier what it would have had to give up later without compensation.

A quick scan of the well-prepared index provides a wealth of knowledge in itself. From "diplomatic access" through "deterrence," "ethics" and "the diplomatic role of military officers" to "writing and reporting," Freeman's thinking and exposition runs the gamut of information necessary to one who is sent abroad to represent his country. The presentation is clear and concise without being simplistic. It calls not for a quick reading but serious study of the underlying principles espoused.

I am particularly taken by the section on international negotiation. In just a few pages, Freeman carefully and accurately sums up the lessons of past negotiations and the experiences of many negotiators. He correctly stresses that politically appointed ambassador-negotiators should be backed up by professional diplomats. I would have only added that some political appointees have that rare mix of knowledge and ability that make them uniquely apt for a particular position at a special point in history. A recent example of that phenomenon, in my opinion, is President Bush's last appointee in Moscow and our first Ambassador to the Russian Federation, Bob Strauss.

Ambassador Freeman's work is also familiar in form and at least partially in substance to professional soldiers. We have been fortunate to have had our Bonaparte, our Jomini, our Clausewitz, and our Mahan. Our professional journals are replete with contemporary thinking on the practice of the art of war. However, much of the literature available heretofore to the professional diplomat has been historical rather than practical--the autobiographical reminiscences of successful, or sometimes less-than-successful diplomats. This may reflect a profound difference in the way we think about our professions. For example, military history has often had to fight for its small place in the constellation of learning thought necessary for the professional soldier, particularly in our military education system. We pay lip service to the need for an understanding of history but devote little curricular time to its presentation and elucidation. A broad background in history, military and otherwise, seems to characterize diplomats rather than professional military officers of my acquaintance.

However, military officers do profit from an extensive, graduated, and practical educational system that insures that leaders are prepared to plan and execute military campaigns as needed. The diplomat, on the other hand, spends much less time in formal, professional education after entering the Foreign Service and is seldom faced with "how-to" courses. There is no FM 100-5, *Operations*, in the Department of State. *Arts of Power* helps to fill this practical void.

This work should be required reading for any military officer embarking on an assignment requiring knowledge of diplomatic practice and skills. Its only flaw is its brevity. Almost every page has a topic that cries for development into a chapter. Let us hope that Chas. Freeman will continue to devote his talents to further expansion of the concepts, ideas, and practical, sensible principles outlined therein.

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● **Taking Charge: The Johnson White House Tapes, 1963-1964.** Edited and with commentary by Michael R. Beschloss. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997. 624 pages. \$30. **Reviewed by Richard Halloran**, formerly with *The New York Times* as a foreign correspondent in Asia and military correspondent in Washington, who currently writes on security issues from Honolulu.

This is at once a revealing and maddening book.

It is revealing in that it adds to the portrait of President Lyndon Baines Johnson as a paranoid, ignorant, and indecisive politician who blundered the United States into the war in Vietnam. If the families of Americans killed in action in Southeast Asia read this book, they might be tempted to march across LBJ's grave in anguished protest.

The book is maddening in the way it was edited; it is inadequate in context, makes insufficient connections with other books on LBJ and Vietnam, and is best read from back to front. In its clumsy format, one paragraph--and not just one--has 14 lines with nine footnotes, requiring the reader to bounce from the top of the page to the bottom and back again. Most of those references should have been slipped into the text.

Almost from the minute he took office after President Kennedy was assassinated, LBJ had most of his telephone conversations recorded. The purpose was largely innocent; LBJ wanted a record of promises made and invitations accepted, and a historical record. By the time he left office in January 1969, about 643 hours of 9500 conversations had been taped. This volume includes those from his swearing in aboard Air Force One through the Tonkin Gulf crisis and the Democratic nominating convention in August 1964. A subsequent volume will include more on how LBJ in 1965 plunged the nation into war in Vietnam.

A few nuggets can be panned from the stream. In a conversation on 15 January 1964 with his old friend from Capitol Hill, Senator Richard Russell of Georgia, LBJ says he would have favored having the United States recognize Communist China in 1961 or 1962. Russell said: "The time's going to come when we're going to have to recognize Red China." LBJ: "I don't think there's any question about that." Russell: "I ain't too sure but what we'd been better off if we'd recognized her three or four years ago." LBJ: "I think so." Russell: "Politically, right now, it's poison, of course." He evidently referred to conservative support for the Nationalist Chinese government on Taiwan.

There are also dollops of humor. LBJ insisted that transcripts of the conversations be typed up immediately. In the rush, his heavy Texas drawl misled harried typists and mistakes crept in. In one instance, LBJ said a "pack them bastards" was waiting to see him. On listening closer, that turned out to be the "Pakistan ambassador."

Overall, however, Johnson is seen to have cared little for anything beyond politics. He was haunted by the ghost of John Kennedy and feared the ambitions of Robert Kennedy, who remained as Attorney General. LBJ doubted the allegiance of other Kennedy appointees on the White House staff and in the Cabinet. He loathed the press even as he sought to manipulate publishers, editors, columnists, and reporters.

On Vietnam, LBJ was skeptical about getting involved but worried about communists taking over Southeast Asia, feared China's Mao Zedong and the Russians, and fretted about what political advantage Senator Barry Goldwater on the right and United Nations Ambassador Adlai Stevenson on the left would make of whatever he did.

Indeed, LBJ's main and sometimes only weathervane seems to have been what a decision would do to his chances of winning the 1964 election, not the national interest or military strategy. Competence or experience had little to do with picking General Maxwell Taylor to be Ambassador in Saigon. LBJ said on 18 June 1964: "Taylor can give us the cover that we need with the country and with the Republicans and with the Congress. We need somebody to give us cover with the opinion-molders."

More than once LBJ proclaimed his ignorance of Vietnam. Senator Russell said on 27 May 1964: "It's the damn worst mess I ever saw, and I don't like to brag. . . . I just don't know what to do." LBJ: "That's the way I've been feeling for six months." To Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara: "I'm not a military strategist." To national security adviser McGeorge Bundy: "I don't know enough about it [to know what to do]." Later, in frustration, to McNamara: "Have we got anybody that's got a military mind that can give us some military plans for winning that war?"

Here is the same lame excuse of former Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara in his book, *In Retrospect*, in which he lamented: "When it came to Vietnam, we found ourselves setting policy for a region that was terra incognita." Nonsense. General Bruce Palmer, in *The 25-Year War*, criticized the nation's leaders for ignoring the body of Vietnam experience Americans had acquired by 1964. He reported: "Lieutenant General Samuel T. Williams, who served almost five years (1955-1960) as chief of US MAAG, Saigon, cooled his heels in the Pentagon for three weeks upon his return in September 1960 without being consulted about the Vietnamese problem." Dozens more--military officers of all ranks, diplomats, scholars, specialists in land reform and economic development--were similarly ignored. Of the 150 people whose names crop up in the LBJ tapes, none had ever served in Asia, except for a few during World War II.

It need not have been this way. As a senior Army general told this reviewer many years ago: "We don't need legislation to appoint military advisers to the President. If the President wants advice, all he has to do is pick up the telephone." For LBJ, the telephone was an extension of his ear, but these tapes show that he rarely used it to seek advice beyond the political sphere.

At the same time, it is clear that LBJ had articulated doubts about the value of Vietnam to the US national interest, the lack of public support for the commitment, and the eventual cost of the war. He asked Senator Russell: "How important is it to us?" Russell: "It isn't important a damn bit." LBJ to Russell: "I don't think the people of this country know much about Vietnam and I think they care a hell of a lot less." Later Russell tells the President that to clean up Vietnam: "It'd take a half million men. They'd be bogged down there for ten years." LBJ agreed: "We never did clean up Korea yet." This said in 1964, mind you.

More than once, McNamara deplored the absence of a searching debate within the Administration over reasons for being in Vietnam, what national interests were served, and what US political and military objectives should have been. He takes his share of the blame for that failure, but at the end of the day, ladies and gentlemen, generating that sort of debate is what American voters and taxpayers have a right to expect of a President. Not a word of it appears in these tapes.

Wednesday, 27 May 1964 is perhaps the most illuminating day covered in the book. Three days earlier, the National Security Council had recommended that the United States apply "selected and carefully graduated military force against Vietnam." That was a mistake that wise generals from Alexander the Great in ancient Persia to Colin Powell in the Persian Gulf War have assiduously avoided in favor of military power massed to defeat an enemy swiftly and with minimum casualties.

LBJ hesitated, to his credit. He talked at length with Russell, who said, "I just can't just see it," with Bundy, who said "90 percent of the people don't want it [war in Vietnam]," and with Stevenson, who opposed going to war "ten thousand miles away in a part of the world that's almost meaningless to the American people and which is a quagmire." In the end, however, that's exactly what LBJ did with the overwhelming consent of Congress in the Tonkin Gulf resolution three months later. Led by Senator J. William Fulbright, who was later to become a prominent critic of the war, the Senate voted 88-2 to give the President wide authority to go to war. The House approved the resolution 416-0.

As for editing, the explanation of what's in the book and how it came about is in the back in an editor's note and acknowledgments instead of up front to give the reader signposts about what's coming. The cast of 150 characters, which would bewilder all but the most diehard Washingtonian, is also in the back instead of the front.

Most of all, the context in which LBJ operated in those critical days is not fully laid out, thus leaving all but the specialist floundering. Most conversations have preceding comments to set the stage, but they are insufficient. Readers

would do well to consult an excellent book by H. R. McMaster entitled *Dereliction of Duty: Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Lies that Led to Vietnam* before plunging into the thicket of these tapes. Earlier works to be consulted would include Stanley Karnow's *Vietnam: A History*, Neil Sheehan's *A Bright Shining Lie*, Colonel Harry Summers' *Vietnam War Almanac*, General Bruce Palmer's *The 25 Year War*, Robert McNamara's *In Retrospect*, or Thomas Schoenbaum's *Waging Peace & War: Dean Rusk in the Truman, Kennedy & Johnson Years*.

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● **The Military and Conflict Between Cultures: Soldiers at the Interface.** Edited by James C. Bradford. College Station: Texas A&M Univ. Press, 1997. 236 pages. \$37.95. **Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Peters (USA Ret.),** author of *Twilight of Heroes*.

Problems first: this book needs a crisper title, better packaging, and a much lower price if it is to reach the audience it deserves. For once, a university press has produced an interesting, pertinent book that is largely a pleasure to read. I am not, however, certain of the wisdom of launching a 236-page book that costs \$37.95. If the goal of the editor and his superb array of contributors is just to add one more publication to their credentials, then the mission has been accomplished. If, however, these authors wish to share their considerable insight and thoughtful perspectives on the military, cultural interaction, and our own historical amnesia, then their collective effort will likely fail. At the list price, with a gobbledygook title and packaging that snores on the shelf, the many readers who genuinely would enjoy the essays in this book will never even see it--or if they do stumble across it, they will not buy it. If published in trade-paperback format, priced at about ten dollars, and titled, *Culture and Military Conquest*, with, say, a Veraschagin or Remington shoot-'em-up painting on the cover, this book might have found the readership the authors deserve and would have been a natural choice for staff and war college required-reading lists, since it is immediately relevant, scholarly in the best sense, and short enough for officers to actually read from first page to last. Plaudits to Texas A&M for publishing such a book, hisses and boos for its package and price.

Why make all this fuss? First of all, because university presses operate with the efficiency of Soviet industry and the intellectual vigor of a local beauty contest. They publish the otherwise unpublishable--not in defense of freedom of speech or thought, but in defense of tenure and campus fads. The salient result is the slaughter of perfectly good trees.

With rare exceptions--and those in technical fields--books should have to earn their keep. The nonsense that unpopular authors deserve to be heard and so must be published in subsidized form is a non sequitur. To be published is not necessarily to be heard. The target of a real book is the reader, not the author. Especially in the realm of ideas and the liberal arts, the marketplace is the only valid test. If readers will not have sufficient interest in a book to buy it, then publishing it amounts to nothing more than a vanity press run for academics. Even a glancing consideration of the state of university presses in North America cannot help but excite sympathy for the excesses of Chairman Mao's Cultural Revolution.

My excuse for this barbarian assault on the campus orchid plantations is anger that a fine work by A-team contributors, such as Robert M. Utley, Dennis Showalter, Douglas Porch, and others of like merit if not of similar fame, will go ignored. *The Military and Conflict Between Cultures* grapples with issues both timely and timeless: the inevitable conflicts (and occasional conversions) between militaries of different cultures, and examinations of how past leaders and systems have triumphed, failed, or muddled through when confronted with the challenges of empire, encroaching modernity, or the simple will of embattled tribes to survive. There is wonderful stuff here, such as a brilliant, career-condensing essay by Utley on our frontier Army's attempts to cope with the asymmetrical values and approaches to violence of bluecoats and Indians. The following chapter, by John W. Bailey, on the generals who ultimately conquered the plains and the last stony mountains of the West is as fine a summation of the varieties of military leadership and character as the reader will find anywhere. Richard W. Slatta's marvelous description and analysis of Argentina's Indian wars--contemporaneous to our own--deserves expansion to book length, both for the sheer interest of the story and because setting the problem at a continental remove allows US officers to view the "civilization vs. aboriginal conflict" business more dispassionately. Had a Russia hand, such as Bruce Menning or Jacob Kipp, followed up with a chapter on the 19th-century conquest of Central Asia, the book would have covered each of the three great domestic-expansion dramas of the first great age of imperialism (forerunner to our own far more sophisticated and sustainable age of economic and cultural imperialism). But that gap could be closed in a subsequent (lower-priced) volume, since the issues here under consideration merit extended discussion. But give us paperbacks!

Other essays range from John F. Guilmartin, Jr.'s scholarly, if slightly arcane, look at cultural patterns in the light troops and auxiliaries of classical armies, Showalter's usual star turn on the gunpowder age and the cultural patterns of modernizing warfare, and Porch's fascinating look at Bugeaud, Lyautey, and the French military romance with North Africa, a reminder that France was once a state that others regarded with some seriousness. There are big themes here, rendered in jewelry-shop fineness.

In contrast, Carol Morris Petillo performs high-school psychoanalysis on the colonial experiences of Generals Black Jack Pershing, Leonard Wood, and Douglas MacArthur, concluding that MacArthur's empathy with the Philippine people resulted from his sexual inability to deal with strong white women. Further, she suggests that military men like foreign assignments because they can indulge their homosexual tendencies out of sight of the folks back home (based on the empirical data available to me, the overwhelming majority of military men are, on the contrary, unreformably and energetically heterosexual). Sadly, her tabloid judgments obscure Morris Petillo's broader promise. Sex is, in fact, a squeamishly ignored ingredient of military performance and, certainly, of the colonial experience, and Morris Petillo has chosen a field of great potential interest. But she will have to plow that field more deeply if she is to be taken seriously by those of us in the military. As one of the finalists for the title of the US Army's leading neo-Freudian, I can assure Morris Petillo that the sexual impulse in violence and power relations is a bit more complex than supposing that MacArthur sought out a (half-) Filipino mistress primarily because she was small in stature and brown--and thus not threatening to his manhood.

Yet Morris Petillo is on to something. Occupying troops do not generally treat the natives the way they would the girl next door, and the biological exchanges during conflict and the long sexual aftermath of victory deserve serious contemplation. Throughout history, soldiers have intermingled with subject and object populations, and they have always taken home war brides (sometimes with less ceremony than on other occasions). Morris Petillo has in hand a can-opener that just might let her get at some real worms--but she will have to learn to base her conclusions on the evidence, rather than the other way around. Her essay--the quintessential mixed bag--also offers valuable insights into the formative experience of the US Army in the Philippines and East Asia, where our forces have been shifting garrisons for one year short of a century. We have far more to learn about ourselves and about the military demands of tomorrow from our highly cultural clashes with the Moros, Huks, and Philippine society at large than from yet another book on the invasion of Normandy or Jackson in the Valley. I would read a future book by Morris Petillo just to find out whether the quality of her inquiry can transcend the dogmas of the faculty lounge.

We have always been a "dirty little war" military and a grumbling constabulary. We have long been asked to cover much of the planet with inadequate forces and--worse--with inadequate knowledge of those we have come to discipline, occupy, or protect. It is hard to imagine a worthier field of study for a serving officer today than the frontier and colonial experience of the US military. The past is repeating itself in living color. Time to reread Tuchman on Stillwell and anything you can find on Smedley Butler or gunboats on the Yangtze. And, by the way, the Barbary pirates are back. James C. Bradford, this book's editor and also a fine essayist, has done us a splendid service in assembling *The Military and Conflict Between Cultures*. It's a shame he didn't publish it through a major New York house that would have rammed it down readers' throats and made them pay for it happily.

Perhaps the best summation of the worth of this book and the studies it summarizes comes from Utley, whose authority in his field is matched by his ability and willingness to communicate clearly (rather a taboo in academic writing, where lucidity is seemingly regarded with the same loathing accorded leprosy in the Middle Ages). Describing the impatience and distaste the big-battle-minded brought to the Indian wars of the US Army, he notes, "In truth, military leaders looked upon Indian warfare as a fleeting irritant. Today's conflict or tomorrow's would be the last, and to develop a special system for it seemed hardly worthwhile." Who could better summarize the attitude of today's military traditionalists and their reluctance to accept that grubby non-wars, local slaughters, and peace enforcement (a term that begs a sequel to *Dr. Strangelove*) are the now and future reality, and that it is the "big show" wars that will be the exceptions.

Fine book. Big thoughts. Lousy packaging. Forbidding price. Did the folks down in College Station really want you to read it?

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● **Models and Theories of Executive Leadership: A Conceptual/ Empirical Review and Integration.** By Stephen J. Zaccaro. US Army Research Institute for the Behavioral Sciences, 1996. 469 pages. **Reviewed by Dr. Roderick Magee (LTC, USA Ret.),** Professor of Organizational Change and Strategic Leadership, US Army War College.

For those who are trying to comprehend the various publications on executive leadership, known variously as senior leadership, organizational leadership, and strategic leadership, look no further. Stephen Zaccaro has done an admirable job of assembling, synthesizing, and integrating a vast body of information on a topic of tremendous importance to any student of leadership. Following the example of *Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership*, long regarded as the defining compilation of general leadership research, this book focuses on research related to executive leadership. Zaccaro uses an approach that works well, reviewing each main theme first from a conceptual and then from an empirical vantage point. This approach keeps those in search of a broad understanding from becoming bogged down in the intricacies of the studies and statistics by focusing on the conceptual issues, while allowing the serious student to delve into the topic from methodological and empirical perspectives.

The purpose of Zaccaro's book was "to review military and nonmilitary research on executive leadership: (a) to describe and critically analyze both leading conceptual models of, and empirical research on, executive-level leadership, (b) to synthesize military and nonmilitary research to determine what is known about executive leadership, and (c) to identify some necessary future directions for research in this area." He accomplishes this and more by comparing and contrasting various models and theories to highlight their strengths and weaknesses. Zaccaro's research falls into four categories: conceptual complexity, behavioral complexity, strategic decisionmaking, and visionary or inspirational leadership. This categorization works well and allows for a logical flow throughout the book.

The author attempts to bring some closure to more than 10 years of research on several key issues. His topics include the nature of executive-level work and how it is different from work at other levels of an organization; identification of individual capacities, knowledge, skills, and abilities associated with executive work and performance; development of ways to measure or assess the traits necessary for executive leadership; and finally, the formulation of methods that enable the acquisition of the skills necessary to be successful at the executive level.

Zaccaro accomplishes his objective of identifying fruitful areas for future research by proposing a "model of multi-level organizational leadership performance," supplemented by five sets of characteristics necessary for executive success: cognitive capacities, social capacities, personality, motivation, and knowledge or expertise. His model closely resembles Jacobs and Jaques' "Stratified Systems Theory," which was the first attempt at classifying the qualitative differences between leadership at different levels within organizations ("production level," "organizational level," or "systems level"). Zaccaro adds performance requirements at each level and the effect of environmental factors, particularly at the executive or "systems" level. Among the defining characteristics of executive leadership are the requirement for external boundary-spanning activities, a much longer time frame or perspective for planning, and a qualitative shift in leader performance requirements.

This is not a book for the faint of heart, but neither is it too intimidating for those without deep knowledge of leadership studies. Anyone involved in executive leadership development programs, including those looking for research ideas, can profit from this book.

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● **Managing Ethnic Conflict in Africa: Pressures and Incentives for Cooperation.** By Donald Rothchild. Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 1997. 343 pages. \$49.95. **Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Anthony D. Marley (USA Ret.),** who dealt extensively with ethnic conflict in Africa while serving as an African Foreign Area Officer.

Violent ethnic conflicts have erupted seemingly without warning in many African countries in recent years, toppling governments, destroying national economies, straining international relations throughout entire sub-regions of the continent, and producing grotesque human rights violations, including the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people. From a cursory reading of the news, it would appear that such deadly conflicts between ethnic groups are common, and that the potential for such violent unrest threatens to engulf all of Africa. It is Donald Rothchild's contention in this

book, however, that such conflicts are not inevitable, and that violent ethnic conflicts can often be either avoided entirely or at least managed and mitigated.

Professor Rothchild is a noted scholar in the fields of African and conflict studies. In this work he offers creative new options that could be used by mediators during negotiations to alter the perceptions and strategies of conflicting parties in ethnic conflicts. He provides context for the current situation in Africa through an examination of the concept of ethnicity, then looks at ethnic conflict and the means by which it was managed and manipulated during the colonial era. He traces the issue of ethnic conflict through the independence era, when the new African governments created the basis for political power and conflict control mechanisms, into a present which shows many African states transitioning to more democratic forms of governance than those of the immediate post-colonial era.

In the first section of the book, Rothchild examines the nature of ethnicity and the means by which relations between ethnic groups, as well as between ethnic groups and the state, can be regularized. He introduces conceptual types of non-coercive and coercive incentives that third party mediators might seek to employ, singly or in combination, in their effort to contain or end intra-state ethnic conflicts. Non-coercive incentives include *purchase*, *insurance*, and *legitimation*, while the coercive incentives he identifies include *pressures*, *sanctions*, and *force*. He follows with four case studies of successful conflict mediation (Angola; Rhodesia-Zimbabwe; South Africa; and the 1972 agreement in Sudan), in which he analyzes how and why various incentives and pressures were or were not effective. While these outcomes proved generally satisfactory to all involved, we might also have learned useful lessons from failed mediation efforts, such as those in Rwanda and Burundi. Only by comparing and contrasting success and failure can practitioners develop a full appreciation for the kaleidoscopic mixes of cultures and pressures, indigenous and external, that shape such conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The book's concluding chapter underscores a significant lesson from all these conflicts: to be able to use incentives effectively, a mediator needs legitimacy in the eyes of the contending parties and leverage over them. The author also speculates that the attributes of a good mediator during the Cold War era differ from those that will be important in the future. While acknowledging that mediators will continue to employ a mix of both coercive and non-coercive measures, he suggests that the nature of the mediation process itself is changing significantly. Western powers will play a reduced role in Africa's recurring ethnic conflicts, and various African actors (possibly individual states, but more probably African regional diplomatic and peacemaking or peacekeeping organizations) will emerge to fulfill increasingly important functions. As a result, Rothchild recommends that Western states increase their support for the various African mediation and peacekeeping initiatives that are now under way.

The author also shows clearly the utility of timely third party political and military leverage during negotiations in ethnic conflicts. He makes an important contribution by discussing objectively, with apparent disregard for political correctness, the fact that while unofficial and non-state mediators may facilitate a negotiation, their role cannot be decisive since generally they are unable to exert pressures and offer incentives to the belligerents. While unofficial mediators may improve communications between the conflicting parties, help to build a consensus, draft possible agreements, and draw the actors' attention to areas in which agreement exists, they can neither guarantee nor enforce any resulting agreements.

The book is not without its problems. Conceptual chapters are written in a somewhat abstract, theoretical style and seem very much to have been written for academics. Frequent references in the text to the studies of other researchers causes this section of the book to seem more like a doctoral dissertation than a handy reference for policymakers and implementors. The four case studies and the book's concluding chapter are written much more clearly, and they describe effectively the conceptual categories that Rothchild applies to his case studies.

The theoretical nature and pedantic style in the first third of this book, and its African specificity, suggest limited interest for senior members of the defense community, but it will be an important addition to the libraries of African specialists.