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Book Reviews

From *Parameters*, Autumn 2001, pp. 164-81.

● **The Culture of Defense.** By Christopher D. Van Aller. Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2001. 208 pages. \$65.00. **Reviewed by Charles Moskos**, Department of Sociology, Northwestern University.

What should be the direction of our armed forces? And what should be done to move the armed forces in that direction? These are the questions Christopher Van Aller raises and persuasively answers. The core thesis of this elegantly written and reasoned book is that national leaders and citizens need to examine the political and sociological characteristics of armed forces before they embark on military change, whether in technology or people. The need, in the title of the book, is to grasp the culture of defense.

The guiding principle in the analysis is the inherent friction between the military and civilian worlds. This friction is manifest, in somewhat oversimplified terms, in those who believe only high expenditures guarantee security and those who consider military programs basically as a waste of a society's wealth. But this friction can be complementary, Van Aller argues. Modern warfare, as well as operations other than war, requires the talents of both civilian and military worlds. The issue is the right ratio between the two spheres.

If the military should resist most of the organizational practices common to civilian organizations (e.g. frequent personnel turnover), the armed forces need the periodical infusion of civilian energy and creativity (e.g. breaking out of old modes of warfighting). Inasmuch as war or its threat is a recurring condition, it behooves us to understand what sort of soldiers it takes to win wars. We also need to understand how to avoid having these soldiers become a threat to the civil society. Van Aller sees the United States entering the 21st century as a country founded on principles inimical to peacetime service and martial values. Yet, it is, at the same time, the preeminent military power with global commitments.

Today as in much of America's military history, two key problems exist. One is the fascination with technology, to the detriment of understanding morale and initiative. This "technism" is particularly evident in the curriculum of the service academies. "West Point and Annapolis still emphasize mathematics and technology to the detriment of history and strategy." In a very provocative point, Van Aller states that American security planners ought to consider, though not necessarily adopt, less costly weapon systems rather than always planning for changes of greater technological complexity.

The other recurring problem is the avoidance of military service by privileged youth during peacetime and combat duty during wars. This in turn disconnects the armed forces from civilian elites, a state of affairs Van Aller sees as an increasing gap in the post-Cold War era. In fact, the overemphasis on weapon technology in defense planning leads to an avoidance of dealing with more decisive issues, such as who should serve.

Van Aller casts a wide historical and philosophical net, invoking the insights of Niccolo Machiavelli, Carl von Clausewitz, and Alexis de Tocqueville. He adapts the theories of these political theorists to lay the groundwork for an updated notion of citizenship obligation and civil-military relations. Among modern theorists, the author frequently cites Samuel Huntington, Morris Janowitz, Edward Luttwak, and Martin van Creveld (whose name unfortunately is misspelled in the text). A reference to some of the contemporary iconoclasts such as Ralph Peters or Charles Dunlap could have strengthened Van Aller's presentation.

Van Aller makes a highly original argument that the initial phases of most major American military conflicts are usually hamstrung by the existing military professional leadership, but rescued by outside civilian direction. He convincingly argues that such changes rarely come from within the military establishment itself. One example is how civilian leadership implemented the convoy system over the resistance of the naval leadership in both world wars.

Now more than ever, it is necessary to redesign forces for the threats of the contemporary post-Cold War period. Since the Cold War ended a decade ago, the Pentagon has built its force structure around the notion that the United States must be able to fight and win two major regional wars almost simultaneously to meet its global national security obligations. That the Defense Department review concluded by Secretary Rumsfeld has now recommended that the two-war scenario be scrapped in favor of a more complex approach buttresses Van Aller's thesis. Noteworthy, this significant change in security premises was a key recommendation of the early 2001 report of the US Commission on National Security/21st Century, headed by former Senators Gary Hart and Warren Rudman.

Van Aller makes a strong case for the contemporary relevance of the citizen-soldier concept. He would like to see a reinvigoration of the citizen-soldier, coupled with a solid professional officer corps. He argues for serious consideration of a compulsory form of national service for American youth, including civilian as well as military service. (Full disclosure: your reviewer is cited heavily in this regard.)

The Culture of Defense raises important and troubling questions. Van Aller's answers are persuasive as he attempts to reconcile notions of citizenship obligation with the realities of the post-Cold War era. The author performs an important service in casting a skeptical light on the traditional military profession and its unbridled faith in technology. The publication of this book is exceptionally well-timed.

● **The Tiananmen Papers.** Compiled by Zhang Liang. Edited by Andrew J. Nathan and Perry Link. New York: Public Affairs, 2001. 513 pp. \$30.00. **Reviewed by Dr. Andrew Scobell,** Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College.

This volume is one of the most hyped books of the year, having been front-page news in major newspapers and excerpted in *Foreign Affairs*. The compiler and editors pitch the book as a compendium of secret Chinese documents that provides a behind-the-scenes look at the deliberations of China's top leaders during the spring of 1989. Of course, the backdrop to these high-level meetings in Beijing that readers are now privy to is the unprecedented, massive, spontaneous, and remarkably peaceful demonstrations in cities all across China. The focus of most interest is on what the volume reveals about the decision to use lethal force against Chinese civilians in Beijing on the weekend of 3-4 June 1989.

Controversy has surrounded the publication of *The Tiananmen Papers*. Major questions have been raised about the authenticity of the documents. Many of the documents appear to be genuine; others, such as the "memoranda of conversations supplied by a friend of Yang Shangkun who cannot be further identified," are more suspect. While the information and picture presented are consistent with those we already possess, this does not necessarily make *The Tiananmen Papers* genuine. If the documents are forgeries, they are very good ones. The individual who spirited computer printouts of the documents out of China and selected the items to be included from a larger collection in his possession appears to be well-connected. He clearly has a pro-reform agenda. As he explains in the preface, it is the belief that publishing the documents will "make a fundamental contribution to building democratic government in China" which motivated him to make the material available to foreign audiences (a Chinese edition has since been published, although it is banned in China).

What is the significance of the documents? They contain no startling revelations. Readers actually learn little that is new about the events of 1989. Instead, readers receive confirmation of widely assumed details. Indeed, according to *The Tiananmen Papers*, Deng Xiaoping and his cabal of octogenarian comrades were literally "calling the shots." And blame from this group for encouraging the demonstrations fell squarely on the shoulders of Communist Party Secretary Zhao Ziyang, who advocated a conciliatory approach to the demonstrators in Tiananmen Square and disappeared from view after martial law was declared in mid-May. Also confirmed was the key role of Deng and the elders in selecting Zhao's replacement: Jiang Zemin. He was the consensus candidate because he was untainted by the crackdown in Beijing. Jiang fit the bill because during the spring of 1989 he was the Party Secretary in Shanghai where he handled the protests adeptly and without violence. Equally significant in Deng's eyes--as *The Tiananmen Papers* makes clear--was that Jiang was widely recognized in China as pro-reform. His selection therefore was to serve as a clear signal that despite the bloody suppression, economic reform remained the country's top priority. In short, the real value of the volume is the additional detail and vividness we get regarding elite dynamics at a time of

great turmoil in China.

In doing so, the book also provides fascinating glimpses of the crisis management behavior of Beijing's elite. Many of these observations remain highly pertinent as China enters the first decade of the 21st century. The system today continues to rely on consensus decisionmaking to function smoothly. It is when this elite consensus breaks down that the party-state can become immobilized. This is even truer today than it was in 1989. Then Deng Xiaoping was the paramount leader who, although needing to persuade his contemporaries, was clearly the unchallenged top decisionmaker in China. Today, with Deng and virtually the entire Long March generation gone from the scene, there is no single leader of Deng's stature who wields the same kind of power or prestige. Jiang Zemin (and whoever succeeds him as paramount leader) is much more of a "first among equals" and must constantly cut deals with his comrades on the Politburo to get things accomplished. The result is a leadership system that can be paralyzed during times of crisis.

One of the most surprising images gleaned from this volume is how marginalized or acquiescent almost all uniformed and retired military leaders appear to have been during the deliberations on how to respond to the demonstrations of 1989. While seemingly peripheral at the policymaking level, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) was of course centrally involved in the implementation phase--enforcing martial law in Beijing in late May and in the bloodletting of early June. Although the PLA leadership was initially reluctant to be deployed in Beijing against Han Chinese civilians, in the final analysis with one notable exception they loyally obeyed Chairman Deng Xiaoping of the Central Military Commission. The lesson of Tiananmen for the PLA is a greater hesitancy to play the role of regime enforcer. The lesson for the party is not to rely on the PLA as the first line of defense against domestic upheaval. As a result, during the 1990s China's leaders have sought to make the paramilitary People's Armed Police more capable of serving as the first responders in major cases of protest or civil unrest.

The Tiananmen Papers contains useful maps of Beijing and the area around Tiananmen Square, helpful explanatory and introductory notes, and brief biographies of the major players. Moreover, Andrew Nathan and Orville Schell, two of the most respected and prolific US scholars of contemporary China, provide valuable and frank evaluations of the documents in the introduction and afterword. Their assessment is that the documents seem to be authentic, but they cannot be 100-percent sure. Anyone interested in contemporary China *must* read this book. And each reader must draw his or her own conclusions about whether the papers ring true. While *The Tiananmen Papers* cannot be regarded as the complete or definitive account of the events of 1989, it is likely to be the best we can do until Chinese archives are opened to scholars.

● **Masters of War: Classical Strategic Thought.** By Michael I. Handel. 3d ed.; Portland, Ore.: Frank Cass, 2001. 482 pages. \$24.95. **Reviewed by Dr. David Jablonsky (Colonel, USA Ret.)** Professor of National Security Affairs, US Army War College.

Michael Handel's *Masters of War* is a work of stunning originality and intellectual depth. This third edition was published shortly before the author's untimely death earlier this year. The centerpiece of the book is a comparison of Carl von Clausewitz's *On War* with Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*. Using these two works, Handel convincingly demonstrates that there is no unique eastern or western approach to the art of war--that in fact the basic logic of strategy is universal, involving political direction and the correlation of ends and means. War, in short, is complex and reciprocal in nature; involves moral or nonrational dimensions; and must always deal with friction, uncertainty, chance, and luck. But in the study of the classical works on strategy, to paraphrase Clausewitz, "the result is never final." Handel understood this and in this edition added new chapters and expanded discussion on other classical theorists ranging from Thucydides, Niccolo Machiavelli, and Antoine-Henri de Jomini to Julian Corbett and Mao Tse-tung. The result is a dynamic, nuanced, and sophisticated examination of classical strategic thought with direct application to the strategic issues of today.

To aid the reader in this intellectual smorgasbord, Dr. Handel includes six appendices, five pullout maps and charts, 29 figures, and six tables. He also provides extensive footnotes, many of them miniature essays that alone are worth the price of admission. Equally important, Handel uses quotes from "the masters" throughout the book to great effect in illustrating differences and similarities. And in addition to the normal general reference index, he provides an index

that captures the key concepts of the classical theorists. This is an invaluable help in pulling together thoughts of the strategists that are not always assembled together in their works. *On War*, for example, has no chapter on war termination. But Clausewitz does address this important concept throughout the book in a diffuse manner--all captured in Handel's special index as well as in a separate chapter on the subject.

Another such concept is levels of analysis, which Professor Handel uses to make important distinctions between the two principal philosophers of war. Sun Tzu's framework is broader than that of Clausewitz, whose treatise is focused for the most part at the operational level on the art of waging war--at that point, in other words, when diplomacy has failed. For the Chinese theorists, as Handel illustrates in both a separate chapter and an appendix, political, diplomatic, and logistical preparation for war, as well as the actual fighting, are all considered part of the same activity at the strategic level of analysis. All this in turn leads to a rich discussion with examples ranging from the Gulf War to Kosovo of what Handel calls the "tacticization of strategy"--the operational or military tail wagging the political-strategic dog.

Such differences, Handel emphasizes, are intertwined with many more similarities and complementary ideas. For instance, in two important chapters concerned with the rational calculus of war, he demonstrates that both Sun Tzu and Clausewitz were aware of the crucial effect on that calculus of intangible, nonquantifiable "moral factors" that could include the personality, experience, and intuition of leaders; the passions and characteristics of the people; and the training and motivation of the military. Of the two, Sun Tzu is the more optimistic that rational calculation can still bring about intended results. For Clausewitz, too, war is a rational instrument for leaders to promote and protect a state's interest. But he did not consider it possible for war itself--permeated as it is by "moral factors"--to be waged as a rational activity. All this, as Handel outlines in marvelous detail, has important implications for today's military organizations, which are often so preoccupied with the material and technological aspects of war that they tend to overlook its "moral" dimensions. The current milieu of "information war," "cyber war," and "revolution in military affairs" often suggests that war has been transformed into a rational activity based on nearly perfect information. If anything, Handel concludes in typically succinct and elegant prose, the role of moral factors has expanded, and "war is and will remain a relentlessly reciprocal activity in which all participants can counter each other with different methods, weapons, and technologies."

The key to this approach is to understand the nature of war--the supreme act of judgment. For this task, Professor Handel illustrates why Clausewitz has no peer among classical war theorists in establishing a conceptual framework. At the heart of that framework is the analysis of the three dominant tendencies of violence (the people), chance (the military), and reason (the government) that make up what Clausewitz termed the Remarkable Trinity. Beginning with this analysis, Clausewitz provided all the elements necessary for the conceptual structure, but never fully articulated the framework. Handel believes this is fortunate since that very lack of articulation forces each reader to develop an individual structure for the Clausewitzian system--to interpret in different holistic ways the interactions, connections, and relative significance of the various concepts, each of which if considered separately causes the total of *On War* to appear to be less than the sum of its parts. To illustrate this approach, Handel devotes an entire appendix to the examination of Clausewitz's work as a complex system of interrelated concepts. At the same time, using two flow charts to summarize the Prussian theorist's systematic study of war in a simplified visual manner, Handel sorts out many of the issues and provides a heuristic stimulus for further discussion.

In all this, Dr. Handel applies with great effect the strategic theories of the past to the modern practice of war. Toward the end of the book, for example, he returns to Clausewitz's ideal type of war to discuss the principle of continuity and the concept of war termination. The principle of continuity involves maintaining unrelenting pressure on the enemy--an ideal type of escalation to nonstop war. In reality, as Clausewitz demonstrated, war involves a great deal of inactivity, inaction, and interruption because of such variables as inadequate information and the intensity of motives involved. To this, Handel adds insightful examples of how continuity or the lack thereof in operational campaigns can affect the termination of war. The refusal of the allies in the fall of 1918 to stop their advance while negotiating an armistice with Germany, he pointed out, is in sharp contrast to the adverse results after the cessation of the United Nations ground offensive in Korea in June 1951 as soon as the enemy indicated a readiness to negotiate. At the same time, Handel discusses why the principle of continuity is in tension with Clausewitz's concept of the culminating point of the attack--the idea that as any attack continues to advance and succeed, it also diminishes in strength. The discussion is aided by pull-out color diagrams, one of which includes the 1940-43 British-German "see-saw" situations in the Western Desert

when both sides pressed their attacks beyond the culminating point. It was Rommel, with his inclination to take risks, who favored the principle of continuity over the identification of the culminating point.

It is this technique that makes every chapter so compelling, whether it is a comparison of perspectives of the classical theorists on deception, surprise, and intelligence or an in-depth discussion of the "Weinberger Doctrine" for the use of military force in terms of Clausewitz's warning "not to take the first step without considering the last." In the end, what emerges from Dr. Handel's analysis is an overall conceptual continuity in the outlook of the classical theorists to war and strategy. In particular, as Handel repeatedly demonstrates, *On War* and *The Art of War* do not involve antagonistic theories. Both works transcend the limitations of time and space as well as cultural, historical, and linguistic differences. Each work complements the other, and each is equally relevant for the modern student. And both, as Dr. Handel reminds the reader throughout this movable intellectual feast, "remain the greatest and most original studies ever written on war."

● **Our Vietnam: The War 1954-1975.** By A. J. Langguth. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000. 766 pages. \$35.00. **Reviewed by Dr. Lewis Sorley**, author of *A Better War: The Unexamined Victories and Final Tragedy of America's Last Years in Vietnam*.

The reader is not left wondering about the path this account is going to take. Indeed, the jacket copy reveals all: An admiring quotation from a North Vietnamese suggesting the inevitability of the war's outcome; deprecatory comments on the "ineptness and corruption" of the South Vietnamese and the "waffling and self-deceived" White Houses of Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon; and references to the "enemy's unbroken will and America's fatal miscalculations." While one might credit the author's claim to a "broad sweep," the companion assertion of "even-handed" is impossible to accept.

Next, still before the main text, comes confirmation in the author's "Cast of Characters." Americans listed number 58, including Elbridge Durbrow, Leslie Gelb, even Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who died in 1945. But not Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker, who served for six years at the head of the American Embassy in Saigon. And not General Creighton Abrams, who commanded American forces in Vietnam for four years and served there for five.

We have here, as is clear from the outset, another very lengthy treatment (like Karnow's, like Sheehan's) purporting to be about the war as a whole, but in reality focused disproportionately on the early years of the American buildup and concentration on a war of attrition. This time we get over 660 pages of discussion, 80 percent of it dealing with matters through 1968, only 20 percent with the remaining seven years of the war.

Within this unbalanced overall treatment are reinforcing instances of selective emphasis reflecting the pervasive bias. The massacre of some 500 people perpetrated by US troops at My Lai, for example, is recounted at length--12 pages overall at three points in the text, plus a photograph--while the preplanned and deliberate communist massacre of thousands of civilians at Hue during the 1968 Tet Offensive merits one page, including an exculpatory assertion that "the savagery was due in part to conflicting orders out of Hanoi."

Such skewed coverage permits the author to make the familiar claims of inept conduct of the war by American political and military leadership, poor performance by South Vietnamese governmental and military leaders, and substantial success by the enemy. It seems likely that Langguth acquired these outlooks during early service as *The New York Times* Saigon bureau chief in 1965 and, despite subsequent stints in 1968 and 1970, never reexamined them. Only by ignoring the realities of the latter years, when wiser and more able allied leaders produced a better outcome, can such a version of events gain even superficial credibility.

In May 1968, when General Creighton Abrams was in the process of taking command of US forces in Vietnam, Langguth wrote a long profile for *The New York Times Magazine*. "With Abrams," he asserted, "it was bound to be more of the same." Instead, Abrams changed virtually every aspect of the war, from the concept of its nature to strategy, tactics, and measures of merit. Stressing population security as the key element, Abrams stated explicitly his conviction that the "body count," viewed as the key determinant of progress by his predecessor, General William C. Westmoreland, was essentially irrelevant. "I don't think it makes any difference how many losses he [the enemy]

takes," Abrams told his commanders in a total repudiation of the earlier approach. "I don't think *that* makes any *difference*." Yet in the ensuing decades Langguth has apparently still not confronted the evidence amassed against his earlier judgment.

A major flaw in scholarship is that the text lacks endnote references, forcing the reader who wonders about the basis or source for a given assertion to sift through the page number references at the back of the book on the chance that there might be one relating to the matter in question. This technique is not only frustrating and time-consuming, but also results in significantly less author accountability than the standard practice. And often Langguth makes an assertion concerning a matter of which he could not have personal knowledge without providing any source. These lapses cannot, a quarter century after the end of the war, be passed off as inevitable attributes of the "first draft of history" journalists are fond of citing.

On other matters, Langguth simply does not know what he is talking about. He refers to General Westmoreland's "rare press interviews," when Westmoreland assiduously courted the press at every opportunity, even preempting the residence of a university president to give an impromptu press conference while he was back in the United States to attend a college football game. Langguth claims that when the 1st Cavalry Division deployed to Vietnam it was forced to leave half its trained troops behind due to the impending expiration of their terms of enlistment. The correct figure is more like 20 percent. And he characterizes South Vietnamese General Ngo Quang Truong as "honest but inept." Every American who knew him, from General Abrams on down, considered Truong to be South Vietnam's ablest combat leader, a superb man in every respect.

As the war reaches its grim conclusion in this account, Langguth seems to share the exultation of the victorious North Vietnamese. While initially one might have anticipated that the "our" in the title of "Our Vietnam" would signify America's war in Vietnam, it turns out to denote the war as viewed by those who did, and still do, oppose it.

Thus to the war's aftermath, including the conquerors' murderous "reeducation" camps and the tens of thousands of boat people fleeing their homeland in a desperate search for freedom, the author devotes three lines.

As coda, Langguth takes for his own, inscribed without quotation marks as the final words of his account, a communist functionary's summation of the war and its outcome: "North Vietnam's leaders had deserved to win. South Vietnam's leaders had deserved to lose. And America's leaders, for thirty years, had failed the people of the North, the people of the South, and the people of the United States."

Readers interested in the real story of this war and its consequences might instead consider the words of former Viet Cong Colonel Pham Xuan An: "All that talk about 'liberation' twenty, thirty, forty years ago, all the plotting, and all the bodies, produced this, this impoverished, broken-down country led by a gang of cruel and paternalistic half-educated theorists."

● **Integrity First: Reflections of a Military Philosopher.** By Malham M. Wakin. Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2000. 192 pages. \$60.00. **Reviewed by Colonel Charles J. Dunlap, Jr., USAF,** Staff Judge Advocate, Air Education and Training Command, Randolph Air Force Base, Texas.

Ethics is something the military talks about a lot. Leaders frequently importune their charges with lectures about integrity, honor, courage, and other classic virtues of military culture, if not society at large. But too often such discourse is without context, and it rarely benefits from a thorough understanding of the intellectual roots of the philosophical concepts that underlay ethical thinking and practice.

The absence of such intellectual infrastructure haunts attempts by war colleges and other military forums to have in-depth discussions of the ethical dilemmas today's military leaders are likely to face. Without cognizance of the "wheres" and "whys" of the ethical tradition, such efforts often founder. Too often they devolve into superficial analyses where the end justifies the means and situational ethics reign supreme. Unequipped to see the errors of their logic, officers can leave with a distorted view of their responsibilities.

Solving this dilemma is not easy, as the basic material can be dense and formidable reading. Secondary sources may

not be sufficiently focused on the military environment, or are themselves still too opaque for the busy nonspecialists. A careful reading of retired Brigadier General Malham M. Wakin's collection of essays, *Integrity First: Reflections of a Military Philosopher*, would help fill the void. I say "careful" because most readers will want to skip the extraneous and largely irrelevant diversions into the bureaucracy of teaching, especially at the Air Force Academy where Wakin taught for decades after seeing combat as an aviator in Vietnam.

Regrettably, the short book does evoke a sense of being a boutique volume intended mainly as a tribute to the author and souvenir for his inner group of admirers. Indeed, a disciplined editor might have turned a good and valuable book into a great and invaluable one. Given that the collection's essays were written over nearly 40 years of contentious military policies and political events, cutting superfluous material in favor of added background information would have enhanced its worth.

Still, there is much to commend the work. Its relative brevity and lucid prose invite those deterred by the weighty and nearly impenetrable tomes that seem to dominate the field. Wakin's chapter "On the Nature of Man" is a real gem. It is an exquisite *tour de force* that ranges over thousands of years of philosophical thinking. It very clearly displays the genius of a veteran professor obviously skilled in making the inscrutable scrutable to generations of Air Force Academy cadets. Likewise, in the chapter entitled "Egoism as a Moral Theory," Wakin demonstrates an uncanny talent for concisely explaining the ever-popular "objectivist" thinking of Ayn Rand, a feat that has defeated a legion of other writers, not to mention Rand herself.

That said, a psychological archeologist might find it interesting to chart Wakin's presentations in light of Air Force doctrinal developments. In particular, it is noteworthy that airpower advocates, including some who would have passed through the academy during Wakin's tenure, have made statements in the aftermath of Allied Force's air operation against the Serbs that seem surprisingly indifferent to many of the ethical issues he discusses. Reflecting on the air strategy employed, a very senior officer espoused in an official publication the notion that had bombing cut off electricity and water supplies to Serb civilians earlier, the military effort might have succeeded sooner.* Suffice to say, destroying things indispensable to human survival, particularly in urban areas, for the sole purpose of imposing hardship on noncombatants is an impermissible application of the long-rejected concept of *Kriegsraison*** and raises significant legal and moral issues.

Perhaps the main weakness of the book from this reviewer's perspective is the failure to fulfill the promise of the title. Specifically, too often it seems the text lacks an inculcation of the *military* perspective. The chapter on nuclear weapons, for example, appears to take at face value the layman's view that any use of them is inherently catastrophic and morally unthinkable.

Obviously, any use of these horrific weapons would be hugely tragic, and may well have unintended psychological effects on the politics of the use of force. That is not, however, the same thing as saying the weapons could never have a use that serves right purposes. For the military officer, a dispassionate evaluation that appreciates the range of the weapons' technical capabilities in relation to classic philosophical themes would be immensely helpful. For example, weighing the utility of employing a low-yield nuclear weapon against an enemy's biological weapons facility in order to achieve the very high temperatures needed to destroy certain contagions is the kind of knotty moral and ethical issue to which a technical understanding of military realities might usefully bring context.

Likewise, the book's discussion of the military uses of technology is disappointing. Admirably, the author admits that many humanists critiquing the morality of scientific and engineering endeavors are themselves not literate in those disciplines. But one would think that a philosophy professor at the Air Force Academy would not be among them. As Carl Builder and others have noted, the Air Force is obsessed with science and engineering, ironically to the detriment of its appreciation of the art of war itself. Much the same can be said about the service's moral and philosophical bent. Wakin's brief discussion of the philosophical dimensions of technology does little to address this contention.

Nevertheless, the book does contain many hidden nuggets, and it still represents a highlight in an area of increasing importance to the military professional. One hopes that a properly edited and economically priced paperback version might someday become available. The hardback's price alone will scare off all but the most determined reader, and virtually guarantees the book will never achieve the scale of readership the text deserves.

* The US commander of the NATO air forces during the Allied Force air operation, a 1965 Air Force Academy graduate, was quoted as follows:

"As an airman, I would have targeted the power grid, bridges, and military headquarters in and around Belgrade the first day of the conflict," said [the commander], *who believes that's what eventually brought Milosevic to his knees*. "Air power is made for shock value."

"Just think if after the first day, the Serbian people had awakened and their refrigerators weren't running, there was no water in their kitchens or bathrooms, no lights, no transportation system to get to work, and five or six military headquarters in Belgrade had disappeared, they would have asked: `All this after the first night? What is the rest of this [conflict] going to be like?'"

As quoted by Tim Barela in "To Win a War," *Airman*, September 1999, pp. 2-3 (emphasis added). These are essentially the same points reported earlier by *The Washington Post*. See William Drozdiak, "Air War Commander Says Kosovo Victory Near," *The Washington Post*, 24 May 1999, p. 1.

** *Kriegsraison* asserts that "military necessity could justify any measures--even in violation of the laws of war--when the necessities of the situation purportedly justified it." See Air Force Pamphlet 110-3, *International Law--The Conduct of Armed Conflict and Air Operations* (19 November 1976), para. 1-3a(1).

● **A Soldier's Duty**. By Thomas E. Ricks. New York: Random House, 2001. 320 pages. \$24.95. **Reviewed by Professor Martin L. Cook**, Elihu Root Professor of Military Studies and Professor of Ethics, US Army War College.

Much has been said and written in recent years about the state of civil-military relations and subordination of the US military to civilian leadership. Certainly the tension between the values of the officer corps and the civilian leadership has, in recent years, been marked and great. Contributing significantly to that discussion was Thomas Ricks' earlier nonfiction work, *Making the Corps*, and his many well-informed articles on military affairs in *The Wall Street Journal* and, in more recent years, *The Washington Post*.

In this novel, the author takes full advantage of the liberties fiction allows to explore the attitudes of some Army officers in particular on this subject. The novel's premise is that the President orders a deployment of ill-prepared forces on a humanitarian mission against the weight of professional military advice. Email begins to fly from untraceable addresses criticizing the deployment and, increasingly, advocating public expressions of dissent by uniformed officers, culminating in direct action to sabotage the deployment itself.

A thoroughly engaging mystery story unfolds as investigations are undertaken to determine the source of the emails and sabotage. The details of the plot would, of course, ruin the mystery for the reader. But the narrative vehicle gives Mr. Ricks ample opportunity to introduce extensive dialog among his characters on questions of the nature and scope of "a soldier's duty"--to the Constitution, to elected political leaders engaged in (from the military perspective) ill-advised action, to military superiors and subordinates, and finally to the Army. The author claims that much of this dialog is not his own creation, but plucked verbatim from emails he has received or had forwarded to him from serving officers. Indeed, they have the ring of reality.

The novel is effective as fiction, but it aims at more than engaging pastime reading. Mr. Ricks' real purpose is to raise pointedly the questions of ethical obligation and professionalism of an officer corps frustrated with taskings it often questions, if not outright rejects. Without the defining threat of the Cold War, the author perceives a military separated from and, to some degree, alienated from the American society it is pledged to serve. Mr. Ricks illustrates effectively the human tensions of obedient service to civilian leaders whose judgment some officers distrust, when those leaders send them on missions whose purposes are murky, in an atmosphere of casualty aversion and political management of the military aspects of the deployment.

The author's portrayal of senior Army officers is in many respects unflattering and, in the case of one officer and his subordinates, literally criminal. But he also shows good officers struggling with the ambiguities of strategic-level

leadership, trying to triangulate their way through the complex pressures of supporting administration policies which, in private, they have opposed. He shows the challenges to their integrity in keeping their pledges to give their honest personal opinions to Congress when required, and yet not appearing to lobby for policies opposed to the President's. All of that, of course, is framed in light of their passion to protect and defend their service, and their pain in placing soldiers on deployments where their worst fears come true and ill-trained troops take casualties on missions they opposed in the first place.

A Soldier's Duty is bound to be a controversial and challenging read for any thoughtful military officer. One might well dissent from the picture painted of the state of civil-military relations as too bleak, too polarized. But one would have to look far for a novel that touches so deftly on the complexities and challenges of leadership of military organizations at the highest levels. However one reacts to the choices of these particular characters, reflection on the environment in which they strive to serve the nation, the Army, and their soldiers is a vitally important intellectual exercise. I know of no other work of fiction that forces the complexity of those questions so clearly on the reader.

● **Obeying Orders: Atrocity, Military Discipline and the Law of War.** By Mark J. Osiel. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1999. 398 pages. \$39.95. **Reviewed by Dr. Shannon E. French**, professor of ethics in the Department of Leadership, Ethics, and Law at the US Naval Academy.

International news reports since the beginning of the year have recorded a steady stream of precedent-smashing events in the area of war crimes prosecution. On New Year's Eve, then-President Clinton made the controversial decision to authorize the United States to sign the Rome Treaty, which creates a permanent international criminal court for the trial of war criminals. In February 2001, three Bosnian Serbs were convicted as war criminals by the UN's International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) for raping and torturing Muslim women and girls during the Bosnian War. It was the first time that the international community officially labeled rape, viewed as an "instrument of terror," as a "crime against humanity." Clearly, there is a growing international consensus that certain acts are morally reprehensible in *any* context, including the fog of war. In this setting, Mark Osiel's groundbreaking critical analysis of the problem of motivating ethical behavior among combat troops, *Obeying Orders: Atrocity, Military Discipline and the Law of War*, is urgently relevant.

Osiel, a law professor at the University of Iowa, has wrestled with the complex subject of the conduct of war for many years. His research has gone beyond traditional academic and legal scholarship to include firsthand interviews with war criminals and their victims. *Obeying Orders* follows on the heels of several related journal articles and a 1997 volume entitled *Mass Atrocity, Collective Memory and the Law*. This most recent work deserves the respect and attention of applied ethicists, lawyers, military professionals, and policymakers alike.

The central thesis of *Obeying Orders* is found on page 23 of the text, where the author firmly states that "the best prospects for minimizing war crimes (not just obvious atrocity) derive from creating a personal identity based on the virtues of chivalry and martial honor, virtues seen by officers as constitutive of good soldiering." In other words, Osiel asserts that the best way to ensure that a young Marine will not commit a war crime even if given (illegal) orders to do so by a superior officer is not to drill the said Marine on the provisions of international law and the UCMJ, but rather to help him internalize an appropriate warrior's code that will inspire him to recognize and reject the criminal directions of his officer. Osiel notes that the statement, "Marines don't do that," is "surely a simpler, more effective way of communicating the law of war than threatening prosecution for war crimes, by the enemy, an international tribunal, or an American court-martial."

Osiel makes an extremely compelling case for this psychologically powerful code- and character-based approach to the prevention of war crimes. He connects it to Aristotle's virtue ethics, which stresses the importance of positive habituation and the development of certain critical virtues, such as courage, justice, benevolence, and honor, over the rote memorization of specific rules of conduct. Simply staying within the bounds of a rulebook, as Osiel observes, can often be less demanding than consistently upholding high standards of character and nobility:

The manifest illegality rule merely sets a floor, and a relatively low one at that: avoid the most obvious war crimes, atrocities. It does not say, as does the internal ideal of martial honor: always cause the least

degree of lawful, collateral damage to civilians, consistent with your military objectives. By taking seriously such internal conceptions of martial honor, we may be able to impose higher standards on professional soldiers than the law has traditionally done, in the knowledge that good soldiers already impose these standards upon themselves.

Osiel goes on to highlight the importance of the use of shaming tactics--especially so-called "reintegrative shaming," which aims to reform, not permanently ostracize, the offender--to motivate modern warriors' dedication to the ideals of martial honor. He also defends the value of presenting persons entering the military culture with role models who remained true to their codes of honor even in the face of overwhelming challenges or temptations. As further support for his position, he points out that this approach of reinforcing desirable character traits among military professionals in no way undermines a rule-following approach, but rather provides additional motivation to obey rules when they are clear (so-called "bright-line rules") while giving much-needed guidance when the rules are not enough.

I find Osiel's arguments remarkably persuasive. Furthermore, I believe their strength and coherence is such that even those who are less sympathetic to his views have an obligation to familiarize themselves with his contribution to the debate. That said, I cannot conclude my review without adding one minor qualification to my otherwise hearty recommendation of *Obeying Orders*. While the content of Osiel's book is excellent, some aspects of his writing style are irritating. For one thing, he is given to excessive quotations. There are several passages in which it seems as though every other line is from another source. At times I wanted to shout, "Can't you put anything in your own words?" This occasionally becomes more than a style issue when Osiel commits the "appeal to authority" fallacy by quoting the conclusions of others without presenting the arguments that support them or defending them himself. In addition, some of his lengthier footnotes contain important assertions or clarifications that should have been integrated into the main body of the work. Finally, on a more trivial note, I found Osiel's "politically correct" use of the female pronoun throughout when referring to soldiers or officers jarring and contrived, given that women are still a minority in the military profession. Alternating genders would have been preferable.

Beyond question, *Obeying Orders* is a highly valuable component of the current literature on the prevention of war crimes. This is true not only because Osiel presents a well-considered and potentially fruitful method for motivating moral conduct in war but also because he follows up his theoretical musings with practical advice on how to effect the changes he suggests. After making his case for character-based training, Osiel illustrates exactly what he has in mind by exploring better ways to understand and reshape the psychology of combat units, to find new, more effective roles for military legal advisors, and to empower individual soldiers to avoid the commission of illegally ordered war crimes, minor to atrocious. No one who is interested in reducing the horror of war can afford to ignore the hope that Osiel's *Obeying Orders* offers.

● **MacArthur and the American Century: A Reader.** Edited by William M. Leary. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001. 538 pages. \$40.00. **Reviewed by Dr. Conrad C. Crane,** Research Professor of Military Strategy, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College.

Though I was always impressed with the high esteem verging on awe that my parents and their friends from the World War II generation exhibited toward Douglas MacArthur, I didn't really understand the power of his legacy until I was assigned to serve in South Korea in the late 1970s. I was commanding a trainload of soldiers and equipment heading for Annual Service Practice that broke down in the middle of the night, and my interpreter and I appealed to a sleepy local stationmaster for assistance. He seemed reluctant to help until he spotted my West Point class ring, and after a burst of excited discussion he went out and woke up what seemed to be the whole population of the surrounding village to repair our train. When I asked my interpreter what had happened, he explained that when the stationmaster realized I had gone to the US Military Academy, he felt obligated to render all possible assistance because "General MacArthur went to West Point, too."

As often happens in the United States, MacArthur has been the target of a considerable amount of critical revisionist history since his death in 1964. In *MacArthur and the American Century*, William M. Leary has assembled a collection of essays reassessing the general's legacy. The editor describes the volume as an introduction to MacArthur's career, and it appears to be an attempt to consolidate a variety of post-revisionist evaluations of the most controversial events

in his extraordinary life. Purposeful connections to "the American Century" are tenuous at best, but the selections do illuminate important aspects of World War II and Korea.

Though the book contains some of MacArthur's most eloquent speeches and two first-person recollections, the bulk of the volume features commentaries by present-day historians. The best sections--on the campaign in the Southwest Pacific, postwar occupation of Japan, and Korean War--include a number of contrasting interpretations of MacArthur's performance that display the conflicting passions he still inspires. The essays on Korea are particularly good, including entries by D. Clayton James, Barton Bernstein, and Edgar O'Ballance. Stephen Taafe, Edward Drea, and Clark Reynolds present some provocative observations on World War II in the Pacific. Leary also includes useful commentaries from an Australian and a Japanese historian concerning MacArthur's impact on their nations.

The rest of the volume is much more uneven. MacArthur's early years through his remarkable performance in World War I are not covered, and the only discussion of his important contributions as Chief of Staff of the Army deals with the Bonus March. Stephen Ambrose's rosy characterization of MacArthur's term as Superintendent at the Military Academy needed a counterbalancing view. The "Assessments" chapter is especially disappointing. The editor's reliance there on book reviews of MacArthur biographies can be questioned, and Laura Belmonte's peculiar article on gender and the culture of militarism misrepresents some facts and seems very much out of place. What this volume lacks most is some sense of the awe MacArthur inspired in Americans of his own generation, like my parents. Leary's work would have benefited from the addition of more contemporary accounts.

For readers wanting an introduction to Douglas MacArthur's fascinating career, I recommend Geoffrey Perret's *Old Soldiers Never Die*. For those with more time and wanting a more thorough evaluation, D. Clayton James's multivolume biography cannot be surpassed. Leary's book serves better as a supplement to these other works.

● **Spies and Commandos: How America Lost the Secret War in North Vietnam.** By Kenneth Conboy and Dale Andradé. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2000. 347 pages. \$34.95. **Reviewed by Dr. Henry G. Gole (Colonel, USA Ret.),** who served with MACSOG in Vietnam.

Conboy and Andradé, both of whom have written other books dealing with covert operations in Vietnam, provide us a thoroughly researched and comprehensive account of America's failed clandestine war in North Vietnam. The book is grounded in previously untapped sources, whose full exploitation promises to reveal other aspects of that war. Finding truth in covert operations is difficult due to the nature of operations replete with deception and cover stories designed to mislead. Failed operations provide yet another reason to hide the father of the bastard child. Therefore, the authors' "Note on Sources" is especially useful to the reader.

The Pentagon Papers, leaked in 1971, exposed a covert program in North Vietnam from 1954, a secret war deemed appropriate before US combat troops were committed openly. In 1992, the "Military Assistance Command Studies and Operations Group (MACSOG) Documentation Study," written in 1970, came to light. It provided evidence for what previously had been speculation and rumor, and, because it named names, led to interviews with participants. This source was cross-referenced with classified special operations annexes to the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) command histories to get the details of specific missions into North Vietnam. Then, in late 1995, archivists at the National Archives discovered 80 boxes of SOG financial records, allowing researchers to follow the money trail. Moreover, since 1984 Hanoi has permitted the publication of accounts of countermeasures taken against agents from the South, thus adding insights from "the other side of the hill." Diligence in mining sources and the backgrounds of our authors have produced an authoritative and convincing story.

It is a story of failure--failure in concept, preparation, and execution; in learning from experience; and in loyalty to the indigenous people the United States used, deserted, and forgot. The story begins in 1952, describing the optimism and naïveté of the five-year-old CIA, whose agents behaved like irresponsible cowboys. It points to the folly of encouraging the post-1954 migration of Catholics from North to South Vietnam, thus removing a stay-behind potential that would have facilitated the survival of agents inserted into North Vietnam. It characterizes incompetence in a world in which "Terry and the Pirates" met Charlie Chaplin's feckless little hobo. It is a litany of defects.

The Saigon government was (and would remain) too busy with palace intrigue to heed events in the countryside. American advisers failed to recognize the difference between inserting agents into World War II Europe, with resistance to Hitler ready to support them, and putting agents into a land in the iron grip of Hanoi, where militia was present in almost every village. Repeated use of the same insertion techniques by air and sea between 1961 and 1967 resulted in 54 teams (some 500 men) being killed or captured. SOG's own figures show almost complete failure from 1964 (when it took the mission from the CIA) to 1968. Indications that inserted teams had been turned by the enemy were ignored. Non-Vietnamese speakers were given Vietnamese identification and cover stories. Missions were clumsily conceived and blurred, failing to make distinctions between long-term intelligence gathering (requiring patience and passivity) and sabotage, kidnapping, and ambushing missions (requiring shock, violence, and firepower, thus revealing their presence). Background investigations of agents were crude and ineffective. Agents from different programs mingled in training and recreation, making it easy for enemy spies to determine and report to Hanoi who was doing what. The same safe houses were used for years. The US military in Vietnam negotiated with the American Ambassador in Laos as though with a foreign power. Despite almost uninterrupted failure, Walt Rostow and Robert S. McNamara considered Oplan 34A-64 "a well-reasoned plan of gradual escalation." Distance between thought and deed was great.

Not until 1968 was it determined that North Vietnam was paranoid regarding threats to its total control. That is, psychological operations, cheap in money and lives, caused counterproductive repressive measures by North Vietnam. Ironically, just when enemy vulnerabilities and SOG capabilities were properly matched and SOG hit its stride, President Johnson summoned General Abrams to Washington to tell him that bombing and other operations in North Vietnam would be halted.

The authors conclude that the CIA and SOG operations in North Vietnam affected Hanoi's war only marginally. This reviewer accepts that conclusion and commends the book to readers with three observations. First, the book is very detailed, making it valuable to specialists in covert operations and to scholars, but perhaps a bit overwhelming to the general reader. Second, your reviewer does not accept the charge of SOG ineptness in connection with operations in Laos and Cambodia, but that is a topic for another book. Finally, as a professional soldier and proud American, your reviewer feels unmitigated shame for the shoddy manner in which we used and discarded our brave and loyal foreign "assets" after the war.

● **Leadership in Conflict: 1914-1918.** Edited by Matthew Hughes and Matthew Seligmann. South Yorkshire, Eng.: Leo Cooper, Pen & Sword Books, 2000. 291 pages. \$45.00. **Reviewed by Dr. Douglas V. Johnson II (LTC, USA Ret.),** a research professor with the Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College.

Save your investment here; this book is not what it purports to be. Ask your library to order a copy for the shelves in order to gain access to the extensive footnotes. If you choose to pick this book up, be prepared for a confusing array of "leaders," as they run from former ambassadors turned arch-propagandists to a relatively obscure division commander, a prominent doctor, two field marshals, and heads of state. The unifying thread, loosely woven, is the power of personality in war, and the reader would best approach this by first reading the classic *Die Macht der Persönlichkeit im Kriege*, written by Major General Baron Hugo von Freytag-Loringhoven in 1905.

Thereafter, be prepared to skim this work for particular details as several of the chapters are in serious need of editing for coherence. Beware of the conclusions in several chapters as they do not follow logically from the preceding material. The reader is left with the impression that these papers were hurriedly prepared for a conference that contained a promise to publish the compendium by a certain date that turned out to be too soon after the event. These are faults that must be placed on the editors.

All that said, there is material in this book worth reading. The final chapter, "Kaiser Wilhelm: The Hohenzollerns at War," is nicely done, but it should have been packaged with the other two German pieces on Moltke and Falkenhayn. Contrariwise, the Falkenhayn piece, which in reality addresses staff intrigue more than personality, sets the stage for what could have been a very interesting cross-cultural set on Easterners vs. Westerners in various armies. Another theme deserving greater recognition is the function of personality in coalition operations. In fact, that theme should have been obvious in several essays, particularly those on Foch, Pershing, Rawlinson, and, with some tweaking, Lloyd

George. The editors might well have concluded that in coalition operations, the function of personality in a senior leader is superior to almost every other quality. When interviewed after our recent Gulf War, Lieutenant General Calvin Waller, Deputy Commander-in-Chief, Central Command, interrupted the interview process to say words to exactly that effect. The Rawlinson piece makes this point admirably through the essay, except in the conclusion.

There are good authors in this book, and their research is extensive and well documented. However, the book leaves much to be desired, and the reader will find it necessary to tread carefully amidst the jumble.

● **Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation.** By Joseph J. Ellis. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000. 288 pages. \$26.00. **Reviewed by Dr. Robert M. S. McDonald,** assistant professor of history, US Military Academy.

Joseph J. Ellis's Pulitzer Prize-winning group portrait of the revolutionary generation renders the Founding Fathers not as statuesque patriarchs but instead as a sometimes raucous fraternity of strong-willed statesmen competing and collaborating to answer questions that the War for Independence posed but did not answer: When coinciding claims of liberty, equality, and union come into conflict, which would prevail? Did the new republic derive its authority from laws or men? Would sovereignty reside in the states, the national government, or, as the Constitution of 1787-88 somewhat imaginatively claimed, an "American" people who at the outset of the federal experiment did not really exist? As Ellis's expert account makes clear, the founders proved themselves so adept at constructing alternative responses that today these questions continue to resonate.

Ellis is selective in characterizing this generation, which he describes (notwithstanding recent claims by Tom Brokaw) as the greatest in American history. He focuses on George Washington, whose willingness to not only embrace but also relinquish power made him "an incalculable asset" to the revolutionary enterprise; John Adams, Washington's fiercely independent, realistic, and self-sacrificing successor; Thomas Jefferson, the graceful willow of a man whose lofty rhetoric reflected his soaring capacity for self-delusion; James Madison, the detail-oriented political scientist and Jeffersonian tactician; and Benjamin Franklin, the venerable sage whose knack for timing placed him at the head of the American abolitionist movement at the only moment it may have had a decent chance of peaceably succeeding. Abigail Adams, the second President's wife and one-woman cabinet, plays a supporting role in Ellis's account. So do Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr who, in chapter one, illustrate through their famous 1804 duel the fact that a concern for one's honor could cause a member of the founding cohort (enter Hamilton) to risk all against a craven upstart (enter Burr) who called it into question.

The fatal encounter between Hamilton and Burr proved to be more of an exception than a rule, Ellis maintains. Subsequent chapters focus on instances of compromise: Jefferson's 1790 dinner table diplomacy, which influenced Hamilton to support Madison's plan to locate the permanent capital on the Potomac and Madison to drop his opposition to Hamilton's debt financing scheme; Congress's 1790 agreement, after a particularly bruising debate over slavery, to preclude future discussion of the issue; Washington's authorial collaboration with Madison and Hamilton, which yielded his 1796 farewell address urging "unity at home and independence abroad"; Adams's troubled presidency, which could have been defined by partnership with Jefferson but, after Jefferson spurned the olive branch and embraced Madison's more partisan vision, ended up as a partnership between Adams and his protective, spitfire wife; and the final rapprochement between Adams and Jefferson, who from 1812 to 1826 engaged in an elegiac correspondence marked by posing for posterity and gentlemanly argument. Ellis's episodic treatment allows him to focus on these key interludes, reach backward or forward in time to provide context, and construct an impressively elegant study of sufficient breadth to encompass its penetrating interpretive depth.

His overarching interpretation--that the revolutionary generation's compromises and accommodations preserved the shaky union but failed to resolve with any specificity the ends the union served--does not represent an indiscriminate return to the 1950s "consensus" school of American historiography. But Ellis's emphasis on contingency, on the "improvisational" nature of the period and the fact that "sheer chance, pure luck--both good and bad--and specific decisions made in the crucible of specific military and political crises" determined outcomes does represent a departure from the sometimes overly deterministic ideological interpretations that since the late 1960s have marked studies of the new nation. While this scholarship informs Ellis's account, personality (together with personal choices and relationships) trumps ideology as an agent of change.

As such, this engaging, persuasive book can be read as a leadership primer, an account of real individuals who made real decisions yielding real consequences that shaped their world and continue, for better and worse, to influence ours.

Reviewed 16 August 2001. Please send comments or corrections to carl_Parameters@conus.army.mil