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Editor's Shelf

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Editor's Shelf

From *Parameters*, Summer 2002, pp. 115-17.

In the aftermath of the events of 11 September 2001 there has been a rush to publish on the part of many who would tell us of the motivations and actions of those who committed those vile acts. Among the multitude of releases are three new entries that deserve attention. Each of these works goes beyond the current fundamentalist threat to America and explores the long-term implications of the new terrorist threat. The first of these works is published by Public Affairs and combines the special expertise of two of America's most prestigious editors, James F. Hoge, Jr., and Gideon Rose, the editor and managing editor of *Foreign Affairs*. The book's revealing title, *How Did This Happen? Terrorism and the New War*, reflects the editors' attempt to answer this Machiavellian conundrum and at the same time prepare America for the conflicts ahead. Hoge and Rose have assembled a collection of narratives by some of America's most recognized experts, ranging from Samuel R. Berger, Wesley K. Clark, and William J. Perry to Anatol Lieven, Michael Mandelbaum, and Fareed Zakaria. The book spans the spectrum of the causes and effects associated with terrorism—the motives and actions of terrorists, the ability of the US military to counter terrorists, the impact of the situation in the Middle East, bioterrorism, airport security, and diplomatic pressures. What makes this collection unique is the fact that it is not merely a presentation of op-ed or opinion pieces on the issues leading to the present crisis, but informed, sound, and insightful analyses providing perspective and reliable interpretation of the many issues that created the environment supportive of the events of 11 September 2001 and beyond. A few especially noteworthy offerings (to this reader) merit specific mention. Michael Scott Doran's "Somebody Else's Civil War: Ideology, Rage, and the Assault on America" provides a riveting insight into the organization and motivation of terrorist organizations throughout the world, and their impacts not only on America but on the world in general. Walter Laqueur's "Left, Right, and Beyond: The Changing Face of Terror," William Perry's "The New Security Mantra: Prevention, Deterrence, Defense," and Anatol Lieven's "The Cold War is Finally Over: The True Significance of the Attacks" are equally deserving of the reader's time.



A companion to the offering by Hoge and Rose is *To Prevail: An American Strategy for the Campaign Against Terrorism* by Kurt M. Campbell and Michele A. Flournoy, both with the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). This book is a product of the CSIS Task Force on Terrorism. The book's announced intent is to take the reader beyond the drama associated with the events of 11 September 2001 and to encourage an understanding of the medium- to long-term implications of this new terrorist threat. The authors highlight the difficult choices that will have to be made in the areas of foreign assistance, public diplomacy, and assistance to failed states if we are to be victorious. The authors would have the reader believe that in order to prevail we must, as a nation, place our trust and diplomatic treasure with such organizations as the United Nations and others within the international community so that we might reap the benefit of their support. Various contributors challenge

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America to identify and eradicate the social and political factors that spawn global terrorism. Many of these recommendations go beyond the traditional conservative role the United States has exercised in the past, extolling a more international view of the influences, missteps, and miscalculations that permitted this fundamentalist threat to evolve. As with any task force product, the real value of the book lies with its "Key Findings and Recommendations." There are 16 specific findings by the task force. They range from the obvious—descriptions and definitions associated with "the new terrorism," a call for greater partisanship on the part of Congress, and the need for "international engagement"—to the more esoteric—refocusing our strategic alignment throughout the world, a call for an "international coalition of coalitions," and how to win the "hearts and minds" of Arabs and Muslims throughout the world. The findings are followed by 18 recommendations. This is the area where the authors and their contributors may face the greatest criticism. Although many of the recommendations have already been acted upon, the reader is

left with an uneasy feeling that all we need is more funding for foreign assistance and the military, combined with better relations with the Congress and nations around the world, and all will be well. The task force may have overlooked one basic recommendation, the need to identify and destroy those who would support, condone, or carry out such acts. However, in fairness to the authors and their contributors, the book presents a comprehensive, succinct, and informative analysis of how we should deal with this threat in the years ahead. It is an excellent primer for any academic or intellectual analysis of the terrorist threat to America and the world.

A third view of the terrorism threat is from two of the nation's recognized experts on international terrorism, John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, and is titled *Networks and Netwars*. Do not panic—the book is not targeted at technophiles. Rather, it is a balanced and readable examination of the many emerging threats to America's security, and is suitable for a broad audience. The authors follow in the tradition of the Tofflers, Peters, and other futurists to produce a view of how to survive in the information age. They draw on their 1996 work, *The Advent of Netwar*, to present three sets of case studies addressing terrorists, criminals, and gangs; social netwars in Burma, Mexico, and Seattle; and finally some chapters on the technological, organizational, and doctrinal dynamics of netwar. In each of these sections contributing authors discuss how networks—human and electronic—facilitate the individual's exercise of power. The authors redefine the word “network” beyond the electronic environment that immediately comes to mind. They encourage the reader to meld the human and electronic aspects to better understand how something like “communications technology”—bin Laden's satellite phones—enables his human network—al Qaeda and the Taliban—to assemble and disperse rapidly, to “swarm,” employing a term the authors coined in their earlier work on 21st-century doctrine. The authors describe netwar as having the potential for good and evil. The first portion of the book looks at the evil of networks through the actions of terrorists, criminals, and anarchists. They then shift their focus to the potential for good that networks may exert through social netwar, cyberactivism, and peaceful protest. The concluding section examines the impacts of the internet, technology-enabled social movements, and the future of netwar. Policymakers and strategists alike will appreciate this book. Likewise, anyone involved in the study of how the information and technological revolutions have affected the nature of future conflict should read this seminal work.

An editor's lot is never an easy one. In attempting to review the greatest number of deserving books one sometimes inadvertently misses a nugget among all the stones. Such was the case with George M. Watson's *Voices From the Rear: Vietnam 1969-1970*. Only as the result of a serendipitous phone call did the book come to my attention. For those who

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served in noncombat assignments in Vietnam, this book will bring back more memories than you ever imagined, or possibly desired. It is the story of a college graduate draftee's experiences, from basic training to his tour in Vietnam and his eventual return to civilian society.

There has been a plethora of personal accounts related to the war in Vietnam in recent years, but Watson's tale is unique. Told from the perspective of one who was “screwed” by his draft board, the Army, and American society in general, it brings back many of the bad memories of the Vietnam experience. Watson, currently Chief of the Special Projects Team at the Air Force History Support Office in Washington, D.C., bases his story on remembrances and the more than 250 letters he sent to his girlfriend, later to be his wife. This is not the story of combat that most students of the Vietnam War have come to expect, but rather a glimpse at the mind-numbing routine that most soldiers in Vietnam experienced—mind-numbing routine punctuated by the terror associated with rocket attacks and the occasional probe of the perimeter. Admittedly, there are many who would have happily traded duty assignments with Watson; his time spent at Bien Hoa airbase, and later with the 101st Admin Company at Phu Bai, probably looked pretty darn good to those out in the field. What drew this reader into this particular book was the overarching tinge of sarcasm and acrimony that accompanies each of the author's vignettes. The bitter disgust for authority and the Army in general that many experienced comes through to color almost every act and experience. What the author portrays, knowingly or unknowingly, is a microcosm of the American military and society in general during those turbulent 60s and 70s. For students of the military, or historians, this book presents stark insight into just how bad that Army was, and some possible explanations as to why. For those who served in Vietnam, read it. It will refresh your memories, perhaps to your chagrin.

Two hundred years at any endeavor certainly suggests some measure of success. Having just celebrated its 200th birthday in March 2002, West Point continues to support and reflect the nation it serves. Theodore J. Crackel's *West Point: A Bicentennial History* is the much-anticipated sequel to his *Illustrated History of West Point*. It is certain to be a classic work on the United States Military Academy and its history. Crackel, a visiting professor of history at West Point during its bicentennial year (2001-2002), has produced an extremely readable and introspective view of our nation's oldest military school. The book chronicles the academy's past, including unvarnished looks at cadet and faculty life, institutional governances, curriculum development, the physical growth of the institution, and the growing diversity of the corps of cadets. Of special interest to those who graduated from or served at the academy are the issues associated with the inherent tension between various superintendents and the academic boards, who have often held competing visions of the institution's future. Any student of today's Army will appreciate the chapter "The Years of Turmoil, 1960-2001." This revealing look at the near-constant change that the academy undertook in the last four decades of the 20th century provides candid insights into the institution that has produced some of America's greatest leaders. Crackel's work, intended to recognize this milestone in the life of the US Military Academy, does much more. It answers the age-old question of those who doubt the cost-effectiveness of national military academies. If a nation is to be remembered by history as being truly great, it must produce certain vestiges of greatness, vestiges that provide exponential returns on the original investment. The investment in this case is our nation's sons and daughters; the return, 200 years of graduates who believe in and support the motto "Duty, Honor, Country." Ted Crackel's work makes this abundantly clear to all. It is by far the best of many books on the institutional and social history of West Point. — RHT

Reviewed 14 May 2002. Please send comments or corrections to carl_Parameters@conus.army.mil