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Editor's Shelf

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Editor's Shelf

As the United States concludes its second war with Iraq, the world has received an unprecedented education on the modalities of warfare. “Embedded” journalists and 24/7 news coverage provided observers with insights and perspectives on the strategies, operational capabilities, and the individual strengths and weaknesses associated with combat that prior to this war were replicated only on the sound-stages of Hollywood or in video games. Nations have traditionally been enthralled with the preparations, planning, and execution required for the application of military power, but never to the degree Americans were with this war. The decisions associated with the commitment of America’s most precious resource, its young men and women, into harm’s way made for great theater. Although this war will, in all likelihood, be remembered as a “conventional conflict” it is not representative of what most strategists view as the greatest threat to our national security. Most analysts still believe the overarching threat to American and global security remains non-state actors and their asymmetrical tactics. The explanation of why, where, and when nations decide to exercise military might to counter such threats has resulted in a plethora of new books.



Of special interest to those who followed or participated in the United States’ first war with Iraq is Andrew J. Bacevich and Efraim Inbar’s latest effort, *The Gulf War of 1991 Reconsidered*, a timely and comprehensive examination of America’s first intervention into the Middle East. The editors have assembled a collection of manuscripts examining this watershed event and its impact on international relations. The contributors place the initial Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in a much broader historical perspective. Benefiting from hindsight, they view Desert Storm as much more than merely a brief military conflict. The authors review the first war with Iraq in a context that has amazing parallels with the events of 2003. The contributors answer many of the questions related to why this region remains a preoccupation for American foreign policy. This quick read provides tremendous insight into America’s continuing role in the Middle East.

Richard D. Sokolsky of the Institute for National Strategic Studies at the National Defense University (NDU) has edited a great companion piece for the Bacevich and Inbar effort, *The United States and the Persian Gulf: Reshaping Security Strategy for the Post-Containment Era*. Although the book’s thesis is based on an examination of what the editor believed at publication to be a doomed policy of dual containment in the Persian Gulf region by the United States, the book in fact

For details on publishers and prices of books mentioned, see “Off the Press” in this issue or call *Parameters* at 717-245-4943 (e-mail: Parameters@awc.carlisle.army.mil).

outlines a blueprint for a new security strategy encompassing the entire Gulf region. Sokolsky has gathered a collection of articles from compatriots at NDU to provide a new, longer-range view of the US presence in the region. The contributors present a comprehensive and persuasive analysis of a continuing role by America and its allies. Each chapter provides a differing view of the tradeoffs necessary for a successful US military presence, the promotion of an active American defense policy, or the prosecution of the global war against terrorism. The contributors also offer a new set of equally important principles for the promotion of political and economic reforms essential to resolving many of the region's problems.

To fully comprehend the magnitude of the United States' global interests and the associated threats to our national security, one must first visualize and understand the complete spectrum of future warfare. In *Non-State Threats and Future Wars*, Dr. Robert J. Bunker has assembled a world-class team of defense and national security scholars along with a collection of real-world law enforcement experts to examine the growing threat by non-state actors to the security interests of the United States found at the lower end of the spectrum of war. His book includes such classics as Ralph Peters' 1994 work, "The New Warrior Class," and an updated version of Martin van Creveld's epic, *The Transformation of War*. Bunker divides his work into four major categories for ease of reading and edification: The first examines the theory of future war; the second is comprised of case studies related to the threat posed by non-state actors; the third details advanced concepts and technologies to counter the strategies of opposing forces; and the final section contains two rather distinct presentations. The first is a previously unpublished manuscript from 1987 by T. Lindsay Moore, "The Structure of War: Early Fourth Epoch War Research." The companion piece is based on a series of interviews with key Chechen leaders who fought against the Russians in the 1990s. Bunker concludes that the United States needs to make radical departures from the national security norm if we are to successfully meet the security challenges demonstrated by the events of 9/11.

Roger W. Barnett follows on Bunker's segue to nontraditional threats with his *Asymmetrical Warfare: Today's Challenge to U.S. Military Power*. Dr. Barnett, a retired Navy captain and professor emeritus at the US Naval War College, has crafted a concise and penetrating study of the United States' ability to counter asymmetrical threats. The author reviews the operational, organizational, legal, and moral implications for the use of military force in such cases. Barnett presents a unique argument based on a revised definition of asymmetrical warfare, "taking the calculated risk to exploit an adversary's inability or unwillingness to prevent, or defend against, certain actions." He postulates the United States will always be at a political and policy disadvantage in countering asymmetrical threats due to our unwillingness to respond in kind. Barnett concludes America must create a formal system of responses that will selectively overcome the restraints that perpetuate such reluctance if we are to protect our citizens and national interests.

Paul K. Davis and Brian Michael Jenkins, two distinguished RAND researchers and advisers, have produced a succinct book that proceeds down the same

road as Barnett's work. In *Deterrence & Influence in Counterterrorism: A Component in the War on al Qaeda*, the authors assess America's ability to counter asymmetrical threats and terrorism. Davis and Jenkins recognize it may be difficult, if not impossible, to influence individual terrorists, but they recommend the United States leverage the systems that terrorists form. The report was the result of a joint effort by the sponsoring Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), RAND, and the Institute for Defense Analyses. Davis and Jenkins outline the development of a security strategy capable of influencing those elements of the terrorists' systems that are, in fact, deterrable. Their strategy would include a credible military and political threat capable of placing at risk those things that the terrorists hold dear. The authors do, however, place equal importance on the preservation of core American values, including the discriminate use of force and the maintenance of due process.

Readers interested in the "new American way of war" might turn their attention to two new entries to the market. The first, based on Barnett R. Rubin's years of experience as director of the Center for Preventive Action (CPA) at the Council on Foreign Relations, is *Blood on the Doorstep: The Politics of Preventive Action*. Rubin has created an insightful and informative treatise on regional crisis and its influence on US global security strategy. The author asserts the attacks of 9/11 proved, once and for all, that America ignores the collapse of distant states and the spread of war and disorder at its own peril. Dire conditions that arise in seemingly isolated and distant parts of the globe are in fact incubators for violence that have the potential for striking directly at America. Rubin's thesis is built on the presumption that it is much more difficult to contain these acts once they have flared into violence, ethnic conflict, failed states, or humanitarian disasters. He calls for the establishment of a partnership of nation-states, international organizations, and nongovernmental agencies to reduce the causes of such violence and to prevent its escalation.

The second book is William J. Long and Peter Brecke's *War and Reconciliation: Reason and Emotion in Conflict Resolution*. With the recent experiences of Afghanistan and Iraq fresh in our minds, many are asking how do nations know when they have won and what measures do they, or should they, take to reconcile the peace. The authors present 11 comparative case studies of civil war and eight international conflicts in an effort to explain when and why reconciliation should be used to restore social order. The book centers on the integration of emotion with reasoning and their linkage to the realms of political science and scientific research. The civil war case studies reveal that successful reconciliation following conflict is strongly associated with a process recognized as "national forgiveness," not simply a negotiated settlement. Contrasting this conclusion was the analysis of the international cases. In these studies it was determined that successful reconciliation was not a part of a forgiveness process. Rather, reconciliation was associated with a signaling process—an exchange of costly, novel, voluntary, and irrevocable concessions in a negotiated process. The book provides insight into much of the violence that dominates today's security environment and suggests solutions through the auspices of reconciliation. — RHT □