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## Book Reviews

Parameters Editors

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## *Book Reviews*

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**Union 1812: The Americans Who Fought the Second War of Independence.** By A. J. Langguth. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006). 482 pages. \$30.00 (\$16.00 paper). **Reviewed by Dr. Paul J. Springer,** Department of History, US Military Academy.

A. J. Langguth states in his acknowledgements that “it is high praise when history is said to read like a novel,” and from that standpoint, his latest work is worthy of high praise. His survey of the events and individuals surrounding the conflict is filled with humorous anecdotes and full character descriptions, breathing life into the leaders of the young American nation who guided the country through one of its earliest and most difficult crises. Langguth believes that the war cannot be understood without a thorough review of the events between the end of the Revolutionary War in 1783 and the beginning of what he terms the Second War of Independence. For this reason, he devotes nearly half of his monograph to a joint biography of George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, and James Madison, explaining each within the context of his times and using each as a lens to examine the state of the nation.

Perhaps the most interesting and useful aspect of Langguth’s work is his ability to vividly portray the political and military leaders on both sides of the conflict. In many ways, this constitutes a continuation of Langguth’s *The Patriots* rather than a long introduction to the subject of the present work. His character studies are unbiased, displaying the strengths and flaws of his subjects in great detail. In his view, it was the individual leaders in America and Britain who drove the conflict and determined its outcome, not the vagaries of battlefield engagements.

Unfortunately, the greatest strength of the work is also its greatest weakness. At many times in the work, the biographies seem unfinished; Langguth moves on to a new subject without finalizing an argument about his previous topic, primarily to preserve his chosen method of organization. For example, Chapters Three and Four are dedicated to Washington and Adams, respectively, and chronicle the years each served as President of the United States. Chapter Five, however, discusses Thomas Jefferson, but only describes his first administration. For the examination of the years 1805-1809, Jefferson suddenly becomes a supporting character, replaced by the likes of Andrew Jackson and Zebulon Pike. Jefferson reappears at the heart of the embargo controversy, but the pattern of the narrative is irrevocably lost. This example demonstrates a troubling problem within Langguth’s work. In an understandable desire to maintain the reader’s interest through humorous anecdotes, Langguth allows tangential details to interrupt the overall flow of his narrative.

For Langguth, the primary responsibility for the war rested with American leadership. Without the turmoil of American politics, the war could not have started. Without the rivalries inside Madison’s cabinet, it could not have continued through three years of disastrous setbacks. Yet despite the stubborn factionalism of the poli-

ticians and generals driving the conflict from the American side, the British and their Native American allies must shoulder some of the blame for the conflict. By focusing so heavily upon the American side of the conflict, Langguth virtually ignores the other belligerents, with the exception of Tecumseh and Isaac Brock.

*Union 1812* demonstrates that not all worthwhile military history needs to be produced by historians trained within the traditions of the profession. A professor emeritus of journalism, Langguth has a special gift for prose that draws in the general reader and expert alike. Regrettably, he also follows the growing recent trend of avoiding sufficient notes, primarily providing citations only when using direct quotes. Too often, Langguth requires the reader to accept his arguments on faith. Footnotes may seem an antiquated notion, but they serve the specific purpose of building evidence and leaving intellectual footprints for the reader to follow. In Langguth's case, a careful examination of his sources reveals a dearth of primary sources, particularly of the unpublished variety. He examined virtually every significant monograph written about the conflict, but no articles or dissertations, indicating a broad research agenda, but a lack of depth. In the text, this tends to translate to a lack of rigorous analysis.

Ultimately, Langguth provides an enjoyable summary of the significant events and personalities surrounding the War of 1812, but little explanation of why the events occurred. It is a very useful and necessary synthesis, but provides little novelty to experts of the era. The work will be extremely useful for individuals looking for a one-volume summary of American politics and diplomacy of the period from 1783-1815, but is of less utility to readers interested solely in the War of 1812.

**Muhammad: Islam's First Great General.** By Richard A. Gabriel. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007. 252 pages. \$24.95. **Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Robert Bateman**, a strategist assigned to the Office of Net Assessment, Office of the Secretary of Defense.

Books about the founder of Islam probably number in the tens of thousands. Thousands of tracts exist relating to his personal life, his philosophies, his sayings, and his actions as a religious leader. But to my knowledge until this point no full-length book had addressed him purely as a military/political leader, certainly none in English. In doing so Richard Gabriel does a service. *Muhammad: Islam's First Great General* is not political in the modern sense, it contains no polemic, nor does the author make any value judgments regarding religious issues. This book addresses Muhammad's actions solely on the basis of his success as a Clausewitzian military leader who fused political objectives to strategic, operational, and even tactical means.

The author has the credentials for the project (Gabriel used to be a professor at the Army War College and has written extensively on a myriad of subjects), and his approach promises to be a new one to an old topic. Divorced from the religious elements of the story, the founder of Islam turns out to have been a shrewd, if self-educated, master of the military and political elements required to wage a successful insurgency.

One learns of the origins and nature of Muhammad's initial "battles." These were skirmishes really, given that at his first "battle" he commanded just a little more than 300 men. But Gabriel tracks that evolution (two years later Muhammad fielded a force of 1,500, and six years after that initial battle he put 10,000 men into the field) and sufficiently explains how the founder of a new religion was fairly artful in his political maneuvering—combining force with guile, fusing an apparent keen understanding of local politics and power with a comprehension of human nature. Muhammad also appears to have been gifted with a sufficient amount of inborn coup d'oeil to succeed on the battlefield, albeit in a limited scale, before he had attracted more talented military leaders to his standard who would later lead his burgeoning hosts. It may be considered significant as well that once he did attract such military talent Muhammad did not retain direct control but actually used those newly converted military leaders as leaders, while he himself transitioned to a more political role. Considering how rare that sort of thing is throughout military history, Muhammad does qualify as unique on that count alone.

Gabriel's key point may be in his analysis and observation that Muhammad was, at the outset, very much a guerrilla leader who presented a new political vision for structuring society in what is now Arabia. Prior to the creation of his religion, life beyond the towns (and to a degree within the towns and their environs) was socially controlled by familial and tribal ties. All behavior was corporate, and so all conflicts were defined by tribal affiliations. Demographics generally meant that the result was stagnation, since no one tribe could mass forces sufficiently to dominate the others. Muhammad's introduction of a new religion broke and restructured the societal bonds in such a way as to undermine the power of the tribes in favor of his proposed transcendent allegiance to the "umma" (the community of believers in Muhammad's new religion). This, in turn, was the driving force which allowed him to amass power.

Complete with maps and simple prose, *Muhammad: Islam's First Great General* gives the reader a solid grounding in the origins of Islam's military success.

**Americans and Asymmetric Conflict: Lebanon, Somalia, and Afghanistan.** By Adam B. Lowther. Westport, Conn.: Praeger Security International, 2007. 230 pages. \$75.00. **Reviewed by Major Matthew M. Zais**, Instructor of American Politics, Policy, and Strategy, US Military Academy.

Adam Lowther's analysis of America's experience in asymmetric conflict affords a unique perspective in a burgeoning genre. The author explores America's role in conflicts characterized by disproportionate capabilities and ill-defined objectives. He succeeds in painstakingly tracing the history of unconventional military theory. Lowther provides a superbly systematic analysis of US involvement in Lebanon, Somalia, and Afghanistan. The analysis, however, struggles when conceptually differentiating "asymmetric" conflict from other forms of unconventional engagement. Lowther is eager to suppose a fundamental distinction between "asymmetric" conflict and guerrilla or irregular warfare, but his justifications are ulti-

mately confounding. The author does provide instructive lessons that should be remembered in any future conflict; unfortunately, he offers few suggestions regarding force structure and doctrine.

The reader is left wondering how are we to reconcile current conflicts that see an under equipped and loosely organized adversary challenging the world's military superpowers? Lowther suggests that we must first turn to classic eastern and western military thought to fully appreciate the historical roots and the forgotten regularity of wars defined by asymmetric means. While eastern theorists defined principles for "averting pitched battles," western military thought remained fixated on conventional tactics and strategies. Lowther provides an exhaustive survey from Sun Tzu to Liddell Hart, adeptly exploring the intersection and divergence of eastern and western military thought. While he successfully canvasses authoritative generations regarding military theory, his efforts to extract asymmetric associations are often strained and unconvincing. For example, his analysis of military leaders and theorists such as Jomini, Napoleon, Clausewitz, and Mahan is superbly concise and informative, yet he later suggests that all are essential to an accurate understanding of asymmetric conflict. It would seem that Lowther is attempting to cite every military theorist regardless of his relevance to unconventional conflict.

Lowther then attempts to differentiate asymmetric conflict from guerrilla and irregular war. He asserts that "asymmetric and guerrilla warfare are similar in many respects but differ at the broadest of levels: grand strategy." He suggests that while a guerrilla's grand strategy seeks to overthrow the incumbent political system, asymmetric actors aim to "force a change in his adversary's foreign policy." Asymmetric conflict, according to Lowther, differs from guerrilla warfare in that it involves external intervention and relies heavily on the employment of terrorist tactics. The author claims that guerrillas abstain from indiscriminate violence against local populations, while asymmetric actors seek paradigm shifts in grand strategy, relying on terrorist tactics that indiscriminately target noncombatants. This distinction between guerrilla and asymmetric war is the most controversial factor in Lowther's analysis.

If guerrillas seek the overthrow of an incumbent regime and asymmetric actors aim to fundamentally alter foreign policy, one would expect substantiation from the author that this is in fact the diagnosis from his case studies of Lebanon, Somalia, and Afghanistan. Lowther's methodology for his case studies, however, fails to substantiate the claim that asymmetric conflict should be understood independent of guerrilla and irregular war. Scholars such as Professor Stathis Kalyvas of Yale University and Jason Lyall of Princeton University have posited that guerrillas often resort to and succeed through the application of selective and indiscriminate violence. Kalyvas, in *The Logic of Violence in Civil Wars*, demonstrates qualitatively and quantitatively the impact of selective violence by insurgent and counterinsurgent forces in their attempts to achieve control and collaboration. More importantly, Kalyvas finds that barbarism is often associated with irregular war. Jason Lyall analyzes data related to random Russian artillery strikes in Chechnya and finds that not only is indiscriminate violence a tool for coercion by counterinsurgents, but it can also be utilized to drive down the level of insurgent attacks. Clearly, scholarly de-

bate continues on the efficacy of violence in irregular war, but it is unclear why Lowther attempts to draw his distinction between asymmetric and guerrilla actors through their use of strategy and violence, facts that are empirically unsupported.

Lowther does, however, offer a number of insightful “lessons learned” that are constants in the American unconventional military experience. He finds that human intelligence capacity remains weak, force capability often turns to technological innovations rather than sufficient troop strength, American forces demonstrate a proclivity for static defenses, and interagency coordination for nation-building is often *ad hoc*. Similarly, Stephen Biddle, in *Afghanistan and the Future of Warfare*, warns against associating the rapid defeat of the Taliban as validating a transformation in warfare defined by limited manpower and high technology. Instead, he cautions that we should understand that eliminating the Taliban’s influence is an entirely different objective; one not achieved in Afghanistan and that could only be expected to succeed with the presence of a much larger ground force capable of conventional and unconventional operations. Therefore, as Lowther substantiates, we still face the consequences in Afghanistan of a strategy that abandoned paradigms based on sufficient force capability. One might expect such a result, however, if the means necessary derives from an ill-defined strategy.

*Americans and Asymmetric Conflict* provides a rich survey of military thought that is instructive for those seeking a concise source on unconventional warfare theory. The case studies of Lebanon, Somalia, and Afghanistan are balanced and insightful, and hold value for future contingency planners. They are also an excellent resource to supplement other primary sources related to similar conflicts. It remains unclear, however, why the author chooses to characterize asymmetric conflict as a contemporary phenomenon that is defined by the use of terrorism. Lowther’s “lessons learned” corroborate many of the accounts of current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, but leave this reviewer wondering how the author’s understanding of asymmetric conflict supplants competing explanations related to unconventional war.

**Khrushchev’s Cold War: The Inside Story of an American Adversary.** By Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006. 670 pages. \$35.00. **Reviewed by Dr. Stephen J. Blank**, Professor of National Security Studies, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College.

More than any other leader Nikita Khrushchev globalized the Cold War and turned it from a war of position into a war of movement with constant crises. As a result the period of his tenure as Soviet leader was marked by almost incessant instability, culminating in the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 and the breakup of what had previously been termed a monolithic Soviet bloc. This outstanding contribution to the history of the Cold War explains why he did so and what he hoped to gain. Based on recently opened Soviet archives along with American, French, British, and German sources, memoirs, and secondary literature, the authors present a gripping, well-written account of Khrushchev’s strategy and objectives during the period 1955-64. This was the era when he first gained ascendancy over foreign policy

and culminates with his political demise. Interestingly enough, and to this reviewer's surprise, it was not his foreign and defense policy that appears to have been the primary reason for his ouster in 1964, though it is hard to believe that greater success in these areas would not have forestalled his opposition.

Nevertheless, the main story here is the Cold War crises and diplomacy of the period, the main focus being on Soviet-American relations. But there is also abundant information on Soviet behavior in the 1955-56 period of the "spirit of Geneva," the Suez crisis, the Iraq crisis of 1958, the recurrent German crises related to Berlin, Laos, the U-2 affair, Cuba until the 1962 missile crisis, and a number of disarmament issues following that crisis. The authors make a convincing case that the emplacement of nuclear weapons in Cuba in 1962 was not so much to defend the island from US attacks, but rather to force western concessions on Berlin and disarmament. They also address the origins of Khrushchev's penchant for saber or rocket rattling; identifying the connections between his defense policy, based mainly on the building of ICBMs and intermediate nuclear weapons, and the political costs that this decision imposed on him. The authors convincingly tie together the economic dimensions of Khrushchev's objectives with attempts to force America and the West to take him and Moscow seriously. In their assessment all the contradictory strands of Khrushchev's international, defense, and economic policies come together in convincing style and argumentation.

For analysts of the Cold War and contemporary world politics there are also unexpected benefits from this approach. The authors repeatedly underscore just how bad American intelligence was at fathoming Khrushchev's intentions, policies, and objectives. Soviet intelligence, not surprisingly, given the extent of its penetration of western governments, does better. But at the same time Khrushchev's, not to mention his subordinates', understanding of the West was abysmal and crippled by Leninism along with the traits of Russian culture that blinded them to external realities. As a result one suspects that much of the information garnered from Soviet sources abroad was misinterpreted, misused, or simply ignored. Indeed, one sees much of this continuing Kremlin failure to grasp western societies today, undoubtedly a continuing heritage of past misapprehensions and traditional culture. Thus the main protagonists in the Cold War clearly resembled Henry Kissinger's characterization of two blind men locked in a dark room each thinking the other wants to kill him. And equally unsurprisingly they consequently did a great deal of damage to the furniture in that room, most of all the Third World and Eastern Europe.

While this book is undoubtedly indispensable as an account of the period, there are several lacunae that the reader may wish had been further explored, knowing they would immensely add to a greater understanding of Soviet policies and motivations. The connections between Soviet leadership struggles after 1957 and Khrushchev's foreign and defense policies are left unexplored. Similarly, there is not enough regarding the origins of the Sino-Soviet split which began in 1956, if not earlier, and its consequences for Soviet policies. Although there are discussions of policies regarding Yugoslavia in the 1955 period, along with Poland and Hungary in 1956, and the continuing travails of East German-Soviet relations during this period, there is no overall analysis of Soviet policies, related to defense or foreign policy issues. Surely more

could have been said. Finally, we get only the most cursory analysis of Soviet policies toward America's West European allies and then only in conjunction with the Berlin issue. Notwithstanding these lacunae, this work remains an impressive achievement that is a must read by all students of the Cold War and the former Soviet Union.

**Suicide Bombers in Iraq: The Strategy and Ideology of Martyrdom.** By Mohammed M. Hafez. Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2007. 285 pages. \$17.50 (paper). **Reviewed by Dr. Harry R. Yarger**, Professor of National Security Policy, US Army War College.

Pundits, critics, and acknowledged experts have expounded at length on the internal strategic shortcomings of the United States in creating a stable and democratic Iraq. Fewer have examined this strategic contest from the perspective of the insurgent. In *Suicide Bombers in Iraq* Professor Hafez makes an extraordinary contribution to this alternative perspective. He examines why there is an insurgency in Iraq, how and why it has been successful at forestalling US success, the role and practice of suicide terrorism, and the implications for theory and policy. Consequently, this book offers the reader insight into the Iraqi insurgency and the war on terrorism well beyond what the title implies.

The number of suicide attacks during the Iraqi insurgency has exceeded the combined total of suicide operations conducted by all current and previous terrorist organizations or insurgent groups against America. The reason is obvious—it works! This book revisits why this is true. Professor Hafez's data reveals that not all Iraqi insurgents employ the tactic as freely or base specific strategies on it. This insight is important in determining how the United States conducts counterinsurgency operations. Supported by extensive data, the author makes clear distinctions between the motivations of the nationalist, Baathist, and Jihadi Salafis and how these motivations affect strategy and the conduct of operations. While the data ends in 2006, it and the results of the US surge operations in 2007 support the author's contention that the apparent unity between groups masks the ideological and strategic divides within the insurgency. How Hafez arrives at this provides insight for the strategic thinker regarding the insurgency in Iraq and the broader war on terrorism.

Having made the distinction between groups and the implications of these differences, Professor Hafez turns his attention to the ideology and theology of martyrdom. He provides the reader with the mythology that supports it, how organizations make it work, and a detailed examination of who actually commits the suicide act and why. In addressing these subject areas he is clearly leveraging previous work; *Manufacturing Human Bombs: The Making of Palestinian Suicide Bombers* and *Why Muslims Rebel: Repression and Resistance in the Islamic World*, but offers important new insight. For example, how the killing of fellow Muslims has been legitimized. His conclusions are fully supported by data and firsthand accounts. Even though centered on Iraq, these conclusions provide valuable insight into the broader war on terrorism.

His final chapter, "Implications for Theory and Policy," is worth the price of the book. The author reexamines the four popular interpretations of the deadly



phenomenon of suicide bombing—strategic logic, group competition, psychological trauma, and religious fanaticism—arguing each is inadequate for explaining what is currently occurring in Iraq. In their stead he offers an approach based on individual motivations to become martyrs, organizational motives to send suicide bombers, and societal motives to support suicide attacks. Based on his analysis he offers specific considerations for theory, advances ideas on the potential consequences of Iraq with regard to future terrorism, and develops specific implications for US policy. This book is concise, well-thought, and engagingly written. The reader may not agree with everything Professor Hafez has to say, or want to hear it, but the fundamental arguments are convincing and contribute much to the body of knowledge regarding terrorism and what it portends for the future. For those who think strategically, this work illuminates the key factors that need to be addressed if the United States is to win the war on terrorism. The book should appeal to readers who are directly involved in counterinsurgency in Iraq, those tasked with formulating policy and strategy for the war on terrorism, and individuals interested in counterterrorism theory and doctrine.

**Power, Faith, and Fantasy: America in the Middle East, 1776 to the Present.** By Michael B. Oren. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007. 778 pages. \$29.95 (\$17.95 paper). **Reviewed by Major Christopher R. Danbeck**, Instructor of International Relations, US Military Academy.

Power, faith, and fantasy. With those three words, Michael Oren blends an incredibly detailed account of the United States' extensive interaction with the Middle East. While most readers are aware of America's involvement with the region because of the valuable oil reserves, few know of the role American military officers played in creating the Egyptian military after the Civil War or of the extensive American missionary and tourist travel that occurred in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. To illustrate the depth of this relationship, Oren takes the reader on a detailed excursion through the history of America's interaction with the Middle East. For the purpose of his study, the author defines the area from Algeria to the Persian Gulf, since America's independence in 1776.

The journey starts through the eyes of a young explorer named John Ledyard from New Hampshire, who was one of the first Americans to write about his travels in the Middle East and to reinforce some of the fantastical myths about the region. Fantasy, however, quickly takes a back seat as the realities of power rapidly come into play for the young American nation which, free from British rule, is obliged to develop its own foreign policy. The first President of the United States was also the architect of America's initial foreign policy related to the Middle East, as he struggled to deal with the pirates of the Barbary Coast. But, as Oren makes clear throughout his work, the issue of faith is always near the surface. From the earliest days missionaries from the United States moved to the Middle East in an attempt to create a Jewish homeland. Today's American support for the state of Israel can be traced to these efforts. Oren intertwines three major themes to show the depth and extent of American involvement in

the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Antebellum, Civil War, and Imperialist periods outline the 1800s. In his twentieth century analysis, Oren examines the Great War, World War II, the ascendancy of oil's importance in the world, and the search for *Pax Americana*. The story ends with a comparison of a young Marine officer's experiences during the invasion of Iraq with the experiences of John Ledyard centuries earlier. While at times one of the elements of power, faith, or fantasy may have greater prominence when viewed over a period of decades, Oren clearly develops the interaction of each factor to explore America's interest in the Middle East.

Michael Oren makes a strong case for his book's prominence in the literature related to America and the Middle East when he conducts a literary review of works analyzing American involvement in the region. He makes a convincing argument that a void exists in the literature, based on the fact that no author has yet provided a holistic view of America's Middle East experience. Readers should not be concerned with the length of the book as its logical structure makes it easy to read. An exceptionally well-researched account, the volume includes 79 pages of notes and 48 pages of bibliography for the dedicated scholar.

*Power, Faith, and Fantasy* is clearly a work that history buffs will love—filled with countless facts, names, and stories that, while at times may be distracting, truly bring to life the American experience with this historic region. One such story occurred in March 1790, when an opinion piece appeared in the *Federal Gazette*, published in Philadelphia, penned by Sidi Mehemet Ibrahim. This Algerian prince argued for his right to retain slaves although his slaves happened to be white sailors from America captured during the wars with the Barbary States. Ibrahim insisted that he was concerned primarily for the well-being of the slaves, who he felt could not possibly care for themselves after years in captivity. It was his responsibility to look after the American slaves and to care for them in Algeria under the “Sun of Islamism.” Ibrahim was, in reality, not an Algerian prince. Benjamin Franklin adopted the pseudonym to bring to light the flawed arguments of southern slave-owners during a time when Congress was debating the issue of slavery in America.

In another example, Oren not only describes the extensive involvement of American Army officers in creating the Egyptian Army in the 1870s, but also the American drive to instill a sense of nationalism not present in Egypt. These officers recognized that in order to ensure Egypt's future independence from external rule, they needed to instill “galvanizing ideas like the love of one's country and a commitment to civil society.” This struggle was undertaken by a handful of senior officers who established themselves as the general staff for the Egyptian Army and created the educational system responsible for developing Egyptian officers whose loyalty was aligned with the state. While no direct references are made to the Army's experience in Iraq today, clearly lessons can be examined.

The tenets that tie Oren's arguments together provide a context in which senior members of our defense community may understand America's historical involvement in the Middle East. The majority of America's more than 230 years of active engagement with the Middle East has not been solely defined by oil. Oren highlights this fact through his examination of the intermingling of power, faith, and fantasy that have all served to bind our regions together. Michael Oren's work is a

reminder to present and future strategic leaders that they need to fully understand the extent and import of this historic relationship; as we will in all likelihood remain actively involved in the region for the foreseeable future.

**The West's Last Chance: Will We Win the Clash of Civilizations?**

By Tony Blankley. Washington: Regnery Publishing, 2005. 232 pages. \$27.95. **Reviewed by Matthew J. Morgan**, Associate, McKinsey and Company, and author of *A Democracy Is Born* and *The American Military after 9/11*.

The assignment to review *The West's Last Chance* was a challenge due mainly to the number of dichotomies that appear in the book, making it hard to fit into any particular categorization. Author Tony Blankley, editorial page editor for *The Washington Times*, is an accomplished journalist at what many would stipulate is a reputable but unquestionably right-leaning paper. The dual-appeal to the right-wing common man and the serious student of international affairs is a recurring theme throughout the book. The back cover features endorsements from Rush Limbaugh, the conservative talk show demagogue who never graduated from college, and Henry Kissinger, one of the most significant thinkers on international relations of our time. Regnery Publishing self-consciously positions itself as the nation's "leading conservative publisher" (according to its website), but the author declares his book is an assessment made with "cold logic and objectivity." Written in 2005, the book takes on the still relevant major foreign policy challenges of our time, but new developments on the international stage have obviously taken place since publication.

The opening chapter presents "The Nightmare Scenario," envisioning catastrophic attacks in American suburbia, persisting Islamist pressure on European free expression, the emergence of a Hillary Clinton-esque hawkish Democratic presidential candidate against a dovish ex-Marine Republican senator in 2008, and a history-changing accommodationist European accord with its growing Muslim minority. Aside from the point that a "nightmare" scenario is hardly a logical or objective form of argument, the chapter does have a certain appeal. Tony Blankley presents a readable and provocative narrative. It is at its best when a London-based Islamist campaign seeks to cover or destroy offensive nude statues across Europe. The most implausible part of the chapter comes during the fictitious Republican candidate's speech at a huge Muslim American rally when he announces: "It's time for *sharia* in America." Blankley notes a pervasive ignorance of Islam among Americans, and the nominee's irresponsible declaration is meant to illustrate both this ignorance and its dangerous ramifications. The Republican then loses to the Democrat in a tremendous landslide. In real life, the Republican John McCain has emerged as an uncompromising hawk, and Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama spent the primary period competing over who can bring the most troops home from war the fastest, but the author's political insight is nonetheless impressive. The plausibility of a Clinton landslide is not as strong today (as of this writing) as it was in 2005, and McCain (who is not as clearly caricatured in the chapter as Clinton) has

certainly emerged as a hawk rather than an accommodationist. Perhaps Blankley's critical view of his Republican nominee is expressive of the conservative skepticism of and hostility to McCain, but this reader may be projecting more into Blankley's scenario than intended in 2005. In any case, the call for *sharia* seems to be the most unrealistic part of the chapter. Popular images of *sharia* recall the Afghan Taliban's suppression of burkha-clad women, the conversion of athletic stadiums into public execution sites, and the destruction of Buddhist cultural artifacts. Would an American presidential candidate in 2008 ever call for *sharia*, and would American Muslims—among the most liberal Muslim populations in the world—ever cheer such a thing?

After introducing the concept in the second chapter, "Hope and Determination," the author outlines the dangers of Islam to western civilization in strident tones in Chapter 3, "The Threat." Three main points summarize his argument. First, the recent conceptual innovation of individual jihad has resulted in increasing Islamist terrorism around the world. Second, there is a large population of peaceful Muslims who are at worst supportive, in the middle tolerant, and at best theologically aligned with violent extremists. Finally, the vulnerability of open western societies coupled with the technological availability of radiological "dirty bombs," biological reagents, or even traditional bombs and guns creates more exposure than ever to these emerging threats. On the back cover of the book is an endorsement from Tom Ridge, "Tony Blankley gets it! The enemy is much more than al Qaeda and the stakes are much higher than most people realize." The endorsement provides a quick synthesis of the three points. The second point about the great silent majority of Muslim support is what makes this a "clash of civilizations," as the book's subtitle states. Indeed, according to Blankley, President Bush's "War on Terror" and Samuel Huntington's "clash of civilizations" are "insufficient" to describe the magnitude of the Islamic challenge that confronts western civilization today. Immigration trends of course fit largely into the analysis, which is why Europe, with its sizable influx of Muslim immigrants, is an important part of Blankley's argument.

Blankley then moves on to describe the European reaction to these pressures in "Europe Reacts" and the hopeless myopia of the politically correct left-wing intelligentsia in "The Deracination of the West." His analysis in the latter chapter seems susceptible to the "straw man" fallacy, in which an author simplifies or misrepresents a position so that it can be attacked more easily. This is a common practice of Blankley's left-wing adversaries. Blankley falls victim to the same left-wing fallacies he aims to discredit. When he says that "intellectuals (and the government officials and elite media whom they affect)" are incapable of rationality and that "a normally intelligent, healthy person" sees the world accurately (i.e., as Blankley sees it), he is guilty of arrogant and sloppy reasoning. Perhaps this reviewer would agree with Blankley's point that left-wing relativism is vacuous and self-defeating, but I do not think that scholars whose analysis argues these points are not "normally intelligent."

In Chapter 6, "Saving Democracy, 1940s Style," Blankley draws numerous examples from World War II to advocate more stringent infringements on civil liberties, specifically calling for censorship, internment, and restrictions on free speech, among other measures. The main problem this reviewer has with these analogies is that World War II was an event of limited duration. Blankley already said in his second

chapter that the word “war” is insufficient to characterize the cataclysmic scope of the conflict between the West and Islam. The jurisprudence cited in the chapters presents vigorous defense of wartime suspensions of civil liberties, but these suspensions are temporary in time of emergency, not meant for ongoing existential changes to the American system. Blankley addresses the concern of permanence, but not to the reviewer’s satisfaction. If we fundamentally alter our democratic way of life in response to these terrorist aggressions, whose goal is to fundamentally change the western way of life, is it not ultimately a surrender?

The author gets to the meat of his analysis in Chapter 7, “A World in Transition.” His point about historical discontinuities presents an insightful observation that the future is more than just a continuation of the present. Further in the chapter, however, we are left with some points of contradiction. He abandons the demographic arguments that seemed to be central to Chapter 3, “The Threat.” Blankley concludes that demography is not destiny and that demographic patterns are notoriously unpredictable. The reader is left to wonder at the previous frequent mentionings of birthrates in the West if these present demographic trends are not relevant to the future.

In Chapter 8, the author presents a set of recommendations on where to go from here: (1) declare war (on jihadists); (2) use ethnic profiling; (3) secure the borders; (4) adopt national identification cards; (5) chart progress; (6) perform fact-based analysis; (7) take advantage of globalization (to export western values to the Muslim world); (8) strengthen our alliance with Europe; and (9) win the European culture war.

The book is interesting and readable, and while the reviewer is sympathetic to many points raised by the author, however, one cannot agree with Blankley’s arguments completely. Of the book’s two main audiences—(1) right-wing talk radio listeners and readers of other Regnery books by Rush Limbaugh, Michelle Malkin, etc., and (2) national security scholars and professionals—*The West’s Last Chance* will certainly find a more enthusiastic reception among the Limbaugh “dittoheads.” Well-written and thought-provoking, it certainly deserves the warm reception it has found among its target audience.

**Governing the American Lake: The U.S. Defense and Administration of the Pacific, 1945-1947.** By Hal M. Friedman. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2007. 320 pages. \$64.95.  
**Reviewed by Major Eric R. Bjorklund**, Instructor of International Relations, Department of Social Sciences, US Military Academy.

Hal M. Friedman’s monograph is a very detailed and well-written account of how the United States dealt with the multitude of strategic issues in the Pacific in the waning months of World War II and the years following. Although the book focuses on a narrowly defined and understudied topic of American history, any reader interested in the US national security process will appreciate the parallels between America’s post-World War II Pacific policy concerns and those of today. In both cases the United States found itself thrust into the role of global hegemon, yet subject to limited means and enthusiasm as evidenced by the peripheral attention given to the potential threats to its interests in this region. The other lasting contribution of

this work is as a case study of the challenges of coordinating policy between various government organizations having their own culture and interests. Through a wide variety of primary sources, Friedman vividly captures the difficulty of the inter-agency process as well as the intense rivalry between the military services.

The book is organized into six chapters each focusing on a different bureaucratic player in Pacific policy. Friedman first analyzes the Army's viewpoint that anticipated a short occupation of Japan and an eventual defensive perimeter in the Pacific Basin. That chapter vividly portrays the intraservice disagreements between Eisenhower and MacArthur through an effective use of primary sources and recently declassified material. The second and third chapters investigate the perspectives of the Air Force and Navy, respectively. In these chapters, the interservice struggle for being America's first line of defense in the Pacific is captured through a synthesized examination of radio transcripts, speeches, letters, and memoirs. In these chapters the author presents one of his central theses that the services relied on "useable history" to form their positions. In such cases the service leaders used or abused the lessons from the Pacific war to justify their policies and suggestions for the future. Moving away from the military perspective, Chapter Four focuses on the State Department's role in shaping foreign policy in the Pacific Basin. In this enlightening chapter, Friedman captures the essence of the American dilemma between maintaining absolute control over Japan's former possessions and remaining true to traditional American values that rejected imperialism. The following chapter provides a short case study on Philippine independence and is a showcase for some of America's early attempts at a strategic communication plan. The closing chapter takes an in-depth look at the Interior Department's position related to the administration of the Japanese-controlled islands. In contrast to the initial lack of debate over who should be responsible for the occupation of Iraq, Friedman highlights Interior's concern over the domestic and international implications of a military occupation and its argument for an Interior-led civilian occupation of the islands of Micronesia, Guam, and American Samoa.

Just as American foreign policy struggled to find its identity and proper role since the early 1990s, the United States in the aftermath of World War II found itself in a similarly precarious situation. Dr. Friedman, a professor of Modern History at Henry Ford Community College, illuminates both the opportunities and challenges that faced America in the Pacific. Using White House files from the Truman Library, he finds letters from Admiral Halsey expressing concern over international recognition of US primacy in Pacific affairs as well as rarely cited strategic insights from Eisenhower on the importance of Pacific bases for future power projection. Additionally, the book analyzes a number of foreign policy issues that were just becoming salient to America, issues that would become increasingly dominant over the next 60 years. In the struggle related to the status of Japan's former possessions, Friedman captures the beginnings of United Nations Security Council politics among the winners of the war, particularly the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. It is illuminating to see the origins of America's traditional noninvolvement in African affairs stemming from compromise between US agencies that resulted in prioritizing focus and American primacy in the Pacific.

Carl Builder, in his book *The Masks of War*, asserts the main characteristics of each individual military service influence its approach to strategy. Throughout Friedman's work, the reader finds ample examples of service rivalries. Friedman portrays this best in his analysis of numerous documents from admirals and Secretary of the Navy Forrestal, each lobbying against unity of command for forces in the Pacific. Likewise, the author examines the Army's and fledgling Air Force's advocacy for a unified Pacific Command based mainly on their traditional dependence on others for logistical support. Despite the best intentions of the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 and subsequent improvements in interservice cooperation, Builder's thesis and Friedman's examples remain true and still reflect the challenges to be overcome as the military adapts and responds to more complex threats.

While the casual reader may struggle with the level of detail and specificity in this account of America's rise to power in the postwar Pacific, those interested in researching early Cold War foreign relations will gain insight from reading it accompanied by its 45 pages of notes and bibliography. Furthermore, students of American bureaucracy and interservice rivalry will find a treasure trove of information and sources in this work.

**Why Taiwan? Geostrategic Rationales for China's Territorial Integrity.** By Alan M. Wachman. Palo Alto, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2007. 254 pages. \$65.00 (\$24.95 paper). **Reviewed by Richard Halloran**, a freelance writer who was once a lieutenant of airborne infantry and later a foreign correspondent in Asia for *The New York Times*.

This is a good book in that the author addresses with careful research one of the issues of war and peace in our time: Why the island of Taiwan is worth fighting for. Alan M. Wachman, professor of international politics at Tufts University, touches on most of the reasons the People's Republic of China (PRC) wants to conquer Taiwan but emphasizes its strategic location. A particular strength of the book is the author's reliance on authoritative Chinese sources, letting them tell their own story.

Having said that, the reader must slog through many passages of turgid academic writing to discern the author's points. The text is repetitive and needed the firm hand of a demanding editor. Too much sourcing is relegated to 41 pages of endnotes. In substance, Wachman fails to produce a thorough examination of the reasons the people of Taiwan should fight for their homeland or why the United States might need to fight for Taiwan.

Wachman is not an apologist for the PRC. Rather, he has tried, and in large measure succeeded, in laying out the reasons that mainland Chinese seem increasingly willing to use military force to bring Taiwan under Communist rule. Those reasons range from raging nationalism, revenge for a century of humiliation by the West and Japan, fear of what Chinese Communists see as subversive democracy in Taiwan, and a drive to hold sway over Taiwan's economic progress.

Wachman, however, focuses on China's strategic rationale for annexing Taiwan. That island off China's southeastern coast, along with Tibet in the south,

Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in the west, Inner Mongolia in the north, and ethnic Korean communities along the Yalu River in the northeast, are seen from Beijing as border lands that must be secured for the sake of Han China. (Mainstream Han Chinese take their name from the Han Empire of 202 B.C. to 220 A.D.)

Leaders of the PRC, inheritors of a continental power, are seeking to add maritime power to the capacities of the People's Liberation Army, which comprises all of China's armed forces. They believe control of Taiwan is essential to that construct. Defensively, Wachman tells the reader, ruling Taiwan would add strategic depth. Offensively, governing Taiwan would abet China's maritime power projection east into the mid-Pacific and south into the South China Sea and the Strait of Malacca that has become vital to China's trade and economic progress.

Wachman names Admiral Liu Huaqing, China's naval commander 1982-87 and later vice chairman of the Central Military Commission that sets China's military objectives, strategy, and policy, as the leading advocate of Chinese seapower. "It was Liu who articulated the significance of putting to sea a 'blue water' navy that would be capable of 'offshore defense' and dominate the seas" out to 1,800 miles from China's coast.

Moreover, taking Taiwan would breach the "line in the water" the United States had begun to draw in the western Pacific. A line that begins in the Sea of Japan, runs south through the East China Sea and the Strait of Taiwan, and pushes further south into the South China Sea and west through the Strait of Malacca. East of that line are Japan, which has a security treaty with America; Taiwan, which has informal security relations with the United States; and the Philippines, which also has a security treaty with the United States. Behind that line the island of Guam in the central Pacific is being built up as a major US air and naval base.

Not so incidentally, Guam is 1,800 miles from China's coast and on a mid-Pacific line to which the Chinese intend to expand their naval and air power. Chinese admirals are already looking beyond that line, one having recently suggested to Admiral Timothy Keating, commander of US forces in the Pacific and Asia, that China and the United States split the Pacific Ocean down the middle. China would patrol the western half with the aircraft carriers the Chinese navy intends to build while the United States would be responsible for security in the eastern half. Admiral Keating, politely but firmly, allowed as how America was not about to be pushed out of the western Pacific.

For the United States there are several reasons why Taiwan is worth fighting for. As Wachman writes: "Taiwan sits at the interface of two strategic domains—the continental domain of the PRC and the maritime domain of the United States." Though few US political leaders seem willing to say so, keeping Taiwan out of hostile Chinese hands reduces a threat to the sea lanes of communication vital to American and allied navies and to the seaborne commerce of US economic partners such as Japan and South Korea.

Additionally, if the United States were to abandon Taiwan, it would cast doubt on the willingness of America to keep its treaty commitments to South Korea, Japan, the Philippines, Thailand, and Australia. It would also call into question informal security ties with Singapore, Indonesia, and India. Besides, the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979,



enacted by Congress after President Jimmy Carter switched diplomatic recognition from the Republic of China on Taiwan to the PRC, requires the United States to maintain the capacity “to resist any resort to force or other forms of coercion that would jeopardize the security, or the social or economic system, of the people on Taiwan.”

Lastly, for America to forsake the fledgling democracy on Taiwan would be hypocritical after so many American politicians of every stripe have asserted that promoting democracy around the world is an American mission. Wachman is spot on when he asserts: “The Taiwan issue remains a powder keg with a long-simmering but ever-shortening fuse.”

**The Great War.** By Paul von Hindenburg. St. Paul, Minn.: MBI Publishing, 2006. 256 pages. \$34.95. **Reviewed by Dr. Douglas V. Johnson II (LTC, USA Ret.),** Research Professor, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College.

“*Mein Leben* was a huge bestseller in Germany, but was dismissed by most military historians and critics as a boring apologia that skipped over the most controversial issues in Hindenburg’s life.” So says the omnipresent Wikipedia. Readers might also wish to examine Adam R. Seipp’s review in *The Journal of Military History* (April 2007). This version of the Field Marshall’s memoir is certainly easier reading than the original translation but does not provide the reader all the background and context of earlier works. Among these works one is certain to find the following thoughts. An almost religious adulation of the Prussian Kaiser is evident and serves to remind us that perhaps the most important event of the nineteenth century was the creation of Germany—first the German Empire—and later the state.

Why this is important in the field of military history is forcibly brought out by an excellent book by Robert T. Foley, *German Strategy and the Path to Verdun: Erich von Falkenhayn and the Development of Attrition, 1870-1916*. Foley presents a fascinating picture of an officer corps en route to professionalization, yet still falling well short of the mark because of the strength of the Prussian social system that continued to exert a destructive effect on operational behavior. Perhaps that characterization is too strong because something akin to it also continued to exist in the French Army as well. The action which calls forth this observation is the unpredictable indiscipline of senior commanders who, in both armies, acted contrary to the orders of their superiors. In two of the more well-known cases, Verdun and the events of July 15, 1918, senior commanders ignored the orders of their superiors. It is easy to see how this could happen in a German Army comprised of Prussians and Bavarians—note the two extremes—and led by a minor noble, Erich von Falkenhayn. Even in this slimmed-down edition under review the force of the almost medieval codes remains evident.

For the student of the operational level of war, however, the clarity and relative simplicity of Hindenburg’s appreciations are instructive. While giving Ludendorff his due at almost every turn, Hindenburg routinely cuts through the cluttering details to present insight and analysis that every commander can appreciate. The clarity with which the contending options are portrayed serves as a model for today’s planners and leaders. As the narrative focuses on 1915, the strain of Germany’s two-front war

begins to tell on the General Staff, and by implication criticism of General von Falkenhayn and Hindenburg increases. At the same time, Hindenburg acknowledges that Germany had sought to avoid a two-front war that was certain to demand a price in national resources that were too few. The passages describing the lost opportunities of 1915 on the eastern front highlight this problem.

Hindenburg claims to have been surprised by his elevation to Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army, while others suggest he had been steadily working to undermine von Falkenhayn's position. Foley indicates that von Falkenhayn had never had the full confidence of the "old" army, but the failure of his Verdun gambit and Hindenburg's continuing successes in the East made it impossible for the Kaiser to choose anyone else for the position.

Hindenburg's promotion also required his thinking to move to a higher plane where politics, manifested to some degree in determining his options in the East, now claimed greater attention. Here is the section most useful to the student of strategy—the interface between the military high command and the political arena. Matters of the resources required for national warmaking now became part of Hindenburg's concern. Although the publishers may have removed much of what might be construed as context and background, this edition again exemplifies the German mastery of the operational art when applied at the strategic level and makes the book well worth the read. The analyses of the strategic and operational conditions surrounding the final German offensives in 1918 are so direct as to be almost simplistic, yet practitioners of the art will know well the difficulty of what is required.

From the end of June 1918 onward the tenor of the narrative turns morose and defensive, exposing some of the character described in the Wikipedia quote. It is, however, difficult to ask much more of a warlord who sees his allies crumble, his enemies grow in strength due to failures of diplomacy, and the shifting of power from his hands to others with less resolution. Such is the nature of most narratives of defeat, and the reader must take them as they are.

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