

The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters

Volume 38
Number 4 *Parameters Winter 2008*

Article 5

11-1-2008

Editor's Shelf

Robert H. Taylor

Follow this and additional works at: <https://press.armywarcollege.edu/parameters>

Recommended Citation

Robert H. Taylor, "Editor's Shelf," *Parameters* 38, no. 4 (2008), doi:10.55540/0031-1723.2448.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by USAWC Press. It has been accepted for inclusion in The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters by an authorized editor of USAWC Press.

Editor's Shelf

Our friends at Routledge publications have provided readers with a new series on Strategy and History, edited by two of *Parameters*' stalwarts, Colin Gray and Williamson Murray. The series focuses on the theory and practice of strategy. It is designed as a review of historical cases that have either impacted or served as examples for the exercise of grand and military strategy. A most valuable contribution to the series is *America, Technology and Strategic Culture* by Brice F. Harris.



This timely addition to the genre of war in the Clausewitzian tradition examines the origins, viability, and technical feasibility of the military strategy currently exercised by America. The author espouses a belief that many of the difficult military situations that America finds itself in around the globe today are a direct result of its inclination to substitute technology for strategy. This rather pricy offering is well worth the reader's investment. Anyone with a sincere interest in America's successful revision of its strategic paradigm will certainly get their money's worth from this excellent work.

With the ever-increasing torrent of books crossing my desk I sometimes, admittedly, almost never, overlook a new entry into one of the well-managed piles. Such is the case with the edited work by Derek Reveron and Judith Hicks Stiehm, *Inside Defense: Understanding the U.S. Military in the 21st Century*. The editors, both with well-established reputations within the military and academic arenas—primarily based on their tenure at the Naval War College and the US Army War College, respectively—have assembled the works of scholars, policymakers, and practitioners to provide comprehensive insight regarding the emerging role for the US military in international relations. This new assertiveness is complemented by a renewed and ever-increasing relationship with domestic institutions within America and with the society at large. It was the editors' realization that the traditional military mantra of "fighting and winning the nation's wars" no longer seemed to fit the actions and missions of the US military that they saw in the media. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, along with humanitarian relief operations around the globe, and the civil-military operations within the continental United States, all appeared to dictate new roles and strategies for America's military. Of special interest to readers is that portion of the book examining the Department of Defense's interaction with other US governmental institutions.

Some of America's best military history finds its origin in the Secretary of Defense's Historical Office. Renowned for their work detailing the organizational changes within the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the accompanying evolution of the functions and actions of the Armed Services and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the office has once again published a superb work. Chief editor Roger R. Trask, along

with co-editor John P. Glennon, has provided an invaluable addition to the history of the Office of the Secretary of Defense with *The Department of Defense, 1978-2003*. This updated documentary record is a follow-on to the 1978 work edited by the office's Alice C. Cole. Of critical importance to the discerning reader is the coverage related to the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, along with other important legislation impacting the Department from 1978 to the end of 2003. This work is a splendid reference for all students of military history and government.

America's role in military interventions during its limited time upon the world stage has been the fodder for endless debate. One of the more memorable forays in that arena was America's invasion of Panama in 1989. Operation Just Cause was the termination of more than two years of diplomatic and military interaction with the corrupt regime of General Manuel Antonio Noriega. Lawrence Yates, a former historian at the Combat Studies Institute at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, has provided an insightful and detailed examination of the planning, training, and political interaction leading to the invasion in *The U.S. Military Intervention in Panama: Origins, Planning, and Crisis Management, June 1987-December 1989*. What makes this book unique is that it is not about war, but rather focuses on those difficult military and political tasks required before America can invade a sovereign nation. Yates does a masterful job of analyzing the roles played by the dominant personalities on both sides. The result is a mix of timeless experiences and insights directly attuned to contingency warfare in the post-Cold War era. If readers want to fully grasp the detailed planning, training, and political oversight associated with preparations for major combat operations, this is the book.

Robert Mandel continues his examination of the causes, consequences, and cures surrounding today's global security questions in *Global Threat: Target-Centered Assessment and Management*. The author challenges many of the "best practices" being exercised by nations following the Cold War. Mandel champions a target-centered approach to assessment and management based on the identification of threat analysis deficiencies and an alternative conceptual approach to recognizing and prioritizing "severe" threats. For his analysis the author uses four post-9/11 case studies: the weapons of mass destruction linked to the Iraq War; the natural threat generated by the 2004 tsunami disaster; the terrorist threat resulting in the 2005 London Transport bombings; and the mass population threat associated with American tensions linked to illegal immigration in 2006. The book presents a number of target-centered ideas and conclusions related to new methodologies for dealing with such threats. This is a work with broad appeal and should generate great interest among students and practitioners in the international relations, security, and policy arenas.—RHT □

For details on publishers and prices of books mentioned, see "Off the Press" in this issue or contact *Parameters* at 717-245-4943 or e-mail: CARL_Parameters@conus.army.mil.