

The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters

Volume 39
Number 3 *Parameters Autumn 2009*

Article 4

8-1-2009

Editor's Shelf

Robert H. Taylor

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

Recommended Citation

Taylor, Robert H.. "Editor's Shelf." *The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters* 39, 3 (2009).
<https://press.armywarcollege.edu/parameters/vol39/iss3/4>

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

“What is the good of experience if you do not reflect?” Certainly, this admonishment by Frederick the Great holds as true today as it did in the sixteenth century. Reflection is one of mankind’s principal tools that aid us in attempts to get it right the next time. Assisting in that reflection is *The Impact of 9/11 on Politics and War*, the first volume in a six-volume series “The Day that Changed Everything?” from the folks at Palgrave Macmillan. The series editor, Matthew J. Morgan, has been a regular supporter of this journal over the years, and his expertise as an author is equally obvious in his editing of this marvelous series. The series captures the thoughts of a number of the leading thinkers of our time regarding the impact of this dramatic attack on various domestic institutions and international and security policies. With contributions from the likes of R. James Woolsey, Jr., and Ambassador Marc Grossman, the book provides an excellent perspective for understanding and applying the lessons from this terrible tragedy. A must read for anyone interested in understanding the impact of 9/11 and its aftermath.



Continuing on the theme of reflection are two works from our friends at Cambridge University Press. *The War Puzzle Revisited* by John A. Vasquez is part of the “Cambridge Studies in International Relations” series. The book provides readers with a scientific analysis of the causes of war in the last half century. The author has masterfully updated his previous work with recent research on the onset and expansion of war and the conditions required for peace. The real value of this work is Vasquez’s attempt to systematically describe the factors associated with war and to determine what, if any, patterns exist that would suggest why war occurs and how it might be prevented. The book is divided into three primary parts, with “Part III: Findings on the Steps to War, 1994-2008,” probably having the greatest utility for today’s practitioner. The book is much more than a simple examination of the theories associated with the causes of war; it contains empirical findings that the reader may use to gain a greater appreciation of the scientific rationale underpinning war and peace. The second book is an edited work by Kate McLoughlin, *The Cambridge Companion to War Writing*. The book focuses on the war writing of British and American authors encompassing works that span the centuries, from Beowulf to the Cold War. Most readers readily admit that wars capture the imagination and inspire writing. In this particular work, however, the editor has assembled a collection providing not only unique insight into the conduct of war from a historical perspective, but from a cultural aspect as well. Adding to the book’s worth are the recommendations for additional readings that accompany each of the chapters. The book consists of 20 chapters examining everything from “War and Words” to “The War on Terror.” This work will be of special interest to students of war literature, as well as those readers with an interest in history and cultural studies.

Our friends at RAND Corporation continue to produce timely and meaningful products having a direct impact on America's national security. Of special interest to US and Mexican policymakers and analysts is *Security in Mexico: Implications for U.S. Policy Options*. This short monograph presents the work of Agnes Gereben Schaefer, Benjamin Bahney, and K. Jack Riley on a range of topics, from the deteriorating security situation in Mexico to the future of US and Mexican relations. Based on a RAND study assessing the security situation between the United States and Mexico, the monograph contains a range of policy options that the United States might undertake in its attempts to assist the Mexican government in formulating strategies to prevent further violence. The study members were especially sensitive to those actions that would have a direct impact in preventing the current violence in Mexico from spilling over into the United States. The monograph concludes with the warning that regardless of the policy options the United States pursues in its developing relationship with Mexico, the key factor will be whether or not America can demonstrate that Mexico's sovereignty will be respected.

Fighting Chance: Global Trends and Shocks in the National Security Environment is an edited work by Neyla Arnas. The editor is a senior research fellow at the Center for Technology and National Security Policy at the National Defense University. The book is the result of a Department of Defense workshop examining the strategic trends, their defense relevance, and how they might merge to cause "strategic shocks" such as Sputnik or the fall of the Berlin Wall. The collection by more than 17 well-known authors provides a wide range of views on six major trends identified as impacting shocks: conflict; demographics; economy; environment; culture, identity, and governance; and science and technology. While one group of authors explores these trends, another group of regional experts considers how such trends might impact their respective regions. The book is an excellent tool for those concerned with the possible impact of strategic surprise on global trends and national direction.

Our final book in this feature is categorized as a "reference handbook;" another work that eludes the format of the traditional review. *Serving America's Veterans* is the product of Lawrence J. Korb, a former Assistant Secretary of Defense, and his team of experts: Sean E. Duggan, Peter M. Juul, and Max A. Bergmann. The book represents the contributors' attempts to survey, analyze, and evaluate infrastructure, along with the challenges associated with veterans' health care, its policies, and the politics inherent in veterans' affairs in America. The full spectrum of veterans' issues is examined, including that rapidly growing proportion of veterans requiring protracted rehabilitation and lifelong intensive care. The book provides readers with not only a handy historical reference to veterans' affairs; it also details the Department of Veterans Affairs' ongoing attempts to cope with the needs of veterans from each of the services, to include reserve forces and retired members. This book would make a lasting contribution to the library of any service family or concerned citizen. — RHT □