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Editor's Shelf

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Editor's Shelf

When visitors first enter my office they immediately encounter an ever-expanding edifice of books. Usually, their first words are, “Do you read all these books?” I can only lament, “I wish that I could.” Within that mountain of cellulose are a number of works that for one reason or another will not have the benefit of one of our full-fledged reviews. That is an omission that we try to correct on a regular basis with this feature. We are indeed fortunate in this issue to share with readers a number of insightful and informative works, thereby reducing the mountain by a few pebbles.



Our friends at Stanford University Press have released two thoroughly researched and objective works of events impacting America's military affairs and security policies. The first, *Victory for Hire: Private Security Companies' Impact on Military Effectiveness*, is authored by Molly Dunigan. The author certainly possesses the bona fides to produce this work; she was the lead author on the 2010 RAND monograph, *Hired Guns*. Dunigan provides an in-depth analysis of a growing and unsettling trend, various states' use of private security forces. She fills a void in recent writings with her examination of the impact that private security contractors have on military effectiveness. With the ever-increasing tendency to outsource various missions to contractors, the question becomes: what impact will these personnel have on military operations? What make this book unique are the author's recommendations for alleviating negative impacts. Meir Finkel, Director of the Israeli Defense Force's Ground Forces Concept and Doctrine Department, authors our second offering, *On Flexibility: Recovery from Technological and Doctrinal Surprise on the Battlefield*. The author examines a question that has preoccupied armies and strategists for centuries: how to cope with technological and doctrinal surprise on the battlefield. Finkel presents a number of case studies where armies were successful or failed in their attempts to overcome surprise and, in the process, identifies a number of variables impacting the studies' outcomes. He then details a methodology for military planners that would enable armies to overcome surprise in future combat.

Francis A. Galgano and Eugene J. Palka have edited a work that, when first viewed by the novice, may appear a bit esoteric. *Modern Military Geography* is a thoroughly readable presentation by subject matter experts on contemporary and historical military subjects from the viewpoint of the geographer. This superb collection provides some rather startling analyses of the impact that the geographical knowledge of space, place, people, and scale can have on military operations. It is this knowledge that provides planners with the critical understanding of how to manage the challenges related to geography during military operations. This is a book for any planner, strategist, or policy maker associated with the military's role in support, environmental security, disaster relief, humanitarian development, or stability operations.

Everyone knows that commissions are a waste of time and money, but Jordan Tama may prove all of us wrong. *Terrorism and National Security*

Reform is the author's attempt to show how commissions are most valuable in obtaining policy change in times of crisis, and how they are singularly successful in forging bipartisan consensus. Drawing on a number of case studies, more than 200 interviews with policy makers and members of various commissions, and an original database, Tama reveals how commissions have forged such major events as the plan for ending the Iraq War, America's counterterrorism policy, and the complete reshaping of the Nation's intelligence community. The author successfully demonstrates how commissions can make a difference in times of crisis. This book should be a valuable addition to the libraries of individuals associated with the crafting of public policy.

The United States Institute of Peace (USIP) Press has again provided the international community with two outstanding works by recognized experts on such diverse issues as the role of gender and cross-cultural negotiations. The first book, *How Pakistan Negotiates with the United States: Riding the Roller Coaster*, is coauthored by Howard B. Schaffer and Teresita C. Schaffer. This is the latest volume in a series of country-specific assessments on negotiating behavior. The authors draw on their own diplomatic experiences to examine how Pakistan negotiates with the United States. (Howard is a 36-year veteran of the US Foreign Service and Teresita served as the United States ambassador to Sri Lanka, among other diplomatic assignments.) Certainly, this work could not be timelier; especially, when many in America are trying to determine if Pakistan is friend or foe. The authors analyze Pakistan's ideological core, geo-spatial position, government, military, and culture to determine what shapes the country's negotiating behavior. They address not only how the two governments reach formal agreements but also how informal relationships aide in the conduct and maintenance of the diplomatic processes. The second of USIP's offerings is an edited work that expands on one of the articles in this issue. *Women and War* is the result of Kathleen Kuehnast, Chantal de Jonge Oudraat, and Helga Hernes' collection of recognized experts on the role of gender in times of conflict and peace. Specifically, the contributors focus on the impact various international initiatives such as UN Resolution 1325 have on the lives of women in times of conflict. The thread running through each of the articles is the vast gap between the realities faced by women in war and peace and the commitments made by various nations and policymaking bodies to their well-being. This is a must read for anyone trying to understand the impact of gender on warfare and peacebuilding.

For those in our audience with an interest in the nations' ability to survive a nuclear future (we would hope that is a fairly large segment), there are two new entries to the market deserving of notice. *Getting to Zero: The Path to Nuclear Disarmament* is an edited work by Catherine McArdle Kelleher and Judith Reppy. The list of contributors reads like a "Who's Who" in the world of nuclear disarmament and negotiations, with contributions from around the globe. The editors demonstrate a depth of knowledge for the processes inherent in the governments of Russia, Europe, and the United States, and the impact these processes have on the goal of a zero nuclear weapons policy.

Authors examine the hard questions related to the needs and desires of the various nuclear powers and the impact they have on getting to nuclear zero. The impact that nuclear abolition would have on the future provides readers with some rather startling and unsettling prospects. The value of this work is the unvarnished examination of the policy issues raised by the question of nuclear disarmament and the steps required by nuclear powers to ensure a nuclear-free world. James M. Acton has produced a marvelous volume titled, *Deterrence During Disarmament: Deep Nuclear Reductions and International Security*. The author analyzes the recent proposal by Russia and the United States to pursue deep cuts in nuclear arsenals. To better understand the concerns associated with these deep reductions, Acton conducted a number of interviews with present and former officials and analysts in Russia and the United States. The author combined this information with deterrence theory to determine if such reductions were possible. His work goes a long way in disproving the belief that these reductions constitute too great a risk to our national well-being, or possibly, even undermine international security. Based on his interviews and review of the history of nuclear armed states, the author opines that the challenges associated with low numbers of nuclear weapons can be overcome. Acton concludes that if we are to ensure the complete elimination of nuclear stockpiles, we must first create the appropriate political and security conditions within those states possessing nuclear weapons.

Our final book in this feature is coauthored by Derek S. Reveron and Kathleen A. Mahoney-Norris, *Human Security in a Borderless World*. The authors present readers with a blatantly obvious thesis—in today's complicated and ambiguous world issues impacting human security are truly national security issues. Although the book is designed as a text for those with an interest in the study of international and national security, it provides the reader with a brilliantly poignant understanding of the concepts underpinning human security. The authors, both retired military officers currently teaching at military colleges or universities, draw on their military and academic experiences to develop a perspective of security issues beyond the traditional focus on the major powers and big wars. Reveron and Mahoney-Norris stimulate the reader's understanding of the security in the new century through their comprehensive examination of nontraditional, human security issues. This work will be invaluable to any student, policy maker, or those who teach and advise on matters of human security at the global level.