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Book Reviews

HUMAN & INHUMAN WAR

Warrior Geeks: How 21st Century Technology is Changing the Way We Fight and Think About War

By Christopher Coker

Reviewed by Dr. Janne Haaland-Matláry, Professor, the University of Oslo and the Norwegian Defence University College

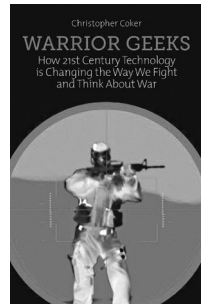
This is a brilliant and difficult book about a rather nightmarish topic, i.e., how technology now enables us to become post-humans, a term that by now has become familiar in debates about certain types of technological advances.

Professor Coker has been preoccupied with the ethos of the warrior and the ethics of war in several previous books. Steeped in classical knowledge of the Greeks and their warrior culture, he also has an in-depth knowledge of modern military technology and its most recent developments. In particular, he is interested in how technological developments in robotics, neuroscience, and cybernetics influence the soldier, and the prospects for what we can term post-human warfare.

This book is the culmination of many years of deep study of these phenomena, and it is not only a very important book but also a deeply disconcerting one. Coker starts by quoting C. S. Lewis's *Abolition of Man*: "Human nature will be the last part of Nature to surrender to Man. The battle will then be won. . . . But who, precisely, will have won it?" (1943). The prospect of post-human human beings is already beginning to be a reality in terms of genetic manipulation and eventually the cloning of humans. The knowledge of humanity, of what we should be as persons, is less and less widespread—fewer heed classical insights into human nature and the virtues, and technological possibility seems to be "good" in the sense that what can be done, will be done. The world looks increasingly less like that of the Greeks and more like that of the geeks, who do not care about ethics, but only about technology, argues Coker. God is dead in this universe as there is no longing for the transcendent, but the possibility to manipulate away pain, fear, and the need for courage. This is, in Coker's comparison, like Mustapha Mond's life in *Brave New World*—with existing, but mostly future technology, the soldier can be rendered into an actor who need not risk anything, fear anything, or sacrifice anything.

What does he mean by this radical and disturbing hypothesis? In his own words:

What I have tried to do in this book is to examine the likely impact of early 21st century technologies—digital, cybernetic, and bio-medical—upon our understanding of how war and our humanity will continue to co-evolve. Throughout this book I have been skeptical of the direction in which we are taking war. I am concerned that if soldiers are denied their private thoughts and are embedded in a cybernetic web they may be denied the chance for personal development . . . if we were ever to sub-contract responsibility for ethical decision-making to robots . . . if we could ever engineer courage or



London: Hurst & Company,
2013
317 pages
\$37.50

blot out conscience through drugs we would severely compromise what we value the most—our individual free will (pages 292-93).

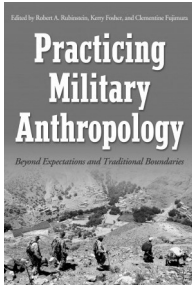
War online, as videogames, drone pilots who kill and go to fetch the kids from kindergarten, drones that can target on their own, robots that take the risk out of battle and make decisions, soldiers whose brains are manipulated through neuroscience to blot out fear and conscience—the list is disturbing and long. This reviewer cannot claim to understand the details of new technology, but Coker writes in great detail about it and illustrates the role it may come to have with science fiction and fiction, ancient and ultramodern. Avant-garde technology is accompanied by works of science fiction, computer games, and films—all of which the classically educated Coker seems to know as well as his classics.

This is a very demanding book, intellectually and conceptually. It is disconcerting because it deals with imminent reality; some of this technology is here now. Drone pilots experience trauma not from being in the battlefield, but from being away from it—they kill, but are not in battle, hence no risk, no danger, and no sacrifice. The ethical issue is the difference between war and murder. Until now, drone pilots have been uniformed, but for how long? Then the work will be wholly “technical,” civilian, and not different from a war game, it would seem. What are the ethical implications of such a development? Lawyers are speaking about humanitarian law applied to autonomous weapon systems—a contradiction in terms, literally speaking.

Coker writes very well; his pen is an elegant one. The reader is treated to a literary feast, and it is not easy to digest the many courses served. The final chapter reflects on technology’s impact. He writes:

Character is at the heart of this change, it is being relentlessly challenged by the march of science. It is being undermined by genetics, by evolutionary psychology, and by neuro-science (the idea that behaviour is determined by modules of a hard-wired brain) (page 293).

This book is not only about warfare under technology’s spell, but, more importantly, about man’s general condition today. It is in the battlefield that the contrast between the Greek and the Geek is most pronounced, for here the human being has always—or so far in history—been asked for supreme courage and sacrifice, for character. If war can be rendered riskless and rid of sacrifice, is it still war? And more importantly, are soldiers in such a war still soldiers?



Practicing Military Anthropology: Beyond Expectations and Traditional Boundaries

Edited by Robert A. Rubinstein, Kerry Fosher, and Clementine Fujimura

Review by Dr. James Dorough-Lewis Jr., Senior HUMINT Instructor for the Department of Defense and former Social Scientist for Human Terrain Systems

For a researcher in the social sciences, putting one’s career at the service of the military involves a degree of professional risk; however, it is far from the terminal move a vocal minority, especially though not exclusively found within the anthropological community, might have

one believe. Social scientists operate under imperatives of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice that strike some as being at odds with their interpretations of military institutions. And yet, as Rush discusses in the first chapter of *Practicing*, the defense and academic communities have long histories of productive partnerships in which social scientists are no more or less beholden to standards of ethical practice than within purely academic settings. Over the course of its seven chapters, *Practicing Military Anthropology* fills a critical gap in knowledge about the frequently marginalized first-hand perspectives of anthropologists who have built fruitful relationships with the military in spite of, and sometimes by virtue of, the apparent challenges.

True to its subtitle, this work approaches a contentious topic with surprising articulation and authenticity. Rubinstein, Fosher, and Fujimura introduce *Practicing Military Anthropology* with the hope of shedding light on the breadth of interaction occurring between the military and the social sciences as well as where the military has repeatedly demonstrated itself to be a worthwhile subject of anthropologists' attentions. Fujimura's explanation of becoming a military anthropologist (Chapter 2) and Holmes-Eber's description of her daily life as a professor of culture at the Marine Corps University (Chapter 4) bookend Turnley's narrative of moving through a gambit of successes in applied anthropology eventually bringing her into contact with the intelligence community (Chapter 3). These chapters express a range of victories and hurdles, of pride and self-consciousness that constitute an invaluable repository of lessons learned about the practical side of doing social science research for the military. *Practicing Military Anthropology* performs superbly its intention of speaking to social scientists already working with the military or those considering doing so, particularly young scholars who may have limited exposure to careers in the defense sector. It is very much a collection of reflective essays by, for, and about applied researchers within the military context, and on its surface appears to have little to offer outside that audience.

That said, eavesdropping can have its advantages. *Practicing Military Anthropology* would likely benefit senior members of the defense community for two reasons. First, the authors are anthropologists active in their specialties and, in my experience, solidly representative of their colleagues. In this context they confront the central critiques and concerns among social scientists about working for military institutions. They do so in terms that demonstrate both how seriously they consider these tensions and how profoundly personal experiences inform the reasoning by which they have negotiated them. The authors speak with sincerity and clarity, refreshingly free of guile or political wordsmithing about their own journey towards an appreciation of the military as a constantly evolving institution and a collection of intelligent, curious, and very human professionals. To take a phrase from Fosher a bit out of context, "[N]othing replaces a native informant" (page 94). *Practicing Military Anthropology* holds the potential to improve the relationship-building capacities of senior leaders working with or depending on members of the social science community. Any member of the defense community interested in concrete examples of how social scientists have tackled controversies associated with working with the military, and found the experience rewarding and affirming, will find this book uniquely insightful.

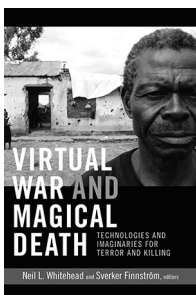
Second, the authors in several places outline areas of strength and opportunity for the military's incorporation of embedded social science capabilities. Turnley, for instance, mentions how one perspective on social network analysis popular in military circles undermines rather than supports an understanding of organizational effectiveness, and then refers the reader to more promising alternatives. Fosher discusses the shortcomings of approaches to training that treat culture as rules of etiquette over processes for making sense of the world. She goes on to outline how her work with the Marines led to improvements on the ground (Chapter 5). Additionally, anyone seeking a glimpse of what right looks like in terms of leveraging applied social science research towards mission success would do well to review Chapter 6. There, Varhola—himself a military officer and anthropologist—describes the nexus of maximum synthesis between military operations and field ethnography. In this respect, *Practicing Military Anthropology* represents a wealth of opportunity for mutually beneficial cooperation between academe and the military.

Rubinstein closes with what may be one of the most astute and succinct analyses of the ongoing conflict between those who support a formal military-social science relationship and those who do not (Chapter 7). He points to traditions in anthropology privileging diversity of opinion and encouraging the exploration of key social institutions, among which the military counts. Though brief, the reader, whether an inquisitive social scientist or a senior leader, can expect *Practicing Military Anthropology's* stories, suggestions, and raw information to provide a return on the investment of time and interest.

Virtual War and Magical Death: Technologies and Imaginaries for Terror and Killing

Edited by Neil L. Whitehead and Sverker Finnström

Reviewed by Dr. Robert J. Bunker, Distinguished Visiting Professor and Minerva Chair at the Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College



Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013
200 pages
\$24.95

Army readers will find that the late Neil L. Whitehead and Sverker Finnström, anthropologists from the University of Wisconsin and Uppsala University respectively, have edited an intriguing—yet at times vexing—book on virtual war. The work offers a masterful ethnographic perspective on virtual war, stemming from a synthesis of the “techno-modern” with the “magico-primitive,” while providing a critical analysis of the Army’s Human Terrain System (HTS). To be fair, the work draws upon scholarly arguments derived from lessons learned from anthropology’s colonial and neo-colonial legacies and is not meant to be overbearingly antagonistic in its approach. Still, for at least some of the chapter contributors, it is readily apparent that the HTS is indeed viewed as the equivalent of a present-day “military invasion of anthropology.” Additionally, the angst generated within that academic discipline concerning what is legitimate and ethical scholarship permeates the work, especially in regard to some perspectives taken on embedded HTS anthropologists, and high profile scholars, such as former program spokesperson Dr. Montgomery McFate.

The origins of the work can be traced back to a panel of the American Anthropological Association meeting in Philadelphia in 2009 on “Virtual War and Magical Death” and took three years to complete as a document. While the work is written primarily for other academics, specifically anthropologists, it may provide far more utility for defense and security analysts and senior military officers than the contributing scholars intended.

The book is organized into eleven chapters with acknowledgments and an introduction in the front section and ample references, a listing of contributors, and an index in the back section. Along with the two editors, who have also written chapters, nine contributing authors exist. These authors all appear to hold Ph.D.'s in anthropology or closely allied fields, except for one doctoral candidate, and while mostly representative of United States scholarship, also hail from universities in Belgium, Sweden, the Netherlands, and New Zealand. The various chapters in the work focus on topics related to ethical issues surrounding the use of ethnography in support of the state (Neil Whitehead); the Human Terrain System and its interrelationship to remote and drone warfare (David Price); human social cultural behavioral modeling (Roberto González); the military invasion of anthropology (R. Brian Ferguson); the Lord's Resistance Army and witchcraft (Sverker Finnström); night vision technology as a hostile perceptual filter—much like a dark magical artifact—that allows US soldiers to dominate in nocturnal combat (Antonius Robben); the use of cognitive laborers as virtual soldiers/mercenaries (Robertson Allen); virtual counterinsurgency (e.g., drone strikes) in the tribal zones of the Af-Pak theater (Jeffery Sluka); impunity as the generator of an alternative dimension in which chaos and death are the norm in Guatemala (Victoria Sanford); the shamanic-like use of music in war (Matthew Sumera); and a conclusion that argues the global political-economic order is a “carrion system” dependent on the growth of profit (Koen Stroeken).

The central theme of the work is an initially difficult construct to absorb. It appears to be a juxtaposition of magical-primitivism—drawing upon concepts of “assault sorcery,” which is injurious magic leading to physical harm and even death—with virtual-visual killing, night vision dominance, and electronic intelligence dominance representative of components of techno-modernism. The premodern and the postmodern elements of conflict are in essence viewed as being closer to each other than conventional elements of warfare. As a result, violent nonstate actors and special operations forces, both practitioners of virtual warfare in highly unpredictable operational environments, are theoretically integrated into this ethnography. This synthesis thus promotes a form of symmetrical anthropology that is said to better describe premodern and postmodern conflict than the military doctrine of “asymmetric warfare.” This reviewer sees quite a bit of merit in this approach and the need for the cross-pollination of military science by other disciplines such as anthropology; in fact, this is one of the underpinnings of the HTS.

With this in mind, the critical theme underlying the work, while very much dominated by academic misgivings and feelings of betrayal concerning anthropologists working for the US government, should not be considered solely in the polemic. Better understanding these

criticisms should be of some interest to Army audiences for the insights they provide into the academic mind—one which at times is in great variance with military thinking. Some components of this critical theme are as follows. First, the use of anthropologists as a component of the HTS is ethically questioned from a humanistic approach. Ethnocentric values and “weaponized culture”—hence, *de facto* “weaponized anthropology”—to support US military counterinsurgency programs are highlighted. Second, the issue of “traditional harmful practices” in need of eradication is touched upon. Such culturally specific practices, such as honor killings, are viewed in variance with liberal democratic values. This returns us to the old “civilizing the savages via their children” controversies tied into foreign aid and development programs. Third, a concern over the question of endless post-9/11 cycles of violence (e.g., the global war on terror) is raised. Rather than being viewed as an anomaly, the editors now suggest such cycles have become “. . . a fundamental aspect of liberal Western democracy itself, and as such it is an inbuilt tool in the development of the world, . . .” (page 23), that is, a fundamental component of our economic system.

Still, Army readers will mostly benefit from the work’s major theme which seeks to blend the techno-modern with the magico-primitive in a new ethnographic perspective on virtual war and killing (spectacide). Such a techno-magico synthesis is inherently strategic in nature, provides an emerging appreciation for the importance of virtuality and dimensionality in conflict, and ultimately may offer us new perspectives on cyberspace that will someday be of tangible benefit to the Army’s strategic leadership.

CONTEMPORARY WAR

War Comes to Garmser: Thirty Years of Conflict on the Afghan Frontier

By Carter Malkasian

Reviewed by Dr. Joseph J. Collins, Colonel (USA Retired), Professor, National War College, and author of *Understanding War in Afghanistan* (NDU Press, 2011)

The twelve years of this “Decade of War” have produced many good books on counterinsurgency. Carter Malkasian’s *War Comes to Garmser: Thirty Years of Conflict on the Afghan Frontier* will be ranked among the best of them. Indeed, the value of this book extends beyond the case in question. It speaks to the unchanging nature of war and the complex, changing character of war in the information age.

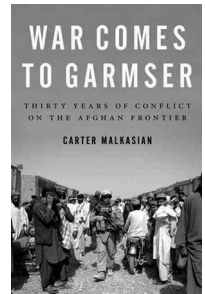
The author is well educated on the subject and has performed yeoman service on the ground as a scholar and diplomat in both Iraq and Afghanistan. In the latter theater, Malkasian learned Pashto, the local language, and stayed two years in one area, achieving great prominence as a T. E. Lawrence-like diplomatic operative. He downplays his own role, but in August 2011, *The Washington Post* wrote of “Carter Sahib” that:

The adoration [of the local population] stems from his unflinching politeness (he greeted people in the traditional Pashtun way, holding their hands for several minutes as a series of welcomes and praises to God were delivered), his willingness to take risks (he often traveled around in a police pickup instead of in an American armored vehicle with a squad of Marines), and his command of Pashto, the language of southern Afghanistan (he conversed fluently, engaging in rapid-fire exchanges with gray-bearded elders). Afghan officials and U.S. commanders credit Malkasian with playing a critical role in the transformation of Garmser from one of the country’s most violent, Taliban-infested districts to a place so quiet that some Marines wish they had more chances to fire their weapons.

To make war in a place like Afghanistan means you must immerse yourself in that milieu. In addition to friendly and enemy forces, there will be other actors. Local power centers, competing tribal structures, religious sects, drug lords, and parties to land disputes, are norms, not aberrations. Conducting war under these conditions requires soldiers who are as culturally sensitive and well educated as they are trained for the kinetic fight.

Real people are central to *War Comes to Garmser*. Malkasian modeled his outstanding book, on the famous Vietnam-era text, *War Comes to Long An* by Jeffrey Race. In both books, the study of counterinsurgency begins with an intense examination of a war in a small area. Malkasian’s book is population-centric counterinsurgency under a microscope. More than 31,000,000 Afghans live in 34 provinces that contain over 400 districts. This book is about one of those districts and fewer than 150,000 Pashtun tribesmen.

Taking advantage of a few years in Afghanistan, Malkasian researched conflict in Garmser, a district in the south-central part of Helmand Province and, at times, a Taliban stronghold. Contrary to



New York: Oxford University Press, 2013

321 pages
\$20.29

most American books about Afghanistan, the main characters in this book are nearly all Afghans. It is not just about the Taliban versus the Government of Afghanistan and the Coalition in the Garmser district. This book is all about powerful tribal leaders, feuding Pashtun tribes, narcotics, land disputes, religious figures, and competing power structures. The dominant American characters here are mud Marines and a handful of US and British diplomats who fought and worked in Garmser from 2009 to 2011.

Malkasian's focus is on how and why the Taliban came to power, were ousted in 2001, and came back five years later. "In other words, why did things go wrong, and did they ever go right?" Like a good novel, the characters tell the story: men like the intrepid Abdullah Jan, the on-again, off-again District Governor, who, bereft of resources, tried to keep the tribes together to thwart the 500-man Taliban offensive, led by the treacherous Mullahs Naim Barech and Dadullah Lang. In Garmser, in 2006, the center could not hold. The Taliban seized the district and held it for a few years. It took three years of hard, dangerous work by 1,000 Marines and squads of diplomats and development experts to take it back.

In Malkasian's conclusion, he cites three key problems in Garmser, all of which are smaller-scale models of nationwide issues: "first, rifts within society and within the government, particularly the reluctance of Afghans opposed to the Taliban to ally together; second, Taliban safe-havens in Pakistan, and third, the after-effects of the [US-sponsored 1960s] canal project," which introduced landless immigrants into the area. The canal system, a potentially important feat of agricultural development, laid the foundation for a legal and ethical problem of such magnitude and sensitivity that Coalition diplomats and development experts were ordered to stay out of the land reform business. This "us-versus-them" issue became a fertile breeding ground for Taliban support. The Coalition's refusal to deal with it ensured land reform will remain a sore point in the future.

In the end, what does this book tell us about the future of Afghanistan, in particular, and counterinsurgency, in general?

Malkasian sticks to his knitting and does not try to provide the reader a roadmap for success. Judging by his analysis of problems in Garmser, he is a moderate optimist, happy about the buildup of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), which could have blocked the Taliban were it strong enough in 2006, but concerned today about the Coalition's staying power and whether the Afghan government can survive after the departure of the Coalition expeditionary force in December 2014. On that subject, the ANSF is fighting well and paying the price for doing so. Today, the Afghan Minister of the Interior is in trouble with the Parliament for losing up to a few hundred policemen per week. In a similar vein, a senior American officer assigned to the theater told this reviewer in July 2013 that, today, virtually all the fighting is being done by Afghan forces, more than three-quarters of which are fighting "unilaterally," that is, without US support or partners. The Taliban has had few successes in the latest fighting season.

The press is full of pessimism, bombast, and Karzai's latest antics. Subtracting from a message of unity and resolve, the US government has vaguely threatened a post-ISAF "zero option," which could only

benefit Mullah Omar. Afghanistan is about ten months away from an election that will tell us—if it is honest—how the Afghan people assess the contending narratives and view the future. The Coalition and the Government of Afghanistan can only help the pre-election narrative by completing the future security agreement and agreeing on the post-ISAF advise-and-assist force.

This book is proof positive of how difficult and costly counterinsurgency is. It requires tremendous resources to achieve gains that often prove temporary. At the height of the surge, the Coalition used 140,000 foreign troops and over 350,000 Afghan soldiers and police officers to block 30,000 full-time Taliban and their local recruits. Success in Garmser, one of Afghanistan's more than 400 districts, required 1,000 Marines for a few years. Indeed, Rajiv Chandrasekaran, in his 2013 book, *Little America: The War within the War for Afghanistan*, judged the Helmand deployment to be excessive, given greater needs elsewhere in theater. In my own trips to Afghanistan in 2011 and 2012, it was not unusual to see Army brigades in the eastern part of Afghanistan responsible for three provinces.

Whether or not Chandrasekaran was right, the Marines in Helmand did great work, and one can be sure that their Grunts never felt they had an excessive number of troops. The Marines in Garmser lived up to the traditional aggressive fighting standards of Marine infantry, a hardy perennial that has not gone out of style in the information age. They were among the Marine contingent awarded a Presidential Unit Citation.

Financial resources also rose to incredible heights under the Obama surge. From 2010 to 2012 inclusive, by Congressional Research Services (CRS) calculations, total US expenditures averaged 109 billion dollars per year. It is fair to ask how many more conflicts on the scale of Iraq or Afghanistan that the United States can afford in the future.

The counterinsurgency effort is not only huge and costly but also organizationally complex. Security is paramount, but it is only one line of operation. Diplomacy, development, capacity building, and rule of law are all part of what some call “armed nation-building,” and others refer to as population-centric counterinsurgency. The military surge required a civilian surge. In the Coalition, interagency cooperation was in high demand but short supply. As the overwhelming presence of coalition combat forces fades, one may expect the impetus for interagency cooperation will tend to do likewise. More importantly, while the Afghan security forces are robust, the civilian government is still weak, corrupt, and illegitimate in many eyes. Pakistan, beset by its own Taliban revolt, remains both ally and antagonist. At the risk of understatement, the uncertainties associated with the future of the conflict in the Hindu Kush are considerable.

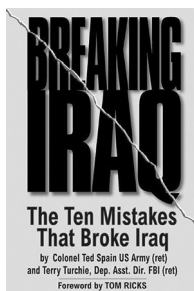
Another dimension of the complexity here is knowledge. Large-scale counterinsurgency requires thousands of experts with area knowledge and language skills. Local intelligence officers need to understand their districts with the same level of expertise that Malkasian and the Marines did in Garmser. Sadly, many of our “strategic corporals,” to borrow General Krulak's phrase from 1997, and many of their officers have not always shown such sophistication.

The unique character of such conflicts poses tough questions for force planners: Are these levels of knowledge and language skills reasonable expectations for general purpose forces and a poorly resourced State Department? Is large-scale, expeditionary-force counterinsurgency even do-able? (The last undisputed US success was in the Philippines in 1902.) Can large-scale expeditionary forces avoid the mistakes of Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan? Can forces focused on high-intensity combat rapidly transition to fighting a counterinsurgency or vice versa?

On counterinsurgency, it would seem wise to get in early and light with well-trained, area-educated forces. In this technique of COIN Lite, the advise-and-assist force should focus on developing the host nation forces and turning operations over to them as quickly as possible. All of this, of course, is more easily typed than accomplished.

It is difficult to be completely optimistic on prospects for success in Afghanistan. In the end, the future of Afghanistan will be in the hands of the Afghan government and its people. We can provide assistance and advice, but Afghans will have to win the Afghan war, if the “w” word even applies to wars in the Hindu Kush. While this challenge is daunting, it pales in comparison to what Taliban leaders will have to accomplish to have a successful outcome.

Lest he be accused of local-itis, the broad-minded Malkasian concludes that “thinking objectively about strategy demands a degree of attachment that the individual on the ground must fore swear—at least if he is to do his job. Emotional commitment, with all of its biases, is irreplaceable. Grand strategic calculations on costs and benefits are best left to far-off policy-makers” (page 274). Statesmen must figure out when, where, and on what scale to engage in this form of war among the people. No amount of skill in counterinsurgency techniques can remove the burden of strategic decisions from our nation’s leaders.



Breaking Iraq: The Ten Mistakes That Broke Iraq

By Ted Spain and Terry Turchie

Reviewed by LTC David G. Fivecoat, US Army, former Infantry Battalion Commander in Afghanistan, and veteran of three tours in Iraq

Since the 2003 invasion of Iraq, thousands of books have been published on the conflict. Regrettably, very few have been written by the hundreds of officers who led battalions and brigades in Mesopotamia for a year or more in combat. By my count, only six battalion commanders and one brigade commander—Chris Hughes of 2nd Battalion, 327 Infantry; Nate Sassman of 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry; Steve Russell of 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry; Pat Proctor of 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery; Jim Crider of 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry; Harry Tunnel of 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment and Pete Mansoor of 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division—have written about their experiences. *Breaking Iraq: The Ten Mistakes That Broke Iraq*, by Colonel Ted Spain, US Army Retired, and Terry Turchie, adds to the short list by describing Colonel Spain’s experience leading the 18th Military Police (MP) Brigade in Baghdad, Iraq, from April 2003 to February 2004. Unlike other commander’s memoirs, *Breaking Iraq* attempts to go one step further by

Palisades, NY: History Publishing Company, 2013

310 pages

\$28.95

critiquing ten operational and strategic decisions that made the mission more challenging. Unfortunately, the book struggles to do both tasks well.

Utilizing the 18th MP Brigade's experience, the authors demonstrate the impact of ten operational and strategic decisions on the military policemen patrolling Baghdad's streets. Paraphrasing the authors, the ten mistakes were: the failure to deploy enough military police, to emphasize the establishment of law and order, and to rebuild the Iraqi police force; the lack of a clear definition on prisoners; the ill-defined roles between interrogators and military police; the decision to assign Brigadier General Janis Karpinski to run Abu Ghraib prison; the focus of General Ricardo Sanchez on combat operations; the ineffectiveness of the Coalition Provincial Authority; the unhelpful role of Bernie Kerik; and the utilization of allies who saw the mission differently than the United States. Ten years after the invasion, there is little debate that these decisions, and others, contributed to the insurgency's growth and additional challenges for all soldiers deployed there. While the strategic and operational critiques were conveyed better in James Fallows's *Blind Into Baghdad* or Tom Ricks's *Fiasco*, the authors' emphasis on military police and law and order is a new and insightful twist on the debate. Exploring the hypothetical, the authors contend that deploying more of the US Army's military police force might have prevented the rise of the insurgency. Had their book been published in 2005 rather than 2013, Spain and Turchie could have had a greater impact on the discussion of the factors responsible for the Iraqi insurgency's growth.

The year 2003 was a chaotic time in Iraq, as units did their best to understand the environment, learn counterinsurgency and nation-building skills, and craft an effective way ahead. The military's experiences in Panama, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan seemed to lack relevancy. Colonel Spain and the 18th MP Brigade's challenges of dealing with uncertainty, inadequate plans, the breakdown of Iraqi society, and reestablishing order will be familiar to any veteran who served in the early days of Iraq. The letters and after-action reviews from his officers and soldiers add to the narrative and are particularly insightful.

Colonel Spain pulls no punches as he shares his unique perspective and opinions on key leaders he encountered, especially Bernie Kerick, James Steele, Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez, Major General Geoffrey Miller, and then-Major General Martin Dempsey. The section on the Brigade's experience with Abu Ghraib prison and the turn over to Brigadier General Janis Karpinski provides another perspective on how the scourge of torture and prisoner abuse materialized inside the prison walls. Finally, the description of the events surrounding the death of Lieutenant Colonel Kim Orlando, Battalion Commander for the 716th MP Battalion, and one of the highest ranking soldiers killed in Iraq, sheds some light on the events of that confusing night in Karbala.

Regrettably, the book has several shortcomings: a need for an editor to clean up a reoccurring problem of words running "togetheronthe page," a lack of maps, and a requirement for better organization. A factual error involving Colonel Spain's encounter with the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR) in 2003 (pages 70-71) raises questions about the accuracy of the memoirs. While the 2nd ACR was indeed in Iraq in 2003, it didn't field Stryker vehicles until 2005, and it didn't deploy

with Strykers until 2007. Also, the authors' additional research appears limited to a small number of senior leader memoirs and a few newspaper and magazine articles. Perhaps drawing from other works published in the intervening decade, like the US Army's excellent *On Point I* and *On Point II* or Mark DePue's *Patrolling Baghdad: A Military Police Company and the War in Iraq*, might have added more context to Spain's experience.

Throughout the book, the authors criticize every higher headquarters above the 18th Military Police Brigade, including Combined Joint Task Force-7, the Coalition Provincial Authority, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and the President of the United States. Some of the criticism is warranted, but very few leaders in the chain of command seem to escape Colonel Spain's ire. Despite his rigid standards for others, there is little self-assessment of the successes or failures of the 18th MP Brigade. Spain's appraisal of the rebuilding of the Iraqi police force, the change in the security situation in Baghdad over the year, and the Brigade's role in the recovery of artifacts from the Baghdad museum, would have added to the book's impact. With ten years of perspective, some degree of introspection into the Brigade's accomplishments and shortcomings would have been welcomed.

Colonel Spain should be commended for possessing the courage to write *Breaking Iraq*, only the second memoir by a brigade commander who served in Iraq. It is a solid book for military policemen, individuals who served in Baghdad in 2003 and 2004, and future postwar planners. However, it adds little to the narrative on the poor operational and strategic choices that fueled the insurgency's growth in Iraq. Hopefully, Colonel Spain will write another book that tells the full story of the challenges he experienced leading the 18th MP Brigade.

AMERICAN POWER IN THE NEW ERA

War, Welfare, & Democracy: Rethinking America's Quest for the End of History

By Peter J. Munson

Reviewed by Major Nathan K. Finney, US Army, strategist and veteran of Iraq and Afghanistan, and a current student in the Basic Strategic Art Program at the US Army War College

In the wake of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, much ink has been spilled relating servicemembers' personal experiences or discussing the misapplication of American foreign policy. Few of them do both, let alone place such events in the greater context of history. In *War, Welfare, & Democracy*, Peter J. Munson does both by providing the reader a deep look into the driving factors in American foreign policy, punctuated by vivid images from his personal travels. Readers will find this book both enlightening and engrossing.

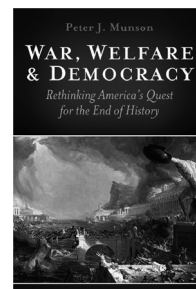
The thesis of this book is that the major challenges in the world today stem from the same source—the states' struggle to manage the flows of economic activity driven by globalization and the sociopolitical modernization that comes with it. In seven quick chapters, Munson synthesizes international relations theory, history, and economics to describe how the modern international system has developed into one of stark inequality, driving the instability and conflict seen across the globe today. Wealth and power are not distributed equally, with Western states providing too many resources to their populations through welfare states and developing nations failing to provide enough.

In addition to economic disparity, Munson uses Fukuyama's "end of history" theme to suggest that America's belief in the inevitable triumph of western liberalism helps explain the last decade's foreign policy choices. Munson describes how, as a nation, we have forgotten where, and the historical context in which, these concepts originated. His comparison of the morally dubious attempts at state-building in medieval Europe to the attempt to build government in societies dominated by tribalism and corruption particularly resonates.

Quoting from Kalyvas' *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, he suggests that modern insurgencies can be seen "as a process of competitive state-building." In Munson's view, our recent quest to drive foreign nations to speed the "end of history" through military adventurism, has stymied local attempts at state-building, not supported them. America tried to spread Western values through force, mistaking the illusion of elections for good governance and modernization for progress.

Munson balances his pessimism with optimism about the American propensity for change. In his view, instead of exporting their perceived success, Americans need to focus on re-creating the conditions at home that made our country great. In so doing we will act as an exemplar in foreign policy, not a crusader.

If these prescriptions sound both obvious and vague, you are not alone. While Munson does an outstanding job describing the historical



Washington, DC: Potomac Books, Inc., 2013
240 pages
\$29.95

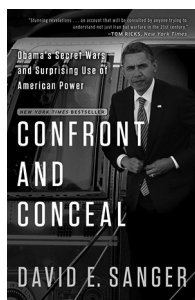
narrative leading to today's issues as well as illustrating them with examples from his own travels around the world, his solutions are easier said than done. Many American presidents have come into office focused on improving the economic standing of the country and reducing our commitments overseas. Both the complexity of the task and the complexity of the contemporary world make this a more difficult task than it seems.

Overall, *War, Welfare, & Democracy* is a well-researched and authoritative look at what drives us as a nation and how we arrived at where we are today. Munson's fluency with international relations theory, contemporary history, and economic theory provides the reader with a clear picture of global trends and provides a useful framework that points the way into the future. While his solutions lack specificity, Munson's framework is valuable for national security professionals to understand. This book is highly recommended.

Confront and Conceal: Obama's Secret Wars and Surprising Use of American Power

By David E. Sanger

Reviewed by Dr. W. Andrew Terrill, Research Professor, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College



New York: Random House,
2012
496 pages
\$28.00

In *Confront and Conceal*, David Sanger, the chief Washington correspondent of *The New York Times*, examines President Obama's approach to US national security. He considers the president's actions in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the Middle East, China, and North Korea, and argues an "Obama Doctrine" of sorts has emerged. It calls for the United States to confront the actions of its adversaries through a variety of ways including engagement, sanctions, covert actions, propaganda war, cyberwar, working closely with allies, and employing drones and Special Operations Forces. Conversely, the use of massive conventional military force is something the Obama Doctrine seeks to avoid except in cases involving US national survival. This reluctance is motivated by the president's concern about developing open-ended commitments and long occupations "that we can no longer afford" (page 421). Throughout the work, Obama is portrayed as deeply engaged in foreign policy, which he views through a realist lens (an approach that James Mann has without irony called that of a "Scowcroft Democrat"). He is also presented as seeking to manage other world powers and friendly states through intensive diplomacy and a keen understanding of their interests and goals.

Sanger maintains that Obama's approach to national security is reflected in his willingness to accept what the administration was reported to have called "Afghan Good Enough" as the basis for a US withdrawal from that country. This policy seeks a decent outcome in Afghanistan but is primarily concerned with ensuring the country never becomes a sanctuary for al Qaeda or other international terrorist organizations. Sanger maintains that Obama considers Pakistan and Iran to be more difficult problems than Afghanistan, and the president is described as viewing a loose Pakistani nuclear weapon as his most frightening foreign policy contingency. The Obama administration has struggled a great deal with this question but never reached a satisfactory solution

largely due to the Pakistani's claim that their weapons are 100 percent safe and the obvious fact that even a safe arsenal can become unsafe if Pakistan implodes.

Some of the most interesting analysis of this work involves US policies to prevent or at least delay Iranian development of a nuclear weapon. Here much of what Sanger presents is an account of US-Israeli covert war against the Iranian nuclear weapons program based on investigative reporting and not confirmed by official United States government statements. Sanger describes aspects of the covert war in some detail considering issues such as cyberattacks and sabotage against Iranian nuclear infrastructure. In one of the more amusing aspects of the book, Sanger also discusses a US-sponsored propaganda effort against Iran that appears modeled on "The Daily Show," whereby two US-based Iranian comedians highlight some of the most absurd aspects of their leadership's statements and actions. Moreover, while the covert and propaganda wars have been occurring, Obama has been steadily tightening economic sanctions on the Tehran regime by convincing foreign leaders that Iran has refused a reasonable diplomatic solution. This tightening has been a slow process since China and Russia initially showed almost no interest in confronting Tehran over this issue, but were eventually brought along.

Sanger comments extensively on the Obama administration's use of drones, which he maintains is substantial. Again, his accounts are detailed but often unsubstantiated by official US statements or documents. He maintains that drones are highly effective and over time have become much more accurate thereby reducing collateral damage in countries where they have been used in recent years. Nevertheless, Sanger strongly objects to one aspect of Obama's drone policy, which is the secrecy surrounding many aspects of the program. Sanger states that the Obama administration's decision to keep many details of its drone program secret has allowed US enemies to dominate the discussion of these systems with wildly exaggerated claims of the suffering of innocent victims. Sanger maintains the United States could win the argument on the morality of the drone program if it had not forfeited the option of doing so through excessive secrecy. This criticism may have value, but such decisions almost always involve the host government and not just the US administration. Recently, the much greater openness of Yemeni President Abed Rabbo Hadi (elected 2012) about drones has allowed the Obama administration to lift at least some of the secrecy about such activities in Yemen, although clearly not nearly to the extent Sanger is advocating.

In his discussions of the Arab Spring, Sanger states that Obama was viewed throughout the Arab World in an extremely positive light upon taking office. His landmark 2009 speech in Cairo was given to a widely approving audience, whose members occasionally shouted, "I love you." This approval was not to last, however, and the US president lost much of the luster with young Egyptians when he was perceived as dragging his feet on renouncing the Mubarak regime. He later showed another side of his cautious approach with Libya by refusing to send US ground troops into the conflict. Sanger quotes Obama National Security Advisor Tom Donilon as stating, "When you are on the ground, you own the result—and it is not long before you are resented by the local

population” (page 346). Additionally, while the United States did commit air units to the early phase of the NATO intervention in Libya, it was unwilling to accept even this level of involvement in the much more complex and difficult situation in Syria.

Sanger spends less time discussing China and North Korea, but he does consider potential problems between China and the United States. He states that Chinese leaders were delighted with the Bush-era wars, which they saw as weakening the United States and causing Washington’s attention to be diverted from Asia. This situation has now changed with the US pivot towards Asia, which the Chinese view with suspicion. Sanger suggests that an important part of the new US focus on Asia involves concern over the erratic and aggressive behavior by North Korea, but he correspondingly notes that China has shown little inclination to restrain that country in ways that would assuage US concern. He further states that China has alienated many of its neighbors over the past few years with efforts to advance its territorial claims in the South China Sea. Unsurprisingly, many of the countries most concerned about these Chinese actions are currently seeking to strengthen their ties to the United States. Sanger also discusses some of the divisions reflected in Chinese government publications on whether that country is better served by an assertive or a restrained foreign policy. The uptick of US tension with China came at a particularly bad time as the Chinese were terrified that the Arab Spring would leap the Pacific. Hence, they became especially sensitive to any US actions they perceived as meddling in Chinese domestic politics. Reflecting this concern, there were countless government-sponsored news stories about the end of “normal life” in Arab Spring countries.

In sum, Sanger presents an administration that jumps enthusiastically into the world of technological and other covert actions to fight America’s enemies but shows tremendous restraint about major commitments of military forces. He describes the president’s diplomacy and other foreign policy actions as meeting a number of important challenges with “patience and ingenuity” in ways that have led to favorable outcomes without incurring huge costs. The central foreign policy criticism that Sanger presents is his belief that Obama has been too tactical and reactive in his approach to national security. He maintains the president has come up short in developing and explaining “an overarching strategy to maintain and enhance American leadership and power in the world” (page 426). There may be some truth in this criticism although Sanger also seems to answer his own critique by suggesting the American public is not interested in such a strategy, and both the US public and Congress are more attentive to the “can we afford it questions” and the need for “nation-building at home.” This book is strongly recommended for those interested in the formulation and implementation of President Obama’s foreign policy and how his administration views national security issues.

NETWORKS & SECURITY STRATEGY

Convergence: Illicit Networks and National Security in the Age of Globalization

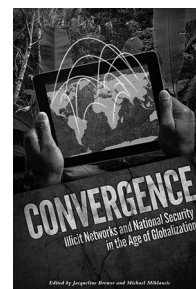
Edited by Michael Miklaucic and Jacqueline Brewer

Reviewed by Dr. Robert J. Bunker, Distinguished Visiting Professor and Minerva Chair at the Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College

Michael Miklaucic, director of research, information, and publications, and editor of the security studies journal *PRISM*; and Jacqueline Brewer, an analyst, both with the Center for Complex Operations (CCO), Institute for National Strategic Studies, at the National Defense University, have created a useful and timely edited publication. The genesis of the book emanated from the conference, “Illicit Networks in an Age of Globalization,” sponsored by the Center for Complex Operations, 8-9 February 2011. This book is in the same genre as James J. F. Forest’s edited work *Crime and Terror* (Routledge 2013), Jennifer L. Hesterman’s *The Terrorist-Criminal Nexus* (CRC Press 2013), and my own, with coauthor John Sullivan, *Studies in Gangs and Cartels* (Routledge 2013), all appearing this year. *Convergence*, along with these other works, focuses on varying aspects of the blending of violent nonstate actor (VNSA) forms, the rise and spread of the illicit networks in which they are linked, criminal forms of international political economy (Dark IPE), and the increasing threat these hostile entities represent to the sovereign state.

This splendid edited collection includes a foreword by James G. Stavridis; acknowledgments; an introduction; fourteen chapters divided into four parts themed “A Clear and Present Danger,” “Complex Illicit Operations,” “The Attack on Sovereignty,” and “Fighting Back”; and contributor notes. The individual chapters include the following:

- Chapter 1: “Deviant Globalization” (Nils Gilman, Jesse Goldhammer, and Steven Weber)
- Chapter 2: “Lawlessness and Disorder: An Emerging Paradigm for the 21st Century” (Phil Williams)
- Chapter 3: “Can We Estimate the Global Scale and Impact of Illicit Trade?” (Justin Picard) in part one
- Chapter 4: “The Illicit Supply Chain” (Duncan Deville)
- Chapter 5: “Fixers, Super Fixers, and Shadow Facilitators: How Networks Connect” (Douglas Farah)
- Chapter 6: “The Geography of Badness: Mapping the Hubs of the Illicit Global Economy” (Patrick Radden Keefe)
- Chapter 7: “Threat Finance: A Critical Enabler for Illicit Networks” (Danielle Camner Lindholm and Celina B. Realuyo)
- Chapter 8: “Money Laundering into Real Estate” (Louise Shelley) in part two
- Chapter 9: “The Criminal State” (Michael Miklaucic and Moisés



Washington, DC: Center for Complex Operations (NDU), 2013

298 pages

\$29.95 (Paper)/Free (PDF)

Naim)

- Chapter 10: “How Illicit Networks Impact Sovereignty” (John P. Sullivan)
- Chapter 11: “Counterinsurgency, Counternarcotics, and Illicit Economies in Afghanistan: Lessons for State-Building” (Vanda Felbab-Brown) in part three
- Chapter 12: “Fighting Networks with Networks” (David M. Luna)
- Chapter 13: “The Department of Defense’s Role in Combating Transnational Organized Crime” (William F. Wechsler and Gary Barnabo)
- Chapter 14: “Collaborating to Combat Illicit Networks Through Interagency and International Efforts” (Celina B. Realuyo) in part four

Each chapter contains its own endnotes and a small number of figures are available in the overall text.

The contributors are representative of an academic (Ph.D.) through practitioner (military and governmental agent) continuum with quite a bit of gray area expertise drawn from both poles, along with some investigative journalistic and policing hybrids also evident. This allows for a healthy mix of skill sets represented in the work. The reviewer has worked with, is working with, or is presently tracking a good portion of the scholars found in this edited collection. For this reason, a couple of observations can be readily made. For readers not familiar with the book’s themes, this work presents a great initial introduction to the writing of the prolific scholars who contributed to this work, including Douglas Farah, Vanda Felbab-Brown, Moisés Naim, Louise Shelley, John P. Sullivan, and Phil Williams. For those readers more steeped in the literature, the works of quite a few of the subject matter experts who have had less publication exposure are of much more value—especially the works found in “Part IV Fighting Back” by David M. Luna, William F. Wechsler, Gary Barnabo, and Celina B. Realuyo. This was a most welcome section because too often scholars are willing to define and outline a problem or threat but are either unable—or unwilling—to recommend solutions to mitigate or respond to it. Still, some of the solutions offered draw upon approaches known about for well over a decade and a half still have not been implemented, which suggests that we are still long on problem definition and short on solutions to these growing threats.

Focusing on some of the specific contributions themselves, it is of some importance that an intentional linkage was made in this work—via the first chapter contribution of Nils Gilman, Jesse Goldhammer, and Steven Weber. That chapter summarizes the main points of their acclaimed book *Deviant Globalization* (Continuum 2011) and, in so doing, helps provide some of the theoretical foundation for *Convergence*. The Douglas Farah chapter should also be mentioned for providing a trenchant overview of the circular flows of goods and cash and the “fixer” chains—what are essentially the “feedback loops” of illicit transactions. While much discussion of VNSA and illicit networks is made in this edited collection—the dying vestiges of our modern world are still defined by the legitimacy and sovereign rights bestowed upon territorial states. For this reason, the discussions and analysis

provided in Chapter 9, “The Criminal State” by Michael Miklaucic and Moisés Naim, is also of great theoretical significance with its coverage of degrees of state criminality and the development of the “Criminal Sovereign” construct.

Neither an index nor, more importantly, a comprehensive reference listing is included in the book, which is a slight detraction. Due to the small font size utilized in the physical book, readers will likely prefer digitally accessing the work and enlarging the font size using the zoom function of a PDF reader. In summation, this is a quality work, on an increasingly important topic of national security, and free in PDF format—all boons for the reader.

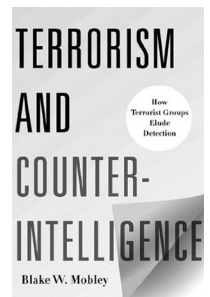
Terrorism and Counterintelligence: How Terrorist Groups Elude Detection

By Blake W. Mobley

Reviewed by Mr. Ross W. Clark, Graduate Student, School of International Affairs, Pennsylvania State University

Combating terrorism has been the focal point of US policy following that fateful day on 11 September 2001. Many in both the academic and professional worlds often fail to realize the most prominent terrorist groups in media headlines are not backwoods ad hoc organizations. They are not the groups of disturbed children or adults attempting to find their place in society as some analysts tend to portray. Many of these organizations are, in fact, quite sophisticated, well-organized groups that control their members via opportunities for improved living standards and an agenda in line with the population’s values at the time. Sophisticated organizations, both past and present, such as al Qaeda, the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA), Egyptian Islamic Group (IG), and Fatah all use a variety of techniques described throughout this book to evade their adversaries’ most effective counterintelligence methods, and it is these four groups the case studies represent.

Terrorism and Counterintelligence: How Terrorist Groups Elude Detection examines the intricate webs that make a terrorist group successful, and begins its review by defining the words “terrorism” and “counterintelligence.” Academics and other professionals often disagree on the basic definitions of these broad and manipulative terms, which in turn cause problems in the thorough analysis and interpretation of the reasoning behind a group’s actions. In a society with a plethora of definitions of terrorism and counterintelligence, the author does an exceptional job of defining these terms in line with the key underlining message of this book, which is to scrutinize the structure of these organizations and attempt to understand how they function from the inside out. The counterintelligence techniques used throughout the case studies include basic denial, adaptive denial, and covert manipulation. Basic denial includes training members of the group in basic counterintelligence techniques such as limited information of the telephone and internet networks and maintaining a low profile. Adaptive denial is adjusting the group’s counterintelligence techniques to combat an adversary’s intelligence methods; lastly, covert manipulation, uses double agents and false defectors to



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340 pages

\$36.00

provide false information to the adversary. All these tactics prove useful and both the adversary and the terrorist group must create new forms of intelligence and counterintelligence techniques to combat older tactics. This book does not discuss specific terrorist plots or provide the reader with dramatic stories; it is rather a book with an in-depth focus on the inner workings of how terrorist cells relay information and the degree to which they keep their most sensitive information secret.

Mobley uses a variety of case studies to provide the audience with a comprehensive look at terror organizations throughout their growth and decline. Instead of classifying an organization as the same entity throughout the span of its life, he breaks these organizations into blocks of time during which they have grown stronger or weaker. The characteristics used to describe the prominence of each group are as follows: organizational structure, popular support, controlled territory, resources, and adversary counterterrorism. Throughout each case study the author explores these characteristics of the various terrorist groups and meticulously details counterintelligence strategies of the terror organizations. Some of these tactics include but are not limited to: controlling territory, recruitment numbers small enough to effectively train, face-to-face meetings, codes for sensitive phrases, and constant movement of leaders. The book describes the specific counterintelligence tactics of each organization in a way that does not immortalize the group. For each counterintelligence measure that is described for terrorist groups to evade detection, an opposite reaction by their adversaries is just as meticulously detailed and implemented to counter them. These adversaries are often state directed and therefore have greater resources and personnel at their disposal to intercept telephone calls, e-mails, or to disseminate agents into the group.

Understanding how terrorist groups evade their adversaries and undermine intelligence collection efforts is what Mobley outlines. The sources used in researching this book are extensive and allow the author to present a compelling case. The use of charts provides the reader a graphic description of these groups. The author understands the complexities of larger, more resourceful terrorist organizations and advises that each group has personality traits that make it unique. In lieu of these individual traits, it is up to the adversary to find these characteristics, and exploit their weaknesses in order to gain crucial inside knowledge. *Terrorism and Counterintelligence* is an intellectual rollercoaster that shows the ups and downs of the biggest and most prominent terrorist groups the world has dissected so far and leaves the reader with a renewed sense of the power and control these groups have on traditional society.

WWI: STRATEGIES & STRATEGISTS

Engineers of Victory: The Problem Solvers Who Turned the Tide in the Second World War

By Paul Kennedy

Reviewed by Dr. F. G. Hoffman, Senior Research Fellow, Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University

In his new book, *Engineers of Victory*, Paul Kennedy has crafted a unique and lively history of the Second World War. His frequently incisive tale takes a different tack from the more traditional historical focus on the decisions of senior statesmen or military leaders. Instead of “Masters and Commanders,” the author narrows his scope to the often unknown middle-rank officers and government officials who resolved critical operational gaps with the key organizational or technological breakthroughs that made victory possible. In 1942, the sweeping strategic strokes laid down by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill represented more aspiration than executable plans. While the ends were clear, the means were not immediately at hand, and numerous shortfalls in capability were not yet even evident. Over a span of just a few years, enormous technological advances and organizational solutions were tested, refined, and fielded. Without such ways and means, the strategy of the Grand Alliance was mere paper.

Long a student of grand strategy, Kennedy has held the Dilworth Professor of History at Yale for three decades. While well recognized for his broad strategic and historical work, including *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* and *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery*, here the author confirms his ability to weave operational detail and the tools of war into a cohesive and reader-friendly assessment.

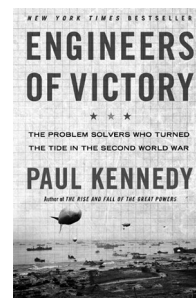
While acknowledging that no single variable can explain success, Kennedy’s underlying metanarrative is that wars are ultimately won by a superior organization imbued with a culture of innovation that actively encourages inquiry, experimentation, and interdisciplinary problem solving. Kennedy’s thesis is succinctly captured:

The most important variable of all, the creation of war-making systems that contained impressive feedback loops, flexibility, a capacity to learn from mistakes and a “culture of encouragement” that permitted the middlemen in this grinding conflict the freedom to experiment, to offer ideas and opinions and to cross traditional institutional boundaries.

This variable is the intangible factor of strategic or organizational culture that was ultimately needed to bring about the explicit and unconditional victory sought by the Allies. This was the “ghost in the machine” that brought down the Axis.

Kennedy’s masterfully told story is arrayed across five distinct operational challenges, and largely within the early 1943 to late 1944 time period.

The first case study involves the Battle of the Atlantic, which required relearning how to employ convoys to overcome the ruthless



New York: Random House, 2013

416 pages
\$29.95

efficiency of Admiral Doenitz's U-boats. In 1942, the Allies had lost 6.3 million tons of shipping to U-boats, mainly off the coast of the United States. The introduction of convoy systems, intelligence, radar, capable escorts equipped with Sub-killing Hedgehogs, and determined commanders like Royal Navy Captain F. J. Walker won the one campaign that kept Winston Churchill awake at night.

Once forces and their material could cross the ocean, Allied forces needed to command the air. Here Kennedy excoriates strategic bombing advocates and the obstinate thinking that continued to commit large numbers of crews at risk for little gain until the Allies learned how to suppress German air defenses. Here the principal story is how Ronnie Harker, a British test pilot, proposed the merger of the powerful Rolls-Royce Merlin engine with the anemic American P-51 Mustang, producing a superb escort fighter.

The third case study addresses ground combat challenges, particularly the impact of German armored warfare. Kennedy naturally starts with the British battle against Rommel in North Africa, but he then reaches out to the Clash of Titans in the Eastern Front. "This struggle was unique in its grand combination of mechanized destructive power with Asiatic-horde-like warfare," Kennedy notes. "The existential struggle between Teutons and Slavs was now entwined with an increasingly complicated and ever-changing technological competition." The author details how a team of US engineers from Aberdeen critically assessed the numerous deficiencies of the initial models of the T-34, which helped the Russians modify their design and manufacturing.

The next competition required the Allies to learn how to project power from the sea. From the initial debacle of the Dieppe raid, Kennedy traces the steady learning curve from Operation Torch in North Africa to the subsequent evolutions in Sicily, Salerno, and Anzio. These demonstrated careful orchestration abetted by detailed planning. The culminating point for this organizational learning was D-Day, ably crafted by Admiral Bertram Ramsay, RN. In keeping with his focus on problem solvers, Kennedy lionizes Major General Percy Hobart for his numerous tank alterations, which the troops fondly called "Hobart's Funnies." He also notes the contribution made by the American Army Sergeant Curtis Culin, who fashioned the hedgerow-slicing Rhinoceros that allowed US armored units to avoid getting tied down in Normandy's bocage country.

In his final case history, the author shifts to the Pacific and the problem of defeating the "tyranny of distance" in that immense theater. Kennedy offers an extended discussion of the strategic options available to Allied planners but ultimately gets around to the key sub-components of waging war across such vast and contested distances: Andrew Higgins's flat-bottomed landing craft, the long-range B-29 Superfortress, and the unrestricted warfare conducted by US Navy submarines once the defective torpedoes were corrected. Disappointingly, in the latter case Kennedy chose not to include any discussion of how US submarine performance was enhanced by a feedback loop on best practices comprised of war patrol reports, endorsements up and down the chain of command, and the distribution of Submarine Bulletins. The extension of American fighting forces across the Pacific was abetted by a gigantic engineering organization, the Construction Battalions led by Admiral

Ben Moreel. His fighting “Sea Bees” built the bases, airfields, repair docks, and hospitals that were the essential infrastructure for Nimitz’s and MacArthur’s inexorable thrust towards Japan. Kennedy describes Moreel as “one of those neglected middlemen who made Allied grand strategy work.”

In each chapter, Kennedy’s demonstrated mastery of the historical record is matched by maps of extraordinary quality.

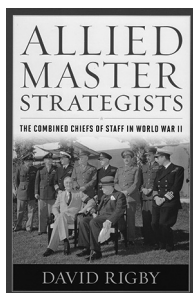
Engineers of Victory is a brilliant synthesis of these discrete developments, weaved into a coherent story that defines the real foundation of the grand alliance and its success. The key message is that it is not enough for policymakers to define great aspirations. While seldom a subject of serious inquiry, strategy has to be actionable and the ways and means harnessed to its ends must be practical. Success is gained only in the face of contingency and thinking opponents. The dynamics of strategic success must often be engineered by practical men and women who overcome the seemingly insurmountable.

Kennedy joins a growing field in military innovation studies. While there are books that address innovation before wars, particularly *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period* (Oxford University Press 1998) edited by the American duo of Williamson Murray and Allan Millett, until recently few historians have explored the process of innovation and adaptation that must occur *during* war. Murray’s later *Military Adaptation in War: With Fear of Change* (Cambridge University Press 2011) is devoted to some of the same cases but extends the historical range to the 1973 war between Israel and its Arab neighbors. Most recently, our understanding of adaptation in contemporary conflict was measurably improved by insights about lessons generated from the bottom up at the tactical level by Dr. James Russell of the Naval Post Graduate School in *Innovation, Transformation, and War: Counterinsurgency Operations in Anbar and Ninewa Provinces, Iraq, 2005-2007* (Stanford University Press 2010).

Kennedy’s assessment adds to these studies by showing that in more traditional forms of conflict, where materiel and technological capacity matter more, we should “mind the middle” to find the neglected realm of oft-forgotten individuals who provide the means of victory. The lesson for policymakers and strategists is that victory is not always found at the policy summit or even in the trenches or the cockpit. Sometimes it emanates from battle captains or “lab rats” in between with a keen appreciation for getting things done. Such mid-level genius does not spontaneously or routinely occur, however, and Kennedy might have buttressed his theme with the recognition that senior leaders must nurture and sustain the culture that allowed the “engineers” to have their ideas aired and tested. Both Roosevelt and Churchill were avid collectors of eclectic ideas and organizational mavericks.

Overall, Kennedy has succeeded in providing a riveting overview of the main competitions of the war as well as his “analysis of how grand strategy is achieved in practice, with the explicit claim that victories cannot be understood without a recognition of how those successes were engineered, and by whom.” Because of Kennedy’s superb narrative and research, this book will appeal to and is recommended to a wide range of readership, from civilians interested in history to senior defense leaders

grappling with engineering solutions to today's seemingly insurmountable defense problems.



Annapolis, MD: Naval
Institute Press, 2012
270 pages
\$29.95

Allied Master Strategists: The Combined Chiefs of Staff in World War II

By David Rigby

Reviewed by Dr. Bianka J. Adams, Historian, Office of History, US Army Corps of Engineers

While most histories of the Anglo-American Alliance in World War II mention the existence of the Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS) in passing, not many go into detail about its members, their biographies, their relationship with each other, or their work with their trans-Atlantic counterparts. David Rigby's *Allied Master Strategists* is an attempt to fill that particular gap. Over the course of eight chapters, the reader becomes very familiar with each individual, his role on the staff, and the CCS's importance for the conduct of Allied warfare.

Organized thematically with a rough chronological overlay, the book begins with a biographical chapter that introduces full-fledged members of the CCS as well as those who did not “quite make the cut” (page 43). The second chapter focuses on the organization of the CCS and the negotiations at the Casablanca Conference in 1943. Chapter three deals with the war in the Pacific, and the next chapter compares the effectiveness of the Alliance with the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis. Here, Rigby attributes the success of Allied coalition warfare in large part to the efforts of the Combined Chiefs of Staff. The fifth chapter details how the CCS helped reduce inter-Allied friction regarding Operation Overlord.

In the final three chapters, the author defends his thesis “that it was the Combined Chiefs of Staff organization, not politicians, diplomats, or bureaucrats that was the most important planning agency behind the military victories achieved by the Western Allies during the war” (page 7). In chapter six, the author details how members of the CCS had to fend off their political masters' attempts at making strategy, and in chapter seven Rigby gives examples of how individual members of the CCS supervised actions of their subordinate commanders in the field. The last chapter explores how the Combined Chiefs of Staff handled issues not traditionally military in nature, such as war production, management of raw materials, and diplomacy.

To undertake a subject in the well-plowed field of Allied strategy and planning during World War II with the intent to offer new insights is an ambitious undertaking, at which the author only partially succeeds. His well-researched, well-documented, and well-indexed study certainly breathes life into an institution that scholars of World War II mostly take for granted—never stopping to think about the men who served as the Combined Chiefs of Staff. Rigby humanizes this planning body. He carefully crafts short biographical sketches of each member, pointing out their strengths and weaknesses, though their weaknesses are never so grave as to make any of them unworthy of being a member of the CCS. Quite the contrary, each brought the right mix of prickliness or charm or an uncanny ability to handle either President Franklin D.

Roosevelt or Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill. The author also gives examples of how each service chief contributed directly to the war effort by limiting mistakes through decisiveness at the right moment. They all had their faults, to be sure, but Rigby paints overwhelmingly positive portraits of the chief Allied planners.

So positive are Rigby's descriptions of their qualities and concerns for the welfare of the Alliance and the conduct of the war that the politicians responsible for the overall Allied war strategy look foolish by comparison. The author's low opinion of the political leadership on both sides of the Atlantic finds its best expression in the title of chapter six: "Keeping the Armchair Strategists at Bay." Here, Rigby channels what might well have been the anguish some members of the Combined Chiefs of Staff felt towards their political leadership. Rigby directs most of his wrath against Churchill, whom he describes as a petty micromanager and a highly intrusive armchair strategist (pages 146-58). Compared to Churchill's offenses, Roosevelt's interventions appear minor. While the author concedes that Churchill was the right leader for a beleaguered Great Britain, he condemns the prime minister's meddling in the affairs of strategic decisionmaking. His judgment about Roosevelt is milder (page 157). The point Rigby seems to be missing is that politicians are supposed to "intervene" in strategic decisionmaking. Indeed, following the dictum of the primacy of politics/policy, they have a duty as leaders of governments to formulate strategic goals and to determine how best to achieve those goals.

The author's strong prejudice in favor of the CCS notwithstanding, *Allied Master Strategists* is a contribution to the field of World War II history, well worth researchers' attention. I recommend, however, reading the book in conjunction with other, more balanced studies on Allied warfare such as Mark A. Stoler's *Allies in War: Britain and America Against the Axis Powers, 1940-1945* (Bloomsbury 2007). Stoler provides much-needed context for a proper understanding of the significance of the creation of the Combined Chiefs of Staff. While Rigby points out the CCS was an unprecedented institution in the history of coalition warfare, he fails to explain how unlikely this close cooperation was in light of the antagonism that persisted in Anglo-American relations before Churchill and Roosevelt decided that it was in their mutual interest to become not only allies but also friends.

