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Book Reviews

STRATEGIC DOCTRINE

Planning To Fail: The US Wars in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan

By James H. Lebovic

Reviewed by Dr. Lionel Beehner, research director, US Military Academy's Modern War Institute

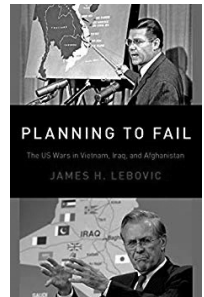
Buglers of bad news that examine how military leaders and policymakers have failed to manage wars that go south, such as Dominic Teirney's *The Right Way To Lose a War* (2015), should be welcomed more in military circles. While the failure of the unfinished wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is well-trodden territory for Beltway scribes, political insiders, and academics, who is to blame and what lessons should be learned remain open questions. It is not enough to boil it down to President Barack Obama's quip, "Don't do stupid stuff." Bureaucracies are stubborn creatures. Leaders are fickle.

To understand what went wrong and why, James Lebovic, in *Planning To Fail*, trains his eye on the military failures in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan. He argues policymakers deserve most of the blame, for rushing into war with a set of options that virtually guaranteed military departures short of meeting their objectives. Lebovic does not focus on why we went to war in each case, or map out a set of alternative strategic options. But rather he discusses in painstaking detail *how* we stumbled into war and then looked for an exit, like a drunk trying to find his keys in a bar.

His argument can be boiled down to this: when it comes to war, US policy-making is often too means driven, groping for limited solutions to problems that require greater commitments of force. Leaders blunder into wars, expanding the mission while squandering precious resources, all the while making it up as they go along, then groping for an exit strategy. A better title for this book might have been "The Powell Doctrine Reversed" or "The Bermuda-Clausewitzian Triangle."

The reason for these blinders can be attributed to organizational failures, political shortsightedness, and psychological biases. Lebovic paints policymakers as political creatures, myopic and unsympathetic, driven by unclear objectives, organizational biases, and fixed short-term time schedules—suffering from all three of Graham Allison's pathologies. Yet Lebovic's process tracing lacks the originality and rigor of Allison, relying as it does primarily on secondhand sources and previously articulated arguments.

Anybody hoping for a groundbreaking new insight on America's "forever wars" will not find it here. Nor will one find a cogent distillation of civil-military relations during warfare.



New York: Oxford University Press, 2019

256 pages

\$34.95

Yet, this book still deserves to be read, if not by military strategists and academics, then by aspiring policymakers. His review of what and how the wars went wrong—and so splendidly, like a slow-moving train wreck—is a useful compendium to any reading list of these three wars. Moreover, Lebovic’s analysis of the four stages of intervention, like those for grief counselors, are helpful analytically to pinpoint how decisions by key leaders are motivated by factors like organizational biases, resource constraints, and artificial timelines. Such observations are absent from much of the journalistic accounts of these wars.

Wars, like Tolstoyan families, are not all alike. But policymakers do face similar nodes when it comes to decision-making tree matrices. In the first stage, they decide to engage their military forces. In this stage, policymakers fixate on short-term mission objectives—for example, regime change. Yet too often they fail to articulate or align how these immediate goals should serve long-term grand strategy.

The second stage is to extend military operations—sometimes called mission creep. Here policy often becomes disjointed. At this stage policymakers are further detached from the operational level of the task at hand, and so they both defer to the expertise of those tasked with fighting the war while simultaneously groping for new instruments to use and broadening, whether inadvertently or not, the mission. At this stage, policymakers fall prey both to rational (optimizing the payoff) and nonrational biases (group think, tunnel vision, and so forth).

Stage three is defined by military setbacks, growing unpopularity of the war efforts, constraints in resources, and competing priorities. Suffering from a version of attention deficit disorder, policymakers thus reverse course and seek a strategy of constriction. They limit resources to reduce costs and mitigate risks. Then comes the fourth and final stage, where the goal is disengagement, as policymakers seek to hit the exits as painlessly as possible, handing over duties to often-unready partners, all the while imposing artificial timelines divorced from reality or the conditions on the ground.

Lebovic leaves some fertile ground unexplored. First, he tends to lump the lion’s share of the blame for these wars on policymakers. Military leaders come under only glancing scrutiny. That is a shame. There is a healthy and overdue debate within military circles among too much optimism among senior leaders in the field. Nor does Lebovic really explore the civil-military dynamics of how the various crises contributed to the mission failures. Is McMasterism a relevant factor for “planning to fail?” It is unclear.

Second, part of his theory touches on policymakers’ compressed timelines to get stuff done, even if it is operationally impractical or impossible. Yet he ignores large swaths of literature on this subject, like David Edelstein’s excellent recent book on this very subject, *Over the Horizon* (2017). If politicians are card-carrying procrastinators, as Edelstein and others argue, why not push off invading Iraq for another day? Nor does Lebovic really delve into the preventive-war logic of Iraq,

or the domino folk theories that dominated the foreign policy discourse of the 1960s and 1970s. Was this a blind spot for policymakers unique to that era? Were their concerns unfounded?

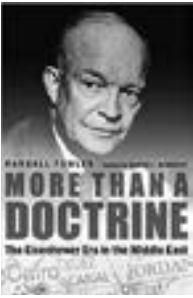
Finally, Lebovic appears to assume all doomed military interventions should follow his four phases of failure. But he could use a negative case to balance his analysis. Why, for example, did George H. W. Bush decide to withdraw from Iraq in 1991 after the first stage? In other words, by selecting on his dependent variable, we get three cases which satisfy his theory of policymaker myopia, but how does he explain cases, such as Panama, Kosovo, and the Persian Gulf War, that do not fit this description?

His case studies are meticulously detailed, yet unfocused at times. There is an important variation which is underexplored. In Iraq and Afghanistan, for example, the initial objective was clear: regime change. Whereas in Vietnam, it was muddled and unclear from the get-go. In Vietnam, too, Lyndon B. Johnson was headstrong in not changing course, facts on the ground be damned. Yet in Iraq, George W. Bush's surge caught even his military commanders by surprise for its course reversal. Obama appeared to punt in Afghanistan, seeking a middle path unsatisfactory to all parties—his liberal base, military commanders, and his more hawkish opponents (even to some of his own cabinet).

A discussion of sunken costs makes a brief cameo in the book introduction—I pulled out a bowl of popcorn and expected a delicious read about how the Concorde fallacy or Daniel Kahneman's theories applied to the "Paul D. Wolfowitz-types" who blunder the United States into war. Instead, there is little discussion of how sunken costs shaped Johnson's or Obama's decisions. Instead, we are treated to bland statements like "*policy makers must recognize that sound policy requires comprehensive assessment*" (190, italics in original).

Finally, and perhaps most troublingly, rare is this modern book on military decision-making by not making even a passing mention to Carl von Clausewitz. Too bad, as this book would have benefited from a discussion of his trinity on raw emotion, rationality, and chance in shaping strategy. Nor, strangely, does Lebovic delve into the emerging currents of grand strategy, or the civil-military relations literature to diagnose the dysfunction cited in his case studies. However helpful his exegesis of some of the organizational explanations of war, there is a "been there done that" to anyone who has read their Graham Allison. Even his dismissal of James Fearon's rationalist explanation of war has a familiar ring.

Policy failures are never preordained. While I applaud Lebovic for attempting to pinpoint why nations fail at war, lumping all the blame on policymakers can feel like an academic cop-out. Given the complexity of the wars in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan, there was plenty of blame to go around.



Lincoln, NE, University of
Nebraska Press, 2018

272 pages

\$34.95

More Than a Doctrine: The Eisenhower Era in the Middle East

By Randall Fowler

Reviewed by Dr. Raymond A. Millen, professor of security sector, Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, US Army War College

In his book, *More Than a Doctrine*, Randall Fowler explores President Dwight D. Eisenhower's rhetorical strategies in pursuit of his Middle East policies. Scrutinizing presidential speeches, addresses, news conferences, diplomatic communications, and meetings, Fowler argues Eisenhower transcended the traditional use of the bully pulpit, though he certainly exploited that venue by deftly employing rhetorical strategies to frame national security issues, inform and educate the public, persuade Congress and foreign leaders, and deter congressional criticism. Specifically, according to Fowler, Eisenhower practiced rhetorical *misdirection* as a cover for America's covert operations and foreign policy objectives for the Middle East.

As Fowler points out, Eisenhower's preeminence in military strategy and national security tempered outright challenges to his command of strategic issues. Moreover, the public trusted Eisenhower, primarily due to his image as a straightforward and congenial leader. Hence, politicians and pundits rarely questioned his competency and motives. Fowler elucidates the administration's Middle East policy within the construct of the broader Cold War containment strategy. Eisenhower understood the Cold War was rhetorical in nature: words and ideas were the real battleground. Parsing presidential communications, Fowler reveals Eisenhower's adroit use of narratives, history, and logic to make his case to Congress and the American people.

Within this context, Fowler recounts the strategic factors—the decline of the British Empire and its loss of prestige in the Middle East, the rise of pan-Arab nationalism behind the banner of Egyptian President Gamal Nasser, and the Soviet Union's intent to exert greater influence in the Middle East—that prompted Eisenhower to commit the United States to the security of the Middle East via the Eisenhower Doctrine. Accordingly, Fowler presents three case studies: the CIA coup in Iran (1954), the Suez Crisis (1956), and the US intervention in Lebanon (1958).

The case studies offer few new historical insights and omit details that would have clarified Eisenhower's hidden-hand policies. In regards to Iran, how was it possible for one CIA operative—Kermit Roosevelt—to overthrow Iranian Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh and reinstate the shah? According to Gary Sick's *All Fall Down*, the conspiracy was a convenient myth for anti-Shah revolutionaries. Mossadegh had lost the support of the Iranian populace, clergy, and business community, so he sought support from the communist Tudeh Party (1985). In contrast, the shah remained quite popular. Hence, without the active complicity of Iranian authorities, the CIA coup would not have been possible.

For the Suez Crisis, Fowler does not mention the impact of Eisenhower's operation in June 1956 on the failed Aswan Dam negotiations with Nasser. Granted, Nasser's maladroit bargaining and diplomacy were factors. But without Eisenhower's firm guiding hand, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles tactlessly broke off negotiations, which prompted Nasser to nationalize the Suez Canal. For Eisenhower, the ensuing British and French invasion of Egypt, known as Operation Musketeer, undermined the allies' Cold War strategy. First, the operation coincided with the Soviet invasion of Hungary, wrecking an opportunity to arouse international condemnation of Soviet aggression. Second, Musketeer hearkened back to great-power brinkmanship, spurning the spirit of the new international order and recklessly precipitating a potential war with the Soviet Union. As a consequence, Eisenhower explained the main reason he forced his allies to withdraw was because we cannot "subscribe to one law for the weak, another law for the strong; one law for those opposing us, another for those allied with us." In the aftermath, Eisenhower concluded Britain and France had lost the moral authority and trust to combat aggression in the Middle East, implementing his own doctrine with the concurrence of Congress.

Fowler's coverage of the US intervention in Lebanon during 1958 contains some omissions and errors. Although the threat of civil war in Lebanon, triggered by President Camille Chamoun's unconstitutional bid for a second term, did not fit the parameters of the Eisenhower Doctrine, the unrest did coincide with Pan-Arabism, which threatened to destabilize the entire Middle East, and provided an opportunity for Soviet exploitation. Fowler asserts Eisenhower virtually ignored the situation in Lebanon prior to the Operation Bluebat intervention. In reality, US and UN officials were in constant dialogue with Chamoun months before and during the crisis, urging him not to seek reelection and to support the popular presidential candidate General Fuad Chehab.

Operation Bluebat was an established contingency plan that Eisenhower activated as a result of the July 14 Iraq coup. His concern was that the coup would trigger widespread revolutions in the Middle East, abetted by Nasser. The intervention was limited to Beirut and the nearby airport, with US Marine Corps and Army leaders working closely with Lebanese security forces. Eisenhower's strategic communications within Lebanon and the greater Middle East effectively conveyed the Americans were there to stabilize Lebanon until the presidential elections. The phased withdrawal of US forces, from mid-August to the end of October reinforced those messages. Eisenhower also dispatched Ambassador Robert Murphy to Lebanon, Iraq, and Egypt to allay fears and reinforce the US commitment to the Middle East. Hence, Eisenhower's swift intervention and messaging reinforced the Eisenhower Doctrine and served to stabilize the Middle East.

Despite these historical errors, *More Than a Doctrine* complements Meena Bose's *Shaping and Signaling Presidential Policy* and Fred I. Greenstein's *The Hidden Hand Presidency* fittingly, providing useful insights on Eisenhower's rhetorical strategies.

CONTEMPORARY WARFARE

Temperature Rising: Iran's Revolutionary Guards and Wars in the Middle East

By Nader Uskowi

Reviewed by Alma Keshavarz, associate, *Small Wars Journal*—El Centro

Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2019

226 pages

\$80.00

Nader Uskowi offers an insightful account of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and its Qods Force (QF) in Middle Eastern affairs. He begins with a history and follows a trajectory of Iranian military and proxy activities in the region. Uskowi opens the book by recalling the time he met Ayatollah Khomeini in Paris in which he said to Uskowi, "the revolution is not about just Iran, but the whole region" (xiv). This introductory statement sets the stage for what the book is ultimately about with regards to Iran's military undertakings and geopolitical intentions across the Middle East.

As Uskowi explains, Iran is a country at war in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen, with the addition of covert operations in Afghanistan. In large part, the book discusses the importance of the Qods Force—the IRGC's elite branch. Under General Qasem Soleimani's leadership, the Qods Force established the Shia Liberation Army (SLA), which is meant to safeguard Shia interests and push Iranian militant ideology into the region. The SLA consists of Lebanese Hezbollah, Iraqi militias, Afghan militants, and the Houthis in Yemen (17). SLA fighters are recruited and trained in the region before being sent to Iran for additional training in explosives, ballistic missiles, and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), among other specialized training with the IRGC.

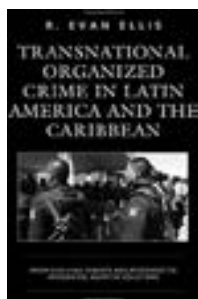
The author also provides a history of the events that took place during the Iranian Revolution and how the Qods Force came to be in the post-Revolutionary era. While it may act as an independent entity, it draws from the IRGC and Iran's regular army, Artesh. The Qods Force has its own regional directorates known as "the Corps," which cover Iraq, the Levant (Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, and Jordan), the Arabian Peninsula, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India. Other Corps exist in North Africa, Central Asia, Europe and the Americas (139). But it relies heavily on Shia militant groups. As such, the author also offers a history of Hezbollah—including early attacks such as the AMIA bombing in Argentina in 1994 and the Khobar Towers bombing in Saudi Arabia in 1996. Other groups have taken on the Hezbollah model. Uskowi discusses the important Iraqi groups—the Badr Organization, Kata'ib Hezbollah (KH), and Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq (AAH)—that form the core of the Qods Force-led Popular Mobilization Force (25). The Qods Force has also had long ties with militant groups from Afghanistan and Pakistan. These include the Fatemiyoun and Zaynabiyoun groups, both of which have experienced heavy combat in Syria. Over time, Iranian

support extended to some Sunni groups. As the author explains, “‘ Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), al-Qaeda, and the Taliban were seen as fellow revolutionaries whose efforts were against common enemies, particularly the US and Israel” (30).

Uskowi’s chapter on Iraq and Afghanistan is most interesting as he follows a timeline of when Iran seized on opportunities to enter both countries and maintain a presence. Days after the September 11 attacks, IRGC and Qods Force special operations officers were active alongside Northern Alliance commanders in Afghanistan. Following US airstrikes on Taliban targets in November 2001 in Herat, Soleimani saw the province as a gateway into other provinces in Western Afghanistan, which included the Farah and Nimruz provinces that had large Shia populations (51). In Iraq, the Qods Force acted on the US withdrawal to heavily recruit and fund proxy groups to establish a stronger foothold in the country. By the end of 2013, Soleimani appeared to have control over Iraq. Uskowi also addresses how Iranian forces, including their proxy groups, were instrumental in pushing the Islamic State out of key areas in the country. As a result, the population developed deeper ties with the Shia-led Popular Mobilization Forces as they were on the frontlines in direct combat with the Islamic State.

Moreover, the author dedicates a significant portion of the book to Iranian involvement in the Syrian crisis. Key battles are explained in great detail, including the infamous Battle of Aleppo. Following the Aleppo victory, Uskowi explains how Iranian-led forces moved east and established a land corridor from Iran through Iraq and Syria to Lebanon, the Mediterranean, and the Israeli northern fronts (88). These successes from 2017 onward have been major contributing factors to Iranian expansion, which includes influence on the Arabian Peninsula. In Yemen, the Houthis took over the country’s capital, Sanaa, and within days, the IRGC-linked Mahan Air began direct flights from Tehran to the city to send military advisers from a range of Shia groups as well as a variety of advanced weaponry (115). None of these cases could have been made possible without continued Qods Force aid. As the author explains, proxy groups rely on the Qods Force to provide not only funds and training but also weaponry needed to fight their enemies. They have access to the IRGC’s arsenal of ballistic missiles, UAVs, and other weaponry, which Uskowi provides in great detail.

Throughout the course of the book, the reader comes to understand the scope of the Qods Force. It is ultimately a “military headquarters that gathers intelligence, prepares operation plans, provides logistics support, and conducts command-and-control functions for its military campaigns” (13). This is a timely book as it addresses this shadowy organization that has not been given ample attention. Few publications that address the IRGC and its branches. Uskowi’s analysis narrows the focus to the development of Iran’s military following the Iranian Revolution and how the IRGC and Qods Force have transformed Iran’s military doctrine. This book is a significant contribution to the field and a must-read for anyone interested in the subject.



Lanham, MD: Lexington
Books, 2018
236 pages
\$100.00

Transnational Organized Crime in Latin America and the Caribbean: From Evolving Threats and Responses to Integrated, Adaptive Solutions

By R. Evan Ellis

Reviewed by G. Alexander Crowther

This book by the prolific R. Evan Ellis discusses one of the main security challenges in the Western Hemisphere: transnational crime. The main argument is that transnational crime is widespread and eats away at the roots of societies throughout the hemisphere and requires a whole-of-government approach to resolve.

This book offers two main contributions: it is authoritative in its discussion about transnational organized crime groups and it may be the most thorough discussion that proposes holistic, integrated solutions. These elements alone make it relevant to senior members of defense communities throughout the hemisphere. But this book also excels in the chapters on “Transnational Organized Crime Groups” and “Comparative Solutions.”

A chapter on transnational organized crime groups is one of the best summaries on this topic that this reviewer has ever read; it is concise yet thorough. The author creates a new typology of cartels, intermediary groups, ideologically oriented groups, and gangs that allows him to discuss a widely disparate group of organizations that have only one thing in common—crime.

The comparative solutions chapter is particularly well done. Its 68 pages provide detailed recommendations on how to move ahead on what could be called a wicked problem. These recommendations cover eight different areas: whole-of-government solutions, interdiction of criminal flows, targeting of transnational criminal organization leaders, use of the military in a domestic law enforcement context, institutional reform within law enforcement, targeting the financial flows and resources of organized criminal groups, prison control and reform, and binational and multinational cooperation against organized crime.

Several of these concepts stand out as must-reads for US strategists and policymakers. Although several are obvious, the sections on the use of the military in a domestic law enforcement context, institutional reform within law enforcement, and prison control and reform are not always understood by US audiences.

In the first case, the US Posse Comitatus Act (18 U.S.C. § 1385) prohibits the use of federal armed forces within the United States except for cases of rebellion or disaster. Because of this law, US decisionmakers sometimes seek to impose that paradigm on our international partners, which robs our partners of their militaries, often their most well-resourced capability.

In the cases of law enforcement and prison reform, many US decisionmakers do not understand the level of corruption in some partner law enforcement and prison organizations. Since the days of the Spanish empire, Latin American countries have often underpaid law enforcement personnel, which allows transnational criminals to avoid punishment and even continue criminal activities from within prison walls. Thus, any holistic approach to resolving transnational crime in the Western Hemisphere will require significant police and prison reforms.

The examples of success in this book provide a menu of changes countries can choose and explain how the changes have worked in similar situations. The variety of Colombian examples is particularly useful. The Colombian government made sweeping reforms throughout society in the early 2000s in its successful bid to defeat the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) insurgency, which survived only due to its transnational criminal activities.

Although the primary sources based on personal contact with senior security service people throughout the region are notable, other sources disappoint. The author speaks Spanish but refers mainly to English language sources. In chapter two, "The Geography of Transnational Organized Crime," only 31 of 167 citations come from the region, 20 entrants cite the author's own works.

Although there are minor factual errors throughout, such as referring to the Spanish Gendarmerie rather than the *Guardia Civil*, they are not as important as the omissions. For instance, the author makes tantalizing mentions of illegal minerals coming from Peru and Bolivia. But the thread is not developed and minerals do not even appear in the index. Even worse is a total omission of Cuba or Haiti. It is impossible to discuss transnational crime in the Caribbean thoroughly without mentioning two of the three largest countries in the region.

This book could have used a more thorough copyediting. It has some errors such as referring to several US Army colonels as "coronel." Other minor issues include multiple references to criminal bands in parentheses (BACRIM) followed on the next page by criminal bands in quotation marks ("BACRIM") and later by the phrase "criminal bands," again in quotation marks, or "Bacrim" (with only an initial cap). For another example, the Red Command is referred to as "CV" without mentioning *Comando Vermelho*. Even more irritating, "Red Command" is used for subsequent references.

In the end, this strong book addresses an important problem everyone in the Western Hemisphere faces. Transnational crime weakens the societies and governments of developed and underdeveloped countries throughout the area. By using this book to understand the problem better and considering the comparative solutions, US and Latin American strategists and policymakers can improve their capabilities to deal with these issues and mitigate the negative impact transnational crime has on all of our societies.



Arlington, VA: Missionday,
2018

175 pages

\$26.95

Radical Inclusion: What the Post-9/11 World Should Have Taught Us about Leadership

By Martin Dempsey and Ori Brafman

Reviewed by Lt Col Derek W. Beck, US Air Force Reserves

Radical Inclusion argues one can attract more bees with honey than with vinegar. The book argues that seeking to include people (a radical ideal in today's society, per the authors) versus creating walls (as we are prone to do) will lead to greater success, be it in business or civil-military operations in war-torn Afghanistan. Primarily a leadership book, the text is bolstered by stories from the two authors' lives, though it is heavy on examples from the life of General Martin E. Dempsey, US Army retired, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (2011–15).

As outlined in the preface, the book's thesis is what the authors call the "*digital echo*, where information passes from individual to individual more quickly but in the process often becomes distorted" (xii, italics in original). Simply put, this concept is just the faster-moving digital equivalent of how information has always grown more distorted with each retelling. The authors treat this as a neutral force, ignoring actions such as overt efforts to inject misinformation. The preface concludes with six "concrete leadership tools" that are anything but concrete, but aim to inspire inclusion: (1) create a team's sense of belonging; (2) make each team member's contribution matter; (3) be an imaginative leader; (4) instead of paralysis by overanalysis, "develop a bias for action"; (5) empower the organization at all levels; and (6) relinquish control to make the team self-sustaining (xiii–xiv). In other words, the book's preface gives some fuzzy and largely derivative advice as concrete leadership tools, but it is the kind of advice found in nearly all leadership books, albeit described in this one with different buzzwords.

Throughout, *Radical Inclusion* gives various lengthy examples to make its points. An early example of a narrative's power comes from coauthor Ori Brafman's experience. While at the University of California, Berkeley, Brafman, a vegan, protested the eating of animals. His initial efforts were not inclusive and included shaming carnivores. As a result, he encountered many obstacles.

Soon after, Brafman and a friend seized upon an idea to set up a restaurant across from a McDonald's to sell veggie burgers, dubbed the "McVegan." When he shifted the message from debating with meat eaters to making veganism inclusive, hip, and fun, by selling T-shirts and giving away free McVegan burgers, people got curious. Even carnivores were curious. People loved the shirts. After briefly flirting with pursuing a lawsuit despite local public opinion, in the end, McDonald's introduced its own McVegan locally (20).

Brafman helped bring veganism into the mainstream, and McDonald's ultimately benefited—not by fighting against the vegan

burger but by embracing it. That is inclusion: even vegans can come have a burger at Berkley's McDonald's. McDonald's recently began experimenting with a McVegan burger in select markets worldwide, although it is currently not widely available in the United States.

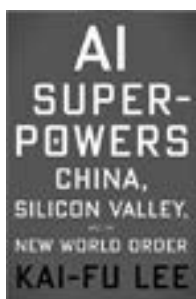
A more pragmatic view is McDonald's simply responded to market forces just as the Filet-O-Fish was added to its menu when revenues declined in response to Catholic customers avoiding meat during Lent. Without Brafman's veggie burger, it would have happened eventually. Thus, is this really a story of radical inclusion or merely a natural result of a responsive capitalistic entity seeking to increase profits? Or maybe it was both.

In another example, Dempsey, as a young Army officer in Germany in 1975, had written off some of his less stellar soldiers as "disgruntled draftees . . . including several who were awaiting judicial punishment and discharge for charges involving drugs, racism, and violence" (84). At one point, a local nun arrived on post to talk with those disgruntled soldiers. Dempsey later asked her why she had wanted to talk to them. She responded, "Well, have you given up on them?" Dempsey realized he had, and vowed to do so never again. Decades later, one of those soldiers, then a high-ranking sergeant, thanked Dempsey for giving him a second chance (84–86).

Simply put, leadership is hard and cannot be distilled to being inclusive. Moreover, the book cherry-picks its examples and glosses over them to serve the points it tries to make before moving on. If the reader examines any example too closely, it will reveal more questions than answers. And there is no discussion about the needs of the many (or the country or the service) outweighing the needs of the few that the authors argue need to feel included. The discussions about when the mission must supersede the needs of inclusion are also absent.

As a leadership book, *Radical Inclusion* is as good as any. But that is a low bar. *Radical Inclusion* is filled with catchy phrases, such as "digital echo," "radical inclusion," and "develop a bias for action," that give little new insights. Even the concrete examples proposed in the book's preface are little more than catchphrases derivative of what many other books have described. There is nothing radical about *Radical Inclusion*.

MODERN POWERS



Boston, MA: Houghton
Mifflin Harcourt, 2018

272 pages

\$28.00

AI Superpowers: China, Silicon Valley, and the New World Order

By Kai-Fu Lee

Reviewed by Robert J. Bunker, adjunct research professor, Strategic Studies
Institute, US Army War College

Kai-Fu Lee, the author of *AI Superpowers*, is a “social media rock star” with 50 million followers primarily on Sina Weibo, a Chinese social media platform, and 1.61 million followers on Twitter (@kaifulee) in the West. He is a leading expert on China and artificial intelligence (AI) with a pedigree that includes a PhD in computer science from Carnegie Mellon University as well as experience as the former president of Google China. Presently, he leads a Chinese technology investment company with approximately \$2 billion assets under management.

While this best-selling book is not a strategically focused military work per se, the emerging military significance of AI and China’s growing capacity in this field more than justifies a review.

AI Superpowers is divided into an introduction, nine chapters, acknowledgments, notes, and an index. The chapters are “China’s Sputnik Movement” (AlphaGo’s triumph over the human Go master Ke Jie); “Copycats in the Coliseum” (China’s predatory and semi-illicit internet sector); “China’s Alternate Internet Universe” (an alternate Silicon Valley ecosystem); “A Tale of Two Countries” (China’s government support for AI trumps US AI expertise); “The Four Waves of AI” (internet, business, perception, and autonomous); “Utopia, Dystopia, and the Real AI Crisis” (the coming crisis of jobs and inequality); “The Wisdom of Cancer” (Kai-Fu Lee’s humanism epiphany); “A Blueprint for Human Coexistence with AI” (human dignity and social investment); and “Our Global AI Story” (global wisdom related to AI disruption potentials for humanity). The index is well developed and the references include an adequate number of sources presented in an italicized sentence fragment notation system found in popular books. Given the work is really derived from Lee’s insider understanding of China and its relationship to AI development, however, such references can be considered secondary to his functioning as the primary source himself.

The main theme of the book is the Chinese work ethic and approach to business (a cutthroat fight over market dominance that can quickly devolve into criminality). The book also addresses China’s massive online data-rich environment, which is required for deep learning that enables AI algorithms and is far more important than the US advantage in world-class human AI researchers (14–17).

This thematic focus takes place in the context of US and Chinese corporate interests that are “construct[ing] the ‘power grids’ for the AI

age: privately controlled computing networks that distribute machine learning across the economy, with the corporate giants acting as ‘utilities’” (84). A distressing side note related to this topic is that Microsoft Research China, founded in 1998 under Lee’s stewardship, has been responsible for training “over five thousand AI researchers, including top executives at Baidu, Alibaba, Tencent, Lenovo, and Huawei” (89). From the reviewer’s perspective, this has represented, in hindsight, an epic transfer of technology to mainland China.

However the book has little to say about great-power competition and the potential for military conflict between the United States and China. From Lee’s perspective, a *fait accompli* has taken place with China expected to be the increasingly dominant global AI power. That such an emerging AI power is authoritarian based—the antithesis of liberal democracy—and is already implementing this advanced technology for domestic social control purposes is never mentioned in the work. Concern over such “AI race[s]” and “international military contests” is viewed as secondary to “what [AI] will do to our labor markets and social systems” (227–28).

While Lee has transcended national and great-power interests within this work—he truly focuses on humanity’s future relationship with the disruptive nature of AI—he is also a man who exists between worlds. A Taiwanese national who was educated in the United States and who has served as an executive of Apple, Microsoft, and Google, he has transformed into a high-technology venture capitalist operating in China. In the process, Lee has become a stateless citizen and denizen of the global capitalist economy.

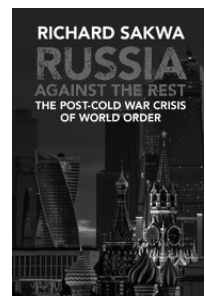
For those of us with a more pedestrian existence—and who have sworn to defend our constitution—we should be concerned not only with the larger disruptive potentials of what AI may portend for our social class structure but also about the threat of an authoritarian great power to our nation. If China becomes the dominant global AI power, as Lee argues, this scenario may well occur.

Russia against the Rest: The Post-Cold War Crisis of World Order

By Richard Sakwa

Reviewed by Michael Fitzsimmons

Many debates in Russian foreign policy literature revolve around a chicken-and-egg question: which came first, Russia’s illiberalism at home and abroad or the rest of America’s and Europe’s hostility toward Russian power? Hence, the prominent contending themes of Russian paranoia in Western commentary and of Western hypocrisy in Russian commentary.



New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2017

370 pages

\$84.99

British scholar Richard Sakwa gives ample space to both of these themes in his latest book, *Russia Against the Rest: The Post-Cold War Crisis of World Order*. While the title suggests a tilt toward a critique of Russian paranoia, Sakwa's arguments are actually quite sympathetic to elite Russian perspectives on international politics. Indeed, the book amounts to a sustained critique of the alternately labeled "Atlantic community" or "Historical West" for failing to transcend the ideological and institutional trappings of the Cold War and thereby alienating Russia. He charts a progression of Russian disillusionment through four epochs of the post-Cold War era: Atlanticism (early to mid-1990s); competitive, peaceful coexistence (late 1990s); new realism (2000s); and neorevisionism (post-2012).

Sakwa's analysis is comprehensive in scope, and his research is impressively eclectic. The book serves as a sophisticated elaboration of Russian viewpoints on international relations over the past twenty-five years. Western analysts may find chapter 5, which examines alternative visions for organizing Russia's relationship with Europe and its other Eurasian neighbors, especially useful. An insightful thread running through the book is the continuity of certain principles of Russian conservatism that are evident throughout czarist, Soviet, and post-Soviet thinking. Examples include the importance to Russia of great power status, multilateralism, and exertion of "privileged interests" within its region.

However, Sakwa's arguments are less than convincing regarding the errors and sins of the so-called "Historical West." The book's frequently repeated thesis posits a path not taken in the 1990s—the transformation of the "Historical West" into "Greater Europe"—that would have better integrated Russia into the international system. Rather than fundamentally rethinking institutions like the European Union (EU) and NATO, Sakwa believes, Western nations simply expanded their remit, treating Russia more as a vanquished enemy than as a partner.

Liberal hegemony, a central concept in Sakwa's analysis, is held responsible for much of the present discord and is contrast unfavorably with pluralism in international affairs. Sakwa claims that "Russian leadership sought to adapt not to Western values and governance norms, but to what were considered universal values and global norms" (324). But he is frustratingly vague in defining pluralism or which universal values are distinct from Western ones.

Multilateralism and the sanctity of state sovereignty are the two principles of this pluralism that seem clear. But the reader is left to wonder if it is mainly the most illiberal features of Russian and Chinese politics that are neglected by liberal hegemony. As Gerard Toal points out in an *H-Diplo* review of the book, Sakwa is guilty of "creatively configuring acceptance of autocracy as 'pluralism'" (2018).

Sakwa's assignment of blame to the hegemonic ambitions of the liberal international order for casting Russia as an outsider is problematic for at least three reasons (46). First, this formulation paints quite diverse

political actors within the Atlantic community with the same broad brush. Second, it denies agency to the peoples of central and eastern Europe and the former Soviet republics who sought refuge of a sort in the EU and NATO precisely because of Russia's historical pattern of regional transgressions. Third, it is not at all clear how to distinguish hegemonic ambitions, with all of that term's overtones of coercion, from the advocacy of democracy, the rule of law, and human rights that enjoy domestic constituencies throughout the world, including in Russia.

The grand strategy Sakwa attributes to Russia seems designed for Russia to have its cake and eat it too. Its premise is, a realist understands, the unique prerogatives of power and a certain measure of deference that is therefore due to Russia's will, regardless of principles. Yet it is dressed in the garb of international law and the multilateral collective decision-making of an international society.

Russia has repeatedly and brazenly violated its nominal principles regarding state sovereignty when expedient (see Georgia, Crimea, Ukraine's Donbas, covert political activism in Europe, and election tampering in the United States). A simpler explanation for Russian attachment to multilateralism rather than the principle of a "democratic system of international relations" is that it creates a pretext for Russia to offset its power deficits relative to its competitors (55).

Sakwa at times bends over backwards to absolve Russia's leaders of responsibility for their behavior. The book is littered with passages that obliquely reference Russian aggression while somehow locating its causes beyond Russian agency. He says, for example, "the fear that its concerns were not being heard prompted the Russian leadership to speak increasingly loudly and forcefully, fostering a rhetorical escalation that in the end spilled-over into violence" (72). He refers to the annexation of Crimea as a reunification and even a transfer. Sakwa seems particularly uncritical of the standard Russian government's talking points on military issues. He gives space to only the most benign interpretation of Russian nuclear strategy, highlights NATO exercises but not similar Russian exercises, and appears to accept at face value Russian criticism of American ballistic missile defense systems in Europe, despite that argument's well-known technical dubiousness.

In chapter 8, Sakwa's criticism of the United States veers at points into absurdity. For example, he decries bipartisan anti-Russian hysteria, doubts the copious evidence of Russian cyberhacking of the 2016 US presidential election, credulously reports Julian Assange's denials of Russian entanglement with WikiLeaks, equates the pervasive dishonesty of the Trump White House with that of defenders of traditional Atlanticism, and cites a few websites hawking conspiracy theories.

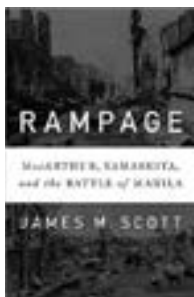
Still, despite these flaws, Sakwa's wide-ranging analysis offers a thoughtful, useful counterpoint to mainstream analyses of Russian foreign policy. Those looking to devise more a more stable and congenial future for politics and security in Eurasia will need to grapple with the worldviews and historical interpretations that Sakwa presents here.

MILITARY HISTORY

Rampage: MacArthur, Yamashita, and the Battle of Manila

By James M. Scott

Reviewed by Dr. Russell W. Glenn, author of *Reading Athena's Dance Card: Men against Fire in Vietnam* and *Rethinking Western Approaches to Counterinsurgency: Lessons from Post-Colonial Conflict* and director, Plans & Policy, G-2 US Army Training and Doctrine Command



New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2019

635 pages

\$32.95

James M. Scott's recounting of the World War II battle of Manila is well researched, diligently referenced, and accessibly written. It is, however, not a resource that will be of professional interest to most readers of this journal. Like its significantly less comprehensive predecessor *The Battle for Manila: The Most Devastating Untold Story of World War II*, this work is less an operational analysis than a compilation of atrocities committed by occupying Japanese forces.

Those looking for valuable insights regarding urban combat operations will therefore find themselves unfulfilled and better advised to refer to the Center of Military History's official green book analysis *Triumph in the Philippines* by Robert Ross Smith. Anyone interested in combat plans and ensuing unit actions during the battle for the city will appreciate the tactically-oriented and narrowly-focused resources such as the Sixth Army's *Combat Notes, number 7*, and Japanese Defense of Cities as Exemplified by the Battle of Manila; the Combat Studies Institute Battlebook 13-B, *Battle of Manila*; or Kevin T. McEnery's staff college master's thesis, "The XIV Corps Battle for Manila, February 1945." First person accounts of Japanese occupation in Manila include both those by Filipinos and foreigners who spent the war in prison camps. Many of these were published in the Philippines, among them the unassuming *Boy Guerilla: The World War II Metro Manila Serenader* by Rudy de Lara with Bob Fancher; the scholarly *A Diary of the Japanese Occupation, December 7, 1941–May 7, 1945* by Juan Labrador; the social history *The Everyday Life in a Time of War* by Thelma B. Kintanar; and an essential reference of camp life in a Manila prison, *The Japanese Occupation of the Philippines* by A. V. H. Hartendorp. *The Philippines Under Japan: Occupation Policy and Reaction* edited by Ikehata Setsuho and Ricardo Trota Jose provides an eclectic and often revealing academic view of occupier policies—to include notable failures in efforts to resource the wider war effort that includes "Japanese Administration Policy towards the Moros in Lanao," "Cotton Production under Japan Rule, 1942–1945," and "The Rice Shortage and Countermeasures during the Occupation." That is not to say *Rampage* does not include some material valuable to military readers or others with operational interests. The initial chapters provide brief biographical sketches of antagonists Douglas MacArthur and Tomoyuki Yamashita, contrasting the former's failures leading to his flight from the Philippines and the latter's strikingly successful seizure of Singapore.

Many of its remaining pages concentrate on individual and small group experiences of those interned—and often eventually interred—in the occupiers’ prison camps or others from Manila’s civilian population during the period between its capture in the earliest days of 1942 and MacArthur’s return in 1945. These details along with occasional short descriptions of tactical actions, snapshots of senior leader activities on both sides (to include MacArthur’s grossly premature declaration of the capital’s capture), and US soldier reactions on finding American internees dominate the second and largest component of the text. The trial of Yamashita and select fellow officers comprise Scott’s focus in the closing pages. There is little new in this trio other than material regarding the suffering of specific American, Filipino, and other nationalities’ civilians derived from author interviews or his subjects’ personal writings.

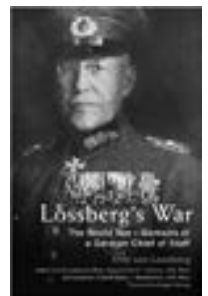
As might be deduced from the above, there has yet to be written a commercial or civilian academic study regarding the battle for Manila that is the equivalent of Brian Linn’s *Guardians of Empire or U.S. Army and Counterinsurgency in the Philippine War, 1899–1902*, covering early US actions in the Philippines. We are fortunate to have resources such as those noted above that provide multiple perspectives on what is one of the Second World War’s most significant urban struggles, certainly the most demanding for American forces in the conflict’s Pacific theater. It is intriguing to consider the role its lessons would have offered had the Allies found themselves executing Operation Coronet, the invasion of Honshu and the Tokyo Plain. Any wishing to mine that counterfactual ore—or seeking a single source on the battle to advise the full scope of urban challenges yet to come—will have to rely on information available only via wide-ranging exploration of texts, pending an offering that more greatly focuses on matters of interest to the military professional.

Lossberg’s War: The World War I Memoirs of a German Chief of Staff

By Fritz von Lossberg

Reviewed by Dr. Dean A. Nowowiejski

Few historians write about staff performance instead of focusing on commanders. A similar few have the language ability to translate scholarly works into accessible English. David T. Zabecki has been an exception for years. First, in 2008, he edited a useful two-volume set for the Naval Institute Press entitled, *Chief of Staff: The Principal Officers Behind History’s Great Commanders*. Next, in 2015, Zabecki turned his attention to translation and editorial comment on important German memoirs in *Order in Chaos: The Memoirs of General of Panzer Troops Hermann Balck*, a translation done with Dieter J. Biedekarken. Now, he and Biedekarken continue to bring important German military memoirs to light for English reading scholars with *Lossberg’s War: The World War I Memoirs of a German Chief of Staff*. *Lossberg’s War* thus combines several important



Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2017
480 pages
\$65.00

thrusts into one effort: explaining excellent staff leadership, resurrecting memoirs from the Great War, and exposing important foreign language works in English.

Friedrich “Fritz” Karl von Lossberg, who became known as the fireman of the imperial German Army, rushed to a variety of chief of staff positions throughout the war to turn failing army defenses around. He entered the war as a lieutenant colonel, chief of staff for a corps, and served consecutively to the Armistice when he was chief of staff for a German army group and a major general. David Zabecki said in his chapter on Lossberg in *Chief of Staff* that, “Lossberg was one of the most important tacticians of the twentieth century.”

The combination of the original memoir, a gripping tale originally published in 1939, and the extensive modern update provided by Zabecki and Biedekarken should serve as an essential primer for those military professionals interested in senior leadership in large-scale combat operations, staff planning, the role of the German General Staff, the value of professional military education, and the essentiality of battlefield calculus. The editors add important notes capturing current arguments and historiography and clarify the few factual errors Lossberg made in his memoir based on recent evidence and their analysis.

Fritz von Lossberg was the imperial army’s specialist in defensive operations. Lossberg was first dispatched by the kaiser himself to rescue the Third Army in the Champagne region when they were threatened with rupture in 1915. The Chief of the German General Staff then sent him consecutively to the First Army on the Somme in 1916 and the Fourth Army in Flanders in 1917. The sequence of his individual rescues is a catalog of critical German defensive successes.

Lossberg’s methodology was regular: when dispatched as a chief of staff to the rescue of a large German defensive formation, he would immediately tour the front in person, speak to all affected subordinate commanders to best understand front line conditions, make his synthetic personal assessment, and then return to brief the affected commander in person. Only after these steps would he engage the new staff of which he had been made chief.

His presence, authority, and actions would turn the situation around. Lossberg would adjust in frontages, reserves, artillery, and logistic support to stabilize the situation. He applied a trained, professional soldier’s assessment of battlefield physics and capacities regarding the importance of defensive frontage, available supporting artillery, particularly heavy artillery, ammunition resupply, communications networks, and lines of communications.

Lossberg was not only skilled in the science of war but also had an innate sense for the human or moral capacity of the formations that he led, often remarking on the willpower of the individual soldier. He had a sense of modern warfare, as his battlefield assessments repeatedly highlighted the emerging, significant role of airpower. He is credited with the ascendance of the German concept of defense in depth.

The serious student of operational art will sense the importance of individual professional development and the study of the art of war between the lines of Lossberg's detailed account. Lossberg's expertise as a rescuing General Staff officer was built on the professional knowledge he had acquired through a lifetime of disciplined practice, the rigorous education given to general staff officers, and their long-term relationships within that group.

Lossberg often disagreed with his commanders and respectfully let it be known when he did. His memoir is an alternative telling of the German history of World War I, as Lossberg makes clear when he thinks strategic and operational mistakes were made. He is relentless in his criticism, for instance, of Erich von Falkenhayn's insistence on continuing the attacks toward Verdun, just as Lossberg is critical of the failure of Erich Friedrich Wilhelm Ludendorff to fall back to new defensive lines and stabilize the front at the end of the war. The reader often wonders what the outcome would have been had Lossberg's viewpoint prevailed.

There are lessons in the power of relationships throughout this memoir. Most often, when mentioning a new superior or a flank unit or higher chief of staff, Lossberg comments, "We knew each other well from a previous assignment." Lossberg is dutiful and faithful in his service to a succession of commanders, even when he saw their flaws or disagreed with their decisions. Lossberg proves to be a model of the imperial German Army chief of staff archetype: knowledgeable, loyal, hardworking to the point of exhaustion, but unrelenting in dedication to the success of the mission.

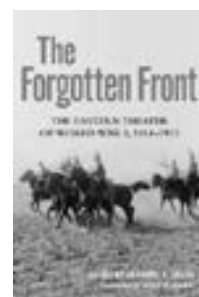
This clarity on the attitude and role of the German General Staff is a strength of this book, carefully explained by the editors in a useful appendix. There is much to commend this book to the shelf of the military professional or historian specializing in the First World War. It credibly contributes to David Zabecki's long-term effort to help military professionals understand both exceptional chiefs of staff and the German exemplars of them.

The Forgotten Front: The Eastern Theater of World War I, 1914–1915

Edited By Gerhard P. Gross

Reviewed by Michael S. Neiberg

Given the outpouring of excellent recent historical research on the Eastern Front, one might be forgiven for wondering if it is still the "forgotten front" that it was in years past. We now know a great deal more about the east, especially the magnitude of the impact of events there from the outbreak of war in 1914 to the triumph of the Red Army in the Russian Civil War in 1921.



Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2019
388 pages
\$65.00

The east bequeathed the Bolshevik Revolution, the proto-Nazi *Freikorps*, new states like Poland, and the genocidal battle for what Timothy Snyder has called the “Bloodlands” between Germany and the Soviet Union. No serious scholar of the First World War would even consider a study of the conflict that marginalized or ignored the events of the east.

Still, specifically because of those monumental events, the First World War in the east lives in the shadows. But it is not the shadow of the Western Front that obscures and distorts, but the shadow of the Eastern Front in the Second World War. Virtually every essay in this ambitious and important book references the war of 1939–45 either to offer a comparison, a contrast or, appropriately enough, to ensure that the history of the Second World War is understood in relation to the First World War.

This volume is part of a truly impressive centennial project by the Center for Military History and Social Sciences of the German Armed Forces based in Potsdam, Germany, the same town where Kaiser Wilhelm II signed Germany’s declaration of war in 1914 and where Germany’s conquerors met in 1945 to try to close the 30-year period of conflict. Gerhard Gross and his team have worked diligently and intelligently to bring scholars together, publish primary documents, and ensure that historians can treat the complex history of Germany in this period with all due meticulousness. They deserve a great deal of credit for their work over the past few years.

This volume is no exception to that diligence and meticulousness. It brings together some of the most experienced scholars in the field (Hew Strachan, Stig Förster, and Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius among them), and presents new research on new themes, such as the place of the Eastern Front on internet portrayals of the war. This is an ambitious and wide-ranging book that covers the German, Russian, Austria-Hungary, Slavic, and Polish perspectives. Strachan sets the stage with a thoughtful and analytic introduction that places the war in the east in geostrategic terms.

A few themes from the book’s 20 essays stand out, notable among them the ways that the east differed from the west. Those differences include the nature of geography, the de-modernization of eastern battlefields, the much more diverse nature of the peoples living in the east, and the relatively lower importance of alliances. In the east, Russia fought with no direct ally, and the Germans so thoroughly dominated their alliance with Austria-Hungary that the concept of alliance, as understood in the west, does not apply.

It is also worth remembering that Germany won on this front, as the 1918 Treaties of Brest-Litovsk transferred to the Central Powers effective control of most of what is now Ukraine and the Baltic States, while at the same time effectively making Poland a German satellite. Victory in the east allowed the Germans to plan and resource their 1918 spring offensives, but, ironically, the collapse of Russia also gave Austria-Hungary no reason to keep fighting.

The eastern war also featured movement. Russian armies swept into the Carpathians in 1914, then German and Austrian-Hungarian armies pushed east in the great victory of Gorlice-Tarnów. Armies thus came in contact with new and strange populations, not the least of which were the eastern Jews the Germans called the *Ostjuden*. German war policy had to decide what to do with them, and how to organize a region that they found disease-ridden, unsanitary, and, because of the panic that attended the Russian retreat in 1915, underpopulated.

However, the land could help the Germans overcome the material shortages they were suffering due to the British blockade. The essays here argue that the Germans did not envision genocide or even forced removals, but a reform of the east to make its agricultural land more productive and its people more modern.

Societies at war in the east also needed narratives, both during and after the war, to explain to their people what had happened. The book contains essays on literature, museums, and memory as tools for this explanation. The war in the east became, in effect, two wars: the war for conquest and the war for memory.

As Förster noted, the eastern front, in the end, had no victor. Because of Germany's defeat in the west, and the attendant repudiation of Brest-Litovsk, all of the belligerents of the east lost this war. Czarist Russia, Wilhelmine Germany, and Habsburg Austria all ceased to exist, ushering in radical, revolutionary change. That change, we know now, kept the dynamic of hate and competition burning, helping to fuel another round of war. As a result, no one could have written a book called "All Quiet on the Eastern Front."

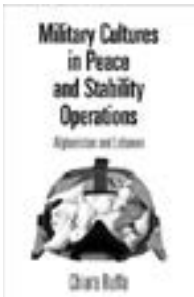
That giant shadow of Stalin, Hitler, and the war they led in the east from 1941 to 1945, looms over every essay in this book. It cannot be otherwise. For even if the combatants of 1914–15 (to use this book's narrow periodization) did not know what was to come, we do. The Eastern Front may no longer be forgotten to First World War scholars, but the immensity of the nightmare to come has reduced it in both history and memory. This fine book should help to correct the balance.

MILITARY CULTURES

Military Cultures in Peace and Stability Operations: Afghanistan and Lebanon

By Chiara Ruffa

Reviewed by Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky, author of *American Allies in Times of War: The Great Asymmetry* and associate professor of political studies, Queen's University



Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018

204 pages
\$65.00

If you are conducting research in the field of security studies, it can be challenging to find scholarly work that accurately depicts military interactions at the tactical level. Yet, to understand how today's multinational military interventions are conducted, this level of military analysis has become increasingly important to explain variations in mission outcomes. When considering the war in Afghanistan and the fifty or so allies and partners that participated in the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF), it is striking to see how individual nations operating under the ISAF umbrella may have experienced the war in dramatically different ways. In Canada, ISAF came to be known as a combat mission and the Canadian Armed Forces suffered a fairly high casualty rate, while in Italy, the mission was always presented as a peacekeeping operation, which was reflected in the daily tasks carried out by the Italian armed forces.

While many factors play into whether military interventions are perceived as successes or failures, a particularly elusive variable is military culture, or how a nation's armed forces might bring unique characteristics to the battlefield, which in turn translates into different mission outcomes. As Chiara Ruffa notes in her monograph *Military Cultures in Peace and Stability Operations: Afghanistan and Lebanon*, "Military culture is closely related to the national origins of a military unit, and operates as a filter between domestic political configurations and the way the military behaves in the field" (32). It follows, then, that the armed forces of two troop-contributing countries might assess threats differently and respond in kind. To get at these dynamics, you admittedly need a complex research design, which is enough to deter many from pursuing this kind of research. But for all who intend on doing so, Ruffa's book can serve as a useful guide.

In order to isolate the influence of military culture on tactical behavior, Ruffa compares France's and Italy's contributions to two missions: the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and ISAF. The contribution of both countries was of comparable size in each case and the deployed troops were in similar areas of operations and exposed to the same level of threat. When we look at the range of military tasks and how they were carried out, however, some interesting differences arise. While the evidence is far from conclusive (and Ruffa acknowledges as much), the case studies are instructive. For example, she shows how the

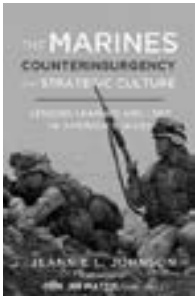
French units in Lebanon were mainly concerned with patrolling tasks, while the Italian units prioritized contact with the population and civil-military cooperation activities.

Since the French units were performing these tasks with a security mindset, they placed a premium on force protection and carried out these patrols in tanks, which displeased the locals (tanks are noisy and they destroy roads). Ultimately, this mindset made them less effective in terms of carrying out a UN stabilization operation where success is heavily dependent on the support of local populations and adapting to their needs. By contrast, the Italian units in Lebanon had also deployed with tanks initially but switched to armored vehicles when they realized local communities were against tanks. A humanitarian mindset led the Italians to adapt their dismounted patrols and the frequent contact with the population meant they picked up on this cue rapidly.

Ruffa explains how the different military cultures illustrated different interpretations of what the patrols were intended to achieve. The French prioritized zone patrolling, which was intended to “monitor hostile activities in the area,” while the Italians did contact patrolling, which is meant to “get in touch with the population and collect information about the security situation and people’s needs” (75). Military culture really comes to life in her analysis and the account is compelling, thanks to her extensive fieldwork.

What is less clear from the book is Ruffa’s level of ambition for her framework. At the beginning of the book, she states the following: “I argue that we can make peace operations more successful—in their ability to save lives, protect civilians, and avoid mass atrocities—by better understanding the on-the-ground dynamics” (17). Can the research presented in this book really inform assessments of success or failure? Even in the case analysis, the only cursory assessment of mission outcomes surveys local perceptions or media accounts. To be fair, this critique is commonplace as decisive indicators of operational effectiveness are hard to come by.

To summarize, the book’s main contribution is the examination of how armies differ in terms of their military culture, and how that translates into divergent tactics on the battlefield. While this is interesting in its own right, it does not help us understand why some missions succeed and others fail. Hopefully, scholars inspired by Ruffa’s book will take up the challenge, drawing from her insights on military culture.



Washington, DC:
Georgetown University
Press 2018
324 pages
\$110.95

The Marines, Counterinsurgency, and Strategic Culture: Lessons Learned and Lost in America's Wars

By Jeanie L. Johnson

Reviewed by Dr. Montgomery 'Mitzzy' McFate, professor, Strategic and Operational Research Department, US Naval War College

Jeanie Johnson's book, *The Marines, Counterinsurgency, and Strategic Culture: Lessons Learned and Lost in America's Wars*, is grounded in the literature on strategic culture, which posits (roughly) that states have a relatively coherent set of practices and preferences regarding policy, strategy, and warfighting. Her objective is to examine the interplay between the organizational culture of the US Marine Corps and American strategic culture with reference to counterinsurgency.

Johnson begins by describing the US aversion to counterinsurgency, stemming from an "acultural and ahistorical predisposition" towards other societies. As a subset of American culture, US military culture shows a "partiality for . . . conventional war," in which political and military personnel operate within separate spheres (46). She then turns her attention to the Marines, describing how they develop an identity through recruiting, training, narratives, and legends. While this identity, which she describes as "elitist and fight oriented," has remained stable, the role of the Corps has shifted over the past two centuries from small wars to amphibious assault to expeditionary operations.

While the first three chapters will be generally familiar to most readers with an interest in strategic culture and the history of the Corps, in chapter 4, Johnson drills down into the organization's norms and values to great effect. She teases apart some of the contradictions in Marines Corps culture, including the exclusion of minorities and women from the "mystical brotherhood," the clash between the values of form and appearance with the "values of pragmatism or utility downrange," and the tension between valuing teamwork and valuing the individual (97). Some of her observations are not just astute but also humorous. Johnson notes institutional frugality has made necessity into a virtue that results in Marines excelling at "appropriating" folders, toilet paper, MREs, and refrigerators. "In good DOD fashion, Marines have made an acronym of their pickpocket practice: STEAL (Strategically Taking Equipment to Another Location)" (105). In chapter 5, Johnson discusses how the Marine Corps commitment to "doing windows"—whatever tasks are required by the nation—is buttressed by a set of norms emphasizing flexibility, innovation, and a healthy "disregard" for doctrine.

Part 2 of Johnson's book transitions from a discussion of the general organizational culture of the Marine Corps to a more specific discussion of how that culture has influenced their approach to counterinsurgency. After short summaries of the 'banana wars' and the Vietnam-era Combined Action Platoons, Johnson indicates many of the lessons learned or lost "are best explained as a product of a widely shared

American culture rather than anything the Marine Corps cultivated on its own” (153). Johnson observes naïveté and paternalistic racism of American culture resulted in bad behavior in Central America and during Vietnam the Corps “continued to reflect the prejudices shared across the American public.” Essentially, she gives the Marine Corps a pass by assigning negative behaviors such as racism, forced labor, and unnecessary brutality to American culture in general. Johnson clearly admires the Marines, and sometimes seems loath to criticize them.

Chapter 7 offers perhaps the most insight on the unintended consequences of American nation building, namely “Marines, raised in a democratic system that they viewed as exception and superior, attempted to duplicate this system by undermining nearly every principle on which it is founded.” In her view, Marines attempted to increase the efficiency of Central American republics through centralized authority and in Vietnam through popular resistance rather than centralized government. In chapter 8, Johnson discusses the consequences of the preference for conventional war, including the slow development of doctrine and the aversion to performing nation-building tasks. In her penultimate chapter on counterinsurgency in Iraq, Johnson examines how the lessons learned during small wars were applied in Iraq, including respecting the civilian population, understanding local culture, and employing information operations.

Her conclusion, unfortunately, does not return the reader to the main thesis of her book—namely, the relative impact of US strategic culture on the Corps performance of counterinsurgency operations—but rather offers a series of lessons learned, such as the importance of training indigenous security forces, the importance of intelligence, and the multiplicity of approaches to counterinsurgency. She candidly observes how the Marines often tend to get in their own way: “The reward system and clear hierarchy of the corps means that aptitude in dissecting the sociocultural aspects of the war will remain an under-celebrated aspect of the warfighter personality” (262).

While Johnson’s book is certainly enjoyable and rich in material, she has adopted a strategic culture paradigm to studying an organization. The result is aspects of US strategic culture become difficult to separate analytically from aspects of Marine Corps culture. A more beneficial approach might have been to rely on the copious literature on organizational—such as *Studying Organizational Cultures through Rites and Ceremonials* by Harrison Trice and Janice Beyer (1984), *Organizational Stories as Symbols Which Control the Organization* by Alan Wilkins (1983), and *Organizational Culture: A Dynamic Model* by Edgar Schein (1983)—and apply it to the Marine Corps. As structured, the main argument of the book sometimes disappears in the entertaining and colorful details of Marine Corps culture. Nevertheless, anyone interested in the history and culture of the Marine Corps would certainly profit from reading the book. Johnson’s writing shines when she point out contradictions, discontinuities, and unintended consequences of military culture, and one hopes she will pursue this topic in the future.

