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## Book Reviews

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# Book Reviews

## ON STRATEGY

### Strategy and Defence Planning: Meeting the Challenge of Uncertainty

#### Perspectives on Strategy

#### The Strategy Bridge: Theory for Practice

by Colin S. Gray

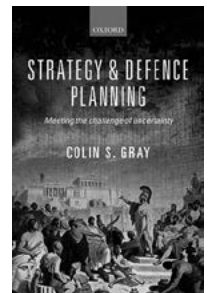
Reviewed by Major Nathan K. Finney, US Army strategist currently on the Army Staff.

Few authors have been more prolific, or as penetrating, as Dr. Colin S. Gray. Currently wrapping up a career in academia at the University of Reading as the a professor in the Department of International Politics and Strategic Studies and the Director of the Centre for Strategic Studies, he also served as a defense advisor for both American and British governments, at one point serving on the Reagan Administration's General Advisory Committee on Arms Control and Disarmament. These experiences, together with decades of research, led to over two-dozen books, multiple edited volumes, and innumerable journal articles.

Among this vast body of work, the trilogy of *The Strategy Bridge: Theory for Practice*, *Perspectives on Strategy*, and *Strategy and Defence Planning: Meeting the Challenge of Uncertainty* will most shape this discipline – and the education of practicing defense and strategic planners – well into the future.

While all three are complementary, *The Bridge* and *Perspectives* are the most similar. Much as his predecessor in strategic theory, Carl von Clausewitz, whose magnum opus *On War* was written to explain a general theory of war that could be used in educating practitioners, Gray uses these two tomes to delve into a general theory of strategy. *The Bridge* is the more comprehensive of the two, taking Clausewitz's theory and building upon it to describe the dicta and parameters necessary for practitioners to bridge tactics and policy – to be “good enough” in the translation of force into political effect. *Perspectives*, on the other hand, expounds upon some of the specific dimensions of strategy Gray was unable to address sufficiently in *The Bridge*. The most important additions these two books provide to the theory and practice of strategy are to its inherently relative nature and the dialogue and negotiation that make up the development of any strategy (as well as the particular strategies that lead to actions on the ground).

*Strategy and Defence Planning: Meeting the Challenge of Uncertainty*, the last book in the trilogy, builds upon Gray's general theory of strategy – including the incorporation of the relative and iterative nature of strategy. In this book, however, Gray focuses on the necessity and difficulty in planning for future security. As might be deduced from the expanded title, *Defence Planning* is in large part a discussion of uncertainty – in this case, the uncertainty that plagues attempts to plan for the future defense of a polity.



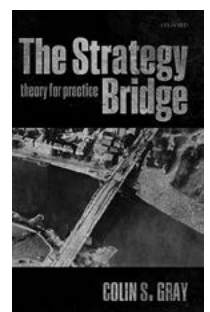
New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014

240 pages  
\$82.99



New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013

256 pages  
\$89.99



New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010

328 pages  
\$88.99

Three core elements of Gray's discussion on defense planning are: the impossibility of overcoming all uncertainty about the future when shaping the people, processes, and technologies for defense of a nation; as in war and strategy, it is a human endeavor and is therefore influenced by the political and bureaucratic preferences of those involved; and, also like war and strategy, it is an exercise in relativity – one need only be “good enough” (better than the adversary) to be successful. Of particular interest to current efforts at shaping the Department of Defense in our current environment is Gray's dichotomy stemming from the political nature of defense planning. This dichotomy details the fact that defense planning can only be tested when employed to achieve political effect and must have both an internal and an external consistency; all measures at planning for the future must meet today's domestic politics and bureaucratic preferences (internal) and be successful when employed against an adversary (external).

Finally, Gray spends significant space covering the importance of historical understanding to defense planning – because this is the only source available to ascertain patterns of behavior accurately that could be drive human choices in the future:

“The choice of historical experience as the essential fuel for a tolerably prudent theory of defence planning is not exactly a heroic one. The reason is that there is literally no alternative to education in history for the preparation of contemporary defence planners.” (*Strategy and Defence Planning*, 38)

Such a focused treatment of the place of history in a defense planner or strategist's intellectual tool kit makes one wonder whether it should play a larger role in the education of military and civilian leaders, whether before service or during their career progression. The ability to pick up a book on history belongs to any literate individual – the capability to read history holistically, ascertain trends, and determine patterns useful in planning for future defense scenarios is something requiring focused education over time.

Overall, *Defence Planning* is an admirable addition to the theory of strategy Gray developed in his previous two books. I recommend military and civilian leaders interested in – or likely to be involved in – the development of strategy or the preparations for the future defense of a polity read this remarkable trilogy, as well as study it over the course of their careers. Each book will provide different insights and cognitive tools necessary to hold together the bridge spanning the policy and tactics that make up strategy development and defense planning. These books should join works like *On War*, the *Art of War*, and the *History of the Peloponnesian War* as mandatory canon internalized by the military leaders and practitioners likely to participate in the development of strategy.

## Restraint: A New Foundation for US Grand Strategy

By Barry R. Posen

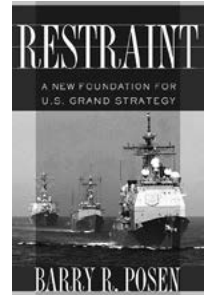
Reviewed by LTC Joseph Becker, Department Chair for Military Strategy at the National Intelligence University.

The opinions expressed by this review are personal to the author and do not imply Department of Defense endorsement.

Grand strategy is an often controversial term in the vocabulary of United States foreign policy. Competing visions of the US role in global affairs lead to watered-down policy pronouncements which must be evaluated in hindsight by their manner of implementation for a clear interpretation. In his latest book, *Restraint: A New Foundation for US Grand Strategy*, Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor Barry Posen makes such an assessment. He identifies a relatively consistent pattern of activist behavior which he dubs a grand strategy of “Liberal Hegemony.” This strategy, he argues, has been wasteful and counterproductive in securing US national security interests, and he offers a competing vision for US national security strategy. While most readers will find his arguments against Liberal Hegemony compelling, his grand strategy of “*Restraint*” will be divisive on a number of levels.

Posen is clear and systematic throughout the book in defining his terms and developing his arguments. He scopes his use of the term grand strategy along national security lines related to the generation of military power, avoiding potential pitfalls of debate over issues such as public health or domestic policy. He defines liberal hegemony as a strategy of securing the superpower position of the United States largely through the active promotion of democracy, free markets, and Western values worldwide. Variations of this strategy have been championed on both sides of the political aisle by liberals and neoconservatives. His counterproposal, *Restraint*, is a realist-based grand strategy which focuses US military power on a narrow set of objectives, relies on “command of the commons” to ensure global access, avoids entanglement in foreign conflicts, and actively encourages allies to look to their own security. Posen advances a largely maritime-focused strategy to command the world’s commons.

Liberal hegemony is a strategy based upon a worldview that sees accountable governments as safe and secure partners for perpetuating the American way of life and non-accountable or non-existent governance as a threat that must be managed or ultimately rectified. It encourages a leading role for the United States in establishing and defending this order. It is this role which Posen believes to be ill-conceived and poorly defined, leading needlessly to wars of choice and the open-ended commitment of US forces worldwide. Posen views the current network of US alliances and security guarantees as largely a Cold War relic, allowing countries such as Germany, Japan, France, the Republic of Korea and even some of the Middle Eastern oil suppliers a free ride on the US taxpayer. He also believes that some of these commitments have encouraged reckless behavior, with Iraq and Israel as particular examples. Posen states that, since the end of the Cold War, policymakers have consistently exaggerated the threats to US interests in various regions of the world,



Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014

256 pages

\$29.95

overstated the benefits of military engagement, and embroiled the US in a morass of identity-based conflicts with little hope for a solution. He argues that most US allies could (and would) manage their own security if forced to do so and they would naturally balance against threats to regional stability and the emergence of aspiring hegemony. Also, importantly, Posen bases his arguments on the assumption that great powers (current and emerging) will maintain a nuclear deterrence capability and this will largely reduce the likelihood of great power wars.

The grand strategy of liberal hegemony, in the form described by Posen, would likely have fewer supporters today than any time since the early 1990s. There is no doubt the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, combined with the larger Global War on Terror, have been tremendously costly in terms of blood and treasure, and their long-term benefits are dubious. As of this writing, the Iraqi government faces mortal danger from extremist groups. Democracy in Afghanistan is a tenuous prospect at best. Lieutenant General Michael Flynn, the recently departed director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, was quoted in recent statements as saying that even after more than 13 years of war the US is not safer and extremist ideology is “exponentially growing.” There is little argument that business as usual is no longer an option in US national defense.

While the status quo would seem to require a change, the level of disengagement recommended by Posen could be problematic in ways his book fails to explore. The network of alliances and security guarantees maintained by the United States does more than simply abet stability in far-flung areas of the world. The United States, as a nation, tends to be rather opinionated as to the conduct of world affairs. While rarely stated explicitly, security assistance in its various forms is one of the levers used by Washington to gain influence over the decision-making processes of other nations. A prominent example is Congress’ linking of security assistance for Pakistan in 2011 to a concrete set of performance objectives. It is also true that countries hosting US bases or deployments usually reap considerable economic benefits from those arrangements as well.

Unfortunately, balancing power is a dangerous game which does not always lead to stability. Posen argues, for instance, the US should remove ground forces from Japan and the Republic of Korea, believing the South Koreans are more than a match for the North Koreans and both Japan and the ROK will balance against China once they have to. But what if the Japanese and the Koreans assess the threat differently than the United States? What if one nation attempts to “buck pass” its security preparations to another and holds out too long? Stalin did this before World War II, expecting France to bear the cost of balancing against Germany. When France fell, the stage was set for Hitler’s invasion of Russia.

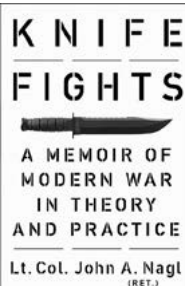
Balancing can also have unintended consequences. Posen states, “*Restraint* aims to energize other advanced industrial states into improving their own capabilities to defend themselves...” (162) But the capability to defend generally implies a capability to attack as well. Japan’s balancing against China would almost certainly arouse insecurities on the Korean peninsula, among other places. Nationalist tendencies in either location might also encourage a state to flex its newfound muscle. Perhaps the US can no longer afford to be the guarantor, but abandoning this role

will relinquish a measure of control the United States maintains over its international environment. The United States will always maintain some responsibility to assist its allies and could be drawn into regional conflicts whether or not it prefers.

Posen's vision for "command of the commons" means the United States would dominate the air, sea, and space. His treatment of space is brief and largely sound, but he underestimates the contested nature of this arena. Air forces are treated as essential but could be right-sized to coincide with a reduction of ground forces. The thrust of Posen's argument is the United States should support its grand strategy of *Restraint* through a maritime-focused force, significantly reducing the size and priority of ground forces. In his view, the balance of power and nuclear deterrence will reduce the likelihood of great power war, and a reluctance to engage in smaller-scale regional conflicts will eliminate the need for massive counterinsurgency operations and render the current force structure irrelevant. Oddly, Posen argues for a reduction in naval forces as well, going so far as to assess the number of aircraft carriers in the fleet. The United States, he believes, has the economic might to reconstitute the reduced forces if necessary, but should save its money in the meantime.

Regardless of the reader's views on the grand strategy of *Restraint*, this book has value. Posen outlines the benefits of having a clearly articulated grand strategy and demonstrates the pitfalls the United States has faced in navigating national security policy without this level of clarity. His case against becoming embroiled in conflicts requiring counterinsurgency operations is strong. The grand strategy he proposes is problematic for a variety of reasons, largely for the optimism of its assumptions and its required alignment of forces. However, this work provides a starting point for debate and a structure from which various alternatives might be built and assessed. Posen is right that something needs to be done differently.

## MEMOIRS/BIOGRAPHY



New York, NY: Penguin Press, 2014  
269 pages  
\$27.95

## Knife Fights: A Memoir of Modern War in Theory and Practice

By John Nagl

Reviewed by Paul J. Springer, PhD, Professor of Comparative Military Studies,  
Air Command and Staff College

What is it about colonels named John with revolutionary ideas about how to conduct warfare and an inability to function effectively within the existing military system? For the US Air Force, it was John Warden and, to a lesser extent, John Boyd, who invented entirely new concepts for aerial warfare, but who could never get out of their own way enough to maximize the effect of their ideas. For the US Army, Lieutenant Colonel John Nagl played the same role, and it is evident in his recent memoir, *Knife Fights*, that he has only partially internalized the old cliché about capturing more flies with honey than vinegar. A West Point graduate, Rhodes Scholar, and recipient of a PhD from Oxford University, Nagl quickly developed a reputation as a brilliant defense intellectual and he is accustomed to being the smartest person in the room. Unfortunately, he at times conflates raw intelligence with subject matter expertise, and his ego gets the better of him throughout this work.

Nagl was integral to the development of the US Army's 21st-century understanding of how to conduct counterinsurgency warfare, and his first book, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, has justifiably been required reading for military leaders deployed to the long conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. His memoir offers a tremendous opportunity for insight into the development of *FM 3-24: Counterinsurgency*, the key doctrine manual guiding much US military decision-making in both conflicts. However, far too much of his memoir is dedicated to settling old scores and taking unnecessary cheap shots at people who helped him at every stage in his career. While some degree of criticism for senior leaders' decisions is certainly warranted, this reviewer found Nagl's decision to deliberately insult the members of his first platoon completely beyond the pale. It comes across as arrogant, demeaning, and peevish, completely unbecoming of an officer of his stature. Nagl would do well to consult Eugene B. Sledge's *With the Old Breed* for an object lesson in how to criticize fellow service members—the insiders who served with Sledge could certainly identify the cowards and the villains in his work, but outsiders could not do so with any certainty.

After detailing his service in the Persian Gulf War, Nagl explains his intellectual development at West Point, Oxford, and the Command and General Staff College. None of those august institutions, nor their faculty, met Nagl's high standards, suggesting his theme for the work will soon devolve into "If only they had listened to me." After finishing his dissertation at Oxford, Nagl was appalled to have it rejected at presses he considered worthy of his efforts, and he makes no friends in the publishing community with his vicious attacks upon Praeger, the press that eventually published his work. Even a chapter break does not halt the assault on Praeger, who Nagl blamed for poor book sales, even though there is little evidence he lifted a finger to help those sales.

Chapter 3 is by far the best in the work—it is a thoughtful memoir of his deployment in 2003-2004 to Al Anbar province, just as the region descended into complete anarchy. There, Nagl discovered the fundamental differences between theory and practice. The chapter is exceptionally well-written, balanced, and offers a solid critique of his experiences, both positive and negative, in the Iraqi desert. Sadly, it is somewhat marred by his heavy focus upon his fellow officers—even though NCOs and enlisted personnel bore the brunt of the casualties under his command, there is little evidence Nagl knew much about them, and he has little to offer about their contributions and sacrifices, leaving the distinct impression they had little influence upon the war.

In Chapter 4, Nagl turns his attention to the genesis of *FM 3-24*, but once again, his petty attacks significantly influence the value of his discussion. He goes to great lengths to inform the reader that Conrad Crane was the second choice to lead the writing effort, although to Nagl's credit, he eventually admits that Crane, a self-effacing academic if ever there was one, was the better choice for the role. Additional insults are lobbed at senior civilian and military leaders, including some who significantly aided Nagl's career. In pursuit of said career, Nagl relates a tale of essentially selling out his co-author, Paul Yingling, for the sake of his own promotion opportunities, a move that paid no dividends. Perhaps that is why he passionately attacks the promotion system's failure to elevate his choice of leaders, while at the same time demonstrating how often the process was circumvented by aspirants with powerful benefactors.

By Chapter 6, Nagl's story has worn thin—he presents himself as one of the central architects of the strategy applied in Iraq in 2006, and yet, David Petraeus elected to leave Nagl commanding a training battalion in Kansas rather than bring him into the inner circle as he did with so many other promising officers. Nagl offers an outsider's summary of events in Iraq and Afghanistan, but probably should have focused instead upon his own role and how his unit performed in its "train the trainers" mission. It is clear Nagl offered a verbal summary of his dissertation to the officers who regularly rotated through his training course, it is not so obvious what else was accomplished by his unit.

Chapter 8 stands out as Nagl's chance to offer advice on how the military should conduct its affairs in the future, and is another shining example of what happens when he turns his formidable intellect upon a challenging problem. He comes to many of the same conclusions as have other prominent defense analysts, namely, US conventional dominance and nuclear deterrence make irregular warfare the only viable option for any opponent seeking to fight the United States or its allies. This chapter would benefit from offering a bit more guidance regarding the key works an interested reader should consult for more information, as the extremely truncated bibliography hits a few of the obvious highlights, but barely scratches the surface of good works currently available.

Overall, this memoir has some unique insights, particularly regarding the need for, creation of, and resistance to a new counterinsurgency doctrine. Unfortunately, the author's often-cutting style, relentless self-promotion, and continual name-dropping severely undercuts the final work. Nagl's perspective is reminiscent of Cassandra of Greek mythology—an oracle with unflinching accuracy, but doomed to be disbelieved



by all who heard her prophecies. Perhaps Cassandra, and John Nagl, would have won over more believers had they been able to present their predictions in a less caustic fashion. This book is a worthy addition to the shelf for any consumer of war memoirs, any student of military doctrine, or a scholar interested in the development of modern counter-insurgency theories. Its flashes of greatness outweigh its negatives, but much like the war in Iraq, it could have been so much more successful with a better execution of a well thought-out plan.



## The Strategist: Brent Scowcroft and the Call of National Security

By Bartholomew Sparrow

Reviewed by Steven Metz, US Army War College Strategic Studies Institute

Few people have influenced US national security policy as much as Brent Scowcroft. Some luminaries burned more brightly – Henry Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski come to mind – but their time in the spotlight was shorter. Scowcroft was a senior policy maker in both the Ford and George H.W. Bush administrations, and an influential figure in Washington policy circles between and after his stints in the White House. And he was there for some of the most seminal events in American history including the final collapse of South Vietnam and the end of the Cold War. As Bartholomew Sparrow puts in *The Strategist*, his massive new authorized biography of Scowcroft, “...no other official or analyst has consistently had such a profound impact on the national security policy of the United States. For many in Washington, Brent Scowcroft is a pillar of the foreign policy community and a global strategist par excellence.” (xii)

Capturing a career of this magnitude is an ambitious undertaking so Sparrow’s book includes well over 500 pages of primary text. It draws deeply from both secondary and primary material – including Scowcroft’s personal files – as well as extensive interviews with Scowcroft himself and dozens of his colleagues and associates, many of them central architects of American security policy.

Sparrow’s admiration for Scowcroft is evident on every page. At times it tips so far toward imbalance that it detracts from the power of the book: the author consistently gave Scowcroft credit for everything that worked out well and absolves him of responsibility for what might seem to be missteps. For instance, when recounting components of the Bush policy that were less than successful or outright failures such as Afghanistan and Yugoslavia, Scowcroft recedes into the background. On successful endeavors such as the Bush administration’s response to Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait in 1990, he moves to the fore as when Sparrow argues that Scowcroft “Almost single handedly...determined what the United States’ response to the invasion of Kuwait was going to be” (385).

Still, there is much to be drawn from this impressive book. Two questions are particularly important. Sparrow places great stress on the idea that Scowcroft is the model of a national security adviser, combining a detailed grasp of complex issues with realism, pragmatism and a willingness to work behind the scenes rather than hogging the limelight.

New York, NY:  
PublicAffairs, 2015

752 pages  
\$34.99

Sparrow notes George H.W. Bush described Scowcroft as “the perfect national security advisor. He’s an honest broker, yet has strong opinions of his own.” (488) “He believes in working with other influential people out of public view,” Sparrow wrote, “Somewhat wary of Congress, skeptical of the media, and uncertain about the wisdom of the public, he believes in a security policy made by mandarins – a hierarchical approach...” (559)

If this is accurate, the question is how the United States can routinely find such people. It is not a coincidence that Scowcroft and Colin Powell, who had some of the same attributes, came out of the military. Is the answer that the National Security Adviser should routinely come from the senior ranks of the military? That has some appeal but also profound implications for civil military relations. As illustrated by the tenure of retired Marine General James L. Jones as Barrack Obama’s national security adviser shows, success in uniform does not always translate into success at the National Security Council.

A second important question – and one Sparrow addresses more directly – is whether Scowcroft’s brand of pragmatic realism is still as relevant today as it was during the Cold War. During Scowcroft’s time in office, the global security system was very much state centric. The conflict with the Soviet Union had matured to the point that it was possible to craft a working consensus among Americans and their elected leaders that allowed things to get done. Today’s security system is very different. Violent transnational networks, both ideological and criminal, may not have fully surpassed other nations as security threats, but they are at least co-equal.

Domestically, the Cold War idea that partisanship should at least be muted in national security policy has collapsed. Instead, there is hyperpartisanship driven by a new form of populism created by the Internet, 24 hour news, and talk radio. This new populism has now spilled over into relations between the Executive Branch and Congress, making national security policy simply one more battleground for partisan political conflict. It is not clear whether a national security adviser like Scowcroft, who deliberately kept a distance from partisan squabbles, could be effective in this complex, dangerous new political climate. It may be that he was the perfect national security adviser for the final years of the Cold War but not a model for the future.

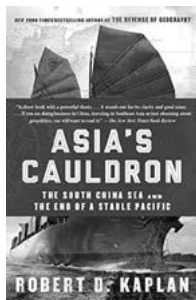
In any case, Sparrow’s magisterial book provides an invaluable picture of an important era in US national security policy and lays a foundation for talking about America’s future even if it does not attempt to provide a roadmap for it.

## ASIA

**Asia's Cauldron: The South China Sea and the End of a Stable Pacific**

By Robert Kaplan

Reviewed by Andrew Scobell, Senior Political Scientist, RAND Corporation



New York, NY: Random House, 2014  
225 pages  
\$25.00

The South China Sea has rocketed into the headlines in recent years spawning a cottage industry of instant experts proffering alarmist commentary and provocatively titled volumes. Tensions in maritime Southeast Asia have been on a slow boil since at least 2010, but whether the South China Sea merits the label of “Asia’s cauldron” is debatable. Kaplan is prone to hyperbole, but he has done his homework and is no neophyte when it comes to the Asian littoral (he is also the author of *Monsoon* — a geostrategic examination of the Indian Ocean published in 2010).

Kaplan is right on target when he underscores the importance of the South China Sea to the wider region describing it “as central to Asia as the Mediterranean is to Europe.” (49) Using colorful anatomical terminology he describes this body of water as the “throat” connecting two oceans — the Pacific and Indian. (9) The South China Sea is certainly a major maritime thoroughfare crisscrossed by a spider’s web of sea lanes. But is it accurate for Kaplan to identify this semi-enclosed sea as “a principal node of global power politics”? (49) If “global power politics” is used as a synonym for geostrategic competition between the United States and China, then the answer is “yes.”

However, many in the United States and elsewhere insist the tensions in the South China Sea are not about “power politics;” rather (for many in Washington and other capitals), what is under threat is the sacrosanct principle of freedom of navigation. Arguably, the real issue is which great power or set of powers will guarantee this principle now and for the foreseeable future, and whose interpretation of freedom of navigation will be observed in this body of water.

But for many in China the issue is Beijing’s territorial claims over many islands, reefs, atolls and associated waters in the South China Sea. These claims tend to be made on the basis of a purported historical record of Chinese presence and activity in the area as well as China’s interpretations of international law. And many Chinese view high-minded US rhetoric about the sanctity of freedom of navigation as a ruse to justify continued geostrategic meddling and invasive military activity in Beijing’s maritime backyard. The author suggests China’s approach to the South China Sea is “akin” to America’s Monroe Doctrine in the Caribbean Basin. (13) However, as Kaplan observes, this parallel has its limits. An important difference is Washington never made territorial claims to all the islands and waters of the Caribbean; rather, the United States asserted a sphere of influence. This is not to say Washington hasn’t muscularly asserted itself in this region over the years, but rather the United States never asserted sovereignty on the basis of historical claims.

The heart of the book is contained in the first two chapters which address the South China Sea's significance to China and the rest of the world. While *Asia's Cauldron* book does not add much beyond what has already been written about the South China Sea itself, Kaplan's astute broader geostrategic analysis is well worth the price of admission. Discussion of this body of water becomes a launching pad to raise larger, uncomfortable questions about the future trajectory of US-China interactions in East Asia and the Western Pacific.

The strategy of other claimants to the land formations and associated waters to counter Chinese pressure tactics is to push the United States to remain engaged in Southeast Asia while avoiding an escalation of tensions to actual military conflict or to the point of forcing the capitals of the region to choose Beijing or Washington. Understanding how these other claimants and interested parties play is important and Kaplan does make efforts in this regard. Unfortunately, too much of the book — six of its eight chapters — is crammed with perceptive but peripheral geopolitical travelogue of the states surrounding the South China Sea. Much of this discussion — successive chapters on Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Taiwan, and China — does little to illuminate the roles each of these actors play in the South China Sea slow boil drama.

These shortcomings aside, *Asia's Cauldron* is recommended reading for national security communities all along the Pacific Rim and around the world.

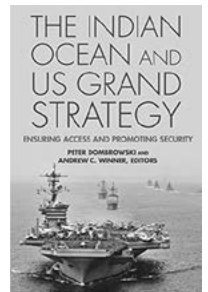
## The Indian Ocean and US Grand Strategy: Ensuring Access and Promoting Security

By Peter Dombrowski and Andrew C. Winner, editors

Reviewed by Larry A. Grant, CDR USN (ret.), Research Associate at The Citadel Oral History Program and Adjunct Professor, Charleston, SC

The history of America's relationship to the world's oceans and seas began with the crossing of the Atlantic Ocean. American interest spread following independence to the Mediterranean Sea when North African pirates tested the young republic. The growth of the China trade and the movement of the nation westward to the Pacific expanded American horizons yet again, but the Indian Ocean did not assume a similar level of importance to the United States as these others until long after World War II. It caught strategists' attention only belatedly and almost entirely as a consequence of the need to protect the flow of Middle Eastern oil and in reaction to Soviet advances in those waters. According to Peter Dombrowski and Andrew C. Winner in *The Indian Ocean and US Grand Strategy* it is time that negligent attitude toward this important body of water and its surrounding nations changed.

This book explores the same general territory mapped out by Robert D. Kaplan's *Monsoon* in 2010. Kaplan wrote; "It is my contention that the Greater Indian Ocean, stretching eastward from the Horn of Africa past the Arabian Peninsula, the Iranian plateau, and the Indian Subcontinent, all the way to the Indonesian archipelago and beyond, may comprise a map as iconic to the new century as Europe was to the last one." (xi)



Washington, DC:  
Georgetown University  
Press, 2014  
232 pages  
\$49.95

The formerly slighted Indian Ocean is, in Kaplan's view, on the verge of becoming a new international strategic locus for the United States.

This prediction and the concomitant requirement to make prudent national strategic preparations for the consequences that would follow from its realization provide the thematic framework for the collection of essays that make up *The Indian Ocean and US Grand Strategy*. Editors Dombrowski and Winner argue in their introduction that the rise of the Indian Ocean as a trade route and potential battleground elicits "questions about whether, and how, American policymakers should adjust their previously limited approach to the region." (2) The required information for this reassessment according to the editors includes: 1) a determination of US interests in the region; 2) a grasp of the geopolitical characteristics of the region and their dynamics; and 3) the development of mechanisms by which the interests of the US can be furthered.

The editors argue there are significant risks even in maintaining the status quo. In light of recent events, perhaps the most compelling of those discussed is that "allies and partners in the region may perceive the status quo or a slight decline in US defense activities...due to the Afghanistan and Iraq drawdown as Washington pulling back more broadly. This may result in more aggressive behavior on the part of adversaries..." (11) (If the chaos there is evidence, this last prediction seems to have been realized in Syria, Yemen, and Iraq and may suggest that the decline in US influence is already underway). The editors accept the Obama administration's proposed "Asian pivot" as a potential step in the right direction, but they also point out that it does not include a specific strategy for the Indian Ocean. They return to this deficiency in their concluding chapter, offering the "beginnings of an analytic framework for evaluating the contending strategic approaches offered" by the authors of the other essays. Their unsurprising conclusion is the United States would benefit from a coherent Indian Ocean strategy.

The editors' introductory and concluding chapters bookend essays by eight other scholars offering varying assessments of the need for American engagement and the methods through which America's geopolitical future in the region ought to be pursued. The second through seventh of the essays examine various strategic options, and essays eight and nine track the possible paths of evolution of recent policies into the future. All of the authors are either scholars or foreign service professionals with backgrounds in strategy, political science, or Asian or Pacific affairs.

Strategic speculation like that contained in *The Indian Ocean and US Grand Strategy* often makes for interesting reading assuming one can decipher the sometimes dense prose. However, the likelihood of any of the suggested Indian Ocean strategies receiving a serious trial in the near future seems small as long as other concerns continue to take center stage. For example, future China policy will undoubtedly include an Indian Ocean component, but of more immediate interest is China's advancing "Great Wall of Sand" as some are calling China's island hopping and building program in disputed South China Sea waters, and her growing influence in an area that is home to important American allies. Chinese encroachments there will not wane soon and will capture much of America's limited resources before they can reach the Indian Ocean.

If some of those resources do pass through into the Indian Ocean, it will almost certainly be en route to the Middle East. There they will continue to go so long as the Middle East – where it could be argued the United States has long had and is now watching the decline of the sort of regional policy these authors advocate for the Indian Ocean – continues in its currently chaotic state. Perhaps that crumbling structure, which might be thought of as a policy under real-world review, ought to be repaired before moving on to other regions.

Prudent contingency scholarship and planning – like scientific exploration – always has value, even though it may not be realized until long afterward. At present, however budget pressures may keep the realization of an Indian Ocean regional strategy consigned to the academic seminar for room.

## **The Hundred-Year Marathon: China's Secret Strategy to Replace America as the Global Superpower**

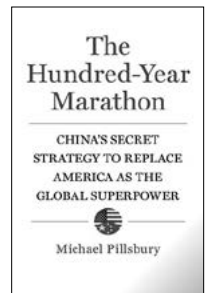
By Michael Pillsbury

Reviewed by Timothy L. Thomas, senior analyst at TRADOC's Foreign Military Studies Office. He has written extensively on Chinese cyber issues and strategy.

Author Michael Pillsbury's book *The Hundred-Year Marathon*, which is about China's quest to become the world's primary superpower by 2049 (the 100th anniversary of the Communist Party of China), contains three key elements. First, this book is unique in that, with regard to China's geopolitical strategy, it attempts to weave two important elements of Chinese historical and cultural thought, namely the use of stratagems and the concept of *shi* (how to attain a strategic advantage over an opponent), throughout the entire narrative. Pillsbury relies extensively on writings and strategic lessons learned from the Warring States period, stating, "I learned that the Warring States mind-set has long been dominant among China's leaders." Pillsbury stresses that hawks have "persuaded the Chinese leadership to view America as a dangerous hegemon that it must replace." Other works on Chinese strategy typically move away from this emphasis, making the analysis feel less "Chinese" and more "Western."

Second, Pillsbury offers readers several insights regarding his personal history that indicate the extensive depth of his knowledge and why his book has to be taken seriously. His information comes from his access to classified sources (where the *shi* concept was mentioned often, he writes), personal interviews among a host of primary sources in China (to include former leader Deng Xiaoping), and access to Chinese defectors. His ability to read and speak Mandarin, access to such sources, and his work with the Central Intelligence Agency, and his role as a policy advisor were also important.

Third, Pillsbury's book, perhaps unintentionally, may long serve as a primer for aspiring Chinese analysts. He offers educators several areas where they should direct their attention. For example, he lists the nine principal elements of Chinese strategy that form the basis of the *Hundred-Year Marathon*, and in the conclusion of the book he lists concepts the United States can adopt from China's Warring States era to



New York, NY: Henry Holt & Co., 2015

336 pages

\$30.00

offset or counter China's strategic aims. Further, to insure analysts are not taken in by Chinese claims the United States is nothing more than a global hegemon or a great Satan, he explains in some detail how much assistance America has provided China over the years, in economic, diplomatic, and military terms.

In spite of these extensive friendly gestures on the part of the United States, China looks at US assistance (through its prism of skepticism and suspicion) as part of an overall stratagem against China. It continues to harbor concerns the United States is out to humiliate China. Perhaps this is merely a case of how China has learned to view the world through the Warring States template, where power politics, intrigue, deception, and open warfare existed side by side. Or perhaps this is simply the case with autocratic regimes, as we often hear the same claims of humiliation from Russia's current leadership, even though they have been offered extensive assistance through the years. The assistance was clearly not intentioned to exert "dominance" over Russia, rather, it helped Russia get back on its feet. The United States simply does not have the desire, budget, forces, or strategy to dominate strategic giants such as Russia and China.

The book has a few shortcomings. For example, it would have been informative for Pillsbury to access and report on the context of some of the People's Liberation Army's more recent strategic works beyond the *Science of Military Strategy* (2001). It is important to know if Pillsbury's continued references to the Warring States period are still in vogue. Or are we seeing more creative input in concert with President Xi Jinping's "China Dream?" When Pillsbury asks whether we are continuing to "unwittingly assist in the challenger's ascendance," important responses are required from the perspective of strategy. Analysts, independent of their level of experience, should carefully weigh the lessons Pillsbury has learned. The responses of a new generation of strategists to such questions as "whether we are assisting the Chinese" will shape our future meaningful engagement with China. Books like Pillsbury's will be important to their assessment processes.



Annapolis, MD: Naval  
Institute Press, 2013

320 pages  
\$34.95

## Asian Maritime Strategies: Navigating Troubled Waters

By Bernard D. Cole

Reviewed by Richard Halloran, formerly with *The New York Times* as a foreign correspondent in Asia and military correspondent in Washington, DC

This book is a primer on the strategically vital, internationally complicated, and potentially explosive region running from the Yellow Sea through the Straits of Malacca to the western Indian Ocean. The study moves on known headings, with few discoveries, as it seeks to help those unfamiliar with these turbulent waters.

The author, Bernard D. Cole, is a retired Navy captain who was skipper of a frigate and commodore of a destroyer squadron. As an academic, he earned a PhD in history from Auburn University, has specialized in Asian naval issues, and teaches at the National War College in Washington DC.

Early on, the author points to the “essentially maritime character” of the region, then bit by bit acknowledges the basically continental orientation of Asian nations throughout history. Today, he writes: “Few Asian nations have coherent maritime strategies or ocean policies that reflect both truly vital national interests and defense-budget realities.”

Cole says Western nations have been influenced by the famed US naval officer, Alfred Thayer Mahan, British strategist Sir Julian S. Corbett, and French naval officer Theophile Aube. But he does not name an Asian counterpart, and neither Sun Tzu nor other classical Chinese strategists have much to say about seapower.

Indeed, from 1498 when the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama landed in India, Asian nations were notable for their lack of naval power to fend off European, Russian, and American seaborne incursions. By the mid-twentieth century, foreign flags flew over all but three Asian nations: Japan, Thailand, and Nepal.

Two exceptions to this absence of seapower: A Chinese admiral, Zheng He (sometimes written Cheng Ho), led several exploratory voyages through the South China Sea and across the Indian Ocean in the fifteenth century. But China’s imperial rulers, as Cole points out, lost interest after that.

Japan responded to the arrival of American and Russian warships in the 1850’s by building a navy strong enough to defeat Russia at sea in 1905 and to attack the US fleet in Pearl Harbor in 1941. But during World War II, Japan lost 3,032 warships and commercial ships and was left with little afloat.

Thus, Asian seapower is largely a product of the postwar period in which Asians have built navies from the keel up. China’s plans have been the most ambitious, but Beijing had to resort to getting a People’s Liberation Army (PLA) general, Liu Huaqing, to change into a naval uniform to begin assembling a fleet. (The PLA comprises all of China’s armed forces.)

Liu, Cole writes, “made his mark as the country’s most influential modern flag officer” in the 1980s. His plans were based on three phases that reflected his thinking as a soldier whose armies operate along lines of defense, advance, and logistics.

By 2000, Liu’s navy would be able to defend waters from the coastline to what he saw as “the first island chain” running from northern Japan south through the Philippines to Indonesia. By 2020, the Chinese navy should be able to defend farther east, to “the second island” chain running from Japan through the Mariannas to Indonesia. “Finally,” Cole concludes, “by 2050, the PLAN (PLA Navy) would possess aircraft carriers and have the capacity to operate globally.”

For the moment, Cole asserts, Japan has a better navy: “It is the most capable maritime force in East Asia. It is not as large as China’s navy but it is more technology-intensive, more experienced, and more highly trained.” He argues Japan’s naval strategy has gradually shifted “from a narrowly focused defense of the home islands to a global focus.”

However, Cole contends: “National policy makers in Tokyo during the past decade or more have failed to acknowledge this maritime



dependence; they have not adequately funded the armed service most crucial to Japan's national security."

India reflects the experience of many Asian nations in shedding colonial rule, in this case from Britain in 1947, soon to begin assembling an armed force, including a navy. As Cole notes: "It is no exaggeration to say that Indian maritime strategists take the name 'Indian Ocean' literally."

Cole reports that India's 55,000 sailors, a relatively small number, man "an impressive fleet" that includes two aircraft carriers. The author reports that India's naval leaders appear to realize that their force is not capable of going "one on one" against the Chinese. Hence, India has sought to forge "strong relations with other navies, particularly those of the United States, Japan, Singapore, and Vietnam."

*Asian Maritime Strategies*, while valuable, is marred by several questionable contentions. A sampling:

The author asserts that John Lehman, who served in the Reagan Administration "was almost unquestionably the most strategically minded Secretary of the Navy in US history." Yet Mr. Lehman was distinctly controversial and was reined in by Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger for overstepping his authority.

Some 44,000 American sailors are deployed at sea on half the fleet's 288 ships on any given day, Cole says. A few pages later, an admiral is quoted as saying 50,000 sailors are underway on 145 of the fleet's 285 ships. Not a big difference but a good editor should have insisted that those numbers be reconciled.

In Japan, Cole says, the Japanese government "pays most of the costs" of US warships based there. That is overstated as the Japanese cover the yen costs—shipyard workers, guards, rent—while the US pays considerably more for the ships, their operations and maintenance, and the pay and allowances of the crew.

In Australia, the author says, US Marines are establishing a base. In fact, the Marines are rotating through Australian army training areas. Similarly, he writes that US ships will be homeported in Singapore when they are being rotated there for a six months at a time. Politically, rotating troops through someone else's training grounds or ships through a host nation's piers and setting up a base or port are quite different.

## MODERN SOLDIERS

**The Combat Soldier: Infantry Tactics and Cohesion in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries**

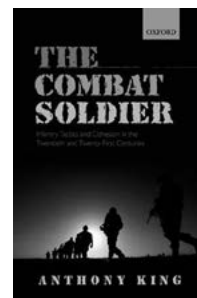
By Anthony King

Reviewed by George J. Woods, III, Colonel (USA Retired), Professor of Strategic Leadership, US Army War College

After more than a decade of continuous conflict, Anthony King, a Cambridge graduate and professor of sociology at Exeter University, authored a superb and in-depth look at today's soldiers. King's research passion, the examination of the sociological phenomenon "collective action"—how and why groups form and sustain themselves—ranges from sports teams to the military. In *The Combat Soldier*, King meticulously "explores how cohesion and combat performance, often assumed unchanging and universal across wars, may have changed in the course of the last century, as armies have moved away from the citizen towards the all-volunteer professional model." (39)

King examines how armies in Western-like, democratic societies behave and maintain cohesion in the face of the hellish experience of combat. He does so by deftly analyzing how the "multiplicity of factors including comradeship, political motivation, doctrine, tactics, and training (39)" affected combat performance in battle from World War I to the present. Rather than a macro perspective, he studies the phenomenon from the grassroots level using the infantry platoon as his unit of analysis to identify what motivates these soldiers to act in unison in a combat environment. His method includes comparing citizen army platoons from World War I to Vietnam against the modern, professional army platoons which have fought from the Falklands to the most recent operations in Afghanistan. By design, his emphasis focuses on six armies: Australia; Canada; France; Germany; the United Kingdom; and the United States, and applicable infantry platoons from their marine ground units. Precise definitions and disciplined social science methodologies aid King's objectivity in analyzing the conditions affecting combat performance. Consequently, he challenges commonly held notions of citizen armies, both positive and negative, in comparing their performance across countries and wars to make his findings more comparable and generalizable.

S.L.A. Marshall's research based on 30 years of study on combat soldiers serves as King's starting point. Marshall, widely regarded as the expert on soldiers in combat, came under attack over the past 25 years. Criticisms cast doubt on his methodology and objectivity, discrediting the findings in his seminal work, *Men against Fire*. While addressing criticisms of Marshall's research, King examines and defends the essence of Marshall's surprising and controversial findings—one in four combat soldiers actually fired weapons in battle. In the chapter, "The Marshall Effect," King reestablishes the efficacy of Marshall's work and uses it to serve as his foundation for exploring the differences in combat performance between citizen armies of the twentieth century and professional armies of the current century. King explains how armies



Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013

538 pages

\$107.00

formerly appealed to “masculine honour, nationalism, ethnicity and patriotic duty” (97) to inspire soldiers to fight in the citizen armies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, he argues new factors have emerged, as a result of the shift from mass to modern tactics due largely to advances in technology and the changing nature of modern warfare. Such factors account for significant increases in the effectiveness of today’s combat soldier—a direct result of the shift to all-volunteer, professionalized armies. King contends the technical and tactical expertise of matured all-volunteer professional armies (inclusive of both commissioned and non-commissioned officers, and probably veteran soldiers) was developed and sustained through rigorous training. Expertise in individual skills contributing to synchronous collective action has become the dominant factor in determining platoon combat effectiveness. King defines effectiveness as how well these “groups [ platoons] generate accurate and effective fire on the battlefield with their personal weapons” (38) or, in today’s counterinsurgency environment, “the privilege of not firing because it [the platoon] has positioned itself in a way where it overmatches its opponent so thoroughly that resistance is plainly futile.” (38) King’s comprehensive and detailed explanation of how today’s armies conduct training through drills and rehearsals is persuasive.

In his final chapter, King examines a significant issue confronting the US military today –the integration of women into the infantry. He provides a balanced and comprehensive treatment of this issue. Although he does not offer specific answers, recommendations, or methods by which the decision should or could be implemented, he does provide a different frame of reference through which to consider the issue and evaluate possible ways to achieve the desired end.

In reading King’s book, I reflected on whom would most benefit from reading it. Historians and sociologists would find his book a fascinating in-depth exploration to inform their views and put today’s combat experience into an historical perspective. For military professionals, the book is most relevant for today’s infantry officer. Though written by an accomplished academic, King’s thorough analysis and research, complemented by expert testimonials, makes the book readable while advancing a meticulous and compelling argument. In particular, King’s descriptions of current infantry platoon training in various armies provide an informative and cross-sectional view. He implicitly communicates the vital role commanders and trainers from company to division level play indirectly in combat infantry platoon development.

Other military officers may find value in King’s work in drawing parallels with either their own branches of service (air and naval) or branch within the ground forces (armor, artillery, etc.) identifying the factors driving their own “collective action” and informing their own professional expertise. They would also gain a broader appreciation for what makes combat soldiers effective on today’s battlefield. From the service chief or combatant commander perspective, especially in these times of fiscal austerity and unpredictability, the important role they play in advocating for funding to resource training and readiness emerges. Although an outcome less tangible than those compared to monies spent on modernization (platforms) and personnel (end strength), King provides compelling justification as to why readiness should be fiscally resourced on par with, if not more than, the other two—if a credible

combat land force is to be preserved. Having the best equipment in the hands of individuals alone is insufficient to make an army effective. King reaffirms, above all, readiness is what makes combat soldiers effective in battle.

## Every Citizen a Soldier: The Campaign for Universal Military Training after World War II

By William A. Taylor

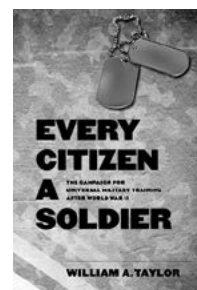
Reviewed by COL (Ret) Charles D. Allen, Professor of Leadership and Cultural Studies, US Army War College

As the American profession of arms seeks to reclaim its identity, it is encouraging to see the emergence of warrior-scholars. William Taylor is one, as an Annapolis graduate and former US Marine Corps officer who transitioned back into civilian society to pursue a career in academia. In *Every Citizen a Soldier*, Taylor appropriately examines familiar terrain – the US policy formulation process to address postwar national security through the preparedness of its military force to protect American interests. Ostensibly, his thesis is the US military’s drive to reduce the time to prepare individuals and units for war through a program of universal military training was subverted by political and social agendas.

For this reviewer, such an examination is particularly timely as the United States marks more than forty years since the end of conscription and the inception of the All-Volunteer Force with the termination of the Vietnam War. Since that conflict the US has been engaged in numerous military operations across the globe—from the heightened Cold War and a series of contingency of operations (Panama, Somalia, Bosnia, and Kosovo) to the hybrid conflicts of the global war on terror spanning the range of military operations. As Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin Dempsey recasts the National Military Strategy with his focus on readiness, force structure, and modernization. Arguably, the latter two enable readiness of the joint force to fulfill missions directed by civilian officials in the White House and on Capitol Hill.

Taylor provides the context of experiences of the Second World War, which weighed heavily in the American psyche, especially as the nation imagined global threats could emerge after the Allied victory in 1945. During the war, it was apparent, as Taylor clearly presents, American society reconnected with its values and the national leadership held its citizenry responsible in supporting the war. He describes the three-fold challenges faced after the war: balancing national interests with individual liberty; determining the role of universal military training (UMT) and its impact on groups within American society; and defining the relationship of citizenry to its military.

Taylor provides a well-explicated precursor to the UMT efforts. Military historians will be familiar with the post-First World War Plattsburg Movement where American students and businessmen volunteered for basic military training under the command of then-former Army Chief of Staff General Leonard Wood. The movement’s success greatly influenced Wood and future generals whom he mentored—George C. Marshall and John Palmer—both who became the



College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2014  
262 pages  
\$39.95

foremost uniformed advocates for UMT. This legacy of the First World War became the National Defense Act of 1920, which reorganized the General Reserve (including the National Guard). However, a critical provision for compulsory military training of males between the ages of 18 and 21 was dropped from the bill. In hopes the world would not brook another conflict of a scale as the Great War, the United States followed George Washington's imperative for a "respectably defensive posture" (22) with a small standing army and reliance on mobilizing its citizenry for military operations.

Embroided in the Second World War in 1944, Army Chief of Staff General Marshall signed War Department Circular No. 347 to make UMT "the primary goal of the army's postwar establishment." (29) To Marshall, UMT was essential in developing military leaders, informing public opinion on military matters, minimizing the expense of a large standing army, and aligning democratic traditions with civilian participation in defense and a small standing force. Above all, Marshall and other uniformed advocates saw UMT as the way to improve military effectiveness.

It is easy to use contemporary professional vocabulary to frame the Army effort as a military campaign in its design, planning, and demonstration of a UMT program. The Army chief of staff provided the vision and strategic direction. The general staff performed estimates of friendly and opposing forces. Together, they developed concept of operations, and "scheme of maneuver" with lines of operation. It was clear to military leaders of the time that readiness of the force was absolutely essential for national security. In an Army that grew from 400,000 to 5.4 million between 1938 to 1942, it was important to shorten the time to train individuals and units for future wars. The Army identified early on supportive stakeholders, called "Friendlies"—as well as opposition groups to UMT. For this reviewer, the chapter "Pig in a Poke" was especially intriguing and illuminating in presenting the concerns of leaders from, labor, religious, pacifist, and minority groups. These groups clearly identified that military necessity had direct and, from their perspectives, undesirable consequences for American society.

In today's vernacular, the lines of operation included communication synchronization and strategic messaging across the War Department where senior officers were "on message" and set about to inform, shape, and build support for UMT in the public sector. Clearly, the goal was to build a constituency capable of influencing policy development. Not surprisingly, members of Congress levied charges of impropriety in civil-military relations against the War Department.

Taylor's analysis reveals, while senior military leaders had a very specific conception of UMT, President Truman had a broader vision for UMT as an instrument to shape American society. Shades of Clausewitz—in other words, the military instrument was adapted and subordinated to policy. In response, the military fiercely resisted changes to the core design of its program. The UMT's essential elements were to select men meeting entrance requirements, and train them to achieve individual and collective skills thereby effectively contributing to unit readiness. As Taylor contends, perhaps the fatal flaw inherent in the UMT structure was the maintenance of racial segregation for the sake of military effectiveness.

Elements of the UMT discourse foreshadow contemporary discussions of the US military and the Army. One can easily envision similar internal debates on Department of Defense force structure and capabilities needed to protect national security interests in an environment of global threats and domestic fiscal challenges. I expect the drive to develop the narrative for Strategic Landpower had similar elements of campaign design with its intent, lines of operations, and messaging. Despite the advocacy of iconic strategic leaders like President Truman and General Marshall, UMT was not enacted (defeated in 1948) and selective service was reauthorized by Congress in the summer of 1951. Subsequently, “large segments of American society remained untouched by military service.” (167) Again, the military necessity so clear to Army leaders did not resonate with civilians in the Executive and Legislative Branches. Other priorities subordinated the military instrument to civilian-derived policy.

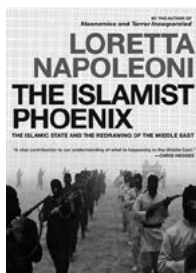
Taylor has produced an immensely informative and insightful book for senior military professionals. His concluding chapter captures the critical responsibility of strategic leadership: “Senior army leaders grappled with the daunting challenge of crafting a postwar policy in the face of great uncertainty. Even as battles...still raged, they attempted to create a viable army that would stand the test of the unknown and be well suited to a democracy.” (168) Such challenges endure for our military leaders of today and Taylor’s work serves as important contribution to understanding the nature of policy formulation for the security of the Republic.

## IRREGULAR FIGHTERS

**The Islamist Phoenix: The Islamic State and the Redrawing of the Middle East**

By Loretta Napoleoni

Reviewed by José de Arimatéia da Cruz, Professor of International Relations and Comparative Politics at Armstrong State University and Visiting Research Professor at the US Army War College



New York, NY: Seven Stories Press, 2014

160 pages

\$11.95

Since its inception in June 2014 when ISIS released a statement announcing the establishment of the Caliphate, not a single day has passed without the media reporting some activity by this notorious extremist organization. For example, the British weekly magazine *The Economist* reported that ISIS is spreading fear, but is losing ground. (March 21-27, 2015) *The Christian Science Monitor Weekly* reported ISIS is sophisticated, lethal and growing in numbers, but will not become a global force. (March 30, 2015) Some reporters treat ISIS as just another annoyance, while others question the ability of the West to deal with this new brand of terrorist organization effectively. No matter how the media treat ISIS, one important thing must be kept in mind: in the post-World War II period, no armed group has ever carved out such a large territory. It is an armed organization “redesigning the map of the Middle East drawn by the French and the British” with the Sykes-Picot Accord of 1946. In her book, *The Islamist Phoenix*, Loretta Napoleoni argues that, while the Western media treats ISIS as little more than a gang of thugs on a winning streak, the organization is proposing a new model of nation-building that relies on globalization and modern technology. (xiv) According to Napoleoni, ISIS and its leader Abu Bakr al Baghdadi are viewed by many Sunnis in Iraq as an Islamist phoenix risen from the ashes of Abu Musab al Zarqawi’s jihad. (14)

ISIS’s spiritual leader, al Baghdadi, presents himself to members of the Caliphate as a man with honorable qualities, and traces his lineage to the Prophet Mohammad. In one of his official appearance after being elected Caliph, al Baghdadi spoke inside the Grand Mosque of Mosul dressed in the traditional attire of an imam. (16) In his speech to his followers, al Baghdadi shows himself as “a wise and pragmatic” religious leader telling them, “I am the *mali* [leader] who presides over you, though I am not the best of you, so if you see that I am right, assist me. If you see that I am wrong, advise me and put me on the right track, and obey me as long as I obey God in you.” (17) Al Baghdadi also portrays ISIS to its followers (and the world) not as the monstrous organization represented by the Western media. Instead, al Baghdadi presents ISIS as a legitimate organization fighting the alliance between corrupted Muslim elites in the Middle East and Western powers. (78) Therefore, al Baghdadi has said “those who can immigrate to the Islamic State should immigrate, as immigration to the house of Islam is a duty.” (76) He also called upon all Muslims to join the Caliphate to reconnect with their roots. This call also served as a means of creating Arab identity. An integral part of al Baghdadi’s mission is the purification of Islam, which is to be accomplished via Salafism. Salafism doctrine calls for all Muslims to go back

to the purity of religion, to the origins of Islam and the teachings of the Prophet. (85)

Another important element of al Baghdadi as the Islamist phoenix is his appeal to geography. (81) As Robert D. Kaplan has written in *The Revenge of Geography*, “geography informs, rather than determines. Geography, therefore, is not synonymous with fatalism. But it is, like the distribution of economic and military power themselves, a major constraint on – and instigator of – the actions of states.” (29) In the case of the Islamic State, al Baghdadi and ISIS attempt to rebuild the Caliphate in Syria and Iraq is linked to their belief that this is an area where God’s judgment will come to pass. Also, geography has always been essential to Islam – both religiously and politically. (81) The Islamic State and al Baghdadi are also actively involved in the globalization of world politics. Rather than rejecting modernity, its leadership shows an unparalleled grasp of the limitations facing contemporary powers in globalized and multipolar world. (xiv) ISIS has been able to use technology to spread its messages and promote its cause, linking them to the world news. For example, one of ISIS’s more successful ventures “is an Arabic-language Twitter app called The Dawn of Glad Tidings, or just Dawn. The app, an official ISIS product promoted by its top users, is advertised as a way to keep up on the latest news about the jihadi group.” (63) Unlike the Taliban or al Qaeda which rejected music, technology, dancing, etc., ISIS has not only embraced them, but also put them to use to advance its cause very successfully.

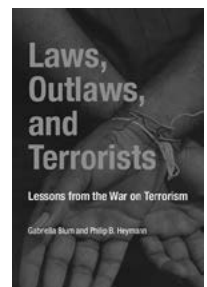
In conclusion, the Islamic State’s use of terrorism to promote changes in the Middle East differs from previous organizations, such as the Taliban or al Qaeda. These groups were fighting to promote their view of Islam in different parts of the world; al Baghdadi and ISIS are trying to establish the Caliphate in the Muslim world and, where God’s judgment will come to pass. ISIS is also different from previous terrorist organizations due to its embrace of geography, pragmatism, and a sense of nation-building. I highly recommend this short but timely book addressing an organization that has had much written about it yet about which much remains a mystery. Students of the US Army War College would benefit from reading Napoleani’s work. ISIS and al Baghdadi have learned that conquering territory is easy; the difficult part is managing and providing what people need and want from their leaders.

## Laws, Outlaws, and Terrorists: Lessons from the War on Terrorism

Gabriella Blum and Philip B. Heymann, editors

Reviewed by Sibylle Scheipers, PhD, Senior Lecturer in International Relations, University of St Andrews

In *Laws, Outlaws, and Terrorists*, Gabriella Blum and Philip B. Heymann reach out far beyond legal debates and into the field of counter-terrorism policies. The message of the book is the United States needs to move away from a perspective that views the law as a cumbersome liability in its fight against global terrorism and it ought to base its approach to this task mainly on non-coercive means.



Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013  
256 pages  
\$14.95



On the whole, this book is worth reading. At first glance, parts of the book seem to be stating obvious lessons from the “war on terror,” such as the idea that adopting a war paradigm as a response to terrorist attacks can lead to inadequate and counterproductive policies. This point has been made over and over again after 9/11. However, French Prime Minister Manuel Valls’ announcement that “France is at war with terrorism” after the 7/8 January 2015 attacks in Paris demonstrates it is a point well worth repeating. Lessons from the “war on terror” are easily forgotten in the panic ensuing a terrorist attack. The book provides a store house of memory, patiently discussing arguments leading down the wrong road and policy options which are likely to backfire.

However, the chapter on targeted killing is one of the weakest. There is little in Blum and Heymann’s recommendations with which US officials would disagree; targeted killing should be a measure of last resort, targeted persons must pose a real threat, targeted killing has to be lead by sound intelligence, and caution must be taken to avoid collateral damage. In this case, the devil is in the definitional detail, but Blum and Heymann do not dig deep enough to tease this out.

The book’s discussion of detention unfortunately focuses solely “outside the combat zone” and implies detentions in Afghanistan and Iraq were less problematic because detainees were apprehended on the “battlefield” and therefore ought to be treated as prisoners of war. However, a number of individuals who ended up in Guantanamo were captured in Afghanistan and Iraq, though not necessarily on the “battlefield,” and it was by no means clear whether or not they were combatants.

The chapter on interrogation is the best in the book as it really pushes the debate towards uncomfortable questions such as US cooperation with foreign intelligence agencies possibly using torture. It also goes a long way to deconstructing the “ticking bomb scenario” and shows it is merely hypothetical scenario that should not guide our thinking on interrogation.

The third part of the book moves into the field of non-coercive policies. It makes the case for abandoning the outright refusal to negotiate in favor of a case-by-case assessment, a point recent research has supported. The second, more original suggestion the authors make is akin to a global “hearts and minds” initiative towards the Muslim world on the part of Western governments. This rests on the assumption that the chief enabling factor of terrorist attacks is the popular support terrorists enjoy as far as their views of the Western world are concerned, even if this support does not extend to the tactics they choose. This is an interesting idea, even if it is not fully convincing. It does not address the problem of homegrown terrorism specifically. Neither does it apply to all sorts of “terrorisms,” as the authors seem to imply: historically, the extreme left terrorist networks of the 1970s and 1980s relied much less on popular support than current Jihadist terror networks do.

Yet these weaknesses should not distract from the fact that this is a good book. It ought to be a must-read for policy-makers in the field of counterterrorism. Terrorism scholars will find much in the book they already know, but will be rewarded with carefully presented arguments and discussions and will be able to use the book’s weaknesses as solid indicators of issues needing further debate.

## CANADIAN ARMY

**A National Force: The Evolution of Canada's Army, 1950-2000**

By Peter Kasurak

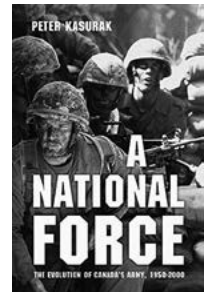
Reviewed by Major Andrew B. Godefroy CD, PhD, Canadian Army Land Warfare Centre and Editor in Chief, *Canadian Army Journal*

The history of Canada's civil-military relationship after the end of the Second World War is a complex story, parts of which remain largely untold. Having started the war as a significant yet still subordinate ally to the British Empire, Canada emerged from the war with a new voice of independence shaped in part by its wartime relationship with the United States. Still, for much of the Cold War era, Canada's military forces found themselves split between its British traditions and an emerging American way of warfare resulting from latter's dominant role in the cooperative defence of North America, the Korean War, and NATO's defence of Western Europe.

In his most recent work, *A National Force: The Evolution of Canada's Army, 1950-2000*, independent scholar Peter Kasurak offers a broad and sweeping narrative of the Canadian Army's history from the Korean War to the beginning of the War on Terror. While general histories of the Canadian Army are nothing new, Kasurak's study is very different from previous offerings in its analysis of the chosen subject. Departing from what he describes as "the standard narrative of the army's history," Kasurak sets out to reframe a story often viewed through the lens of Samuel Huntington's *Soldier and the State* with the perspective of Peter Feaver's *Armed Servants*. The exercise is novel and intriguing, if not at times outright controversial, with the results often at odds with the established scholarship on the subject.

The history of the postwar Canadian Army is typically divided into two eras. The period from 1945 to the unification of the Canadian military in 1968 has at times been referred to as the "command era," followed afterwards by what many critics have referred to as a "management era." The former is often perceived as a golden age of the Canadian Army – British roots, influential, worldly, combat experienced, and professional. The latter – during which the army was integrated with the other two armed services into a single unified service, ushered in what one military historian later described as a "generation of professional decline." In the post-unification era, Canadian Army values had been replaced with civilian business management concepts. British traditions and ethos were discarded. It is this established narrative that Kasurak takes aim at, and using Feaver's agency theory sets out to demonstrate it was in fact not the civilian leadership but rather the army that was "the author of its own decline," beginning not after unification but instead right after the Second World War.

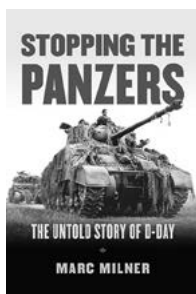
Any attempt to recast a military organization's historical characteristics and attributes so significantly in a single study is bound to run into difficulty, and Kasurak's book is no exception. The history of Canada's postwar army has yet to receive detailed academic attention and there remain some gaping holes in the basic narrative, never mind

Vancouver, B.C. Canada:  
University of British  
Columbia Press, 2013.348 pages  
\$95.00

the analysis or revision of the existing historiography. For example, the defence department's historical directorate has published almost no official history of the Cold War era Canadian Army above the regimental level. Moreover, army biography, especially of the senior Cold War era leadership, is almost non-existent. There is no official history of the postwar army headquarters or the Mobile Command organization that replaced it after unification of the Canadian Forces. Many of the army's NATO operations and UN peacekeeping missions have yet to receive proper official or academic histories.

Kasurak's book had an opportunity to fill some of these critical gaps in the historiography of the subject, so it was disappointing that the author did not do so. Though it is framed as a critical study of the army's institutional evolution, unfortunately *National Force* is just another history of civil-military relations that in this instance sides with the civilians over the soldiers. There is in fact very little explanation in the book of how the army actually functioned as an institution during the Cold War, how headquarters functioned, how the army was commanded or structured, or how the army's combat development processes conceived, designed, built, and managed its various field forces. Similarly, the defence operational research and development establishments that influenced so many army procurement decisions during the Cold War receives barely a nod in this study. Instead, readers are given limited context of what shaped army decision-making leaving one to wonder how the author was able to determine exactly that senior Canadian army officers were engaged in a deliberate, decades-long campaign of "shirking" their duty to serve the state's civilian leadership. Though Kasurak admits "it should not be imagined that civilians are above criticism," too often he gives them a free pass, and this book is clearly aimed at reducing the complex institutional processes of shaping armies through war and peace into a singular struggle between the noble politician and the nefarious general officer.

While the notion of challenging the army's established narrative is both original and welcome, missing scholarship has forced Kasurak to gloss over critical elements of the army's history and draw conclusions without any proper foundational context. The result, unfortunately, is a fractured and biased history that at times appears contrived rather than deduced. In the absence of other scholarship on the period, this book is recommended as an acceptable addition due to what new material it does bring to the narrative. However, readers are cautioned to examine its evidence and conclusions with a very critical eye.



## **Stopping the Panzers: The Untold Story of D-Day**

By Marc Milner

Reviewed by Colonel Gert-Jan Kooij (Royal Netherlands Army)

Ever since the fighting for the beaches of Normandy and the struggle for the first objectives of Operation Overlord came to an end, the role of the Canadian Army has been underestimated and undervalued. In seven decades of historical publications, it has been accused of being an ineffective force that benefited from good fortune. Although the

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Lawrence, Kansas; 2014.

400 pages

\$34.95

Canadians fought hard, they were referred to as “hockey players led by donkeys.” *Stopping the Panzers: The Untold Story of D-Day* proves these allegations to be false. The story of the Canadians during Operation Overlord, is one of well-trained and well-organized units fulfilling their mission to stop the panzers.

Marc Milner is a well-respected professor and director of the Brigadier Milton F. Gregg, VC, Centre for the Study of War and Society at the University of New Brunswick. Additionally, he is an expert on World War II with many books and publications on military history. In 2011, the Society of Military History awarded Milner the Moncado Prize for his article in *The Journal of Military History*, based on his research for *Stopping the Panzers*. He spent many years researching Operation Overlord. In contrast to other historians he focused on the Canadian forces and the German units opposing them. He and his team conducted research in many archives such as those of the Canadian regiments, the Royal Canadian History Institute in Toronto, the Howard Gottlieb Archives in Boston, the Liddel-Hart Centre in London, the US Army Heritage Center in Carlisle, and many other Canadian, British, American and German archives. Milner also visited Normandy to understand better the terrain and the environment in which the Canadians had to fight.

*Stopping the Panzers* is not a repetition of earlier books or journals about Operation Overlord. It is a rich collection of new facts of the Canadian role and the German opposition to the 7th and 9th Canadian Brigades. Thorough research by the author and other scholars led to new facts. Operation Overlord was mainly about speed and operational tempo and – in contrast to the other larger allied partners – this is not what the Canadians displayed. The mission of the Canadians was never to conduct a fast offensive operation. The mission for the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division was not to advance with speed and seize Caen, instead the mission was to stop the impending German counterattack. The Germans anticipated an allied landing on the beaches of Normandy. One of their options was to thrust this landing back into the North Sea with an armored attack on the allied bridgehead west of Caen, which is precisely what they tried to do. Allied planners expected the Germans to counterattack, which could have hampered the entire allied operation. If the Germans had driven a wedge between the British and US armies, the landing would have failed. The mission of the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division was not to seize Caen, but to control key terrain along the road from Bayeux to Caen, consolidate, and stop the counterattack. They paid a high price with the highest numbers of casualties of all allied units during this operation.

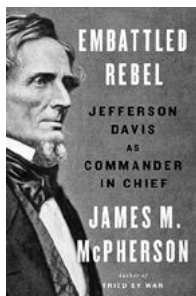
*Stopping the Panzers* is a paradigm shift in Canadian history on Operation Overlord. It is a well-written book that is, despite the vast amount of new facts, easy to read. Because it is based on rigorous research from allied and German archives and because the author’s familiarity with the terrain *Stopping the Panzers* is not just another book about Operation Overlord, but a truly unique view on the Canadian mission and role in the operation. Because it is so groundbreaking and well-written it is a “must-have” for every individual interested in the Second World War. This is a job well done by Milner, his team, and above all, the men of 3rd Canadian Infantry Division who paid a very high price for doing what they had to do.

## CIVIL WAR, WWI, WWII, &amp; THE VIETNAM WAR

**Embattled Rebel: Jefferson Davis as Commander in Chief**

By James M. McPherson

Reviewed by Matthew Pinsker, D.Phil, Associate Professor of History and Pohanka Chair in American Civil War History at Dickinson College



New York, NY: Penguin Press, 2014.

320 pages  
\$32.95

Nobody was better trained as a mid-nineteenth-century commander in chief than Jefferson Davis. There were more important American military leaders and more successful Washington hands prior to the Civil War, but Davis was almost unique in the way he navigated both worlds. A graduate of West Point, combat veteran and war hero (from his role as a regimental officer in the Mexican War), Davis was also a long-serving US senator from Mississippi, who had chaired the Committee on Military Affairs and held the post of Secretary of War during the Pierce Administration. If anybody was prepared for the challenges of an American civil war, it was Davis. Yet both contemporaries and historians have always appeared underwhelmed by the man whom James McPherson now sympathetically labels, “The Embattled Rebel.”

Part of the problem was too much expertise. Davis knew better than his generals how to fight the war, and with a few exceptions (such as in his relationship with Robert E. Lee), he meddled and micromanaged incessantly. McPherson goes so far as to claim, “No other chief executive in American history exercised such hands-on influence in the shaping of military strategy.” (11) That’s a bold statement in light of Abraham Lincoln’s equally assertive leadership style, but the noted Civil War historian demonstrates time and again how obsessive Davis was about exercising his duties as commander in chief. The signs were apparent from the beginning, when on Sunday morning, July 21, 1861, the Confederate president “could stand it no longer” and “commandeered a special train” to take him out to the first great battlefield of the war near Manassas Junction. (41) There, Davis even acted briefly as a field commander, “rallying” straggling troops by proclaiming, on horseback, “I am Jefferson Davis. . . Follow me back to the field.” (41) Lincoln, too, saw a little bit of combat in 1864 at Fort Stevens near Washington, but the former Illinois militia captain never ventured anything quite as bold as this. Nor was Lincoln as aggressive as Davis in demanding face-to-face conferences with his generals in the field, though both civilian leaders were surprisingly eager throughout the conflict to travel out to the frontlines to see for themselves what was happening.

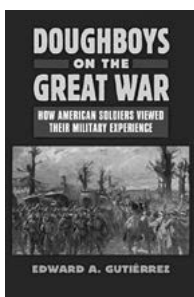
Of course, Lincoln usually gets praised for being attentive to such details while Davis often gets vilified for nitpicking. McPherson warns against allowing these sorts of comparisons to cloud a more objective evaluation of the losing side of this equation. Instead, the author tries to understand Davis on his own terms and that’s exactly what makes this particular Rebel leader seem so embattled. Even the most devoted Civil War buff will be surprised by how early and often Davis found himself criticized and undermined by his own contemporaries. At his First Inaugural address as an elected president, delivered on February 22, 1862, Davis felt compelled to acknowledge, “we have recently met with

serious disasters,” (66) even though the war was not yet a year old. And soon after those sobering remarks, Davis’s favorite field commander, Albert Sidney Johnston, was dead (mortally wounded at Shiloh) and the Confederate’s most popular general at the time, Pierre G.T. Beauregard, essentially went absent without leave, forcing Davis to relieve him. The western theatre was proving disastrous for the Confederacy, an especially painful reality for the Mississippian in charge. And by late spring 1862, the Union forces, which had successfully sailed out from the defenses of Washington to the Virginia peninsula, were only miles away from capturing Richmond.

Fortunately for Davis and the Confederacy, out of this grim period General Lee emerged as kind of military savior, accepting field command in early June 1862 and then earning an extraordinary run of victories over the next year with the Army of Northern Virginia, until their terrible defeat at Gettysburg in July 1863. But even so, the underlying trouble for Davis during that selective series of triumphs was how much Lee’s success as a military strategist often collided with what McPherson terms here the “policy” interests of the Confederacy. (9) Southern military offensives in the fall of 1862, for example, actually alienated Border States such as Maryland and Kentucky, and did little to affect diplomatic affairs. Lee’s audacious tactics also came at a high human cost — one the lesser-populated Confederacy could ill-afford.

Even if Davis could forget some of these problems — and McPherson makes clear he never did — whatever hopefulness the Confederate president may have derived from Lee’s short-term gains was soon lost in a cascade of recriminations over setbacks in the west and elsewhere. Davis spent weeks traveling across the South trying to quell problems among his feuding generals, especially regarding his deeply unpopular western departmental commander, Braxton Bragg. Nothing worked. There were also desperate problems with commissary and supply, made worse by poor administrative decisions. The tetchy cabinet was a revolving door — four different secretaries of state, five secretaries of war, and one miserably unhappy vice-president. Moreover, Davis faced deepening resistance from a balky Confederate Congress, anxious state officials, and a growing southern peace faction. Then, on April 30, 1864, the beleaguered president’s five-year-old son died tragically, after falling from a balcony at the Confederate White House.

Yet despite all of it, Davis endured. He was in poor health throughout the conflict and repeatedly beset by critics, but what emerges from McPherson’s compact study is the portrait of a leader undaunted. Davis may have been irritable, but he was never defeatist. While he has always been a difficult man to admire, McPherson, who openly acknowledges his sympathies for the Union, nevertheless has created provocative grounds for greater empathy and deeper analysis than most readers have ever tried to devote to the forlorn figure of Jefferson Davis.



Lawrence, KS; University  
Press of Kansas, 2014

320 pages  
\$34.95

## Doughboys on the Great War: How American Soldiers Viewed Their Military Experience

By Edward A. Gutiérrez

Reviewed by COL Douglas V. Mastriano, PhD, Department of Military Strategy  
Plans & Operations, US Army War College

*Doughboys on the Great War: How American Soldiers Viewed Their Military Experience*, by Edward A. Gutiérrez, was written with the goal of capturing how American soldiers thought about their experience in the First World War. In particular, Gutiérrez sought to reveal the motivation of the men “to answer their country’s call.” The book opens with a discussion of how views and memories change over time. The challenge for Gutiérrez was to find reliable sources capturing the thoughts and feelings of American soldiers in the First World War during, or close to, the end of their military service. The obvious starting point for such data were biographies and personal letters. Yet, Gutiérrez also sought sources posing similar questions to “establish broader patterns of understanding and ascertain why men fought.” (3) The solution for the author was found in post-war questionnaires distributed by the states of Virginia, Connecticut, Utah and Minnesota. Gutiérrez spent fourteen years studying these surveys and found that data collected shortly after the soldiers returned from military service portrayed their feelings and motivations more accurately. By using this information, *Doughboys on the Great War* endeavored to explain “why individuals volunteer to go to war, and, if reality fails to match expectations . . . to ascertain the cause of these erroneous presumptions.” (12)

Using data collected largely from these questionnaires, Gutiérrez traced the impressions and motivations of the “Doughboys” from their entry into the Army, to basic training, the journey to France, combat, and home again. Just as was the case in Europe 1914, patriotic enthusiasm proved to be one of the chief motivations in joining the military in 1917 and 1918. Yet, there was something grander than this. Gutiérrez uncovered, in his extensive research, a sense of duty was indeed a greater motivation than enthusiasm. To highlight this view, a Virginian is quoted as saying “I believe now that it is the duty of every man to serve his country in time of need.” (23)

Yet, the sense of duty could not make up for the lack of preparedness in the United States. Upon arriving at basic training, the men of the fledgling American armed forces found a lack of equipment, tanks, planes, clothes and even rifles. The Wilson Administration naively believed preparation for war would provoke war. When war finally came in April 1917, the United States lacked what it needed to train and equip a modern army. Instead, soldiers often trained with wooden rifles, under the instruction of an officer, who equally lacked the skills needed to train a force for war. Indeed, many men would needlessly die in combat due to inadequate training and preparation. As one soldier wryly commented, “It is however, a matter of grave discussion, why, when at Camp Gordon, we were taught to sing, while after the armistice we were taught to fight” (Frank Holden, *War Memories*. Athens, GA: Athens Book Company, 1922 [77]).

Gutiérrez discovered insufficient physical preparation was compounded by a lack of psychological understanding. Once the soldiers experienced the reality of modern war, they found neither a sense of duty nor enthusiasm could help them overcome fear and devastation. Instead, the moral character they had developed in life before entering the army proved vital. Quoting one veteran in this regard, “Men get out of war what they brought to it.” Gutiérrez rightly added, “The prewar life experience and personality of a soldier dictate how that soldier will react in battle. Individual predispositions share a soldier’s experience.” (44) This proved especially true in the US military of the First World War, which lacked the skills to train an army for modern warfare.

Although outside of the scope of the book, a more extensive description of the campaigns and engagements in which the Doughboys fought would have provided better context for the reader. This would have enhanced its value by putting into perspective the views of the soldiers who experienced battle. Yet, despite this, Gutiérrez provides a well-researched and thoughtful book.

*Doughboys on the Great War* is a gripping and engaging view into the feelings and perspectives of the average soldier before, during, and immediately after World War I. It does a terrific job painting a picture of the soldier’s experience, to include an engaging description of the motivations driving Italian-Americans and African-Americans in proving their worth in battle to reflect their value as citizens. Overall, Gutiérrez’s book is a valuable contribution to the historiography on the First World War, and a welcome addition to the Centennial commemoration of the tragic epoch.

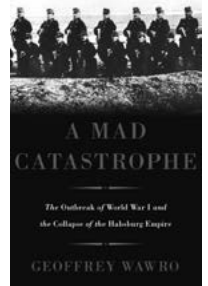
## **A Mad Catastrophe: The Outbreak of World War I and the Collapse of the Habsburg Empire**

By Geoffrey Wawro

Reviewed by James D. Scudieri, PhD, (Col., USA [Ret]), Independent Consultant & Research Analyst, US Army Heritage and Education Center, Historical Services Division

The present work is a long-overdue look at a neglected topic on the First World War. Author Geoffrey Wawro is a well established author with earlier monographs on the Austro-Prussian and Franco-Prussian Wars of 1866 and 1870 respectively. His current work blazes a new trail. *A Mad Catastrophe* examines the pre-war Austro-Hungarian Empire, policy makers’ monumental decisions, and the disastrous operations in 1914. The acknowledgments section is a fascinating read unto itself on his ancestors and their links to the current story. He intends to demolish the myth of the quaint Austro-Hungarian Empire under grandfatherly Emperor Franz Joseph. His introduction sets the stage in no uncertain terms.

Chapters 1 through 5 describe the peacetime Dual Monarchy, including war plans and the pre-military response to the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie. He sees an unworkable state, the more so due to Magyar duplicity; Austrian inadequacy; and unsolvable, ethnic tensions, which demanded national,



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440 pages  
\$29.99



self-determination. Franz Joseph, the venerable Emperor from 1848, is out of his depth in the unraveling domestic situation and the more-challenged diplomacy of the early twentieth century during its latest crisis. Domestically, his shortcomings were glaring in a structure that empowered him over a bureaucracy of ostensibly representative institutions.

Wawro explains why the Hapsburg state did not posture itself for success. The long-expected showdown with Serbia, showcased by the assassinations, provided more challenges than opportunities. Diplomacy notwithstanding, nearly six weeks passed before troops invaded Serbia. Swift action by Austria would have capitalized upon international sympathy. More critically, Chief of General Staff Conrad von Hötzendorf should have understood Austria's limitations in fighting both Serbia and Russia simultaneously. A Serbian campaign had to be immediate or not at all.

The text paints a similarly dismal picture of Austro-Hungarian conflict of military operations. Chapters 6 through 13 cover 1914. Austrian General Oskar Potiorek commanded no less than three disastrous invasions of Serbia in four months, between August and December. Conrad sabotaged proper weighting of effort and deployment in either theater. The fighting in Galicia ebbed and flowed, but Wawro's thrust is poor Austro-Hungarian performance against a better-prepared Russian Army, despite its own challenges. Chapter 14 outlines the devastating cost to the Empire of just five months of war with staggering casualties. He is not the first historian to state Austria-Hungary retained a sort of "militia army" due to losses in experienced officers and noncommissioned officers, besides untrained conscripts. The Epilogue reviews the rest of the war, marked by faster decline, and the unsuccessful, post-war successor states to Austria-Hungary.

In essence, the political, social, and economic situation of the Habsburg state meant significantly underfunded budgets for manning and equipping with tremendous ramifications for preparedness. Scripted exercise scenarios substituted for free-thinking maneuvers. Numerous aspects of national power lacked adequate capability and capacity. Austro-Hungarian land forces did not have the strategic basis, operational finesse, and tactical articulation for the characteristics of warfare and the proposed doctrinal solutions to the dilemma of defensive fire-power. The army had not seen action in nearly half a century; whereas the Serbians were battle-hardened after two Balkan wars. The Russians had learned important lessons from the war with Japan in 1905. Some Austro-Hungarian leaders understood modern warfare, but learning was far too uneven across the force.

The author made skillful use of well-documented, primary sources. He has masterfully woven official documents, senior leaders' evaluations, subordinates' comments, and foreign observations into smoothly flowing prose. He astutely blends the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. Moreover, the book's maps integrate the analysis between armies and corps on the ground, while the text showcases the exceptional degree to which infantry divisions with thousand-man battalions were the "coin of the realm" of land power. Note these divisions were large formations, the more so as Austria-Hungary and Russia fielded divisions of eighteen and sixteen battalions respectively, compared to the more common twelve.

The book shows the deadly combination of rabid ethnic nationalism unleashed in total, industrialized warfare. Atrocity begets atrocity on both sides. Austro-Hungarian treatment of Serbs in particular in 1914 aroused some senior officers' outrage at such excesses.

The particular use of primary sources leads to the book's greatest challenge, which is balance. Wawro leaves no doubt repeatedly and explicitly that Austrian leaders, the Emperor and Conrad in particular, were blundering incompetents. The Dual Monarchy was ineradicably flawed, hopelessly unprepared, executed its plans ineptly. The reader is left wondering how such an entity could have waged four years of protracted war unprecedented in totality. It was not alone in woefully under-forecasted requirements for a prolonged war with a much-expanded force structure. Insufficient tactical articulation to counter the power of the defense, and shortcomings in battlefield intelligence to set the stage for a successful attack too frequently turned potential flanking attacks and synchronized assaults into catastrophic failures.

The book often reads more as an indictment, rather than an assessment. The text tends to present the demise of the Hapsburgs as a predestined, linear decline from peacetime unpreparedness to wartime bungling. Wawro faced unique challenges with these primary sources. Still, more helpful would have been an integrated, comprehensive analysis of politics, economics, manpower, and equipment production, etc.

This issue of balance perhaps symbolizes the conflicted twenty-first-century mind in comprehending the inconceivable wastage of the Great War on most unforgiving battlefields with punishing learning curves for both attacker and defender. Arguably, a revolution in military affairs (RMA) took place between 1914 and 1918. There were shortcomings aplenty in 1914. Yet, what army of the major powers realistically could develop a defensive doctrine that could win a war quickly? The politicians would not end the war, the diplomats could not, and the generals groped for war-winning solutions.

Austria-Hungary's most senior leaders too often decided poorly. Arguably, they made more mistakes than their foes; but these errors were unaffordable given their army's inherent weaknesses, compounded under wartime conditions. Also, a German "rescue" seems an inadequate explanation of individual and collective political, social, and military resiliency to 1918.

Wawro's book is nonetheless an important work, a case study of senior leaders facing increasingly acute challenges without clear solutions. Indeed, he convincingly explains how Austria-Hungary was conceivably the major power least prepared to wage war in 1914, even compared to Russia and Turkey. There are numerous insights for the twenty-first century. Peacetime plans and wartime execution must account for shifting diplomatic, political, social, and economic factors; plus they must balance national perspectives and interests with alliance/coalition goals. Indeed, the wider and more complete research on the Great War to date highlights the depth and breadth of mistrust among the powers. Their interests evolved before and during the war, often in unforeseen ways. Wawro shows how diverging Austrian and German strategic and operational aims can make ostensible allies into competitors or adversaries. Finally, perhaps Wawro's greatest illumination is how Austrian leaders

failed to comprehend the Clausewitzian notion of war as serious means to serious end, replete with chance.

## **The Devils' Alliance: Hitler's Pact with Stalin, 1939-1941**

By Roger Moorhouse

Reviewed by Joseph A Maiolo, Professor of International History, King's College London



Basic Books: New York, NY 2014

372 pages

\$29.99

The Nazi-Soviet Pact of August 23, 1939 is one of the most notorious diplomatic arrangements of all time. With this deal on economic cooperation and spheres of influence between the Third Reich and the Soviet Union, Hitler and Stalin crushed Poland, divided up central and Eastern Europe between them and heralded the coming of the Second World War. During the Cold War, historians could only consult the German records of the negotiations leading to the non-aggression pact and the brief period of Nazi-Soviet collaboration, but since the collapse of the Soviet Union our knowledge of the Soviet side of the episode has benefited enormously from the opening up of Russian archives.

In *The Devils' Alliance*, Roger Moorhouse draws on the latest research and sources to offer readers a vivid retelling of the making and breaking of the deal. He carefully reconstructs the game of political hardball played play by the German foreign minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop, and his Soviet counterpart, Vyacheslav Molotov. The absorbing story of the diplomatic bargaining over frontiers and trade is set against the wider context of the implementation of the pact. The twenty-two months of Nazi-Soviet collaboration enabled the two regimes to experiment in the brutal imposition of their ideological visions on the peoples of Eastern Europe. Behind the German armies, advancing into Poland came special police units to murder Jews and others deemed enemies of the Third Reich; the advance of the Red Army permitted Moscow step by step to Sovietize its share of eastern Poland and the Baltic states and to murder or exile its political foes. With great skill, Moorhouse conveys the human tragedy of these events with telling details from individual experiences. Through these individual tragedies multiplied thousands of times over, Moorhouse reminds us why the collective memories of the period of Nazi-Soviet collaboration overshadow the politics of Eastern Europe to this day.

Moorhouse underscores the basis of the deal was strategic, not ideological. Although the two regimes are often lumped together under the “totalitarian” rubric, there was no red-brown political affinity drawing them together. Ribbentrop may have dreamed about a grand alliance between the Axis states and the Soviet Union to confront Anglo-American powers, but he was alone in this respect. Hitler needed the pact to isolate Poland. Stalin opted for it because he could archive Soviet territorial ambitions in Eastern Europe and remain out of the impending European war, at least temporarily. In this respect, it is worth recalling the Nazi-Soviet Pact failed to achieve Hitler's primary purpose: he had hoped the stunning announcement of the pact would persuade London and Paris to abandon Poland to its fate and to seek a peaceful way out of the European crisis of 1939.

As we know, Britain and France did not seek peace because they were determined to defend their status as great powers, and the balance of economic-military power was ultimately in their favor. Germany avoided a slow defeat through attrition and economic strangulation by the swift victory over France in May-June 1940. No one was more surprised than Stalin, who had predicted his deal with Hitler gave the Soviet Union a few years of peace to arm and prepare for the expected war against Germany and its allies. Although Moorhouse correctly dates the formal German decision to attack the Soviet Union to December 1940, Hitler began to air the idea with his top military advisors just after the French sued for peace. He was never at ease with a grand political bargain that allowed Moscow to acquire German machine tools and blueprints of advance weapons in exchange for industrial raw materials. Mistakenly convinced they could defeat the Red Army in a few weeks, the German high command enthusiastically prepared for Operation Barbarossa. In 1941, Soviet intelligence reported these preparations with growing alarm, but Stalin dismissed them as provocations to lure him into a war he did not want. He saw the German arms buildup in Eastern Europe as part of the hard bargaining process over territory and trade the Nazi-Soviet pact had initiated. In a report of 5 June 1941, the Joint Intelligence Committee in London came to the same conclusion. Stalin simply did not expect Hitler would attack until the war against Britain and its informal ally the United States had ended. As Moorhouse shows in his book, Stalin's failure to anticipate the German attack cost the Red Army and the people of the Soviet Union dearly.

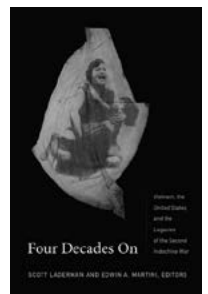
### **Four Decades On: Vietnam, the United States, and the Legacies of the Second Indochina War**

Scott Laderman, Edwin A. Martini, eds.

Reviewed by William Thomas Allison, PhD, Georgia Southern University

The American War in Vietnam continues to engage creative scholars from across diverse academic disciplines to rethink both the legacies of the war and the war itself. The editors of *Four Decades On* have assembled an impressive collection of scholarship in this vein, drawing from the transnational study of identity, memory, film, culture, tourism, and economy. The contributors explore boundaries, official histories and counter-narratives, and remembrance and reconciliation to assess the enduring legacies of a ten-year war, now literally *Four Decades On*, and they go beyond traditional, though still useful, American or Vietnamese-centric approaches. The resulting collection compels reflection on how assumptions and myths influence memory, and emphasizes the illuminating conclusions of new, cross-disciplinary approaches applied to understand better the deep and lingering legacy of this war. In this, the editors succeed.

Christina Schwenkel, for example, an anthropologist at the University of California, Riverside, argues transnationalism influences the evolving narrative of the war exhibited at museums, memorials, and other war-related sites in Vietnam. As Vietnam's economy becomes more global and war tourism gains popularity among American visitors, narratives at these sites (which Schwenkel calls "memory-scapes")



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have shifted from the older hurray-for-we-defeated-the-Americans to a softer, more American friendly tone, often focusing on mutual victimhood of combatants and non-combatants, regardless of nationality. For Schwenkel, reconciliation, ironically, may be the most important if not unintended consequence of Vietnam's desire to open markets with the United States and court American tourists.

Analyzing cultural legacies looms large in this collection. Historian Walter Hixson, of the University of Akron, examines how Americans have emphasized healing and overcoming the Vietnam Syndrome through a variety of means, but most interestingly through film, which tends to focus on the American soldier as victim and the Vietnamese as nearly invisible. These cultural influences allow revisionist history to take root, which can deflect attention from real questions of American intent in Vietnam and American militarism in general.

Fitting well into this rubric of memory, narrative, and reconciliation are the divisive issues of "Agent Orange" and accounting for POWs/MIAs. The legacies of both have been strewn with myth, politics, and manipulation. Diane Niblack Fox, an anthropologist who also teaches Vietnamese Studies at the College of the Holy Cross, offers one the better article-length studies of this controversial issue. Fox looks at the impact of the use of chemical defoliants from multiple perspectives – science, medicine, public policy and law, the work of non-profits, history, and most interestingly the actual experience of those directly affected. She ably dissects the various meanings and contexts of "Agent Orange" among diverse constituencies that transcend class, borders, and even time. Fox argues that closing the gap between state policy and international relations with individual experiences and needs is key to approaching reconciliation for Americans and Vietnamese over the "Agent Orange" controversy. H. Bruce Franklin, professor of English and American Studies at Rutgers University, likewise tackles the POW/MIA myth, providing again one of the better article-length examinations of the evolution of this extremely sensitive issue. From the political manipulations of the Nixon administration to Chuck Norris' numerous Missing in Action films, Franklin pulls no punches in explaining how the POW/MIA myth maintained momentum from its apparent usefulness in all but silencing the anti-war movement in the early 1970s to perpetuating the myth through flying the black POW/MIA flags as a way to focus on American victims of the war rather than on why the United States engaged in such a disastrous war in the first place. Similar to Hixson, for Franklin, the POW/MIA myth conveniently enables Americans to ignore the difficult national questions of memory and legacy from Vietnam.

This collection will find eager readership among specialists and graduate students, but those with a more passing interest in what is the most innovative scholarship on the Vietnam War will find some of the essays difficult. Because some among the academic community insist on using pretentious terminology and, further, assume all are familiar with their particular discipline's theoretical frameworks, they make their otherwise valuable work inaccessible to a willing cross-disciplinary audience. This frustrating problem crops up across the collection and can be distracting. Another minor and related issue is a hint of rejection toward more traditional historical approaches. Scholars utilizing these

new, important approaches should be mindful of the debt they owe to the useful work that preceded theirs which provides a firm foundation for historical understanding, without these newer methods they would have no context and little upon which to build.

Do not let these concerns, however, discourage reading these valuable essays. *Four Decades On* challenges assumptions, dispels myths, and offers insightful arguments on causation, memory, narrative, and reconciliation among nations and, more interestingly, among peoples. As we enter fiftieth anniversaries of key events of the American War in Vietnam, we will be reminded how much that experience continues to affect us, and how we are still unwilling to engage in an honest discussion on “Vietnam.” Laderman and Martini have compiled a provocative collection of the best new scholarship on the “Second Indochina War.” Specialists should read it and engage in the conversation.

