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## Book Reviews

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# Book Reviews

## IRREGULAR WARFARE

### Tough Sell: Fighting the Media War in Iraq

By Tom Basile

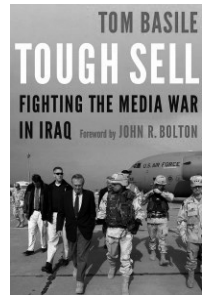
Reviewed by James P. Farwell, National Security Expert; Associate Fellow, Department of War Studies, Kings College, London, and author of *Persuasion and Power* (Georgetown University Press, 2012)

Tom Basile's *Tough Sell: Fighting the Media War in Iraq* is really two books. The first two-thirds of the book offers invaluable insights on the first two years of the Second Persian Gulf War, relating Basile's first-hand experiences on the ground in Baghdad as a key player in the strategy communication shop of the Coalition Provisional Authority. The final third is a polemic defending the decision made by the administration of US President George W. Bush to fight the war—a war even Bush has questioned.

Basile's conceptual discussion about everything from strategic communication to ground realities make the book worth reading. Many challenges confront a military-civilian force attempting to establish and maintain message discipline and consistency. The cultures are competitive and finding the right balance is tough. Civilians tend to be more flexible, while the military decision-making process is bureaucratic. Soldiers are permitted to speak to the press. In Basile's view, military personnel can get the facts wrong, make assertions that lack context, and inadvertently undercut the mission. His analysis of these challenges is incisive.

Basile, is extremely critical of the media coverage of US efforts in the Iraq War. He believes most of the press assigned to cover the war knew nothing, made inadequate attempts to get the facts, and had a strong anti-US bias. Perhaps. But "Rule 101" in media training presumes the press knows little or nothing about a topic. This lack of knowledge by the media is a continuing challenge for strategic communicators everywhere. The lesson is communication strategies in a conflict zone should anticipate and plan for the possibility—and in the author's view, the probability—that the media will spotlight small problems and ignore major successes.

Some of the problems the author and others in the Coalition Provisional Authority experienced when dealing with the media emanated from the blowback occurring when the Authority revealed Bush's rationale for going to war—eliminating Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction—came up short. That challenge eviscerated Bush's credibility on the war, and affected war reporting on the ground, as journalists began questioning what the United States government was doing and how well. Basile's detailed account of forging and executing a communication strategy offers powerful lessons for strategic communicators operating in foreign cultures, especially in nations ruled by dictators. Hussein had hollowed out Iraq. The coalition had to help Iraqis rebuild everything—from hospitals and sewage treatment plants to a new police force—from scratch.



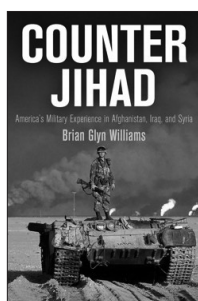
Washington, DC: Potomac, 2017  
303 pages  
\$32.95

Basile argues that in surmounting such a stiff challenge, Paul Bremer, the chief executive authority of the Coalition Provisional Authority, and his team got a lot done with scant credit from the media for their work. Basile also challenges top journalists like Rajiv Chandrasekaran, whose *Imperial Life in the Emerald City: Inside Iraq's Green Zone* (2006) was highly critical of the Authority. Smart people often interpret events very differently. Basile shows the need to hear all sides of the argument.

Basile goes too far, though, in identifying a need to define words like “win” and “success” a *game* aimed at managing expectations. Successful strategy—whether communication, military, or political—requires defining a desired outcome or end state from which follow strategy, operations, plans, tactics, and metrics. In early 2003, General David Petraeus famously told journalist Rick Atkinson: “Tell me how this ends.” Linda Robinson wrote a fine book using this quote, *Tell Me How This Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq* (2008). Petraeus was correct.

Basile’s view that Bremer correctly disbanded the Iraq Army will surely spark discussion. George Packer, in *The Assassins’ Gate: America in Iraq* (2005), and others, citing military sources, argue the decision was a debacle that led directly to the current problems. Any book like this will ignite debates at all levels.

Basile merits high credit for his patriotic service and his thought-provoking book that provides keen insights into what it takes to make strategic communication in war zones a success and into the obstacles to good strategic communication. *Tough Sell* is highly recommended.



Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017

400 pages

\$39.95

## Counter Jihad: America’s Military Experience in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria

By Brian Glyn Williams

Reviewed by Robert L. Bateman, Fellow, International Security Program, New America

It has long been a truism that journalists write the “first draft of history.” In many ways this is true. Yet as is the case with all early reports, whether they come from a light infantry scout platoon, a Special Forces unit conducting strategic reconnaissance, or initial assessments of satellite or voice intercepts, the initial reports of journalists are often just that, “first drafts.” History, solid history, requires time.

There are several reasons for this, easily understood upon brief reflection. First, it takes time to assemble the vast quantities of information needed to write a solid work of history. Second, time allows the passions of the moment to fade and hopefully provides the scholar the chance to examine any issue or era with something approaching neutrality. Participants themselves become less engaged, and hopefully with mellowing (and the judicious assistance of personal notes that might have been written at the time) can themselves see the events they witnessed with a more critical eye. And finally, of course, when dealing with military history there is the issue of declassification of documents, a critical element when trying to reconstruct a cohesive and hopefully

comprehensive account of events. For all of these reasons academic military historians generally consider “real” history impossible for at least 20–25 years after the events took place.

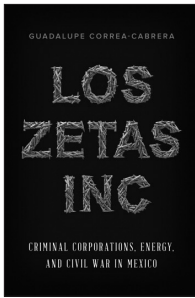
In *Counter Jihad* Brian Glyn Williams is deliberately attempting to split the difference between the “first draft” of history and pure history itself. In effect his book is a serious attempt to write a “second draft of history.” In this it appears he has done solid work, as far as it can be done at this point. As an individual, Williams is in a somewhat curious position, but one that places him well in undertaking such a work. An academic (a professor of Islamic History at the University of Massachusetts) he understands the rigorous requirements that must apply to any serious work of academic scholarship. As a former contract employee of the CIA, tasked with tracking suicide bombers in Afghanistan in 2007, he understands both the military culture and the environment of war at several levels. As a professor who believes in being a teacher not just being an academic confined to mere research he also had a personal motivation: many of his students today were grade school children on September 11, 2001 and have no real idea of what happened through much of the first decade of this century.

It is worth quoting his stated objective in part: “My aim is to shine a retrospective light on the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria in order to ‘historicize’ the disparate events once collectively known as the War on Terror. The objective is to weave all these disjointed stories together into one accessible narrative that tells us how we got to the point where ISIS conquered an area in the Middle East larger than Britain or Israel with eight million people living under its rule.”

In this Williams has made quite a good start. There are, of course, gaps that may leave some dissatisfied. These, like all works, are as much a product of the person writing the book as they are of the perceptions of the readers.

Williams’ personal experiences in Afghanistan came in no small part from his experience as an expert on Islamic culture and history but also as a product of one of his earlier books, a biography on Afghan leader Abdul Rashid Dostum. It is perhaps as a result of this that his coverage of Iraq is less in-depth than some might like. The run-up to the war in Iraq is explained in detail, most especially the politically motivated manipulation and deliberate misreading of Iraqi capabilities in NBC issues and blatant lies regarding ties between al-Qaeda and Iraq. But post-Invasion Iraq, essentially the core of the war there between 2004–10, is glossed over in just 52 pages. Though I would also suggest that this may be at least a little understandable since a real study would require a book some 1,000 pages longer at least. (For this we shall have to wait for the Center of Military History to produce the Tan Books.)

All in all, the book holds up well. Not as detailed as works such as Tom Ricks’ *Fiasco*, nor as lightweight as some other brief accounts of either war. For the specifics of military campaigns or battles during our longest wars one should look elsewhere. But if you are trying to find a decent single-source narrative of how we got here, *Counter Jihad* accomplishes much of its stated intent, to present a concise single source “second draft” of history.



Austin: University of Texas Press, 2017

400 pages  
\$29.95

## Los Zetas Inc.

By Guadalupe Correa-Cabrera

Reviewed by Robert J. Bunker, Adjunct Research Professor, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College

The author of *Los Zetas Inc.: Criminal Corporations, Energy, and Civil War in Mexico*, Guadalupe Correa-Cabrera, is an associate professor at the University of Texas, Rio Grande Valley in Brownsville. In late 2006, her family was threatened with extortion by the Zetas and was forced to flee their farmlands, resulting in her moving from Matamoros, Tamaulipas to resettle over the border in the United States in August 2009. Derived from her family's harrowing experience with the Zetas firsthand—which undoubtedly influenced her ensuing academic research interests—a number of arguments are put forth in this work. Her propositions include “the recent violent conflict in Mexico has its origins in a new criminal model introduced by the Zetas” and the main hypothesis “that this new criminal model and government reactions to it mostly benefit transnational corporate capital” both licit and illicit alike (3, 5).

To address these arguments, a new theoretical framework—drawing upon business administration perceptions—was developed that discusses the Zetas transitioning “from a freewheeling criminal organization to a ‘business,’ albeit one that produces revenue for its stakeholders though illicit activities and the violence that it uses to intimidate both its competitors and adversaries” (5). This sets the stage for exploring the Zetas militarization, responding governmental security strategy militarization, ensuing societal militarization, and the resulting impacts on the hydrocarbon industry and energy sector reform.

The book itself contains an introduction, nine chapters, and a conclusion, as well as numerous maps, tables and figures, an abbreviation listing, acknowledgements, five appendices, notes, references, and an index. The work's chapters are divided into thematic sections titled—*The Zetas: Criminal Paramilitaries in a Transnational Business*, *Mexico's Drug War: A Modern Civil War?*, and *Los Zetas Incorporated*. The work—spanning six years of research and writing—is primarily academic in orientation rather than defense community professional focused. As a result, while exceptionally well crafted—with on the ground research and interviews of over one hundred individuals on both sides of the border and the extensive use of both Spanish and English sources—the theoretical discussions, author arguments, and citations woven into it make for a very dense compression of information throughout. Of particular interest is how the work balances its analysis with concerns over pseudo-conspiracy allegations—multinational corporation premeditation vs. political economy structural change—and criminal gang and cartel socio-environmental modification of areas under their suzerain (e.g. regions of narcotics impunity within the state) (215). What is striking in the work is how it reinforces recent scholarship in the defense theorist community related to criminal and plutocratic insurgency constructs—the twin insurgencies mode—as a component of dark (and deviant) globalization studies. Such mutual reinforcement is significant given

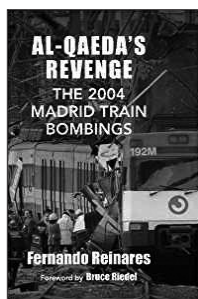
the lack of cross-pollination between the new civil wars (academic) and criminal insurgencies (defense) literatures.

Detractions to the work are twofold. An initial one—while relatively minor—pertains to the characterization of the late Dr. George Grayson’s use of “hyperbolic language” in characterizing the Zetas (10). Grayson, a respected academic, was an early researcher on the Zetas who published a number of significant monographs and books including *The Executioner’s Men* in 2012 (with Samuel Logan). While he indeed gets colorful in his language related to the Zetas sociopathic behaviors in his later work, the sense this reviewer gets is that Correa-Cabrera’s academic sensitivities are more offended by Grayson’s mention of victim castrations and the skinning of their bodies while still alive (which has been an active component of their psychological operations program) than Grayson’s perceived lack of knowledge about the Zetas brutality motivators (10).

The second, larger detraction focuses on her assertion that the Calderon administration’s militarization policy against the cartels “in which the military and federal police were sent to perform the duties of state and local police” was a “radical response” (107, 108). This is an unfair characterization of the Calderon administration’s policies because it had no other choice than to directly bring federal assets into the widening criminal insurgency taking place. The Zetas and the other cartels had by the time of his election penetrated and co-opted entire local and state law enforcement agencies—as well as judicial and political bodies—which resulted in sovereign Mexican territories *de facto* being lost to what essentially were militarized criminal entities. That Correa-Cabrera does not provide viable alternative suggestions to the Calderon administration’s security policies she criticizes underlies the fact that the “hubris of the academy” permeates some sections of her work.

Still, these detractions do not obscure the fact that the other 99 percent of the work—that is, the overall arguments it presents and information provided in support of them—are first rate. *Los Zetas Inc.* very much represents an important addition to research on the Zetas cartel as well as that on the narcotic wars viewed from the perspective of the new civil wars literature. It underlines the metastasis of the conflict from purely narcotics trafficking routes and plazas into territorial control of regions with great hydrocarbon wealth as well as that of other natural resources such as timber and iron ore. In summation, this “dark globalization” type work should be treated as an excellent resource on the Zetas, including presenting future trajectories for the group and its factions (e.g. the discussion of four successful business models in the conclusion), highlighting the broader modern civil war-like trends taking place in their areas of influence which include Coahuila and Tamaulipas and related to other cartel resource controlled areas (such as in Michoacán), and identifying who the winners and losers will be from this process. However, the work should not be viewed as providing anything substantive relating to new security policy recommendations meant to combat the Zetas or to counter the effects of the civil wars (e.g. criminal insurgencies—ones that are economically rather than politically driven) presently raging across many regions of Mexico.





Washington, DC and New York: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Columbia University Press, 2016

231 pages

\$50.00

## Al-Qaeda's Revenge: The 2004 Madrid Train Bombings

By Fernando Reinares

Reviewed by Audrey Kurth Cronin, Professor of International Security, School of International Service, American University

*Al-Qaeda's Revenge* is an excellent, well-sourced monograph analyzing the March 11, 2004 terrorist attacks on four commuter trains in Madrid, Spain. The worst terrorist attack on European soil since the 1988 Pan Am 103 Lockerbie bombing, the so-called 3/11 attacks killed 191 people and injured at least 1,800 others. Victims were ordinary laborers, university students, and office professionals, crammed into four packed rush-hour trains headed into the city. This book sheds new light on who perpetrated the attacks, how, why, and what it all means for anti-al-Qaeda efforts. Based mainly on police records, criminal proceedings, and information from the trials of the perpetrators, supplemented by intelligence reports and personal interviews, it is a welcome contribution.

Beyond the tragedy of the victims' fates, the attacks set off bitter arguments about the West's counterterrorism strategy against al-Qaeda. Sadly, instead of uniting Spaniards in shared grief, the tragedy polarized domestic politics. As the bombings happened three days before Spanish national elections, sparring electoral parties blamed the actor that benefited them politically. The ruling People's Party, having bucked domestic public opinion to side with the US and UK in the 2003 Iraq War, publicly tied the bombings (sans evidence) to the Basque separatist group Euskadi ta Askatasuna. That was blatantly incorrect. The Socialists, opponents of the 2003 war, blamed al-Qaeda for the attacks. They were closer to the mark, and this book explains why. Through a careful analysis of individuals, cells, and networks, Reinares traces the origins to Pakistan (al-Qaeda) and Morocco (the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group). Al-Qaeda was clearly involved. The book's enthusiastic foreword from highly respected former Central Intelligence Agency officer Bruce Reidel stresses this fact.

A second debate at the global level was about al-Qaeda's strategy and its effectiveness. In the aftermath of the bombings, the Spanish Socialists won the election and pulled troops out of the coalition, an apparent cause and effect serving bin Laden's interests beautifully. Pundits waxed sagaciously about the terrorist leader's ability to coerce states to withdraw from territorial commitments. Political scientists saw confirmation of their bargaining theory models. Another contribution of this study is its convincing case that these interpretations were wrong. According to Reinares, with the operation underway years before elections were called, the perpetrators couldn't have known the date in advance (128).

Providing careful, detailed evidence, Reinares shows that the real story predated the 2004 Spanish elections, the 2003 Iraq War, and even the September 11, 2001 attacks. He demonstrates that violent jihadist cells were established in Spain in 1994 (160). The specific decision to carry out the Madrid bombings dated to a December 2001 meeting in Karachi. It was then ratified at a February 2002 meeting of Maghreb jihadist groups in Istanbul. The operational network that carried out

the bombings coalesced before the Iraq War, between March 2002 and summer 2003. So Western observers gave bin Laden too much credit strategically and too little tactically: Reinares shows that this was not a tit-for-tat operation orchestrated by al-Qaeda to sway the Spanish elections.

Third, the attack contributed to public bickering about the true nature of the global al-Qaeda movement and the implications for the US response. Some experts argued that the bombings were mainly “inspired” rather than directed from al-Qaeda central. Others saw central operational leadership calling the shots.

Hewing closely to his sources, Reinares shows that the Madrid bombings had both top-down and bottom-up elements. He argues that a critical clue for understanding al-Qaeda’s role was the weapons employed. Detonating just before 8:00 a.m., 10 Goma-2 Eco dynamite bombs were packed into backpacks and remotely triggered by Mitsubishi Trium cell phones. These particular phones, also used in the 2002 Bali attacks in Indonesia, were al-Qaeda’s “smoking guns” (so to speak), because they were exactly the same phones used for explosions training in an al-Qaeda training camp in Afghanistan (145–46).

But local residents living and radicalized in Spain were also crucial to the operation. The dynamite had been acquired on Spanish territory, provided by a Spanish criminal gang (and its juvenile delinquent stooges). This made the attack unlike the al-Qaeda-sponsored 2003 Casablanca attacks and the 2005 London bombings, which both used TATP (triacetone triperoxide). “Previous kinship, friendship, and neighborhood ties not only facilitated the processes of jihadist radicalization, but also allowed the complete terrorist mobilization of the 3/11 network,” Reinares writes (82).

*Al-Qaeda’s Revenge* conscientiously analyzes the detailed evidence of a tragic incident that killed hundreds of Spaniards and altered the trajectory of global counterterrorism. Those who counter al-Qaeda should read it.



## POLITICAL HISTORY



## Nixon's Back Channel to Moscow: Confidential Diplomacy and Détente

By Richard A. Moss

Reviewed by William Thomas Allison, Professor of History, Georgia Southern University

Primarily driven by increased access to various documents from the presidency of Richard M. Nixon, scholarship on the most controversial presidency in American history has reached new intensity, insight, and understanding. An interesting array of scholars—from renowned historians such as Stanley Kutler, Douglas Brinkley, Jeffrey Kimball, and Ken Hughes, to more recent scholars such as Luke Nichter and Richard Moss—have brought both seasoned analysis and fresh eyes to this voluminous mountain of material. From this work, we know so much more about the politics behind Nixon's Vietnam policy, his covert meddling in the Anna Chennault Affair, and the deeper revelation of the complicated figure of Nixon himself. It is, as they say, the gift that keeps on giving.

Welcome to this rich historiography the exciting work of the aforementioned Richard Moss. An associate research professor in the Center for Naval Warfare Studies at the United States Naval War College, Moss is one of the foremost students of the Nixon tapes. In *Nixon's Back Channel to Moscow*, Moss convincingly shows the importance of Nixon and National Security Advisor Henry A. Kissinger's use of back channels, principally with Soviet Ambassador to the United States Anatoly Fyodorovich Dobrynin, to Nixon's Vietnam policy and relations with the Soviet Union and China.

Like much secret diplomacy, Nixon's use of back channels was far from perfect but suited the needs of the moment. For a president bordering on clinical paranoia, back channels naturally fit Nixon's complex personality and Kissinger's sense of self-importance. Diaries, memoirs, National Security Council minutes, and other materials complement the tape transcripts Moss uses to illustrate several cases of use of back channels by Kissinger and Nixon.

Moss examines back channel roles in defusing the Cienfuegos crisis, shaping the American response to the India-Pakistan War of 1965—early talks that became the Strategic Arms Limitation treaties—and, of course, working the US-Soviet-China triangle, especially in relation to Vietnam. All of these cases highlight the crucial importance of the Kissinger-Dobrynin relationship. Dobrynin had used back channels with the US government for years before establishing the unofficial line with Kissinger.

For his part, Kissinger wanted a back channel with the Soviets to manage personally discussions he believed too vital to be left to officials he viewed as less-gifted—like Secretary of State William Pierce Rogers. As Moss shows, Kissinger used the channel to slow or

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Kentucky Press, 2017

396 pages

\$45.00

to accelerate negotiations, to clarify messaging, to suggest “linkage of unrelated areas,” and as in the case of Vietnam, alert the Soviets to how the US would respond to a crisis (303). Nixon’s response to the North Vietnamese Easter Offensive would have assuredly shocked the Soviets had Kissinger not prepared the ground through the back channel.

The back channel in this case allowed both parties to respond to the invasion as their constituents would expect, providing cover enough to save the Moscow Summit between President Nixon and Soviet General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev in May 1972. Among the more interesting areas Moss discusses is the White House’s special investigation unit—the infamous “Plumbers”—originally formed out of genuine concern for unauthorized leaks such as the famous *Pentagon Papers*. Of course, what was originally convenient but turned more sinister over time, leading to illegal acts that would bring down Nixon’s presidency. Moss also briefly explores the curious Moorer-Radford Affair, in which the military basically spied on the Nixon administration. Moss contends that Kissinger’s surreptitious use of back channels bred a Nixon-like distrust among the Joint Chiefs of Staff toward Kissinger and the National Security Council (304). Nixon managed to keep the imbroglio hidden to protect the back channel.

Moss shows the risks and rewards of using back channels in the highest levels of international relations. The Kissinger-Dobrynin back channel enabled détente to become a reality. But as productive as the Kissinger-Dobrynin relationship was, it outlived its usefulness once détente was achieved. As Nixon’s national security advisor, Kissinger became a savant-like celebrity, and the ability to use back channels was eroded. Once he became secretary of state, Kissinger had to revert to what was in his eyes a bureaucracy-ridden system, the very same one he had so often circumvented and subverted. By that time, however, the back channel no longer served its former useful purpose.

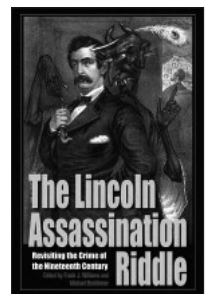
With engaging narrative and impeccable research, Moss has produced an important addition to Nixon historiography. *Nixon’s Back Channel to Moscow* sheds further light on what once had been mysterious and shrouded in shadows. It is an indispensable book for students of the Nixon years and those interested in the cost-benefit of back channel contacts. This book could not be more timely.

## **The Lincoln Assassination Riddle: Revisiting the Crime of the Nineteenth Century**

Edited By Frank J. Williams and Michael Burkholder

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

Three American presidents were murdered within the span of 36 years: Abraham Lincoln (1865), James A. Garfield (1881), and William McKinley (1901). During the same period, thousands of African Americans—perhaps tens of thousands—were lynched for trying to exercise their right to vote for such men. Yet, this explosion of political



Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2016  
214 pages  
\$29.95

violence has been obscured in American memory because it occurred after the Civil War, the nation's bloodiest and most political conflict.

Of course, there is nothing obscure about Lincoln's murder, yet Frank Williams and Michael Burkhimer, the editors of this lively collection of essays, are surely correct in describing it as *The Lincoln Assassination Riddle*. The complexities behind actor John Wilkes Booth's conspiracy plot, the frantic investigation launched at Ford's Theatre on the night of the shooting, the subsequent military prosecution, and even the lingering cultural memory of the tragic event all involve confounding political riddles. There is a sense that solving these riddles can help somehow explain the transition from Civil War to Reconstruction in a fashion that puts the enduring political violence of nineteenth-century American history into a more understandable context.

This book is part of the true crime history series from Kent State University Press. Of all the contributions to this subject—with representative titles in the series such as *Ripperology* (2006) and *Hauptmann's Ladder* (2014)—this particular volume covers the most significant national event. For once, a true crime subtitle, *Revisiting the Crime of the Nineteenth Century*, is not at all hyperbolic. Lincoln's assassination was arguably the central crime of American history.

What Williams and Burkhimer have done so admirably here is to present the topic in a way that captures many of its key dimensions. There is plenty of material on the political context of the attack, from a sobering analysis of Booth's extensive Confederate connections to a learned discussion of how nineteenth-century laws of war applied to the military trial of the conspirators. There is also a precise dissection of Lincoln's medical condition after the single bullet struck on Friday night, April 14, 1865. In addition, various essayists offer insights into the often-deceptive tactics of the professional actor turned political assassin, and readers will find several useful and compact biographical profiles of the other conspirators. Nonetheless, some of the most moving stories concern the impact of the killing on the Lincoln family and others whose lives were ripped apart by the assassination.

Nothing in this book will surprise hard-core Lincoln assassination buffs, but more casual students will appreciate the latest range of insights from leading minds on the subject presented in a series of short, easy-to-follow chapters. The roster of contributors is truly impressive including notable experts Hugh Boyle, Burrus M. Carnahan, Joan L. Chaconas, Richard W. Etulain, Michael S. Green, Blaine V. Humes, Michael W. Kauffman, Michael J. Kline, Steven G. Miller, Betty J. Ownsbey, Edward Steers Jr., Thomas R. Turner, Laurie Verge, and Steven J. Wright.

Still, there have been two important recent books on the Lincoln assassination by authors who are not represented. Insights from Terry Alford's excellent biography, *Fortune's Fool: The Life of John Wilkes Booth* (2015), and Martha Hodes's wide-ranging study on the cultural aftermath of the killing, *Mourning Lincoln* (2015), might have added further depth to this collection. Yet, what Williams and Burkhimer have achieved with *The Lincoln Assassination Riddle* is to provide a compact and effective gateway for readers who want to catch up on the range of questions historians have been chasing and trying to answer recently about the most significant political murder in American history.

## The Netanyahu Years

By Ben Caspit

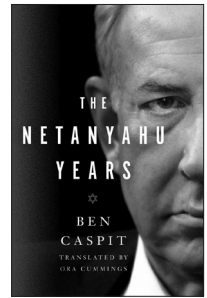
Reviewed by W. Andrew Terrill, Professor Emeritus, US Army War College

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin (Bibi) Netanyahu is currently struggling to address several scandals of various seriousness, including one which led to the arrest of his former chief of staff on corruption charges. These problems could potentially emerge as a threat to Netanyahu remaining in office, but his personality is always to fight to the last and never give up. Even if the attorney general indicts him, Israeli law does not require him to resign unless he is convicted of a criminal offense. Moreover, no matter how serious his problems become, Bibi has consistently proven himself to be not only a survivor, but also Israel's most brilliant contemporary politician. Understanding Netanyahu's politics and policies is therefore vital to understanding Israel, and providing such knowledge is the purpose of Israeli journalist Ben Caspit's excellent but often unsympathetic new volume on the prime minister.

Netanyahu grew up in a politically conservative family moving between Israel and the United States. Bibi's father, a dedicated scholar of Jewish history, accepted a position in the United States due his difficulty finding a position in Israel's mostly liberal academia. Consequently, much of Bibi's early education occurred in the Philadelphia suburbs, where, he learned to speak perfect English. After graduating from high school, Netanyahu returned to Israel and joined the elite Sayeret Matkal commandos and participated in a variety of dangerous combat operations. Later, he moved back to the United States and graduated with honors from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

After various forays into business in the United States, Netanyahu became a public affairs attaché and spokesman for the Israeli embassy in Washington. Bibi performed superbly in this position due to his media friendly personality, and he was later promoted to become Israel's ambassador to the United Nations. In New York, he again served as an outstanding Israeli spokesman and perhaps more importantly became a fundraising genius, able to charm a wide network of friendly Jewish millionaires and billionaires interested in contributing to projects in Israel.

After service at the United Nations, Netanyahu returned to Israel becoming a Likud party leader, where his American-style media and political talents, "were light years ahead of those of his rivals" (130). After serving in a variety of important posts including deputy foreign minister, Bibi was elected prime minister in 1996. Unfortunately for Netanyahu's ambitions, he was much better at campaigning than governing, and his tenure lasted only until 1999 when Labor leader Ehud Barak defeated him by a large margin. In the aftermath of the defeat, Ariel Sharon replaced Bibi as head of the Likud. Netanyahu briefly became Sharon's foreign minister and then finance minister after Likud won the January 2003 election. He eventually led Likud in opposition when Sharon left to form his own very successful political party, Kadima.



New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2017

506 pages

\$29.99

Netanyahu again became Prime Minister following the 2009 election. According to Caspit, he entered office with three main political goals beyond strengthening his hold on power. These were to end the Iranian nuclear program, to undermine and destroy the peace process with the Palestinians without being blamed for doing so, and “to survive unharmed the Obama administration, doing his utmost to ensure that it lasted only one term” (245). Caspit suggests that the last goal was particularly important to Netanyahu since he viewed Obama’s chief goal for the Middle East as “to make peace with the Muslim world” (256). He believed Obama had no real affinity for Israel or any serious record of working with pro-Israeli interest groups.

When Obama gave a conciliatory speech in Cairo about US relations with the Islamic world, Caspit describes Netanyahu as watching it with burning anger. Obama also pressured the Israelis to stop building and expanding settlements in the West Bank and thereby empower the peace process. Eventually, Obama and Netanyahu descended into an overwhelming level of distrust that would become “endless mutual loathing” (315). To make matters worse for Netanyahu, Obama had come to power with around 70 percent of the Jewish vote and surrounded himself with liberal Jewish aides whom some of Netanyahu associates described with the slur “self-hating” (281). The crisis became acute in early 2015 when Netanyahu delivered a speech to Congress opposing the Iranian nuclear agreement that Obama claimed as a major achievement of his administration. The speech did nothing to derail the agreement, but instead threatened to harm traditional bipartisan support for Israel. Some Democrats may have even started to view Netanyahu as a new Dick Cheney, someone they would never trust on matters of war and peace.

According to Caspit, Netanyahu turned Iran into an obsession and became thoroughly convinced Iran was an irrational, messianic, and suicidal state that would allow itself to be destroyed by US and Israeli retaliatory strikes in order to annihilate Israel. This viewpoint was not shared by either the Israeli security community or the Obama administration. Caspit maintains that Netanyahu is so certain on this issue that he will not consider divergent views and even regards himself as a modern-day Winston Churchill, opposing Iran when others sought to appease it. Moreover, Caspit also argues Netanyahu, believes he alone has “the historical, intellectual, and mental attributes to bring together all the sane forces in the world to stop the second Holocaust” (178). Netanyahu’s credibility in making such a grandiose claim may nevertheless be partially undercut by his September 2002 testimony before the US Congress in strong support of an invasion of Iraq, to which he saw almost no down side.

In sum, this work is an important, interesting and comprehensive biography but it is also a harsh critique of important Israeli and US policymakers and most especially Netanyahu. Obama, Trump, Sara Netanyahu, and a variety of other US and Israeli politicians are also taken to task on some occasions, but never as harshly as Bibi. Whether or not Netanyahu’s flaws are as profound as Caspit maintains will be for the reader to consider.



## MILITARY HISTORY

**War in the Shallows**

By John Carrell Sherwood

Reviewed by Martin N. Murphy, Visiting Fellow, Corbett Centre for Maritime Security Studies

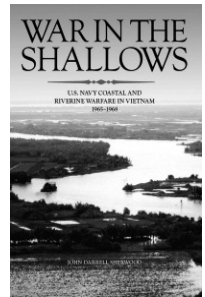
**W**ar in the Shallows represents, in the author's own words, "the first comprehensive scholarly attempt to piece together the operational history of the US Navy in South Vietnam" during the so-called American phase between 1965 and 1968. This subject has been covered already by several authors, the best known of which is probably Thomas J. Cutler who served as a naval advisor in Vietnam during 1972 prior to his appointment to the Naval Academy. His history—*Brown Water, Black Berets* published in 1988—drew on his personal experience supplemented by extensive interviews with others who had served in theater.

The current work is published by the Naval History and Heritage Command. Its predecessor organizations, the Naval History Division and the Naval Historical Center, published two official histories in 1976 and 1986 written, in part, by Edward J. Marolda, Dr. Sherwood's predecessor as senior historian.

All this Dr. Sherwood makes clear in his preface and acknowledgements. What he has been able to do, however, is to take advantage of material recently released from the Command's archives—Vietnamese documents and interviews conducted personally with former Viet Cong. He makes no claim to have unearthed new evidence sufficient to force a change in the accepted assessment of how the river and coastal wars were executed nor of the experiences of those who conducted them. This is in no way a revisionist account. Moreover, while it draws general conclusions about the Vietnam riverine conflict, the book stops well before the US withdrawal from South Vietnam and therefore does not touch upon the significant SEALORDS campaign or the hand-over to the Vietnamese. The author admits that together these topics are too large in scope to cover in the current volume and deserve separate book-length treatments.

The approach adopted is to integrate illustrative vignettes of crucial actions into a larger operational history; eschewing, in other words, the often-unsatisfactory editorial practice of isolating "action sequences" into sidebars. Space has also been found to address the humble but essential issues of selection, training, base operations, intelligence and engagement rules that made the US role successful; belatedly so, it must be admitted, in the light of the perspicacity of the 1965 Bucklew Report and the slow implementation of the measures it recommended (27–28).

The book makes no attempt to disguise the shortcomings of South Vietnam's own forces and the roots of their problems in national (and inevitably service) politics and corruption. Sherwood rightly highlights how these shortcomings often placed US advisors in positions of great



Washington, DC: Naval History and Heritage Command, 2015

425 pages

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peril and how bravery and dedication of outstanding individuals won the respect of the frontline fighters they were trying to help.

It should therefore be regarded not perhaps as a standard history but as an examination and eventual confirmation of the existing evidence. The author does not make clear when he found deviations from the existing record. It is therefore fair to assume if any were uncovered they were not egregious.

One opportunity that has been missed is to place US riverine operations in two contexts: in the thinking of Westmoreland and subsequently Abrams and their staffs and against the background of lessons learned (or ignored) from French riverine operations during the preceding Indochina War. The author touches upon the latter but only briefly.

Even though French riverine operations took place largely in the Red River delta in the north, where the geographical and meteorological conditions were quite different, the enemy's tactics were similar to those employed subsequently in the south. For example, it was the French who stood up the precursor to the Mobile Riverine Force, the *divisions d'infanterie navale d'assaut* (short for *division d'infanterie navale d'assaut*), a concept Bernard Fall complimented back-handedly as "one of the few worthwhile contributions of the Indochina War to military knowledge"<sup>(6)</sup>. However, any dismissal of the *divisions d'infanterie navale d'assaut*'s achievements (like everything else in the French commitment) cannot ignore they were severely underresourced due to France's straightened circumstances post-World War II, one thing America's intervention unquestionably did not lack.

What the author does confirm, however, is two things: first, after decades of what Naval War College professor John Hattendorf described as a focus on the "care and feeding of machines," officers and bluejackets alike renewed the acquaintanceship with close quarter battle that had been such a large part of the naval service of their predecessors in the nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries. It was not until after World War I that landings and land service had become the preserve of the Marine Corps. The Navy, individually and collectively, adapted to the unexpected demands of this vicious war with courage, imagination, and skill. Second, however brutal and unpredictable the fighting was on the rivers, in the swamps, and around the coasts of Vietnam, coastal and riverine operations retained their essentially naval character.

Wars are often dominated by logistics, and Vietnam was no exception. Naval warfare is predominantly about securing safe access to resources and communications while denying the same to the enemy. The Viet Cong depended on water transport. "Market Time," the coastal interdiction operation, virtually closed this route, increasing the Communists' dependence on the Ho Chi Minh trail. The great battle of the rivers was also an interdiction battle. How successful the Navy and its Vietnamese allies were in cutting the movement of material and cadres is hard to quantify, but without doubt, they introduced inefficiencies into the Viet Cong supply chain, which hampered and disrupted their operations. If US policymakers had agreed to use such measures to inject similarly persistent inefficiencies into the Viet Cong's overland routes, it is conceivable the war's outcome may have been different.

## Doing What You Know: The United States and 250 Years of Irregular War

By David E. Johnson

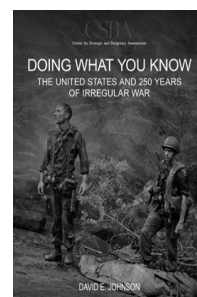
Reviewed by J.P. Clark, Army Strategist and author of *Preparing for War: the Emergence of the Modern U.S. Army, 1815-1917*

The United States military has conducted irregular warfare since its inception. Yet, there is no consensus as to whether this legacy is one of triumph or failure. Those with a positive view generally look to either the earliest days when the influence of the country's first way of war was strong or to the present narrative of a combination of brainy soldiers and fearless special operations forces defeating insurgents and terrorists. Critics focus more on the intervening period, portraying a hidebound officer corps unwilling or unable to adapt to unconventional foes from Native American warriors to Viet Cong guerillas. In this brief monograph published by the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, David E. Johnson (who has since returned to the RAND Corporation) argues the United States has never been so good nor so bad in practicing irregular warfare as either caricature suggests, but instead has a long tradition of mixed results.

*Doing What You Know* consists of three parts. The first examines irregular warfare from the American Revolution through the Vietnam War; for their length, the overviews of operations in the Philippines (1899–1913) and Vietnam are particularly good. This, however, is a work of policy advocacy rather than history, and so those seeking a comprehensive account will be disappointed. There is no mention of irregular warfare in the Mexican-American War, and little on antebellum frontier campaigns or irregular warfare in the Civil War. Also, there is no discussion of independent Marine Corps operations; the “United States Army and 250 Years of Irregular Warfare” would be a more accurate subtitle.

Yet it is likely that even a fuller historical account would only reinforce Johnson's theme of continuity. The late nineteenth-century frontier army is often caricatured as too inflexible and hidebound, while the Philippine-American War is regarded as a great success. But Johnson notes many officers served in both places and that contemporaries felt they were applying hard-won knowledge from their frontier experience to colonial counterinsurgency. Unfortunately, one thread of this continuity was a hard-hand mentality expressed in method (e.g. “water cure” interrogations) and in operational approaches, notably the use of “re-concentration” camps and scorched-earth destruction in Batangas Province.

In the second section, which examines “21st Century U.S. COIN,” Johnson notes a break with the more ruthless past; one of the defining characteristics of recent campaigns has been increased “constraints on what are acceptable methods in COIN” (71). Although Johnson attributes this shift to factors outside military control—the 24/7 media cycle and a change in societal values—his narrative suggests the military on the whole willingly accepted the more restrained,



Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2017

92 pages

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population-centric counterinsurgency approach as expressed in the 2006 edition of *Counterinsurgency* Field Manual (FM) 3-24. Johnson does not claim the military has completely abandoned violence; he notes, for instance, similarities between kill and capture efforts like the Vietnam-era Phoenix Program and the US Joint Special Operations Command in Iraq and Afghanistan. Nonetheless, *Doing What You Know* notes the balance between carrot and stick has tilted dramatically toward the former in comparison to previous eras.

In the final section, Johnson offers two overarching conclusions. The first is that failing to plan for transitions after a major conflict can lead to insurgency. To avoid large-scale irregular warfare, the Army should be ready to fill the postconflict security and governance vacuum. In this regard, Johnson approves of current thinking, citing the discussion of consolidating gains within the Army Operating Concept as a promising start.

In contrast, Johnson's second conclusion—"large-scale irregular warfare and COIN are a brutal business that requires coercion"—goes against the present organizational grain, which is still shaped by FM 3-24 (82). Johnson advocates a greater willingness to "ruthlessly and violently" pursue and separate the enemy from indigenous support as was the case in earlier successful irregular warfare (85). Unfortunately, the history presented in the first section is too cursory to demonstrate conclusively that earlier hard-hand approaches were necessary for victory. Indeed, the overall record of mixed results suggests complex causal relationships.

Nonetheless, there is a reasonable case for the necessity of coercion. Irregular warfare often occurs within a strategic context in which meeting national policy objectives requires some reordering of deeply ingrained political, social, or economic patterns in a foreign land. Such changes are bound to be resisted by a wide range of actors, from those with a significant vested interest to those who simply resent external influence. The more significant the change—and changes of strategic importance are likely significant—the less benevolence, cultural understanding, and force of argument are likely to be sufficient.

Yet *Doing What You Know* stops short of advocating any particular coercive measure. Indeed, Johnson notes even the uncomfortably coercive edge of seemingly benign projects such as education; a superintendent of the Carlisle Indian School saw education as a means "to kill the Indian in him" (15). Elsewhere, Johnson ominously notes the brutal Sri Lankan campaign against the Tamil Tigers is one of the few examples of a recent counterinsurgency. Perhaps the worst outcome is that Johnson is correct in three of his assertions: the United States will again engage in irregular warfare, irregular warfare requires some degree of "ruthless and brutal" measures, and structural factors within the US and the military have caused a turn away from such measures. If so, then the problem is deeper than military tactics and doctrine and so foretells something even worse than the mixed results of the past.

## War Neurology

Edited by Laurent Tatu and Julien Bogousslavsky

Reviewed by Andreas Kuersten, US Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces

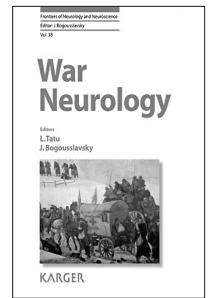
The editors of *War Neurology*, Laurent Tatu and Julien Bogousslavsky, lament the fact that “war and neurology are two themes that are rarely linked, and war neurology is not a subject in its own right” (vii). While this statement must be caveated since the neurological effects of war on humans and the history of such ailments and their treatment have not escaped consistent attention, the editors are correct that the unification of war and neurology under a single subfield of study has thus far not occurred. As such, “this book intends to lay the foundation” for such a subfield (vii). Commensurate with this goal, Tatu and Bogousslavsky have put together an expansive volume delving into the history and practice of war neurology from antiquity to today.

The book begins with a general overview of the historical development of neurological practice during wartime. The ancient Egyptians were the first to record connections between battle wounds and neurological deficits approximately 5,000 years ago. “It was recognized early that head wounds were especially dangerous,” and in the close-quarter, direct combat of antiquity, “warriors tended to focus on striking their enemies’ heads in order to defeat them” (3, 1). Beyond the head, spinal cord and peripheral nerve damage suffered during combat were also given special attention. As far as mental disorders arising from battle experiences, mentions of “mental stress produced by warfare” are found in ancient literary works, but not more widely (7).

Building on this foundation, *War Neurology* covers advancements in neurological science from the Napoleonic Wars to the campaign in Afghanistan. There is also a chapter on the modern history of neurotoxic weapons, including details on their individual characteristics.

Broadly, *War Neurology* is an illustration of the intimate link between warfare and progress in medical science and practice. It has been noted that “it is paradoxical that through war, a concerted effort to annihilate man, we have learned more and better ways to preserve him” (62). But such a relationship is in fact logical. This is because the devastation of human bodies wrought by war provides “the opportunity of making uncomplicated clinical observations,” which “is rare in civil life” (43). Accordingly, “throughout human history, war and the subsequent need for treatment of war wounds has provided a fecund environment for the development of medicine as a whole. The origin of surgery is particularly rooted in the treatment of injured participants of war and combat,” and the subfield of neurosurgery emerged and rapidly developed as a result of twentieth-century wars (22).

Further cementing the link between war and medical advancement is the fact that personnel are arguably the most important weapons in the arsenal of a military force, and this makes their treatment a critical component of warfighting. Avenues of warrior degradation must be countered in order to maintain military strength and capability most effectively. Neurological impairments are some of the most pernicious



Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017

400 pages

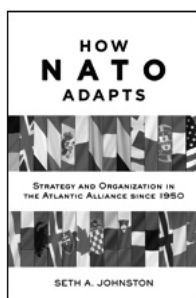
\$39.95

harms suffered by fighting men and women. Sides that are better able to treat and recycle injured personnel gain a meaningful advantage over opponents. As such, “while war influenced the development of medicine, and neurology in particular, medicine also helped to shape the outcomes of wars” (93).

*War Neurology* provides two excellent examples of this phenomenon. The first is the American Civil War. On top of advantages in funding, equipment, and manpower, Union forces also employed a superior military medical complex to that fielded by the Confederacy. This meant that “a greater proportion of the Union army was healthy than of the opposing Confederate force,” and “it can be argued that the advantages provided by medical science were a significant factor in determining the eventual victory of the Union” (105). The second example is the German military, the Wehrmacht, in World War II. Its remarkable success at the beginning of the conflict was due in part to highly mobile forward-operating medical units and streamlined methods for moving and treating wounded, including specialized neurological units and procedures. These facilitated the Wehrmacht’s quick strike blitzkrieg method of attack and “became viewed as ‘indispensable’ for the war effort” (126).

War and neurology are also connected through the use of neurological knowledge to devise weapons, enhance soldiers, and gain intelligence. *War Neurology* addresses the first of these areas in a chapter on neurotoxic substances and their effects. The book, however, provides no coverage of the latter two—like the contributions of neurology to research techniques, substances, and devices intended to heighten soldier cognition or induce captives to speak to interrogators—nor the ethical implications of these pursuits. A chapter considering these topics would have been a welcome addition.

That shortcoming notwithstanding, *War Neurology* offers an engaging, far-reaching examination that successfully lays a foundation for war neurology as a distinct subfield of study. While time will tell if this foundation is built upon, the volume is valuable in its own right and will find an appreciative audience in readers interested in military medicine specifically or seeking to add depth to their understanding of the many facets of war.



## How NATO Adapts: Strategy and Organization in the Atlantic Alliance since 1950

By Seth Johnston

Reviewed by Joel R. Hillison, Professor of National Security Studies, US Army War College

After NATO added its twenty-ninth member state, Montenegro, in July 2017, institutions in Europe remain under significant strain with challenges such as economic weakness in the eurozone, renewed assertiveness from Russia, persistent terrorist attacks, and a wave of “eurosceptism” emboldened by the Brexit. Any of these challenges conceivably could threaten the existence of NATO and the

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272 pages  
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European Union. To survive, these organizations will need to adapt. *How NATO Adapts* provides useful insights for shaping that adaptation. While organizational adaptation is not always an interesting topic, Seth Johnston does a masterful job of providing pertinent details while avoiding the minutia. His compelling historical analysis illustrates the institution's adaptations—in terms of mission, organization, size, and strategy—arising from changes in the European and global security environment. Under this approach, institutions such as NATO, are often path dependent, meaning history has significant and lasting impacts on an organization's trajectory. This book selects cases and identifies critical junctures where changes in the external strategic environment disrupted current institutional paths and presented alternatives to the alliance. Johnston argues in each of these instances that NATO successfully adapted its organization and strategic approach.

The first section of the book, which contains a literature review, will interest international-relations scholars. Policy oriented readers, however, may get hung up in the theoretical discussions. The case studies that follow will interest policymakers and senior members of the defense community.

The chapter on early adaptation is the most enlightening. During this period, the institution was still new and faced existential threats. Discussing the critical juncture of the Korean War, Johnston explains the history of the alliance, its gradual turn to nuclear deterrence, the rearmament of Germany as a member of NATO, and the alternative, but ultimately unsuccessful path, of establishing a European common army: the European Defense Community. The army was an attempt by European states to create their own collective security capability at a time when the United States was distracted by a more global confrontation with the Soviet Union. Although defeated by France—the very country that had proposed its creation—the case study in the European Defense Community provides a useful guide for how the contemporary EU Common Security and Defense Policy might be adapted. The original intent for the Community nested it within the alliance framework, which allowed France and its European allies to influence German rearmament more closely while simultaneously extending the nuclear umbrella to Germany, which had no independent defense capability at the time. While this effort failed, it demonstrated the possibility of greater European military autonomy from the United States and NATO. Brexit has already reignited talks of a European army. These efforts might not only encourage greater EU burden-sharing for security but also encourage closer ties with non-NATO countries.

The case study of the French withdrawal from the Integrated Control and Command Structure is also insightful. France was leery of further subordination to US dominance and resented increased nuclear cooperation between Britain and the United States. France's departure enabled the elimination of some outdated organizations within NATO and a more rational command structure created from the military headquarters in Mons, Belgium, the military committee, the Defense Planning Group, and the Nuclear Planning Group—a new NATO Headquarters with all international staff in Brussels. During the French crisis, NATO remained neutral and avoided exacerbating tensions between the United States and France. As a result, France remained



in the alliance, but outside of the military structure allowing needed organizational reforms and strategic adaptations such as the creation of a “two-tiered political structure” and the strategic concept of Flexible Response, to proceed (115). This institutional approach might be useful in dealing with contemporary issues such as an illiberal Turkey. As with France in the 1960s, NATO has the ability to adapt to these challenges without rupturing the alliance.

The later chapters look at the immediate post-Cold War and post-Kosovo adaptations of the alliance. These chapters are also relevant and equally persuasive. While not the primary tool of choice for the United States initially, NATO actively sought a role in Afghanistan and provided needed support to a stretched US military during the surge in Iraq in 2007 and subsequent surge in Afghanistan in 2010. Despite its flaws and limitations, NATO adapted and contributed substantially to these operations.

Overall, Johnston makes a persuasive argument and adds to the literature on path dependence and critical junctures. More important, *How NATO Adapts* provides historical context needed as the United States recommits to deterring Russian aggression and continues to play a role in European security and stability.

## REGIONAL STUDIES

**Security Forces in African States: Cases and Assessment**

By Paul Shemella and Nicholas Tomb

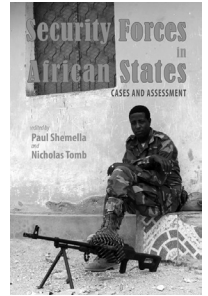
Reviewed by Diane E. Chido, author of *Chaos to Cohesion: A Regional Approach to Security, Stability, and Development in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College

Editors Paul Shemella and Nicholas Tomb have presented an interesting assessment tool in their *Security Forces in African States: Cases and Assessment*. The tool is intended to evaluate “how well security institutions are designed, governed and operated with the institutional mix” (2). The authors note armed forces can be a valuable partner in stabilization, especially in a developing country or one recovering from war, fragility, or natural disaster, but this is not their primary role. Shemella and Tomb focus comprehensively on the security sector from the perspective of effective governance and civil-military relations for attaining “traditional” national and more importantly, human security.

The authors intentionally created an assessment tool that can be presented and used quickly, acknowledging there are other more complex tools to apply and implement. The process is for “government officials, working with key personnel in each security institution (and perhaps international technical partners)” to “generate tables for each . . . security institution” to include armed forces, law enforcement, intelligence services and institutions as necessary. (19–20)

Recommending two levels of assessment to identify qualitatively how a nation distributes resources and roles and provides civilian institutional control over its security sector, Shemella and Tomb identify areas for Level 1 assessment as national branding, national security threat identification, institutional roles vis-à-vis the armed forces and the police, and the strength of the political system prevailing in the state.

The conceptual model of “national branding” is particularly useful and could be deconstructed as an entire chapter or book on its own. The idea of branding typically involves an intentional campaign to present a product or service to a selected audience. In this case, the authors suggest the audience is other governments, who will consider these “brands” as a shorthand to determine their own bilateral and regional strategies and alliances, whether this brand has been developed “deliberately or not.”



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281 pages

\$39.95

<b>Shemella and Tomb's Representation of National Branding</b>	
1. Warfighter	Initiate conflict with other states. Prevail militarily.
2. Defender	Repel invasion and obtain assistance from other countries. Defend against transnational threats.
3. Peacekeeper	Organize, train, and deploy armed forces specifically for international peacekeeping missions.
4. Fireman	Use armed forces to perform any domestic mission that other government institutions cannot be trusted to accomplish.
5. Policeman	Use armed forces to enforce laws. Police in support.
6. Troublemaker	Allow armed forces to determine when to use coercive force against other states.

Their Level 2 assessment rates governance and capacity of the armed forces, law enforcement, intelligence, and civilian institutions responsible for overseeing them on a Likert Scale of 1–10 according to a set of desired outcomes for each based on a Western view of effective civil-military relations. They then apply the framework to 10 African nations with a full assessment presented on Mali.

There are a number of obvious challenges associated with qualitative assessment in any context. As the tool is intended to affect policy formulation and implementation, and the method for populating the matrices is based on input from officials inside and outside the target government, participants must be carefully selected and encouraged to provide bias-free inputs as far as possible to safeguard the integrity of the process. This could perhaps be accomplished under an independent inspector general construct to avoid parochial responses.

The authors recommend open discussion among the chosen panel of experts but a better model might be the Delphi Method, in which experts are assigned to respond to a set of questions during the intelligence analysis process. This method is typically repeated in a preset number of rounds with the panelists made aware of each anonymized member's prior round responses and supporting arguments. It is assumed that the panelists will be informed by their peers' arguments and coalesce around a very few common responses. These converge into a singular assessment by a moderator selected to lead the process to ensure there is an efficient and valuable final result.

Any such collaborative process has proven merit in combining expert judgments but can have dubious value when such a group is called to assess its own organization and can result in a collection of individual resource- or prestige-based interests at the expense of the collective good. The additional danger with any such converging method requiring

a single final “answer” is degeneration of the process into *groupthink*, which pares the final result into a “lowest common denominator” response that is often too broad or too simplistic to be of value. The authors do not discuss the process of bias reduction, particularly when assessing nations with histories of corruption and cronyism.

One additional concern for the assessment process is that the Level 2 matrices for armed forces, law enforcement, and intelligence each include a final “outcome” described as the “culmination of efforts listed above.” Once all the outcomes are averaged to determine the Likert score for each, inclusion of this element seems to skew the results, as this item adds an aggregation of those preceding it, potentially reducing the reliability of the score itself.

Shemella and Tomb have applied the tool to ten cases in Africa with a complete set of Level 1 and 2 matrices for Mali. This case indicates that since the 2012 coup and ongoing insurgency, Malian security forces have accepted civilian control and do not pose a threat to the government; however, Mali must develop a formal national security policy with enhanced oversight and appropriate administration, training, and resource allocation to this sector to achieve sustainable national and human security.<sup>1</sup>

## Thabo Mbeki and Julius Nyerere

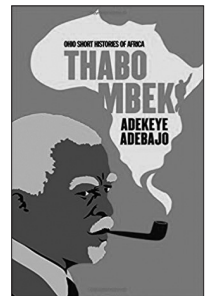
By Adekeye Adebajo and by Paul Bjerk

Reviewed by Diane E. Chido, author of *Chaos to Cohesion: A Regional Approach to Security, Stability, and Development in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College

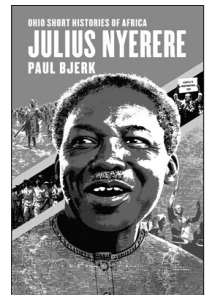
The Ohio University series of Short Histories of Africa promises to offer “lively biographies” as concise introductory guides to general African topics. In the case of both volumes reviewed, the series delivers.

Adekeye Adebajo fleetingly compares former South African President Thabo Mbeki’s life and legacy with that of former Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah, noting the outsized role each played in their country’s move toward postcolonial independence and development but each failed “to deliver the economic kingdom in the end [which] led to the political crucifixion of both prophets” (164). Tanzania’s Julius Nyerere can also be counted among such prophets, as his nation’s independence held such promise but his economic policies had similarly disastrous outcomes.

It is clear that Adebajo admires Mbeki and wishes his story was one of complete success, frequently describing him as “the most important political figure of his generation” both in South Africa and across the continent. Adebajo emphasizes Mbeki’s personal integrity and “total” commitment to end Apartheid through an entire life of service to that cause, but admits that Mbeki’s contentious yet technocratic manner, as



Athens: Ohio University Press, 2017  
190 pages  
\$14.95



Athens: Ohio University Press, 2017  
116 pages  
\$14.95

<sup>1</sup> As the publisher of the volume is the US Naval Post-graduate School, the authors note on page 14 that this institution began educating Malian officers in 2016, while the Army War College began accepting Malian students in its Master’s program in 1998 and has since hosted seven.

well as decades spent in exile and his Western-influenced intellectual perspectives and polish, alienated him from his own people.

Mbeki tried to enhance independent Africa's self-image through an African Renaissance that would unite South Africa and the entire continent, making him a more effective continental leader than a national one. His legacy is likely to be marked more by his Pan-African achievements in developing regional communities, particularly the Southern African Development Community, the Organization of African States and its successor, the African Union.

Paul Bjerck stresses that Nyerere's commitment was to a nonviolent, inclusive transition to independence, which resulted in a statist economy engendering widespread corruption. Bjerck describes Nyerere's talent for appealing to his mainly rural constituency in a multinational country with earthy, universal themes.

Nyerere expanded the concept of "family unity" or Ujamaa to indicate a Tanzanian and more broadly African identity embracing a unified diversity with a socialist but classless core, which included use of Swahili as a national indigenous, noncolonial language. This philosophy also enabled Nyerere to enact autocratic policies through one-party rule without fear of dissent and evading Cold War power plays in the context of a national ethic preserving its interests. The approach also managed to unite not only those in the territory of Tanganyika, but to incorporate the islands of Zanzibar into the United Republic of Tanzania.

Bjerck's characterization of Nyerere is a leader wholly devoted to his people, no matter how unfortunate the outcomes of many policies, while Mbeki appears devoted to the cause of independence and policy formulation for its own sake. Nyerere ironically claimed shortly before independence in 1960: "When hunting there is no problem. . . . Problems start when the animal has died, that's when the fighting starts" (53). His claim anticipated that various factions tearing apart the colonial corpse could destroy the chance for a unified independent country. The claim also underscores an intrinsic understanding of the thorny issues of governance with which Adebajo does not imbue Mbeki.

Mbeki is often criticized for maintaining an economic system that continued to benefit white South Africans and empowering an elite, educated black class, while Nyerere's 1967 Arusha Declaration raised alarm bells about an urban elite gradually overtaking the Tanzanian government while the rural majority remained exploited and oppressed, without an internal socialist revolution. As a result, such elites continue to control the majority of South Africa's wealth and the rural poor of Tanzania have remained so.

Nyerere's devotion to Maoism led to his disastrous "villagization" program, which forced people to relocate to new farmland in "modern" villages. The country's inability to develop a robust industrial base left Tanzania increasingly reliant on tea and tobacco production to the detriment of locally-grown food, which had sustained traditional villages. This resulted in famines, squandering of foreign exchange on food imports, and an impressive array of illicit trade.

On social issues, Nyerere did expand the reach of health care and education in Tanzania, with nearly the entire adult population literate

by 1980. Mbeki's "policy of denial" in the face of Africa's AIDS crisis is often considered his greatest failure with some critics claiming hundreds of thousands of lives could have been saved had he supported robust programs to make antiretroviral medications accessible.

One of the most interesting messages in both books is the widely held belief that no country could be truly free until all of Africa was free, which motivated African leaders and organizations across the continent to work toward independence, especially after the British relinquished control over India in 1947. These early activities have defined bilateral, regional and continental alliances and enmities to the present day.

In a message for us across time and space, after Tanzania's successful invasion of aggressor Uganda, Nyerere stated of the resulting occupation, "We don't want to get too involved in Uganda because we know they'll end up resenting us. It's an irony that no matter how careful we are, at the end of the day, they'll resent our help" (115).

The historical context presented through the lens of key actors provides the broad and human perspective without which African politics cannot be fully understood, especially to Ohio University's intended audience newly discovering this complex continent.

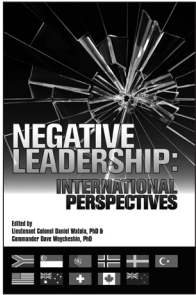


## STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

**Negative Leadership: International Perspectives**

Edited by Daniel Watola, PhD, and Dave Woycheshin, PhD

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

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The study of leadership has become an industry, and researchers and authors have partitioned this broad subject area into several categories such as political, business, and corporate leadership; civic leadership; and military leadership. While some researchers may argue that each type of leadership is unique, it may be that all are cut from the same cloth. Examining parts may provide a better understanding of the whole of collective human interactions to achieve common goals.

The editors of *Negative Leadership: International Perspectives*, Lieutenant Colonel Daniel Watola, an associate professor at the US Air Force Academy, and Commander Dave Woycheshin, of the Personnel Selections Branch of the Canadian Armed Forces, have gathered papers from a diverse group of military scholars and practitioners working at professional military education and defense research organizations in multiple nations. These researchers are participants in the annual International Military Leadership Association Workshop (IMLAW) which, since 2006, has resulted in the publication of an edited volume. Woycheshin has served as coeditor for three previous volumes. For 2016, the theme is negative leadership—a timely topic given recent interest and scholarship on toxic leadership. (See a review of “Tarnished: Toxic Leadership in the US Military” in the Winter 2015–16 issue of *Parameters*).

Comprised of 15 chapters, the book provides international perspectives on the phenomenon of leadership, specifically in the military context. While it is encouraging so much energy is devoted to the subject, it may be disheartening to acknowledge that military leadership, as leadership in the civilian domain, has many facets and presents itself along a continuum of good to bad, including military leaders who range from competent to incompetent and dysfunctional. Leadership may be defined generally as a process to influence others to accomplish tasks or goals. How this process is applied by individuals can have a “dark side” and, hence, a negative impact on followers and organizations. Indeed, each chapter attempts to define the nature of leadership and categorize its manifestations. In doing so, there is overlap among some chapters in the literature reviews of leadership theories, models, and competencies. The commonalities, however, allow for the designation of a cluster of individual and organizational behaviors under the umbrella of negative leadership.

The opening chapters, “Toxic Leadership” and “Why Negative Leadership Matters” provide the foundation and military context, albeit from a predominately US perspective, for the remaining contributions. The authors cite seminal and emerging research (that have added adjectives such as abusive, destructive, tyrannical, despotic, unethical, and laissez-faire to the lexicon of leadership) and contend that militaries

are uniquely vulnerable to negative leadership, which emanates from the “toxic triangle” of destructive leaders, susceptible followers, and conducive environments. As Stanford University professor Philip Zimbardo explores in *The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn Evil* (Random House, 2007), readers will ponder whether negative leadership is an either-or proposition of “bad apples” or “bad barrels.”

Subsequent chapters provide case studies and anecdotes of negative leadership that exist within principally democratic national militaries. Chapter 4, “Negative Organizations: Antecedents of Negative Leadership,” posits that attributes generally associated with individuals can be extended and applied as organization-level attitudes and behaviors. Resource scarcity and lack of staff training can result in organizational anorexia. Likewise, organizational greediness can “exact high demands [of] employees” for loyalty, time, and energy (61). Organizational narcissism demonstrated in self-aggrandizement, sense of entitlement, and rationalization can result in failure to meet the needs of stakeholders (59). Such organizational pressures would create an environment (i.e., bad barrel) conducive to generating negative attitudes and behaviors of leaders as well as followers.

Accordingly, Chapters 5, 6, and 9 (written by authors from Sweden, Canada, and New Zealand) explore what makes leaders—innate personality, learned behaviors, or organizational context—bad apples. Chapter 10 from South Africa examines military leader failures caused by incompetence or lack of character, cognitive abilities, professional knowledge and skills, and the ability to influence others. The combination of bad apples and bad barrels results in organizational cynicism, which is explored in Chapter 7 by authors from the US Air Force Academy.

While the chapters provide multiple perspectives of negative leadership, readers would have been better served by a concluding chapter from the editors with their assessment and derived insights. As such, the existing volume is an interesting and informative collection of papers, representative of the IMLAW, but without synthesis. This reviewer ponders questions that were not addressed by the editors. Are the constructs of leadership as presented in the 2004 Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Experiment study useful for the examination of negative leadership? More importantly, are there cultural differences in the perception of negative leadership among militaries?

The IMLAW does offer a valuable forum for military researchers to examine in depth specific topics with implications for military professions. The workshop’s past publications on strategic leadership development (2007), military ethics (2010), and adaptive leadership (2014) are important investigations and presentations of research findings. Accordingly, *Negative Leadership: International Perspectives* is essential reading for anyone who studies and seeks to understand the practice of military leadership. Positive and negative leadership are two sides of the same coin. While the profession of arms seeks to promote positive leadership as the vehicle to serve its stakeholders (i.e., its governments and citizens), the military has the obligation to develop institutional approaches to preclude or militate negative leadership in its ranks.

