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Book Reviews

IRREGULAR WARFARE

Blood and Concrete: 21st Century Conflict in Urban Centers and Megacities

Edited by Dave Dilegge, Robert J. Bunker, John P. Sullivan, and Alma Keshavarz

Reviewed by Dr. José de Arimatéia da Cruz, professor of international relations and international studies, Department of Political Science and International Studies, Georgia Southern University

In 2014, then Chief of Staff of the Army General Raymond T. Odierno convened a strategic studies group to research a new reality facing the US Army. In the foreword of the group's report, *Megacities and the United States Army*, Odierno wrote: "Our Army has [had] experience throughout its history of operating in urban environments, from Aachen to Seoul to Baghdad. We have not, however, operated in urban areas with populations of over 10 million people—the megacity" (*Army*, 2014, 2).

Written by scholars and practitioners currently in the field or retired from the military, this book:

[P]rovides a foundation for understanding urban operations and sustaining urban warfare research. This *Small Wars Journal* (SWJ) Anthology documents over a decade of writings on urban conflict. In addition to essays originally published at SWJ it adds new content including an introduction by the editors, a preface on "Blood and Concrete" by David Kilcullen, a foreword "Urban Warfare Studies" by John Spencer, a postscript "Cities in the Crossfire: The Rise of Urban Violence" by Margarita Konaev, and an afterword "Urban Operations: Meeting Challenges, Seizing Opportunities, Improving the Approach" by Russell W. Glenn. These essays frame the discussion found in the collection's 49 chapters" (*Small Wars Journal*, January 14, 2019).

Together the chapters shed light on an important issue, conflict in densely populated urban centers of the twenty-first century. Collectively, this anthology also addresses an array of issues faced when "fighting in built-up areas (FIBUA) or policing urban communities" (1). As the editors point out, "urban conflict is dominated by blood in terms of casualties and concrete in terms of the built environment," which is where conflicts of the future will take place (li).

Bloomington, IN: Xlibris,
2019
768 pages
\$22.99

While some military leaders still romanticize conflicts taking place in remote jungles around the world, the reality of future military conflict is quite different. Future conflicts, or so-called mega-urban operations, will most likely occur in a megacity. A megacity is any large urban center, common in the twenty-first century, with a total population of 10 million people or more.

Megacities are predominantly present in developing or emerging market economies. Dhaka, Bangladesh, and Rio de Janeiro or São Paulo, Brazil, are examples of megacities. Those major urban centers are often loosely integrated, and many parts of its sovereign territory may be ungoverned areas controlled by transnational organized crime, criminal factions, or cartels.

An ungoverned area is defined as “a sector where the government has lost control and capacity to manage the population. Security is challenged by non-state actors such as terrorists, insurgents, criminals, and extremist organizations” (177). The provision of basic services, such as drinkable water or electricity, are usually controlled by a militia that preys on the poor and marginalized members of society. In many parts of the world’s megacities, criminal elements are better armed than the armed forces of the state.

Whether we ignore it or take the “out of sight, out of mind” approach, urban warfare will occur as societies continue to urbanize and industrialize, and the US Army will have no option but to fight in such locations in the future. As David Kilcullen notes, urban operations are here to stay. Not only have the vast majority of major battles and campaigns taken place in urban terrain, but the largest battles of any kind since World War II took place in cities (xxxvii).

There are several characteristics of megacities that make them a suitable environment for conflict in the future. For example, most megacities have the following attributes: potential for massive poverty and social unrest; potential for environmental concerns; potential for ungoverned spaces; quick mobilization of the population by social media during times of social unrest; and demographic indications of higher birth rates, city migration, and young unemployed masses (174–75). Furthermore, due to urbanization (tendency for migrations to larger cities in the developing or emerging economies), littoralization (the propensity for people to cluster on coastal cities), and connectedness (the increasing connectivity among people, wherever they live), megacities will be the new “bazaar of violence” in the future (35, 176).

An important lesson members of the armed forces, but especially the US Army, will learn after reading this anthology is that in many instances, government response to the challenges in megacities may exacerbate the problem. As John P. Sullivan and Adam Elkus pointed out in their essay “Postcard from Mumbai: Modern Urban Siege,” “Government responses to

urban terrorism, however well intentioned, have exacerbated the problem through the usage of urban military special operations and the construction of militarized space” (38).

In many instances, the community, rather than partnering with the authorities to identify community criminals and drug dealers, resents the police for how they treat members of the shantytowns. Rather than becoming an asset in warfighting against criminal elements in the megacities, the citizens become abettors. For the police forces operating within those megacities’ shanties, “there is little distinction made between residents of the *favela* [shantytown] and drug traffickers” (39).

Another important lesson provided by the contributors is the notion of megacities as a “bazaar of violence.” According to this idea, urban insurgents will attempt to destabilize governments through strategies of sheer violence indiscriminately applied to government officials and civilian populations. Those heinous acts of violence aim to demonstrate to the population that the authorities cannot help them and that they are helpless against the power of the gun (36).

The megacities of the twenty-first century also bear a resemblance to Richard J. Norton’s idea of the “feral city.” According to Norton’s seminal essay “Feral Cities,” a feral city is “a metropolis . . . of more than a million people in a state the government of which has lost the ability to maintain the rule of law within the city’s boundaries yet remains a functioning actor in the greater international system” (*Naval War College Review*, 2003, 98). In the megacities or feral cities of the developing world, militants can easily blend into the local civilian population and use the city’s complex and dense terrain for cover and concealment (648). Furthermore, the unwillingness, or perhaps the inability of governments in megacities or feral cities, to address issues such as urban poverty, youth unemployment, and social and economic marginalization allows criminal networks to gain ground, enabling the flow of illicit drugs, arms, and money into those already relatively deprived communities.

While some military leaders believe the US Army is designed for combat in open terrain, the reality of future combat will be quite different. As the aforementioned strategic studies group concluded, “the Army is currently unprepared” for conflicts in megacities. “Although the Army has a long history of urban fighting, it has never dealt with an environment so complex and beyond the scope of its resources” (21). As Margarita Konaev succinctly states, “as the world’s urban population continues to grow, the future of global security will be determined by what happens in the cities” (651).

The greatest Chinese military strategist Sun Tzu in *The Art of War*, argues that military strategists should avoid urban warfare unless necessary. In other words, attack cities only when there is no alternative. There is no alternative in future wars. Warfare has become an urban phenomenon. Conflicts, political violence, and war will most likely occur in urban megacities rather than rural areas (xli). I recommend *Blood and Concrete: 21st Century Conflict in Urban Centers and Megacities* to students and future leaders at the US Army.

Civil-Military Relations: Control and Effectiveness across Regimes

Edited by Thomas C. Bruneau and Aurel Croissant

Reviewed by Dr. John P. Sullivan, instructor, Safe Communities Institute,
University of Southern California

Civil-military relations refers to the relationships between the military and the state it serves and protects. In democratic societies, this field of study involves all facets of this interaction including the relationships between elected officials and security institutions such as the armed forces, law enforcement agencies, and intelligence services. This profession essentially defines and employs the mechanisms of state control over the military to ensure the state's interests are served. Generally, these relationships involve applying civilian control over the military. In democratic states, elected officials control the military. But hybrid and authoritarian states can—and often effectively do—exert civilian control over their armed forces.

The precarious nature of civil-military relations is currently of great interest as democratic norms involving the separation of civil and military affairs are increasingly challenged. In the United States, the Trump administration blurred the lines between professional ethics and norms by politicizing the military and eroding the professional barriers to political action by servicemembers. The erosion of the separation between military and political spheres is also evident in the rise of authoritarian regimes outside the United States. These contemporary challenges make this edited collection an important guidepost in the discussion of achieving a balance between civil and military power.

The editors, Thomas C. Bruneau, a distinguished professor emeritus in national security affairs at the Naval Postgraduate School and Aurel Croissant, a professor of political science at the Institute of Political Science at Heidelberg University, built this volume on the foundation of a workshop on comparative civil-military relations centered on the nexus of control and effectiveness. Indeed, that nexus is the key to understanding the relationship between the civilian political sphere and the sphere of military operations. That relationship, as described in a continuous implicit thread throughout the book, is one of maintaining balance between civilian and military interests, politics and operations, and control and effectiveness.

Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner
Publishers, 2019

281 pages

\$75.00

Achieving and understanding the factors influencing the balance between civilian control and military effectiveness is the collection's overarching theme. In the book's first chapter, "Civil-Military Relations: Why Control Is Not Enough," the editors chart the course for their exploration of civil-military relations through a series of case studies. This introduction provides a useful survey of the literature and introduces the case studies and the rationale for their selection while identifying common themes and limitations in understanding the scope of civil-military relations. Conventional warfighting is only one of those missions—and a relatively rare one as interstate war is relatively rare in the post-World War II setting.

Counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, humanitarian disaster relief, peacekeeping operations, and supporting the police in fighting crime are increasingly common. These endeavors, collectively known as military operations other than war, challenge the traditional boundaries of the civil-military nexus. Chapter 1 introduces three attributes of military effectiveness that help address this range of activity: defense planning, structures, and resources.

The next two chapters, which are highly technical, address theory and methodological considerations in researching civil-military relations. This rigorous foundation for understanding the scope and applicability of the case studies in this survey also inform future research design. Regime, coup, and military effectiveness datasets are discussed in both qualitative and quantitative dimensions.

The remainder of the book is divided into three substantive sections on civil-military relations with regard to "Establishing Democracies," "Emerging Democracies," and "Hybrid and Authoritarian Regimes." This information is followed by the editors' summary of the various facets of the civil-military nexus.

Part 1 contains a survey of the established democracies of America, Japan, and Germany, providing a familiar, yet evolving landscape that recaps the historical influences of political scientist Samuel P. Huntington and the relationship between America's Congress, president, secretary of defense, and military services. The tensions inherent in these relationships and the balance between civilian control and military effectiveness are then examined in Japan and Germany. These two nations have respectively sought to ensure civilian control to limit militarism and have based their military framework on participation in coalition operations and avoidance of interstate war.

Part 2 looks at the emerging democracies of Chile, Tunisia, and Indonesia where military operations other than war are predominate. Each of these states imposed civilian control in the aftermath of strongman regimes. Tunisia and Indonesia are now facing significant criminal or criminal-terrorist challenges.

Part 3 examines the hybrid and authoritarian regimes of Russia, Turkey, Egypt, and China. These case studies are perhaps the most interesting and pressing in the current threat environment. In Russia, the military plays a key role in domestic politics by exerting internal soft power in support of a regime ruled by a strong leader. Information operations are thus a major component of maintaining the civil-military balance and projecting hard power in external relations.

In Turkey, strengthening civilian control allowed Recep Tayyip Erdogan to suppress opposition and consolidate personal power. In Egypt, military rules and a lack of civilian control results in diminished military effectiveness, as seen in that state's inability to win interstate wars or contain terrorism. The chapter implicitly suggests corruption is a key civilian influence over military affairs. China is the final case examined, and here readers see the Chinese Communist Party is at the core of the civil-military balance. The military owes fealty to the party, and in return, the party gives the military significant control over the party's operations.

This collection provides a solid political science exploration of civil-military relations in a range of states. Senior military leaders, professors and students at war colleges and of civil-military relations, and scholars of the states examined in the case studies will benefit from reading this fine work of scholarship.

DEFENSE STUDIES

Confronting the Evolving Global Security Landscape: Lessons from the Past and Present

By Max G. Manwaring

Reviewed by Dr. Robert J. Bunker, director of research and analysis,
C/O Futures, LLC

This new effort by Max Manwaring compliments his earlier trilogy of books that ended in 2012 with *The Complexity of Modern Irregular Warfare* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012). A recognized subject matter expert in insurgency, the gray zone, political warfare, and crime wars and how they are influencing the twenty-first-century national security environment, Manwaring belongs to an older generation of warrior-scholars who are now fading into collective memory. His past writings, especially those related to politicized gangs and Venezuela under Hugo Chávez, proved quite insightful regarding new and emerging patterns of war and conflict.

Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger
Security International, 2019

173 pages

\$75.00

Confronting the Evolving Global Security Landscape conveys the accumulated wisdom Manwaring has amassed over many decades of soldiering and study. The foreword by Joseph M. Humire, executive director of the Center for a Secure Free Society, discusses his past association with Manwaring and the need to change our thinking about how to approach modern warfare given its increasingly changing nature. The preface acknowledgments and prologue then provide background context, which is meant to transmit “hard-learned, but too often ignored, lessons from the past and present” (xvi).

Organized around themed chapters, the book takes a vignette approach and includes structured analysis at the end of each case study presented. The introductory chapter focuses on the lessons learned from the Portuguese Coup of 1974, and the next seven chapters focus on the themes of stability (Italy 1968–83 and Western Sahara 1975–present), stability and security (Somalia 1992–93 and Bosnia 1992–98), stability and development (Argentina 1960–present and Mexico 1999–present), development and governance (Vietnam 1959–75 and Algeria 1954–62), governance and sovereignty (Malaya 1948–60 and El Salvador 1979–92), sovereignty and security (Venezuela 1998–present and Uruguay 1962–2005), and a prototype for foreign policy and power asset management

(Afghanistan 1979–89). The ninth and final chapter recaps the case study lessons for decision makers and other interested parties.

The afterword by Alan D. Manwaring—the author’s son who has supported his father for two decades and advocated for getting the national security policy recommendations of his father (and his father’s associates) out to wider audiences beyond policy makers—represents a tribute to his father, this book (quite possibly his last work), and his prior major works. The notes and index sections are well appointed although it is evident Manwaring relied on his decades of expertise to provide the bulk of the creative insights and lessons learned rather than drawing upon the constructs and theories of others.

The case studies and Manwaring’s interpretative analysis of them are the heart of the book. For comparative purposes, each case study includes an introduction, the key issue and context, the findings and response, an outcome, implications and conclusions, and key points and lessons. The case studies build upon one another, and Manwaring uses their qualitative dataset to extract selectively the gestalt of the key points and lessons accumulated through this analytical process. The reviewer sees the artistry and mastery of the process; however, “accumulated wisdom” when transmitted is subjective and nuanced with some faith placed in the expertise of the source. Readers will either accept Manwaring’s past record with the SWORD model and his linear-analytic case study approach or discount his record from the get-go for lack of quantitative scientific rigor (6–7).

The other more-pronounced drawback to this insightful work is the steep price of both the hardcover and e-book editions. This criticism is principally directed at the publisher rather than the author as the cost will severely curtail the book’s distribution. It is hoped a more-affordable softcover edition will be produced in the future. Until then, *Confronting the Evolving Global Security Landscape* will remain principally within the purview of university and think-tank libraries and, to a lesser extent, the private collections of national security specialists and military officers. In summation, Manwaring is an “old dog” of sorts but, to his credit, he still has the capacity to teach readers a new trick or two about twenty-first-century insurgency, political warfare, and crime wars.

Feeding Victory: Innovative Military Logistics from Lake George to Khe Sanh

By Jobie Turner

Reviewed by Dr. Scott S. Haraburda, a retired US Army colonel

Professionals study logistics, especially the impact of logistics upon both strategy and tactics, to determine the connection between victory and loss. That is precisely what US Air Force Colonel Jobie Turner offers readers in *Feeding Victory*. He sheds much-needed light on battlefield successes being highly dependent upon the transportation capabilities of its supply chains. During the past three centuries, technology has evolved from the preindustrial era of horse-drawn wagons through the industrial era of locomotive iron horses to the modern digital era of unmanned aerial systems, requiring innovative methods along the way to supply military operations successfully.

The book is divided into an acknowledgments section, an introduction, five chapters, a conclusion, an appendix, notes, a bibliography, and an index. Each chapter contains a well-documented historical case study that examines a technological era represented by its motive power and dominant materials. Turner aptly provides readers with a solid understanding of how changes in technologies, skills, processes, and organizations impact logistical support planning.

During the French and Indian War (1754–63), the British fought the French at Lake George. The larger British force should have quickly overwhelmed the French, but control of the lake vacillated between both sides for years. The French used well-fortified waterways for resupply, while the British moved supplies overland using valuable resources and time-consuming construction processes to produce animal-powered wagons and roads for their main supply routes, which were most frequently attacked and required more resources for fortification. Although the British won the battles, they financed their logistics through increased levies and economic restrictions upon the colonists, which later contributed to their loss of the colonies a few years later.

In a contest of sea versus rail power in 1917, Britain and Germany fought battles as they leveraged new transportation technologies in which iron, coal, and steam replaced wood, wind, and sail. With the world's biggest navy, Britain

Lawrence: University Press
of Kansas, 2020

400 pages

\$39.95

preferred sea movement while Germany favored rail transportation to move supplies overland nearly 50 times faster than horse-drawn wagons. Unfortunately, British dominance of their sea lines of communications ended once they hit the ground, relying heavily upon horses to move forces the “last tactical mile.” With more concern for tracking soldiers and munitions and their one-way logistics system, the British neglected to track port operations, rail usage, and traffic flows. Turner acknowledges this flawed system further inhibited Britain’s ability to handle crowded conditions, to communicate information, and to manage supply flow to the proper locations at the right time. By the end of 1917, however, Britain began employing combined arms—ground and air power—in their operations, while Germany effectively used the rail lines to counter British successes.

Several years later with supplies being transported faster globally, the new technologies of aluminum, oil, and radios replaced iron, coal, and steam, while mobile firepower from aircraft and ships replaced the impact of artillery. As such, aircraft speed, range, and firepower swiftly became necessary for both the United States and Japan as they fought battles for the control of Guadalcanal from 1942–43, with each possessing similar transportation systems and weapons. Logistics, or the lack thereof, affected ground combat power with soldiers on both sides suffering illnesses, hunger, and dehydration. Turner suggests the United States used its valuable resources to project power on the island, doing whatever was necessary to supply its forces. On the other hand, Japan projected its massive power to obtain resources, leaving its forces to survive on their own. This contrast became evident when the rapid influx of Japanese soldiers on the island to overwhelm American forces instead resulted in the decimation of Japanese food supplies. The starving Japanese soldiers, marching through the dense humid jungle, quickly sapped their combat power and remaining supplies, eliminating their ability to conduct effective offensive operations. Favoring its combat power over supplies and choosing speed over capacity, Japan lost the logistics battle and ultimately lost final control of the island.

At the same time, while fighting the Soviet Union during the Battle of Stalingrad, Germany de-modernized its logistics, moving from engine-powered vehicles that either broke down or lacked fuel to animal-powered transportation. This degradation happened because the Germans outran their ground supply lines that stretched hundreds of miles through mud and snow. The Soviets, however, were unable to capitalize upon this weakness—even with more tanks, artillery, and aircraft—because they lacked integration of their logistical efforts to support effective military operations. Germany also controlled the land supply routes by control of the air, done at great expense to logistical sustainment that often resulted in halted attacks when they ran out of fuel. Without effective logistics, Germany’s overwhelming combat power disappeared, and military missions failed.

As part of the 1968 Tet Offensive, the North Vietnamese besieged American soldiers during the Battle of Khe Sanh in South Vietnam. The US use of computers, pressure sensors, improved radar sensors, and satellite communications enhanced logistics and made it harder for the Vietnamese to conceal the location of their combustion engines. The United States successfully used these new technologies to control its supply lines, which allowed the transport of supplies anywhere in the world in just days. Even with overwhelming firepower and control of its supply lines, the United States was unable to destroy resupply efforts of North Vietnamese guerrilla forces. Since the guerillas relied upon arms and munitions, not food or fuel, supplies flowed mainly via human- or animal-powered transportation, such as bicycles and elephants, making it difficult for the United States to stop the flow completely. Ultimately, North Vietnam did not need to win the battles; it just needed to move enough supplies to convince the United States of its enduring strength.

Turner admirably illustrates the effects of technology upon logistics and its abilities to support military missions. Centuries ago, military leaders understood the need to command the sea. Today, command of the air and information domain is equally important to military success. Senior military leaders will appreciate Turner's research, and his lessons will enhance their ability to address logistical considerations when developing future strategic plans.

MILITARY HISTORY

Killing for the Republic: Citizen-Soldiers and the Roman Way of War

By Steele Brand

Reviewed by Dr. John A. Bonin, consultant, US Army War College

This timely book answers the question of how Rome—originally a small hill village—became the master of the Mediterranean world by 146 BC through the employment of part-time citizen-soldiers. Using classical Roman primary sources such as the works of Livy, Polybius, and Cicero, he argues that Roman republican values and institutions better prepared common men for the rigors and horrors of war than any other ancient civilization. Brand, an assistant professor of history at The King's College in New York City, served from 2009 to 2013 as a US Army tactical intelligence officer who deployed to Afghanistan.

Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019

392 pages

\$34.95

The book includes a preface, a prologue, four parts (one thematic and the others chronological), and an epilogue. The preface and the prologue argue why the Roman Republic and its citizen-soldiers are significant to modern America. The first part describes the relationship between ancient Rome's citizens and their republic. Part 2 provides a history of Rome's original royal and early republic armies, while the third part continues with the success of the Roman middle republic as their citizen-armies defeated the major powers around the Mediterranean. Lastly, Part 4 covers the late Roman Republic from Marius to its replacement with an empire by Augustus. The epilogue questions if the resulting professional imperial Roman army is a better model than one with more participation by citizen-soldiers.

Brand analyzes five specific battles that best represent Rome's constitutional, military, and cultural evolution. During this evolution, Rome's citizen-soldiers, both the elites serving as cavalry and the middling Roman landowners serving as infantry, confronted some of the toughest warriors of the day—from barbaric Gauls at Sentinum in 295 BC to Carthaginian mercenaries at Cartagena in 209 BC to professional Macedonian successors to Alexander at Pydna in 168 BC. In every battle, the numbers, morale, and competence of Roman citizen-soldiers proved decisive. But finally, Rome's citizen-soldiers faced their most dangerous foe, other Roman citizen-soldiers during brutal civil wars—especially the battles of Mutina in 43 BC and Philippi in 42 BC.

Brand does not just review military history. He also explores Rome's cultural and political history and investigates Rome's constitutional basis as a republic and how it obtained maximum military participation and effort from all classes so they achieved socially acclaimed virtue through service. While Brand's research and analysis is extensive, I believe his thesis has several flaws.

First, and most significant, the Roman Republic had already become a *de facto* empire with its successive defeats from 202 to 168 BC of every other major power in the Mediterranean—Carthage, Macedonia (twice), and the Seleucid Empire. The wealth derived from the empire and the demands of maintaining large deployments of Roman citizen-soldiers in Spain, North Africa, and Asia Minor changed the empire's social structure by the late Roman Republic. The elites, who avoided these deployments, now sought wealth accumulation and ruined the small Roman landowners whose plots were then seized and operated by aristocratic landowners using the flood of slave labor provided by these conquests.

Second, Brand overly focuses on the later stages of the late Roman Republic. Many of the problems with the erosion of the Republic and the decreasing role of true citizen-soldiers happened years before as described in *The Storm before the Storm: The Beginning of the End of the Roman Republic* by Mike Duncan (PublicAffairs, October 2017). The Roman Army and its civic militarism had already been significantly challenged—especially by the 105 BC invasion of the Cimbri and Teutons—with the resulting military reforms credited to Marius. These reforms reduced property qualifications for military service, eliminated elite citizens as cavalry, began providing state equipment for common soldiers, and increased soldier dependence on their generals for loot and retirement benefits. In violation of the Republican constitution, Marius was elected consul numerous times and later engaged in the first of several brutal civil wars with his rival and successor, Sulla.

Third, the first triumvirate of Caesar, Pompey, and Crassus that ruled Rome circa 60 BC, and the subsequent civil war between Caesar and Pompey with their personal armies from 49 to 45 BC, marked the end of the previous constitution. Brand appears to believe the Roman Republic and its citizen-soldiers could still be saved as late as the battle of Philippi in 42 BC between Caesar's heir, Octavian, and Mark Anthony and Caesar's assassins, Brutus and Cassius. By this time, the Roman Republic and its mass part-time citizen-armies appeared to have been irreparably destroyed. Of course, historically Octavian became Augustus and created the actual Roman Empire and its professional army that maintained Pax Romana for centuries to come. This historic parallel with the contemporary United States Republic policing Pax Americana with a professional army and its impact appears to be one of Brand's primary concerns.

Despite my criticisms, *Killing for the Republic: Citizen-Soldiers and the Roman Way of War* is a valuable resource for serious students of Roman history, civil-military relations, and the future of the American political experiment.

1939: A People's History of the Coming of the Second World War

By Frederick Taylor

Reviewed by Donald A. Carter, historian, US Army Center of Military History

In his introduction, Frederick Taylor identifies an alternate title for his book was “The War Nobody Wanted” (1). He asserts that, unlike 1914, “there was no mass outbreak of enthusiasm for war” in 1939 (1). Instead, “the propaganda campaign undertaken by the Nazi regime . . . provides a near-perfect example of how, when a government exercises total control of information, an entire nation can be bent to its will” (2). Taylor then tells the familiar story of events leading up to the war, beginning with British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain’s pronouncement of “peace for our time” and concluding with the opening days of the Nazi invasion of Poland.

New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2020

448 pages

\$30.00

Instead of extensive research into historical documents, Taylor bases his narrative on newspapers, diaries, secondary sources, and interviews with British and German citizens who lived through the experience. He notes there were “a host of diaries, newspapers, and memoirs” providing insights into “the everyday lives, fears, hopes, and prejudices of the British population during the year covered by the book” (3). The British Imperial War Museum supported Taylor’s research with audio interview recordings, and German archives and daily newspapers provided individual perspectives on the increasing control of the Nazi party apparatus over the news media. Through this approach, Taylor captures what individuals were doing and thinking as the war approached, but did not necessarily dominate their attention. The result is an interesting—if somewhat episodic—examination of everyday life in Britain and Germany as both nations approached the abyss.

Although often engaging, the book fails to make a case for Taylor’s premise that this was a war nobody wanted. Much to the contrary, he mounts a convincing argument that the leaders of Nazi Germany waged a masterful campaign of propaganda and misinformation to generate public support and enthusiasm for the regime’s military adventures. Readers have only to watch footage of the rallies at Nuremberg to understand the effectiveness of those efforts. If anything, Taylor at times seems to be trying to exonerate the general population, blaming the racism and anti-Semitic hysteria exclusively on Nazi manipulation. Not overtly, but the undercurrent is there.

On the other side, readers see the reluctance of the British citizenry to return to the battlefield. Nonetheless, Taylor paints a vivid picture of their resilience and growing resignation to the reality of what is taking place on the continent. A more accurate assessment might conclude the war was one most of the German population came to embrace, while most of the British population recognized the war was one that had to be fought.

In today's political climate, the book's most relevant aspect is its depiction and analysis of the news media as a weapon of warfare. Anyone who casually employs the term fake news in irritation with today's media would do well to read this story of what the term really means and the power it wields. While the Nazi mastery of information warfare is evident throughout the book, British efforts are equally effective if more subtle. As the German media marshaled and harnessed the outrage of its citizens to support the move toward war, so too did the British newspapers as they began to sway public opinion toward intervention—all without the benefit of the Internet, social media, or, for the most part, television.

While *1939: A People's History of the Coming of World War II* adds little new insight into an admittedly well-worked field, it is, however, a satisfying and entertaining account of the perceptions of everyday civilians to the gathering storm brought to life through interesting anecdotes and insights. Although Taylor occasionally digresses to current political affairs, he generally avoids the comparison. While his argument that nobody wanted war is unconvincing, his descriptions of efforts on both sides (particularly the Germans) to control the information released to the public and to shape popular opinion are disturbing—and at times uncomfortably familiar.

Special Forces Berlin: Clandestine Cold War Operations of the US Army's Elite, 1956–1990

By James Stejskal

Reviewed by Dr. David P. Oakley, assistant professor and scholar,
National Defense University

Special operations forces (SOF) have been at the forefront of global counterterrorism efforts and an integral part of America's military approach since 2001. The military's reliance on special operations has led to closer cooperation between SOF and conventional forces, while also resulting in a twofold increase in SOF over the past two decades (CSIS 2019). Despite greater operational familiarity and the increased regularity of irregular warfare in conventional military lexicon, much remains unknown about the Cold War history of SOF and how it shaped today's special operators. This lack of information is unfortunate because current security professionals can learn much from previous irregular warfare experiences as the United States competes with Russia and China. *Special Forces Berlin: Clandestine Cold War Operations of the US Army's Elite, 1956–1990* is a valuable unit history that reduces this gap.

Havertown, PA: Casemate Publishers, 2020

336 pages

\$32.95

James Stejskal, a former SOF and CIA officer, tells the story of the 39th Special Forces Detachment/Detachment A and its successor Physical Security Support Element-Berlin during their three-decade existence. Originally established in 1956 to provide small unit direct action and unconventional warfare capabilities during a Soviet invasion, Detachment A adopted a counterterrorism role in the 1970s as the threat of terrorism increased. In the early 1980s, Army officials closed Detachment A and replaced it with Physical Security Support Element-Berlin over fear the unit and its personnel were too well known to Warsaw Pact countries. Despite a name swap and a new cover story, the unit's mission remained unchanged. Toward the end of the Cold War, the Army disbanded Physical Security Support Element-Berlin and assigned its members to other Special Forces units. The unit's unconventional warfare and counterterrorism expertise, coupled with its clandestine collection capability, made it a valuable asset for the US Army, its German allies, and its partners beyond Berlin's borders. Even though a Soviet invasion never occurred, the unit remained active during the Cold War and helped shape contemporary SOF.

The book's eight chapters follow a chronological time line of the unit's evolution from its founding in 1956 through its transition in 1984 to its closure in 1990. Although Stejskal focuses on Special Forces in Berlin, he also nicely nests the unit's history within a larger historical context, allowing readers to appreciate how the environment shaped the unit and

how the unit and its members influenced others. For example, a discussion in the first chapter on the early years of SOF and its relationship with the CIA regarding unconventional warfare is particularly useful. The chapter also provides an excellent example of early Department of Defense/CIA relations. It describes bureaucratic struggles so readers can understand the roles and responsibilities of each in a dynamic and uncertain environment. These debates will resonate with practitioners trying to appreciate shifting roles and responsibilities within the current security environment.

Practitioners will also find the discussion on the evolving unit mission and the risks involved with shifting operational focus informative. Although a direct action counterterrorism capability in Europe was needed during the 1970s and 1980s, Stejskal points out how preparing for counterterrorism missions distracted the unit from “the more esoteric tradecraft required for the wartime [unconventional warfare] UW mission” (272). Contemporary security practitioners should appreciate this type of trade-off. Stejskal also shows how organizations created for one purpose often evolve in directions that were unforeseen at their establishment. Although practitioners might not discover solutions in the book, they should find solace in knowing that previous generations grappled with similar dilemmas.

Having served in the unit during the 1970s and 1980s, Stejskal has personal knowledge and access that most authors do not, and his storytelling approach results in interesting personal stories and detailed descriptions of unit members and their experiences. He brings the personalities to life and engages readers, making for a memorable and entertaining book. Stejskal’s descriptive telling of unit members’ involvement in preparation for the attempted Iran hostage rescue is one example. This story is fascinating and reveals the unique combined capabilities the unit provided the United States.

Overall, readers will benefit from Stejskal’s insights and experiences; however, there are times when his passion results in too much detail for general readers. For example, some readers may find the in-depth discussion of underwater operations and SCUBA gear in chapter 3 interesting, but it distracts from the more fascinating elements of the story. With that said, the book is largely free of minutiae, and the presence of such details highlights Stejskal’s passion and familiarity with the topic.

As Stejskal makes clear, this book was a labor of love. In addition to his reflections, he interviewed more than 50 former unit members and senior leaders. His intimate knowledge of special operations in Berlin, personal experiences, and passion shine through in his writing, resulting in an enjoyable and engaging book that places readers in the visual environment he creates. While *Special Forces Berlin: Clandestine Cold War Operations of the US Army’s Elite, 1956–1990* is aimed at a more general audience, scholars will find value in accessing experiences and details previously locked in a classified vault or unit members’ heads.

Southern Gambit: Cornwallis and the British March to Yorktown

By Stanley D. M. Carpenter

Reviewed by Dr. Scott A. Smitson, professor of geostrategy, geoeconomics, and transnational affairs at Joint Special Operations University

In a monograph for the US Army War College Press, the late strategic theorist Colin S. Gray argued that despite changes in the character of war over time, the core logic of strategy remains timeless. During uncertain and increasingly complex times in the global security environment, a select numbers of scholars like Gray have routinely emphasized the utility of history to examine contemporary challenges for continuities in the human experience of designing, implementing, and executing strategy. In that tradition alone, Stanley D. M. Carpenter's *Southern Gambit: Cornwallis and the British March to Yorktown* is a tour de force.

The book meets the highest standards set for historical scholarship—from the depth of Carpenter's research, his demonstrated mastery of the topic, and his avoidance of the myopic to his balanced analysis of the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of war and his clear contributions to the study of the history of the American Revolution. Beyond these accomplishments, Carpenter's most important achievement is brilliantly weaving the core components of strategic theory and practice in an underappreciated and understudied arena of the Revolutionary War: the British Southern Campaign of 1778–81.

Two years after the Declaration of Independence, the Revolutionary War was at a strategic stalemate, which drove the British to consider alternative approaches to regain the initiative and bring the war to a reasonable conclusion amenable to the desires of the Crown. Ending the war was imperative, as Carpenter illustrates, because the Revolutionary War was a subset of a broader global war between the British Empire and the French and Spanish Bourbon Empires. The British hoped by emphasizing the South as the main theater of consequence in the war, it could leverage Loyalist support in the agricultural-rich southern colonies, re-establish Crown control colony-by-colony northwards, defeat the Continental Army under the leadership of General George Washington, and bring about a negotiated settlement to the war on terms favorable to the Crown. Once Crown control had been re-established, British military assets could then be redeployed for the global war against France.

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332 pages

\$34.95

The strategic dilemma for the British, as put forth by Carpenter in the preface, was not alien to the type of conflict America increasingly finds itself in today: how does a distant great power prosecute an irregular war within the context of a regional struggle, all within a global competitive environment? As Carpenter explains, the war in the American colonies was largely an economy-of-force effort for the British, given the competing resource demands in other regions around the world in the war against France. This shortage of resources and manpower motivated the Southern Strategy, yet also contained within it the seeds of its own destruction: the assumption that the significant numbers of Loyalists within the populations of the southern colonies would be a key asset and resource and enable an ultimate British victory. As readers will learn, this assumption did not hold.

Carpenter's central aim is to highlight and understand why a strategy that seemed, in principle, a well-reasoned and logical approach, not only failed to translate to success for the British in the south, but also led to their overall defeat and eventual American independence. Carpenter expertly walks readers through the collapse of the Crown's approach through a British strategic perspective, to include the role of Lord Charles Cornwallis, the commander of all Crown forces in the southern colonies.

To structure his history and analysis of the Southern Strategy, Carter admirably takes the time and effort to introduce a framework of strategic concepts that he returns to time and time again. The introduction and inclusion of this framework in the initial chapter is elemental to the book's success, as it serves as the foundation for a broader narrative that is subtly present throughout the detailed chapters: while the character of war is always changing, its nature does not, and the core logic of strategy endures across time and space. By taking this approach, Carpenter elucidates issues of strategy and war that have applicability and utility beyond the Revolutionary War period, up to and including the current complex security environment in which the United States finds itself.

The violation of these enduring tenets of strategy led, in Carpenter's argument, to the ultimate undoing of British strategy—from a lack of strategic and operational coherence across the colonies, repeated breakdowns in unity of command and effort, the inability of strategic leaders to select and implement appropriate strategies, and most crucially a flawed theory of victory that rested on untenable assumptions that foundered in a kind of war the British could not understand.

While the British were adept at projecting power globally and achieving victory at sea and on land in conventional conflicts of the time, the Revolutionary War was not a classic conventional war, from Carpenter's perspective, but a hybrid war with conventional, irregular, and revolutionary elements. For Cornwallis, his

unwavering commitment to offensive, conventional war in a theater that was anything but would be his ultimate undoing, including his inability to defeat the Fabian approaches taken by Continental Army General Nathanael Greene and the irregular warfare tactics employed by the “Swamp Fox” Francis Marion.

The British strategic and operational leadership failed to understand the nature of the conflict in which they found themselves. Considering the significant experience of Cornwallis, before and after the Revolutionary War, this failure should be a cautionary tale to personnel in the profession of arms—past victories do not easily and automatically translate to present and emergent challenges. As the US military reorients its focus on great-power competition, while still committed to fighting irregular wars in distant lands, the implications of Carpenter’s argument in *Southern Gambit* are as timely as they are relevant, making this book a must read for scholars and practitioners of the strategic and operational arts.

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

Adopting Mission Command: Developing Leaders for a Superior Command Culture

By Donald E. Vandergriff

Reviewed by Captain David M. Todd, US Navy chaplain

In *Adopting Mission Command: Developing Leaders for a Superior Command Culture*, noted author and practitioner Donald Vandergriff offers a fascinating look into the change needed to transform the Army from an Industrial-Age behemoth to an Information-Age cheetah. The cultural philosophy of the German Army, often summarized under the concept of *Auftragstaktik* and translated as “mission command,” has received much focus in the past 30 years. Few authors have been more active researching, articulating, and implementing its core tenets in both theory and practice.

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Institute Press, 2019

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This book—a compilation of Vandergriff’s previous publications *Raising the Bar: Creating and Nurturing Adaptability to Deal with the Changing Face of War* (Center for Defense Information Press, 2006), *Today’s Training and Education (Development) Revolution: The Future is Now!* (Institute of Land Warfare, 2010), and “Before There Was Digitization: How MG J. S. Wood’s 4th Armored Division Stormed across France without Written Orders” (*Armor*, September–October 2000)—provides a unique perspective on the contextual development of his thoughts but makes for uneven reading.

In the first few chapters, Vandergriff sets the foundation for the optimal learning environment for agile military leaders based on the concepts of mission command. The unchanging nature of war consists, in no small part, in its uncertainty and unknown, the “fog and friction” that make the simple difficult (chap. 9). Therefore, the *sine qua non* of military leadership is the ability to form and reform mental constructs constantly within that uncertainty and act upon them quicker than the adversary’s decision cycle’s ability to respond to the reality created by those decisive actions. Successful leaders create and clarify a shared mental model of utmost importance—the mission—while entrusting to their subordinates the creativity, innovation, and independence necessary for its execution within the dynamic environment that is war. Following the first chapter

featuring John Boyd's theory on decision making, Vandergriff sees in the historic German military culture the ideal embodiment of the development of a profession of arms of excellence. The ultimacy of the leaders and their development—at every level—is not the technology, doctrine, or even the system, but the asymmetrical advantage necessary to win the future war.

Vandergriff is at his best when summarizing the essence of what Dr. Chet Richards called the “blitzkrieg culture” the key cultural concepts of “*Einheit*, *Behändigkeit*, *Fingerspitzengefühl*, *Auftragstaktik*, and *Schwerpunkt*” (chap. 11). Interestingly, concepts such as mental agility, reciprocal trust and loyalty, intuition, the development of tacit and collective knowledge, internalized ownership, and decentralized control are found in cutting-edge leader development theories in the civilian sector, Deliberately Developmental Learning Organization and High-Velocity Learning Organization to name a few. While education is essential for the acquisition of knowledge (knowing) and training for the increase of competence (doing), it is the focus on the transformative development of strength of character (being) through shared life together (experience) that characterizes the leader who can integrate knowledge, independence, and joy of taking responsibility inherent into leading well.

The barrier to a mission command culture is the Army's antiquated personnel system, a holdover from Industrial-Age values and allegiances that facilitates compliance, careerism, and micromanagement rather than ownership, innovation, and trust. For Vandergriff, emphasizing the concepts of *Auftragstaktik* in the preparation of Army leaders would set the conditions necessary for the longer-term reforms needed in the personnel system and force structure of the institution. Implementing methodologies he and others pioneered, such as Outcome-Based Training and Education and the Adaptive Course Model, would enable a generation of young mission command-developed leaders to emerge and facilitate the evolution toward a flatter and more adaptive organization. These methodologies incorporate the latest advances in experiential learning and prioritize the development of agile, autonomous thinking leaders in changing and uncertain environments over mere adherence to task, condition, and standards, teaching how to think rather than what to think.

The heart of the book is a veritable “how-to” on developing the conditions for this superior command culture, based on the German model and Vandergriff's years of experience and implementation. Leaders must be teaching leaders par excellence—which has two important implications. Only the best teaching leaders should be assigned to education and training commands, and a leader mindset leads by education, training, developing every day, and using daily tasks and contexts (experience) as the curriculum for intentional leader development. Sharing best practices for creating outcomes and measures, Vandergriff systematically lays out

chapters on tactical decision games, war gaming, free play force-on-force exercises, combat physical fitness, and evaluations to inculcate cognitive complexity, initiative, and confidence in subordinate leader development. The leader leads not only by demonstrating the commitment to a culture of professional excellence but by an intentional dedication—intrusive in the best sense of the word—to the personal growth and development of the team. A chapter on the implementation of Outcome-Based Training and Education and an Adaptive Course Model at the Army Reconnaissance Course showcases the promise and possibilities of implementing these methodologies throughout the Army.

Vandergriff concludes the book with the mission command success of Major General J. S. Wood and the 4th Armored Division in World War II as an example of what right looks like. Many salient components of mission command are personified in the character of Wood and his leaders. While strength of character and, specifically, moral courage seem to be key components of the mission command culture, this example is the closest Vandergriff comes to a clear definition of these foundational elements. Interestingly, Wood's success in utilizing mission command is directly proportional to the German military leaders' abandonment of their *Auftragstaktik* culture; most tellingly, their loss of moral courage. In the final analysis, perhaps, ultimacy must transcend mission—as lofty as the defense of the fatherland is—or it may fall victim to something less than human excellence.

STRATEGY

Reassessing US Nuclear Strategy

By David W. Karn Jr.

Reviewed by Amy F. Woolf, specialist in nuclear weapons policy,
Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division, Congressional
Research Service, Library of Congress

David W. Karn Jr., in *Reassessing US Nuclear Strategy*, sheds light on the public debate about US nuclear weapons, with the goal of identifying “an optimal nuclear strategy” for the United States (Introduction). In this deeply researched volume, he collects the thoughts, analysis, and recommendations of key writers and scholars who have wrestled with nuclear strategy for nearly 60 years and divides their writings into “three ideal type (or representative) nuclear strategies,” derived from the schools of thought evident in the literature from both the Cold War era and more recent years (Introduction).

Karn evaluates and compares the three approaches—nuclear primacy, robust nuclear deterrent, and minimum deterrent—and assesses whether the strategies and their associated force structures, declaratory policy, and employment guidance would strengthen or undermine US national security and nuclear deterrence objectives. He examines how the approaches will affect the US goals of extending nuclear deterrence to US allies and dissuading adversaries from challenging the United States—whether they will bolster or weaken US arms control and nuclear nonproliferation objectives and how they might affect the cost of nuclear weapons modernization programs.

Karn presents each strategic approach “on its merits . . . using the best cases made by its advocates” (Introduction). Consequently, much of the book consists of passages that piece together concepts enunciated by “academic scholars and policy analysts,” with the goal of producing a synthesized framework for each ideal strategy (Introduction). While this approach demonstrates the depth and breadth of his research, it creates an awkward narrative that often undermines his analysis.

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2019

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Many of the policy analysts cited are better characterized as policy advocates who promote their views when out of government, while waiting for the opportunity to join the government and implement their preferred strategies. When these policy analysts do serve in government, they sometimes change the rhetoric used to describe US nuclear strategy, but rarely have a lasting effect on its fundamental character or its implementation.

This rhetoric is not evident in Kern's book because he never describes the actual contours of US nuclear strategy. He focuses instead on public statements and academic debates—an odd omission, as a study seeking to evaluate possible changes in US nuclear strategy should, at the very least, offer enough information about the current approach for readers to understand what would change if the United States adopted any of the “ideal nuclear strategies” (Introduction). By focusing on the theoretical concepts favored by scholars and policy advocates, Kern never addresses factors like domestic politics, technological limits, and budgetary restrictions that have affected US nuclear programs. For example, he assesses how each alternative strategy might affect the cost of nuclear modernization, but never acknowledges the reverse, that concerns throughout the nuclear age about costs have affected the size, structure, and planning for US nuclear weapons.

Kern's study is also weakened with inaccurate data and superficial analysis. He frequently provides incorrect dates for historical events—START II was signed in 1993, not 1992; the Clinton administration's Nuclear Posture Review began in 1993, not 1992 (when Clinton was not yet president); and President Obama's speech in Prague occurred in 2009, not 2008 (when he was not yet president). His descriptions of the current US nuclear force structure and the goals of the modernization programs often reflect the preferences of his research sources, not the goals enunciated by US national security officials. His summary of US arms control and nonproliferation objectives is simplistic and echoes the critiques of analysts who reject these goals. While these errors may be the result of poor editing or Kern's unquestioned acceptance of his sources' preferences, the frequency of errors raises doubts about his understanding of the material.

Kern limits the value of his analysis in two additional ways. First, he asks a question that answers itself and second, he does not address the actual question that animates most debates over US nuclear policy. On the first point, Kern opens his analysis with a discussion of the assumptions guiding his effort. He begins with the “central assumption that nuclear weapons are and will remain important for the overall security of the United States” (Introduction). He also notes the United States “finds itself engaged in a renewed great power competition with Russia and China” and indicates his analysis will assume this security environment will persist into the future

(Introduction). These assumptions essentially determine the outcome of the study.

If one assumes China and Russia will remain great power competitors, then a nuclear primacy strategy will fail. As Kern notes, both nations have the means to respond to US efforts to achieve dominance, and the effort itself would likely generate an expensive and destabilizing arms race. The authors cited in the book who support this strategy generally recognize this problem. Those writing in the 1980s saw US nuclear superiority slip away as the Soviet Union expanded its offensive forces and hoped a US buildup of ballistic missile defenses would re-establish US primacy. The United States, however, lacked the technology—and funding—for expansive missile defenses, while US policy supporting their development likely encouraged the Soviet Union to further expand its offensive arsenal. Authors writing about this strategy in the 2000s assumed Russia and China could not compete with the United States, and, therefore, a US attempt to establish primacy over regional adversaries would also produce primacy over these two nations. They never argued the United States should seek primacy over a resurgent Russian and growing China.

If one assumes “nuclear weapons are and will remain important for the overall security of the United States” then a minimum deterrence strategy will fail (Introduction). Scholars and analysts who support this strategy would likely agree with Kern’s assessment that the strategy would not achieve many of the goals identified in his analysis because it is not intended to do so. Their case for minimum deterrence rests on the argument the United States should reduce its reliance on nuclear weapons. To achieve this goal, the United States would need policies that mitigate the risks from great power competition without relying on larger arsenals and more aggressive targeting.

Finally, although Kern’s extensive research led him to conclude a robust deterrent is the ideal approach for US nuclear strategy, the US national security establishment has relied on this approach for decades (Introduction). The United States has sought to maintain a robust deterrent since the 1960s, when it was evident the Soviet Union would challenge US nuclear superiority. The debate within the US national security community has almost always been about the numbers and types of weapons needed to maintain a robust deterrent, not about whether the United States should change its strategy. Thus, *Reassessing US Nuclear Strategy* shines light on a debate found mostly in academic literature and fails to address the areas of debate relevant to senior members of the US defense community.