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Book Reviews

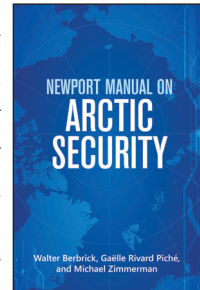
ARCTIC ISSUES

Newport Manual on Arctic Security

by Walter Berberick, Gaëlle Rivard Piché, and Michael D. Zimmerman

Reviewed by Mr. Mark E. Rosen, captain, US Navy Judge Advocate General Corps (retired),
and senior vice president and general counsel, CNA Corporation

In the *Newport Manual*, the authors valiantly attempt to catalogue the issue sets pertaining to the Arctic from a security, economic, and political perspective and make policy suggestions. The book does a particularly good job of explaining the impact of indigenous people and their representatives and how these groups will possibly be used by outsiders (such as China) to drive a wedge between indigenous governments and their nation states. Another thing worth noting was the extraordinary care used in describing the maze of international agreements (especially in the maritime field). The legal descriptions and the footnotes are incredibly useful, too.



The authors did an excellent job of tracking the military operations and exercises held in the region and groups (such as the Coast Guard forum) that have been used effectively in the past. I wish the authors had talked about the security issues associated with China's increased physical and economic presence in the region, including how the "Arctic Eight" (Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden, and the United States) will deal with illegal fishing, given that the high-seas fishing agreement is not legally binding and most exclusive economic zones are incapable of being monitored. Also, how should the Arctic Eight deal with increased foreign investment—especially from China? What are the political ramifications of a large industrial or shipping accident that resulted in major pollution?

The book is organized into three parts—awareness, confidence-building measures, and capabilities. It is further divided into 30 principles. The authors assert in principle 3 that a "greater emphasis on sea power is essential. While it is true that the Arctic is a maritime region and its economic activity takes place near the coast, the authors wisely argue that policymakers should have a nuanced view when it comes to increased force levels or such things as freedom of navigation operations. The authors also suggest a bigger role for the Arctic Council to promote transparency regarding foreign investments and research activities and possibly some form of burden sharing, since the Arctic littoral countries would bear the brunt of any type of environmental calamity.

Part two, “Confidence-Building Measures,” was my favorite. In it, the authors unveiled ideas to reduce the risk of war and promote cooperation in the Arctic. The establishment of a regional air defense identification zone to prevent surprises arising from military aircraft movements near a border seems an especially good idea given that this is perhaps greatest source of friction and concern. One thing not discussed in detail was collaborative confidence-building measures among the Arctic littoral states to have open dialogue and establish plans to address the common risks associated with marine oil and gas exploration, poor charts and navigation aids, and non-Polar Code compliant vessels and mining.

The last part, “Capabilities,” addresses the ability of states to manage the issues discussed. The section begins with a review of the Arctic policies (including acquisition plans) of various states. This review was especially good in tracing regional military build ups, but the section on Russia was brief. Given that Russia is cited as a major security concern, the book should have spent more time discussing specifics about Russia’s build up and distinguishing between routine modernization and genuine expansion. The section does not address the huge risks to the marine environment from near-shore development, mining, and oil and gas development (and how they can be abated). In contrast, the section on “Indigenous knowledge” was excellent in cataloging shortfalls in relations between security officials and indigenous peoples and how these people can be integrated (with mutual benefit) into existing security architectures. The section about information sharing did a good job of explaining the importance of maritime domain awareness and the urgent need for sharing among states. The section does not, however, address the two most pressing issues: (1) how to integrate Russia into the maritime domain awareness scheme and (2) how to create financial and other incentives for all to be part of the network. Finally, the sections on icebreakers and pooling resources make an excellent case for creating a multinational icebreaker force and exploring how states without those platforms can help contribute other capabilities to share in ice breaking support.

The concluding section knits things together and includes the key takeaway that the United States and other Arctic players have more to lose than gain by isolating one or more states, including Russia. That perspective is a courageous stand policymakers should study closely. The authors circle back to the question of governance and security and advocate for some sort of security forum to prevent an arms race and curtail dangerous military activities. Prevention of a major shipping or industrial accident should be part of those discussions.

Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2022 • 228 pages • \$49.95

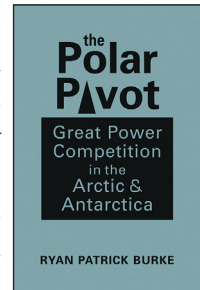
Keywords: Arctic, Arctic Eight, Russia, security, maritime domain awareness

The Polar Pivot: Great Power Competition in the Arctic and Antarctica

by Ryan Patrick Burke

Reviewed by Captain Mark T. Vicik, US Army military intelligence officer

Ryan Burke illuminates emerging security challenges in the polar regions to highlight a gap in America's national defense posture in *The Polar Pivot*. Burke leverages his expertise in defense policy and grand strategy to develop a new security narrative for the Arctic and Antarctica. He provides various unique academic frameworks to assess the importance of the polar regions, measure the relative power of state actors, and predict the future trajectory of security issues in the poles. His process, which he refers to as the "polar pivot," identifies Russia and China as strategic threats in the polar regions and justifies a series of policy prescriptions to refocus the defense community on the poles (21).



Burke outlines the history of international competition in the poles to demonstrate the significance of these regions in the emerging era of great-power competition. To describe the potential drivers of increased polar tension, he lays out a new framework called the "Four Cs" (45ff). He models his framework on Mike Sfraga's Arctic Seven Cs, which define key considerations for analyzing Arctic issues. Burke offers additional concerns—commons, claims, covenants, and cosmos—that could bring states from the last of Sfraga's Seven Cs, competition, into confrontation or conflict. While Burke acknowledges differences between the northern and southern polar regions, he develops his Four Cs framework to highlight concerns pertinent to both poles, allowing him to discuss Arctic and Antarctic issues in parallel throughout his work. A framework that captures northern and southern polar security concerns is uniquely valuable to the national defense community. Recently, academics and policymakers have increased their focus on Arctic security challenges but have failed to do the same for Antarctica. Burke's framework offers a platform to build Antarctic considerations into newly developing Arctic security policy, potentially rectifying this shortfall.

After establishing the interests at play through the Four Cs, Burke assesses the relative power of state actors in the poles using the second of his unique academic frameworks, a typology that groups polar actors by their capability and intent to exert influence in the regions. His typology, governed by Anne-Marie Brady's definition of a "polar great power," defines China, Russia, and the United States as the only three nations meeting the criteria for polar great powers (77). These states have the capability

and intent to project significant power into the poles. He discusses Russian and Chinese polar activities to understand their strategic objectives. He also highlights attempts by Moscow and Beijing to disrupt international norms and stresses their revisionist agendas to establish the threat they pose to the stability of the polar regions.

Having framed the key national interests at stake, Burke prescribes a new national strategy founded on an increased polar focus to address these challenges. This national readjustment, the eponymous “polar pivot,” would be built on a general change in US grand strategy and a series of specific policy recommendations. *The Polar Pivot* is grounded in a strategy of “transactional balancing” (20). Modeled after John Mearsheimer’s theories on offensive realism and offshore balancing, Burke’s transactional balancing approach provides a strategy specifically tailored to the global commons, which includes Antarctica and much of the Arctic. Transactional balancing assumes the ultimate failure of treaty-based organizations in the polar regions and instead maintains the balance of power through a series of bilateral transactions. While Burke’s disregard for the value of multinational institutions can appear extreme at times, his proposed strategy offers an interesting alternative to the blind reliance on international organizations characteristic of post–Cold War US polar policy.

Perhaps the most interesting proposal is an update to the Department of Defense’s unified combatant command structure to include a “Polar Command” (POLCOM) (212). Burke’s POLCOM proposal is an attempt to rectify the ambiguity and disunity of command authority in the polar region since the Arctic is currently shared by two geographic combatant commands, and Antarctica is shared by three, which could impede an effective military response to threats in the regions. He creates a seventh geographic combatant command split into POLCOM North, with consolidated authority over the Arctic, and POLCOM South, with the same responsibility in Antarctica. Overall, *The Polar Pivot* provides a uniquely realist perspective on polar security that is largely absent from existing scholarship. Members of the defense community seeking to understand emerging national security challenges in the polar regions should strongly consider reading his work.

Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2022 • 261 pages • \$98.00

Keywords: Mike Sfraga, Arctic, Antarctica, Russia, China, John Mearsheimer

IRREGULAR WARFARE

Enemies Near and Far: How Jihadist Groups Strategize, Plot, and Learn

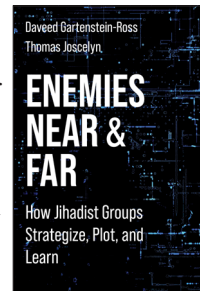
by Daveed Gartenstein-Ross and Thomas Joscelyn

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

Part of Bruce Hoffman's Columbia Studies in Terrorism and Irregular Warfare series, *Enemies Near & Far* is an absolute gem and maintains the high academic standards of this body of literature. Clearly the authors put much effort, resources, and expertise into this project's creation and execution. The authors have extensive backgrounds in international jihadi terrorism analysis. The book's research and writing were underwritten by the Foundation for Defense of Democracies and related entities, which provided the authors with the necessary time to craft a high-quality product.

This work provides insights into jihadi groups' organizational learning in a more sweeping and generalized manner over time, as opposed to a specific case-study or time-period approach (19). The authors present an overview of the process of organizational, as opposed to individual, learning and then explain the book's approach and methodology. The core of this process is articulated in "the violent non-state actor technology adoption curve," which highlights its early adoption, iteration, breakthrough, and competition phases (see fig. 2.3, p. 39). The authors then view and interpret the case-study chapters within their respective contexts and within this qualitative research design with various factors influencing this learning: organizational structure, intragroup communication, membership of an organization, organizational culture and learning mechanisms, and external environment (32–38). These chapters, while at times long, contain a wealth of detail and are best read one at a time and then reflected upon. Nuggets include Hezbollah vehicle-borne improvised explosive device training, intelligence, and related support provided to al-Qaeda in Al-Biqā (also known as Bekaa or Beqaa) in the 1990s—linked back to Iran (68, 326) and Taliban and Haqqani links in Pakistan to al-Qaeda (337).

The book's findings and projections range from the expected to the more surprising. The authors highlight al-Qaeda's and ISIS's strategic evolutions with



a more generalized jihadist strategic evolution discussion focused on where they will operate, how they will present (or market) themselves, and the possibility of an AQ-ISIS rapprochement. The authors then discuss jihadist tactical evolution and learning patterns. Gartenstein-Ross and Joscelyn then look at evolution potentials focusing on drones (a no-brainer, given extensive past ISIS use) and AI (which is up for debate but hedged by limitations to deepfake apps and virtual agents), with a final discussion focused on the strategic countering of these jihadist organizations and a warning about consensus errors within counterterrorism analysis. Overall, the findings and arguments in the book appear balanced and well-developed. No disagreement exists with the policy suggestions of focusing on targeting individual jihadi “innovators and terrorist entrepreneurs” and that terrorist safe havens should be a priority for governmental elimination efforts. For many in the field, however, this notion may appear as a priori knowledge (396–97).

The work is first-rate but not necessarily a good fit for general-public or even undergraduate reading levels. Rather, it has great utility for postgraduate educational consumption and would be very useful for war college and other graduate program international-security courses focusing on contemporary (late 1990s to present-day) jihadi, Sunni-based terrorism. Given the sometimes daunting density of information in the work, chapter 10 should be read prior to the case-study chapters so readers can better understand and appreciate the context of the work’s lessons learned and projections.

In summation, *Enemies Near & Far* represents some of the best new scholarship related to our country’s post-9/11 focus on international terrorism and jihadi insurgency. Gartenstein-Ross considers the book “a worthy swan song,” which is most apropos (401). Given the Department of Defense’s recent shift to great-power conflict centered on authoritarian state competitors like Russia and China, such works may be less relevant than before, but both al-Qaeda and ISIS are still active in many regions of the world. Although presently beaten-down, these entities are attempting to reconstitute themselves and still have a lot of fight left in them. Hence, this work will have enduring utility for many years to come.

New York: Columbia University Press, 2022 • 512 pages • \$30.00

Keywords: organizational learning, jihadis, terrorism, ISIS, al-Qaeda, post-9/11

Understanding Urban Warfare

by Liam Collins and John Spencer

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

Urban warfare is a present and future concern for militaries worldwide. Traditional approaches to warfare seek to avoid urban operations due to the difficulties they present. This avoidance is often reinforced by referencing Sun Tzu's dictum to avoid urban engagements as stated in chapter 3, "Attack by Stratagem," in *The Art of War*, "The rule is, not to besiege walled cities if it can possibly be avoided." The complexities of urban operations reinforce this view. These challenges include urban density. Density, as described by Russell W. Glenn in *Heavy Matter* (RAND, 2000), includes several interactive densities: density of population, structures, potential firing positions, command and control systems, friendly and enemy forces, line of sight issues, and compression of decision times. Notwithstanding these challenges, cities have historically been the scenes of decisive battles and, as this text argues, will likely continue to be in the future.



The text is a collection of interviews conducted by the Modern War Institute at West Point with subject matter experts on combat in cities and urban warfare. The primary authors (essentially contributors and editors) of the work, Liam Collins and John Spencer, are both retired military officers and scholars of urban operations. Collins is a executive director of the Madison Policy Forum, founding director of the Modern War Institute and a former director of the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point. He served as a career special forces officer, retiring from the US Army as a colonel. He holds a doctor of philosophy degree from Princeton University. John Spencer is chair of urban warfare studies at the Modern War Institute, and director of Urban Warfare Training with the 40th Infantry Division, California National Guard, where he serves as a colonel (California). Spencer is an infantry soldier and has held ranks from private to sergeant first class and second lieutenant to major. He was a fellow with the Chief of Staff of the Army's Strategic Studies Group and served as deputy director of the Modern War Institute.

Understanding Urban Warfare is divided into two parts. Part one, "Understanding the Operational Environment," includes interviews with key urban operations specialists. Chapters on "Understanding the City" with David Kilcullen, "Feral Cities" with Robert Norton, "Global Cities" with Saskia Sassen, "Smart Cities" with Sokwoo Rhee, "Megacities and the Military" with

Patrick Mahaney, and “Beneath the City” with Daphne Richemond-Barak. These discussions set the stage for the case studies provided in the following section.

Part two, “Operational Case Studies,” builds upon the previous contextual content to illuminate the challenges found in urban combat. The first interview, “The Battle of Ortona,” with Jayson Geroux, recounts the World War II battle, illustrating tactical innovations such as house-borne improvised explosive devices, mouseholing, and the creative use of explosive concrete-penetrating weapons. “The Battle of Mogadishu” with Lee Van Ardsdale, Larry Perino, and Kyle Lamb provided first hand perspective on that pivotal urban battle. Lieutenant General James E. Rainey covers the Second Battle of Fallujah, where he served as a battalion commander. The key insight here is that even when many civilians evacuate, clearing a city is still a time-consuming evolution. “Rebuilding Fallujah” with Leonard DeFrancisci discusses the critical importance of civil affairs during the Second Battle of Fallujah.

Louis DiMarco recounts the lessons of “The Battle of Ramadi,” where counterinsurgency principles of clear, hold, and rebuild were applied. “The Battle of Sadr City,” with Rob MacMillan, provides insights into the rapid transition from stability operations to high-intensity offensive operations.

The final two interviews, “The Battle of Marawi,” with Charles Knight, and “The Battle of Shusha,” with John Spencer, provide insightful contemporary cases. Knight’s assessment of the Marawi “siege” dissects the brutal contest between the Armed Forces of the Philippines (and integrated police components) and the Islamic State in the Philippines (ISP). The operational tempo of clearing the entire city and the importance of fully integrated information operation is highlighted. In the chapter “The Battle of Shusha,” which took place during the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War, Spencer reminds us that urban battle is not solely a megacity threat but that dense urban terrain complicates action in cities of all sizes.

Understanding Urban Warfare is an excellent primer on the challenges of urban warfare. Seasoned “urbanistas” (scholars of urban operations) and newcomers to the issue will benefit from the text. Its useful insights are often reinforced with tactical diagrams and clarifying dialogue. The work concludes with a set of observations and recommendations. All of these observations are valid, however, two of the recommendations are especially worth highlighting one global: “Militaries Must Allocate Considerably More Resources to Understanding and Preparing for Urban Warfare” (359); and one specific to the United States: “Assign the U.S. Army as the Executive Agent to Ensure the U.S. Military is Adequately Preparing for Urban Operation” (359).

London: Howgate Publishing, 2022 • 392 pages • \$29.95

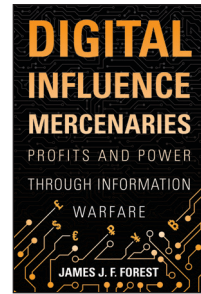
Keywords: urban warfare, *The Art of War*, Heavy Matter, Modern War Institute, urbanistas

Digital Influence Mercenaries: Profits and Power through Information Warfare

by James J. F. Forest

Reviewed by Dr. Ofer Fridman, senior lecturer in War Studies,
King's College London

Unlike most books in this field, brimming with fancy, yet confusing illustrations and technical slang—the understanding of which requires a doctoral degree in computer science—James J. F. Forest's *Digital Influence Mercenaries* reads like a thriller. In his previous books, Forest proved himself as a writer capable of turning the most complicated topics into meticulously researched, detailed, accessible stories. In *Digital Influence Mercenaries*, Forest's skills manifest again. Both novices and information warfare experts should read his work.



Digital influence researchers can learn one important lesson from Forest's monograph: how to present a complicated problem shaped by sophisticated technology to those with no technical background. For the last two decades, the professional language of cyber experts has alienated political decisionmakers responsible for guarding citizens from malicious actors generating influence for profit or for power. From that perspective, *Digital Influence Mercenaries* is a helpful oasis in the desert of the political, professional, and legal discourse on the nature and character of digital influence, as everyone involved in this discourse can understand Forest's authoritative and knowledgeable presentation of the problem.

Forest's academic objectivity makes this book particularly useful to the policy-making community. He focuses on the phenomenon of digital mercenaries—who they are, and how and why they operate. He pays much less attention to their benefactors, making his argument accessible to everyone regardless of their political beliefs. In the same spirit of political objectivity, he refrains from offering political, legal, or other recommendations. While the last chapter attempts to offer a glimpse into future challenges and how to confront them, Forest stops short of offering direct recommendations. Instead, he concludes that “the future looks promising for digital influence mercenaries,” unless some “unimaginably huge changes in America and worldwide” prevent it (169). The book leaves the decision on the nature and

character of the “unimaginably huge changes” required to transform this future to the readers.

The timing of *Digital Influence Mercenaries* could not be better. On February 24, 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin started a war, which very quickly escalated into a geopolitical earthquake. Since the beginning of the war, many writers have spilled much ink discussing the detrimental effects of the shock waves from war in Ukraine on the economic, political, security, immigration, and other foundations of the global order, which the COVID-19 pandemic had already weakened. Unsurprisingly, when the rumble of Russian artillery began echoing just across Poland’s eastern border, the media sidelined the issue of malign digital influence. But that does not mean the problem has disappeared—rather the opposite. Regardless of when, where, and how the guns fall silent in Ukraine, the shock waves of this geopolitical earthquake have already created economic, political, and societal grievances (within NATO member states and worldwide) that different political actors would use to pursue their goals through digital influence.

On the one hand, the war in Ukraine has made the future of digital influence mercenaries even more promising than Forest suggests in this book, sent to press months before Russian tanks crossed the Ukrainian border. On the other, no one can control, predict, or foresee the direction, consequences, and implications of geopolitical earthquakes. The French Revolution, World War I, or the end of the Cold War shook the existing global order and led to geopolitical transformations that helped revive societies by transforming outdated institutions and overcoming systemic obstacles. While we still do not know the magnitude of the current earthquake in Ukraine, it offers many opportunities for previously unimaginable transformations, including in the field of digital influence.

Digital Influence Mercenaries, therefore, has arrived at the right time. It brings much-needed depth, clarity, and nuance to a field in which a generational gap and a lack in technical background create a plague of misunderstandings. Forest’s accessible presentation of the problem offers the desperately needed common language between professionals, policymakers, and legislators. *Digital Influence Mercenaries* deprives its readers of an “I don’t understand the problem” excuse, and this—for better or for worse—is its biggest achievement.

Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2022 • 264 pages • \$39.95

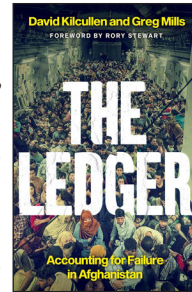
Keywords: digital influence, technology, Ukraine, NATO, Cold War

The Ledger: Accounting for Failure in Afghanistan

David Kilcullen and Greg Mills

Reviewed by Jeffrey D. McCausland, US Army colonel (retired),
and national security consultant for CBS Radio and Television

David Kilcullen and Greg Mills take their experience in counterinsurgency and stability operations worldwide, including more than 16 years in Afghanistan, to explain America's failure in Afghanistan. They analyze the wars in Afghanistan and offer a reasonable history of American policy in the region for the past four decades. They begin with the Soviet invasion in 1979 and end with the withdrawal by the United States and its allied partners in the fall of 2021.



The Ledger is authoritative and relevant for senior members of the defense community in the United States and worldwide. It is one of the first attempts to explain America's longest war and how, following the invasion, succeeding presidents and their administrations failed. Hopefully, this book and others that follow will serve as a cautionary tale for future policymakers.

The authors' central question is clear—how could highly experienced and educated military officers and policymakers make such catastrophic errors? They argue that America (and the international community more broadly) tried to accomplish the impossible. They maintain that the mission in Afghanistan required the integration of a strategy with four complex requirements: (1) a military component to provide security in the country; (2) a diplomatic effort in the region that focused largely on Pakistan, which over time was both a Washington ally and a Taliban supporter; (3) an economic and development effort to raise a significant portion of the population from abject poverty, provide education, reduce the production of narcotics, and so forth; and most importantly, (4) a political component to build a state and a government that over time could gain the support of most of the population and provide the basic services required.

They draw five lessons about counterinsurgency from the Soviet experience, International Security Assistance Force, Vietnam, and so forth. First, the fighting cannot end without a political settlement, and it is best to be in the strongest position when negotiations occur. Second, if the insurgents are still fighting for territory, they are winning. Third, it is extremely hard for an insurgency to survive absent a haven. Fourth, the government must strive for development that benefits the entire population. Without a functioning government, resentment and

increased opposition to the government will occur. Finally, victory depends on understanding the nature and distribution of power in society.

The authors suggest America's fundamental error may have been our ambition to change Afghanistan without understanding its history, culture, and demography. Many policymakers likely never thought understanding Afghanistan was necessary.

The authors sought to achieve too much in a single volume. The book describes Soviet failures in Afghanistan, the failures by the Bush administration in the aftermath of the initial invasion, the failures of succeeding administrations to adjust strategy, and the final withdrawal from the country in the fall of 2021. It then draws broader lessons about counterinsurgencies in Africa, Vietnam, and elsewhere.

While their analysis of the failed thinking of American politicians and military leaders is appropriate, they are not as severe in their critique of Afghan leaders. President Ashraf Ghani's greatest failure may have been that he could not believe the United States and NATO would leave. Their analysis of why the Afghan Army collapsed in August and September 2021 focuses on the withdrawal of US material assistance. While this withdrawal was important, the most recent Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) report found that the last-minute wholesale restructuring of Afghanistan's security institutions between March and June 2021 undermined the Afghan Army's morale and ability to respond effectively to the Taliban offensive. President Ghani reshuffled his security leadership in early 2021 and focused on placing his allies and fellow Pashtuns in key positions in the Afghan security hierarchy. This may suggest an additional lesson: you cannot win a war for someone else. You can help them win it, but they must create solid structures that will gain popular support.

As the first serious attempt at the analysis of America's longest war, *The Ledger* hopefully sets the stage for others to follow. It might be our greatest error to try and forget the tragedy that was Afghanistan. *The Ledger* provides a sober reminder of the ancient Greek playwright Sophocles's description of the siege of Troy. One of his characters, the mythological hero Ajax, reflects:

Far-stretching, endless Time/Brings forth all hidden things/And
buries that which once did shine/The firm resolve falters, the
sacred oath is shattered/And let none say, "It cannot happen here."

Publisher: Hurst and Company, London, 2021 • 352 pages • \$19.95

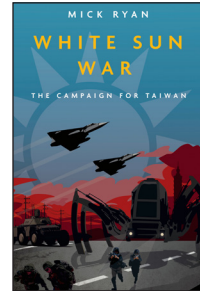
Keywords: Afghanistan, Soviet Union, NATO, International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Vietnam

White Sun War: The Campaign for Taiwan

by Mick Ryan

Reviewed by Colonel Jonathan Klug, US Army, assistant professor,
Department of Military Strategy, Planning, and Operations, US Army War College

In the summer of 1986, Tom Clancy's novel *Red Storm Rising* debuted at number one on the *New York Times* bestseller list as it brought to life World War III, although a nonnuclear version. Similarly, Retired Australian Major General Mick Ryan's new novel *White Sun War* offers a realistic and gripping "historical" account of a war for Taiwan set in 2028. Where Clancy had the Warsaw Pact and NATO, Ryan pits communist China against a coalition of Taiwan, the United States, Australia, Japan, and others. A longtime strategic commentator with 35 years of real-world experience, Ryan's vision of a war in the near future is firmly grounded. He deftly uses fiction to explore the potential challenges of warfare and leadership in 2028.



Ryan's extrapolation of current trends creates a plausible and believable backdrop to his story. For example, the fighting for Taiwan occurs across all domains: cyber, space, maritime, air, and land. This approach aligns with current military concepts, such as the Army's multidomain operations, and practices in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine War. Ryan's vision of warfare also relies on another strength of this book as he incorporates plausible future technology, such as human-machine teaming and advanced drones and how the belligerents employ them. As one example of many instances, the Chinese employ massive numbers of swarming drones, including the land-based so-called "beetles." Moreover, Ryan makes it a point to explore just how difficult leadership at different levels will be in this kind of war.

In addition to fighting across domains, new technology, and leadership challenges, Ryan includes strategic and operational concerns. He touches upon naval battles that secure the sea line of communication for the defenders of the northern end of Taiwan, which holds against the Chinese offensive. Conversely, the Chinese secure the sea line of communication to the southern end of Taiwan, which helps maintain the forward momentum of the Chinese offensive on that end of the island. Ryan also underscores the importance of what he calls "strategic bastions," which serve as protected power projection bases, vital as the Chinese will seek to contest their foes in the

forward area and within their homelands. This Chinese approach also attests to the importance of setting the theater during competition and setting the joint operations area during armed conflict; protection will take on an unprecedented level of importance. Finally, Ryan does an admirable job depicting both sides as they progress through learning cycles. These processes are vital in determining who has the advantage, as military history repeatedly demonstrates (U-boats versus Allied antisubmarine warfare, line versus column infantry formations, aircraft versus air defense, tank armor versus attack capabilities, and many others).

Ryan's novel does a great service by exploring essential aspects of future conflict in an enjoyable yet educational way. The strength of his book is its ability to provide a realistic answer to one of today's great "What if?" questions: "What if China invades Taiwan?" It does not delve into the "why" but deeply into the "how." *White Sun War* is a must read for military leaders and security professionals concerned with contemporary and future warfare, especially with China. This book would be especially useful as a case study for professional military education to provide fictional concreteness, so to speak, to discussions of potential challenges inherent in the battlefields of tomorrow.

Havertown, PA: Casemate, 2023 • 352 pages • \$22.95

Keywords: China, Taiwan, drones, space, World War III

MILITARY HISTORY

Victory through Influence: Origins of Psychological Operations in the US Army

by Jared M. Tracy

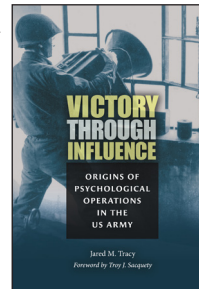
Reviewed by Robert S. Burrell assistant professor of interdisciplinary studies
at Joint Special Operations University

Jared M. Tracy, deputy command historian for the US Army Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg (now Fort Liberty), North Carolina, describes in his book, *Victory through Influence*, how psychological warfare developed during World War I through the Korean War and highlights the principal actors, not the general officer leadership, who conducted psychological warfare.

The author labels Heber Blankenhorn the father of American psychological operations and details his activities to undermine enemy morale. In this conflict, leaflets constituted the primary means of communications with enemy soldiers, and psychological warfare experimented with balloons as a means of distribution. Despite evidence that psychological operations heightened the surrender of many enemy troops and, in tandem, saved many American lives, the US Army dismantled its tables of organization and equipment following the Great War.

The next period discusses psychological operations in North Africa and the Italian campaigns during World War II—which Tracy lumps together as the “Mediterranean.” While the Office of Strategic Services and Office of War Information targeted enemy populations, US Army psychological operations remained directed solely on enemy soldiers. Delivery methods included radio programs, leaflets, and loudspeakers. With only a few hundred soldiers, psychological operations delivered millions of leaflets. To keep pace with the US Army’s advance, the psychological warfare units outfitted trucks that could make leaflets on the spot to adjust quickly to the enemy situation.

If operations in the Mediterranean were ad hoc, those conducted during and after the invasion of France realized the first real integration of psychological operations with conventional operations. In addition to radio and leaflets, the Army experimented with outfitting tanks with loudspeakers to bring the message closer to the front lines and distributed four billion throughout Europe. Most importantly, commanders integrated psychological operations as a nonlethal fire in conjunction with conventional warfare. As the war turned sour for the Axis, there were more prisoners of war.



Psychological operations distributed leaflets on the proper procedures for surrender and even proper pronunciation of the English word “surrender.”

World War II solidified the requirement for psychological warfare, particularly the successful activities carried out on the Western Front. After the war, the US Army maintained psychological operations as a recognized and essential element in warfare, with tables of organization for both active and reserve service. The US military remained generally unprepared for conventional war in Korea and preoccupied with strategic nuclear capabilities. Consequently, the number of psychological warfare soldiers dwindled during peacetime. The US Army’s psychological capabilities continued to vacillate between alignment either with civil affairs or intelligence. Consequently, when the Korean War erupted, the Eighth Army had to organize, man, and equip for psychological warfare. But once it did, psychological operations quickly produced results. Leaflets remained the mainstay with the Army dropping 587 million in 1951, 637 million in 1952, and 627 million in 1953. As the front lines stabilized along the 38th parallel, loudspeaker broadcasts became the norm. Unlike the Axis defeats in World War II, the stalemate in the later stage of the Korean War did not bring about massive numbers of surrendering communist soldiers. Tracy adds another chapter on the Korean War period that examines psychological warfare carried out at strategic commands like those of the Far East Command and the United Nations.

In the end, the title of Tracy’s book, though clever, is misleading. Victory in World War I, World War II, and the Korean War was not won through influence. Psychological operations became an important element within the US Army, a capability that enhanced enemy surrender, particularly in conjunction with American tactical victories on the battlefield. In turn, surrendering troops lowered the number of Allied casualties and preserved lives. I was disappointed that Tracy did not research psychological warfare carried out by Southwest Pacific Area Command in World War II, which he writes off as “handled by non-Army organizations” (7). While Southwest Pacific Area Command developed psychological warfare late in 1944, it did wield these types of activities prior to its invasion of the Philippines. I would also have liked more examples of the leaflets utilized in all three conflicts.

I recommend this book to those in the influence field of study, particularly those at US Army Special Operations Command, US Cyber Command, and the interagency. It provides an authoritative narrative and is heavily researched and clearly articulated. It covers important early and foundational periods of the influence profession, which provides added context to today’s complex information environment.

College Station: Texas A&M, 2022 • 263 pages • \$47.00

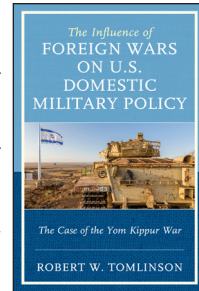
Keywords: psychological operations, World War I, World War II, Office of Strategic Services, Office of War Information

The Influence of Foreign Wars on U.S. Domestic Military Policy: The Case of the Yom Kippur War

by Robert W. Tomlinson

Reviewed by Major Zachary Griffiths, Army Staff

Robert Tomlinson, in his new book, *The Influence of Foreign Wars on U.S. Domestic Military Policy*, makes a compelling case for learning from foreign wars and making the services into organizations that learn from other people's wars. Using the Yom Kippur War as a case study, Tomlinson asks how the US military learned lessons and whether it subsequently increased organizational effectiveness and mission accomplishment.



Themes in this book closely connect to other recent works. For example, *Other People's Wars* (Georgetown University Press, 2021) by Bruce L. Sterling compares four cases of American learning from foreign wars, while *Adaptation Under Fire* (Oxford University Press, 2020) by David Barno and Nora Bensahel focuses on American learning during our wars. Unlike those works, Tomlinson's succinct volume focuses on just one case.

Tomlinson's work offers three significant insights. First, the services must become learning organizations. He finds that the Army and Air Force were learning organizations, but the Navy was not. While the Army and Air Force learned as organizations because they integrated systems thinking, mastered their craft, employed mental models, shared a vision, and learned as a team, the Navy only partially met the personal mastery requirement, while also failing to employ mental models or share a service vision. Second, he argues the United States must draw indirect lessons from foreign wars that might "offer indications of how our adversaries might fight in the future" (92). Finally, he concludes that strong and thoughtful leadership is a prerequisite to "establish and maintain a learning organization" (91). These conclusions have clear relevance today, as the United States reorients from the post-9/11 wars just as the Army of 1973 reoriented from Vietnam.

The Influence of Foreign Wars has several strengths. First, it clearly prescribes how to learn from foreign wars by comparing the successes of the services in the Yom Kippur War. Second, by drawing on a single, well-known case and using a clear methodology, Tomlinson substantiates his argument effectively. Throughout, Tomlinson explicitly follows the learning organization frameworks presented in *Learning from Conflict*

(Praeger, 1998) by Richard Duncan Downie and *The Fifth Discipline* (Currency, 2006) by Peter M. Senge. Finally, the bibliography presents readers interested in understanding organizational change from indirect experience a great starting point for further reading.

Despite these strengths, *The Influence of Foreign Wars* has two significant weaknesses. First, it is almost tautological to state that learning organizations learned lessons better. Insights into *how* to foster learning cultures in the services would be more helpful. Tomlinson builds on the frameworks of Downie and Senge by arguing for leadership's importance but could do more to explain its role. According to Tomlinson, General Donn A. Starry succeeded by convincing others of the importance of his vision and by skillfully working with foreign officials, but Admiral Elmo Zumwalt failed because of "institutional resistance" (91). A better explanation of how Starry succeeded and Zumwalt failed could illuminate the path to learning organizations for today's service leaders.

Second, *The Influence of Foreign Wars* could more comprehensively detail how lessons learned increased organizational effectiveness. The validity of lessons for American services is mentioned throughout the book, but Tomlinson neglects to present it among the key takeaways in his conclusion. Rather than accepting lessons outright, the Air Force adapted maintenance "procedures and organizational structures to meet its own unique needs" (52) and also "debat[ed] and vet[ted] the PME [professional military education] changes made in the force because of the conflict" (59). Not all lessons from all wars are applicable to the United States, and determining which lessons are valid and building consensus around those points deserve greater attention.

The Influence of Foreign Wars effectively complements other works on learning from foreign wars. Scholars and instructors of military adaptation and innovation should add this volume to their library or consider adding it to their syllabi. Anyone seeking to drive change based on lessons from foreign wars, especially the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, should read this book.

Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2022 • 118 pages • \$85.00

Keywords: lessons learned, organizational effectiveness, Yom Kippur War, learning organizations, General Donn A. Starry, Admiral Elmo Zumwalt

Dying to Learn: Wartime Lessons from the Western Front

by Michael A. Hunzeker

Reviewed by James D. Scudieri, PhD, senior research historian,
Strategic Studies Institute

Michael A. Hunzeker's *Dying to Learn* is a multidisciplinary analysis of how British, French, and German wartime armies learned a century ago and the relevancy of that experience to understand future war today (3).

The book first outlines a social science methodology in detail. The armies tried to learn, at differing speeds and success rates, to implement three critical techniques: assault tactics, combined arms, and elastic defense in depth (6).

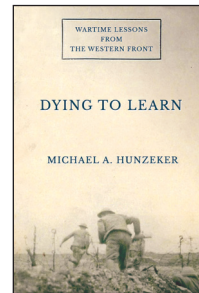
Assessment, Command, and Training (ACT) Theory assesses an organizational structure's systematic impact on wartime learning; the Army functions as a huge search engine (7–10). This wartime learning requires exploration (“experimentation”), selection, and action (22–24). Three attributes especially concern battlefield effectiveness and doctrinal learning: 1) independent, prestigious, and rigorous doctrinal assessment mechanism; 2) moderate delegation of command practices; 3) and centralized control over training (26–27).

Chapter 2 features a succinct, sweeping assessment of what happened on the Western Front—and why. This chapter debunks a decades-old narrative and demonstrates great synthesis, especially among the concerted analyses begun before and during the centenary. This synthesis mentions numerous external impacts on the learning abilities of armies. The Western Front was a deadly confluence of firepower, troop density, and strategic (operational) vice tactical mobility.

ACT Theory interprets how the British, French, and Germans attempted to master assault tactics, combined arms, and elastic defense (45–46). The first three chapters often showcase the thesis that the Germans were the fastest, most effective learners (7, 45).

The depth and breadth reflect Hunzeker's research in primary sources and the most recent, comprehensive historiography. While well-documented in endnotes, the lack of a bibliography makes it frustrating to search for cited sources later.

The book wanders in one aspect. The introduction's consideration of the US Marine Corps in Iraq and claims of a Marine Corps bottom-



up initiative and top-down intellectual framework for the 2006 publication of Counterinsurgency Operations, Army Field Manual 3-24, is a bit of hyperbole (1–2). The conclusion then adds brief but distracting and, at times, too shallow case studies of the US Army in Vietnam and Iraq to apply ACT Theory to more modern conflicts (176–86). For example, the showcase of Combat Developments Command as an assessment mechanism for the Vietnam War is misleading (179–80). The Command had no real impact on troop unit developments. While it did develop the new air assault doctrine, it was otherwise focused on futures. The Army then abolished that Command in 1973.

The major challenge with *Dying to Learn* is the ACT Theory itself. The three key attributes and three critical techniques are stand-alone requirements, central to the book's thesis, and successful prerequisites to deem an army learned well and in a timely manner. The ACT Theory resembles a decision support matrix. What if staff omitted key criteria or weighted the wrong criteria? Here, that latter criterion is centralized training. Moreover, the conclusion makes no fewer than eight claims of successful prediction (170–72, 185, 189).

Defeat alone may not serve as *prima facie* evidence of unsound German learning. That defeat yet begs the question: why? Tactical expertise cannot compensate for operational and strategic shortcomings, but tactical skill may fail to deliver operational success. How then were the Germans the fastest, most effective learners?

The ACT Theory thus contains elements of excessive admiration of German storm-troop tactics, somewhat akin to later obsessions with the success of German blitzkrieg. Furthermore, external factors alone do not explain German defeat. The Imperial German Armies on the Western Front lost tactically, besides operationally and strategically. The ACT Theory also does not account for individual or collective morale and resiliency. Comparative analysis should address the progressive deterioration in German morale from 1916 to the end of the war. The answers were not just Allied technological solutions versus German people solutions. Technology could not triumph alone.

That said, *Dying to Learn* is a valuable and impressive academic and practitioner's analysis. It is not easy reading. The author demonstrates the value of institutional, organizational, and doctrinal study, however unexciting the topics are for many. The specialist will make frequent consultation of the endnotes.

Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2021 245 pages \$39.95

Keywords: ACT Theory, Marine Corps, Vietnam, World War I, Britain, France, Germany

TERRORISM

Terror in Transition: Leadership and Succession in Terrorist Organizations

by Tricia L. Bacon and Elizabeth Grimm

Reviewed by Dr. Kamal A. Beyoghlou, adjunct professor of international security
and cross-cultural communication, Elliott School of International Affairs,
George Washington University

This book is part of Columbia University's Studies in Terrorism and Irregular Warfare Series, whose editor, Bruce Hoffman, is a distinguished and seasoned scholar on domestic and international terrorism. *Terror in Transition* addresses how and why religious-based terror groups and organizations survive following the deaths of their founders. The basic assumption is that the way a given successor "positions himself vis-à-vis the founder" is key (3). The authors set the stage for what follows, identifying five types of successors: the caretaker—a temporary torchbearer for a passing founder; the signaler—a legacy message changer; the fixer—a different direction tactician and operational leader; the visionary—a strategic thinker of new ends, ways, and means; and the figurehead—a decentralized figure whose power is diffuse among many. The same section provides operational definitions of leadership, organizations, and succession within the realm of terrorist groups. This book contributes to the existing literature on terrorist groups by addressing the rarely discussed issue of succession, thereby serving as a useful handbook for counterterrorism and anti-terrorism tactics and operations and adding to the ongoing debate on whether the terrorism scourge should be contained and managed or defeated. This book's implicit value lies in the fact that terrorism was, is, and remains an evolutionary phenomenon requiring constant vigilance.



Chapter 1 provides a framework for analyzing the role of organizational and structural leadership in terms of its centrality and shortcomings. Chapter 2 defines the relationships between founders of terror groups and their followers and highlights the significance and implications of transition and continuity. Chapters 3–6 highlight similarities and differences between selectively identified groups, including the Ku Klux Klan; Egyptian Islamic Jihad; al-Qaeda in Iraq and its successor, the Islamic State of Iraq; and al-Shabab of Somalia. Chapter 7, "Pathways and Possibilities,"

focuses on lessons learned. The conclusion is only a summary of the main points raised in previous chapters, with one short section highlighting limitations of the book and suggestions for future research followed by a short narrative section ironically labeled “Conclusion.” The book culminates in two appendices listing religious terrorist groups, their founders, and successor types, most of which are not directly connected to the case studies.

Because the book’s focus is on religious-based terrorist groups, the chapter about the Ku Klux Klan seems to be out of place, given the racist nature of this domestic American group. While the book revolves around succession of terrorist groups and organizations, it falls short of capturing one thread that runs through all the cases studies.

Important structural changes to al-Qaeda’s *modus operandi* occurred in al-Qaeda following effective counterterrorism measures by the United States and its allies since September 11, 2001, and again following the death of its founder, Osama bin Laden, in 2011. As a result, al-Qaeda has all but abandoned its originally centralized vertical hierarchical successor structures—top-down quasi-military leadership styles—in favor of more horizontally loose and more diffused decentralized forms of leadership styles, stand-alone functional cells, and more egalitarian leadership structures. The latter, however, remains highly committed to bin Laden’s original and “eternal” message. The book also needs a more serious focus on the linkage between successors and their other salient ideological roots (beyond religion), namely, ethnic and national domestic spillover rivalries that, today, also feature strongly in personality and leadership styles and motivations of would-be successors. This book is a bit fragmented; no argument ties all the case studies together. It tells readers about important insights but leaves them wondering why understanding terrorism succession is important. The two appendices do not add value to the recurring themes of the book. Two final questions come to mind: Does it matter if counterterrorism and anti-terrorism practitioners eliminate the founders of terrorism? What are the implications of targeting these founders? The book does lay down, however, an important conceptual and knowledge-based foundation, which will undoubtedly be built on for years to come.

New York: Columbia University Press, 2022 • 300 pages • \$32.00

Keywords: terrorism, leadership, al-Qaeda, counterterrorism, al-Shahab, Islamic State

The Islamic State in Africa: The Emergence, Evolution, and Future of the Next Jihadist Battlefront

by Jason Warner, Ryan O'Farrell, Héní Nsaibia, and Ryan Cummings

Reviewed by Dr. Heather S. Gregg, professor of irregular warfare, George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, senior fellow, Foreign Policy Research Institute

The Islamic State's (IS) loss of territorial control over its self-proclaimed caliphate in Syria and Iraq in 2018, followed by the demise of its leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in a 2019 US-led military raid, appeared to spell the end of one of the bloodiest and most successful transnational terrorist enterprises in history. Jason Warner's extensive look at the Islamic State's persisting presence on the African continent in his book, *The Islamic State in Africa*, however, suggests governments and coalitions focused on defeating the Islamic State should refrain from declaring victory. Warner and his colleagues investigate a puzzling development in Africa: various groups pledging their allegiance to the Islamic State and transforming into either *wilayat* ("provinces") or affiliates, despite the Islamic State's major defeats.



To research why African affiliates continue to use the Islamic State brand, the authors look across nine groups pledged to the Islamic State and investigate them in three periods: pre-*bayah* ("oath of allegiance"); *bayah*; and post-*bayah*, up to al-Baghdadi's death. Within the pre-*bayah* period, the authors consider the effects of what they call the "democratization of jihad," referring to the choices made available by the rise of the Islamic State in Africa for groups to affiliate with either the Islamic State or al-Qaeda or to go it alone (10). They ask the critical question of what each group stood to gain by pledging allegiance to the Islamic State and consider material resources (such as money), legitimacy, and reputational gains. Within the *bayah* period, they consider "affiliate utility validation," which includes: the process by which "IS Central" (the leadership in Iraq and Syria) granted full *wilaya* status to pledging affiliates; how this process changed over time; and how IS Central and the specific group profited from their relationship (10). Within the post-*bayah* period, the authors examine the complex relationship between IS Central and provinces and affiliates in Africa—what they call "sovereign subordinates," or somewhat autonomous groups connected to IS Central—and what these groups stood to gain from that relationship as IS Central declined (10).

To populate this complex research design, the authors draw from an array of qualitative and quantitative sources, including: Islamic State videos and

propaganda; interviews with individuals and government officials fighting IS affiliates in Africa; media sources; and subject matter experts.

The authors conclude African groups persist in using the IS brand because “benefits [continue] to come to African affiliates mostly through branding, and not through material transfers” (10). They project, broadly speaking, IS-affiliated groups will persist in Africa: “From our perspective, there is little reason to believe that the phenomenon of local insurgencies in Africa affiliating themselves with the Islamic State will not continue” (138). They do not expect the number of *wilayat* to grow, however, nor do they predict IS Central will relocate to Africa, given the complexity of moving people and materiel, rather, “the Islamic State’s core leadership is very much likely to remain a primarily Iraqi organization” (138). Despite this assessment, the social and political instability plaguing much of Africa—and the insurgent groups this unrest produces—may create an opportunity for the Islamic State, or at least its ideology, to maintain its relevance and presence on the continent.

These significant findings for counterterrorism operations and strategy suggest efforts to attack terrorist financing or use “leadership decapitation”—that is, to kill or capture key leaders—may not undermine transnational terrorism’s appeal if these efforts do not damage the enterprise’s brand. African *wilayat* and affiliates benefit from the Islamic State’s legitimacy and reputational aspects despite considerable material and operational degradation. Counterterrorism strategy should focus on undermining nonmaterial motivations for groups joining transnational terrorist movements, such as reputational gains and legitimacy. Somewhat ironically, kinetic counterterrorism operations aimed at attacking transnational terrorist enterprises may feed nonmaterial motives by demonstrating these groups require Western countries’ and coalitions’ attention to counter.

This book offers an impressive, sweeping look at the rise of the Islamic State on the African continent. Although somewhat complicated, Warner and his colleagues’ imposition of an analytical framework allows for comparison across groups—a difficult task given the specific timelines and regional factors within each *wilaya* and affiliate. The book’s inclusion of lesser-studied groups—especially in Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of the Congo—lend particular value. The use of regional experts to draft specific chapters and the authors’ extensive research across multiple types of sources make *The Islamic State of Africa* the go-to book for anyone wishing to understand transnational terrorism in Africa in general and the Islamic State’s presence on the continent in particular.

New York: Oxford University Press, 2022 • 288 pages • \$45.00

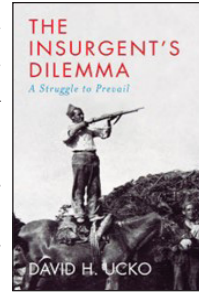
Keywords: Islamic State, Africa, terrorism, counterterrorism, al-Qaeda

The Insurgent's Dilemma: A Struggle to Prevail

by David H. Ucko

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

Insurgency presents a complex, persistent facet of conflict and competition for governance. Although largely thought of as a military problem, certain realities make insurgency a whole-of-society issue. In *The Insurgent's Dilemma*, David H. Ucko takes a deep dive into the nature and utility of contemporary terrorism.



Ucko convincingly argues that today's insurgents rarely win. He first quotes Henry Kissinger's post-Vietnam comments, "[t]he guerilla wins if he does not lose" and "[t]he conventional army loses if it does not win" (1). From those observations to the present day, changes in global geopolitical conditions, insurgency, and its constant companion, terrorism, have led to continued, nondecisive struggles encompassing the state and insurgents' inability to win and presenting the dilemma that drives insurgent adaptation. Violence remains part of the toolkit, but with new, hybrid uses, which Ucko presents (sometimes interactively) as adaptive strategic strategies exacerbating contemporary uprisings: *localized*, *infiltrative*, and *ideational insurgencies* (9).

Ucko sets the stage by recounting the traditional logic of insurgency and illuminates the influence of Mao Tse-tung, Che Guevara, and the Vietnamese trio of Ho Chi Minh, Vo Nguyen Giap, and Truong Chinh. He then discusses these seminal influences in light of later challenges posed—and faced—by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and the Islamic State.

Ucko goes on to describe localized insurgencies where criminals and other state challengers create para-states at the peripheries of states. Gangs such as the Comando Vermelho in Rio de Janeiro's favelas, the Primeiro Comando da Capital in São Paulo, MS-13 in El Salvador, or Moqtada al-Sadr's Jaish al-Mahdi Shia militia in Baghdad challenge state solvency by waging criminal insurgencies. These insurgents moderate violence by localizing conflict and creating an equilibrium of stratified sovereignty in both urban and rural spaces.

Chapter 4 discusses *state infiltration*, also known as *infiltrative insurgency*, as a means of limiting state reactions. The rise of the Cocaleros in Bolivia, culminating in the regime of Evo Morales in Bolivia, exemplifies this method. Ucko examines the use of legal means, such as Adolf Hitler's strategy of seizing power in Germany, or contemporary examples of coopting political movements or front organizations by militias, for example, the Provisional Irish Republic

Army and Sinn Féin in Ireland, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia and the Unión Patriótica in Colombia, or the Muttahida Qaumi Movement in Pakistan. Chapter 5 looks at ideational insurgency and its reliance on the “Digital Counter-State.” The digital realm presents insurgents a venue to wage influence operations cloaked in relative obscurity and plausible deniability as they shape their preferred reality of disinformation and misinformation. *Leaderless resistance* results when direct violent action or *propaganda of the deed* combines with propaganda to shift primary loyalties and political fortunes. In the January 6 US Capitol attack, support for the then President Donald J. Trump’s efforts to invalidate the 2020 presidential election involved sedition by Oathkeepers and Proud Boys militias (130–32). The calls for stochastic terrorism merged with conspiracy theories, such as QAnon, presenting venues for division and denying reality in preference for radical ideology.

After defining the problem, Ucko presents challenges and potential ways to manage these insurgent approaches. First, he explores ways to counter and manage localized insurgencies through traditional means such as “Clear, Hold, Build,” via cases studies of Sri Lanka’s effective eradication of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam insurgency and Colombia’s pacification of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia. Ucko details both rural and urban dimensions of this struggle, with an emphasis on pacifying gangs and mitigating crime wars in El Salvador, Haiti, and Brazil.

In chapter 7, Ucko addresses challenges of “Countering Infiltrative Insurgency,” including a notable and relevant treatment of Karl Popper’s 1945 discussion of “the paradox of tolerance” regarding the Weimar Republic (195). Then, as now, anticipatory defenses are needed (but remain elusive).

“Dueling Narratives” is the theme of chapter 8. Ucko explores countering and disrupting ideational insurgency through law enforcement and deplatforming or suppressing seditious, false, or hateful content. When considering the role of preventing and countering violent extremism, the challenges are clearly complex and contentious.

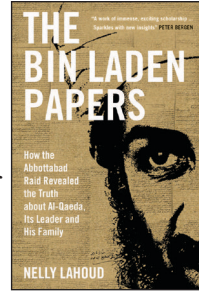
Ucko closes by indicating insurgency has evolved and remains a salient challenge. As always, counterinsurgency demands a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, with perceived legitimacy critical to a successful outcome. This text contributes to the understanding of contemporary terrorism and would form an essential component of any curriculum for understanding both insurgency and counterinsurgency.

The Bin Laden Papers: How the Abbottabad Raid Revealed the Truth about Al-Qaeda, Its Leader and His Family

by Nelly Lahoud

Reviewed by Dr. John A. Nagl, professor of warfighting studies, US Army War College.

The attacks on Washington and New York by al-Qaeda on September 11, 2001, may be the most effective military operation in history when measured by return on investment. For the cost of several hundred thousand dollars and the lives of 19 operatives, the terror group inflicted billions of dollars of damage on what it viewed as “the far enemy” while killing nearly 3,000 innocents in the costliest attack on US soil in American history.



The American response was infinitely more expensive than the attack that engendered it. America invaded Afghanistan, toppling the Taliban that sheltered al-Qaeda’s leaders, and then (entirely unnecessarily) invaded Saddam Hussein’s Iraq. The cost of the wars that followed 9/11 will likely exceed \$5 trillion, and the reverberations they set in motion in the Middle East show no signs of ending in our lifetimes.

About a decade after 9-11, Navy SEALs invaded bin Laden’s hideout near Abbottabad, Pakistan, killing him and capturing 500,000 documents that provided actionable intelligence leading to the deaths of other al-Qaeda operatives. The majority have now been declassified, and student of Islamic terrorism Nelly Lahoud has read them in their original language—Arabic.

The revelations are staggering, including a much closer relationship than had been suspected between bin Laden and Mullah Omar, the Taliban’s leader and provider of safe haven to al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. The missive suggests that in return for bin Laden’s role in assassinating Afghan resistance leader Ahmad Shah Masood on September 9, 2001, Omar refused to hand bin Laden over to the United States. Al-Qaeda expected a few American cruise missile strikes as a reprisal for the 9/11 attacks, but Mullah Omar did not believe an American invasion was in the offing. When it came, many al-Qaeda leaders fled to Iran. Others, including bin Laden, crossed the border into Pakistan.

Despite the safe harbor bin Laden enjoyed ensconced in a safe house in Abbottabad, not far from Pakistan’s version of West Point, al-Qaeda was decimated by Pakistan’s security services: “around 600 brothers, perhaps even more, were captured” wrote Khaled al-Habib, military commander of al-Qaeda, in 2004. (43) Bin Laden was surprised by the ferocity of Pakistan’s response and by its decision to allow the United States to conduct drone attacks that further dismantled al-Qaeda inside Pakistan.

Pakistan's efforts contributed to what is perhaps the most stunning insight Lahoud draws from the papers: that al-Qaeda was rendered combat ineffective in the wake of the American attacks on Afghanistan in 2001. The documents in *The Bin Laden Papers* demonstrate that al-Qaeda could not conduct international terror attacks against the United States after September 11, 2001, except the attacks in Mombasa, Kenya, in November 2002 that had been set in motion prior to its assault on America. The bombings in Madrid in 2004 and in London the following year, though attributed to al-Qaeda, were conducted by local terrorists who claimed the al-Qaeda banner to enhance their stature.

This is the bombshell revelation of Lahoud's work, and one that bears careful study for all students of the past two decades of war. Al-Qaeda, which had demonstrated the ability to conduct international terror attacks before September 11 with its bombings of the US embassies in Tanzania and Kenya in 1998 and the USS *Cole* in Yemen two years later, lost its international reach after being evicted from Afghanistan in late 2001. Its brand name benefited from the September 11 attacks and the ensuing appeal of the jihadi cause spawned affiliates in Somalia, Yemen, Iraq, Syria, and a half dozen countries in Africa. Al-Qaeda central, led by bin Laden until his death in 2011, had no operational influence on these fighters, however, and often struggled with them over their decision to fight the "near enemy" rather than aim at the United States.

Reading *The Bin Laden Papers* makes it difficult not to conclude that the war on terrorism was largely misguided and that the American invasion of Iraq in 2003 gave new life to an international jihadi movement that was already on the ropes—if not on the mat. The contribution Lahoud's work makes to understanding our enemy is invaluable, particularly if it helps prevent a future American overreaction that results in thousands of deaths and trillions of dollars misspent in pursuit of an enemy who has already been defeated.

New Haven: Yale University Press, 2022. • 362 pages • \$28.00

Keywords: USS *Cole*, Tanzania, bin Laden, Somalia, Yemen

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