

# Book Reviews

---

## ARMED NONSTATE GROUPS

### **Global Security Upheaval: Armed Non-state Groups Usurping State Stability Functions**

By Robert Mandel

Reviewed by Dr. José de Arimatéia da Cruz, Visiting Research Professor at the US Army War College at Carlisle Barracks, PA, and Professor of International Relations and Comparative Politics

Robert Mandel's *Global Security Upheaval: Armed Non-state Groups Usurping State Stability Functions* is a tour de force in the field of security studies. The author's arguments and recommendations turn the Westphalian state system on its head. In that system, rule or monopoly over the legitimate use of physical force is considered the exclusive domain of the state. Furthermore, the state's ability to provide for the welfare and security of its citizens is derived from its presumed social contract between the rulers and the ruled. However, Mandel's *Global Security Upheaval* calls into question the common belief that central governments are the sole source of a nation's stability and argues that subnational and transnational nonstate forces are major sources of global instability in an insecure world. According to Mandel, "the steady concentration of power in the hands of states, which began in 1648 with the Peace of Westphalia, is over, at least for a while" in part because "of the ability of armed individuals and armed nonstate groups to undertake physical coercions." In this post-Westphalian system there are diverse sources of rule or monopoly over the use of force rather than just the mighty Leviathan. In addition, armed nonstate groups may enjoy a form of Weberian legitimacy if they step into a power vacuum and provide for critical public needs.

Mandel questions the conventional thinking about international stability. His argument rests on four main assumptions. First, states and intergovernmental organizations are the dominant focus of authority in global society. Second, armed nonstate groups are legitimate spoilers disrupting security and triggering political disorder and violence. Third, the public consistently demands state government protection, and private bodies can enhance security only if they do not rely on the threat or use of violence, as with transnational market-based or humanitarian organizations. Fourth, if a state is not providing stability, a strategy of strengthening and expanding governmental capacity would be a sensible response to the government deficit.

Mandel also provides a set of counterpropositions. For example, areas exist where it makes little sense to rely on central state governments for stability; attempts to bolster such governments to promote stability often prove futile; armed nonstate groups can sometimes provide local stability better than states; power-sharing arrangements between states and armed nonstate groups may sometimes be viable; and these changes in the international setting call for major analytical shifts and significant deviations from standard responses. Mandel believes a state must follow these strategies to enhance its national security.

GLOBAL  
ARMED NON-STATE GROUPS  
SECURITY  
USURPING STATE STABILITY FUNCTIONS  
UPHEAVAL



Palo Alto, CA: Stanford  
Security Studies, 2013

304 pages  
\$32.95

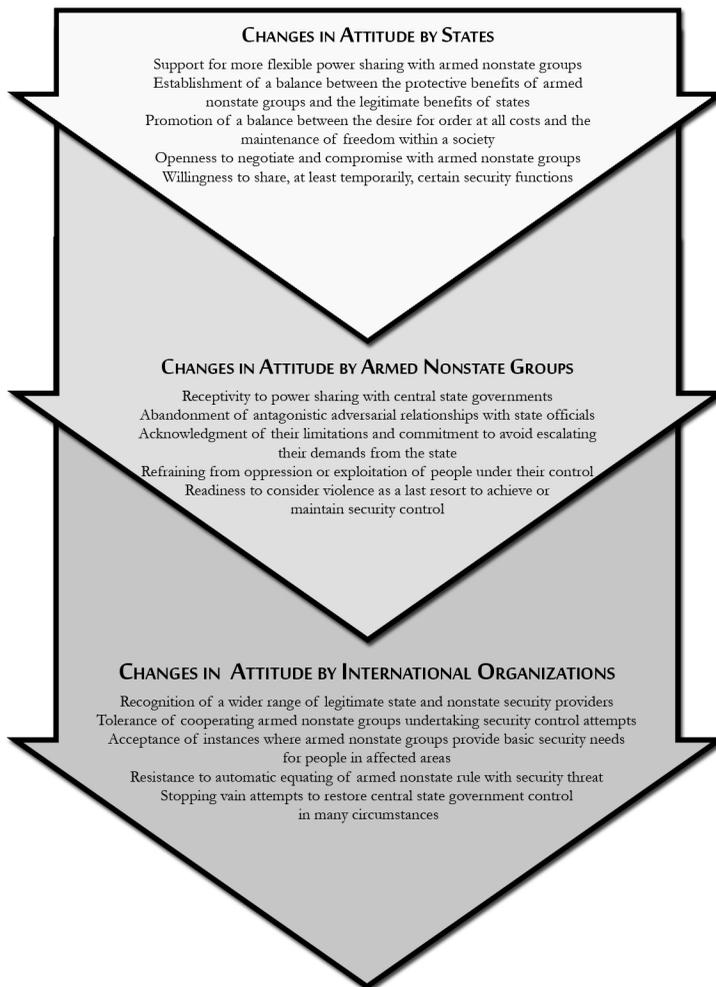
Moreover, changes in the global supply and demand for protection are the primary reason for the rise of armed nonstate groups. As the state diminishes its ability to fight unconventional threats and while there is an increase in public demand for protection, armed nonstate groups will proliferate around the world to fill the vacuum left by the state. As the security of the state and individuals becomes grounded in private enterprise, armed nonstate groups in locales where the state has lost control could become the only viable alternative for stability. Mandel argues that there are areas of the world where it makes little sense to rely on state government for stability. In fact, argues Mandel, attempts to bolster such governments' efforts to promote stability often result in the opposite outcome: more violence and less security. Figure 1 summarizes Mandel's argument of supply and demand of nonstate actors for protection.



**Figure 1.** Mandel's argument of supply and demand of nonstate actors for protection.

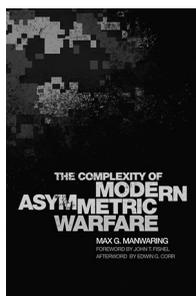
There are several elements in this text that make it unique in relationship to other works. First, each chapter uses figures to highlight

key conceptual points, allowing readers to gain a quick understanding of a section's main thrust and to compare at a glance multifaceted findings across topics and sections. Second, the book contains extensive cross-references allowing readers who want more background on a topic to find the appropriate discussion in another section easily. Mandel explores the question whether the mighty Leviathan state is willing to coexist with a "parallel state" or a "state-within-states" to provide security and stability in the future. Mandel's answer is obviously yes. Figure 2 illustrates Mandel's vision regarding attitude changes for alternative security governance.



**Figure 2.** Mandel's proposed attitude changes necessary for successful alternative security governance.

In conclusion, I recommend this book to anyone interested in global security studies and future military leaders. This text can be especially useful to students at the US Army War College, many of whom will have to face the dilemma raised by Mandel.



Norman: University of  
Oklahoma Press, 2012

224 pages

\$45.00

## The Complexity of Modern Asymmetric Warfare

by Max G. Manwaring

Reviewed by Robert J. Bunker, Distinguished Visiting Professor and Minerva Chair at the Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College

*The Complexity of Modern Asymmetric Warfare* is the final volume in the Manwaring twenty-first century conflict trilogy along with *Insurgency, Terrorism, and Crime: Shadows from the Past and Portents for the Future* (2008) and *Gangs, Pseudo-Militaries, and Other Modern Mercenaries: New Dynamics in Uncomfortable Wars* (2010) also by University of Oklahoma Press. The author—Max Manwaring, a Professor of Military Strategy at the Strategic Studies Institute, United States Army War College—is a prolific and veteran scholar with a wealth of expertise (including extensive field research) in Latin America along with an in-depth knowledge of numerous forms of insurgent and post-modern variations of warfare, which leverage psychological, temporal, and other unconventional capabilities.

The work is composed of a foreword (by John T. Fishel), preface and acknowledgements, and an introduction; the main section of seven chapters written by Manwaring; followed by an afterword (by Edwin G. Corr) and concluding sections composed of notes, a bibliography, as well as an index. Both former US Ambassador Corr and Professor Fishel (emeritus) are long-time Manwaring associates who have written informative and strategically valuable essays that highlight the work's focus on irregular asymmetric revolutionary conflicts. The book's seven chapters focus on historical conflicts in Algeria and El Salvador (Chapter 1); Sendero Luminoso in Peru (Chapter 2); vignettes of al Qaeda (in Spain); Cuban popular militias, gangs and organized crime in Haiti, and the Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC) in Brazil (Chapter 3); the Russian politicized youth group Nashi (Chapter 4); transnational organized crime, gangs, and corrupted elites in Guatemala (Chapter 5); cyber and biological warfare (Chapter 6); and unconventional conflict futures (Chapter 7). Leading into the conclusion, each of the previous six provide key points and lessons as chapter summations.

As a colleague of Manwaring, I've always been amazed at his ability to draw upon unique and esoteric resources in his writings, including personal author interviews. The book's references are solid with an emphasis on scholarly works from the last ten years. The author not only has kept up with the literature in this area but also is responsible for shaping it and being one of its more creative contributors. The book's main arguments and "lessons learned" focus on the rise of irregular asymmetric revolutionary conflicts waged by both state and nonstate actors alike. These conflicts cause us to redefine our long-standing concepts of warfare. What we are seeing is the blurring of crime, warfare, gang activity, and the like. These are new actors—both state and non-state groups—who may wage war and there is a new center of gravity based on information/media developing along with a new definition of victory. Furthermore, our interpretations of power and the purpose and motives of war are changing. The end result—I agree with the author—is that conventional warfare is by comparison much easier to engage in. What we are now facing is conflict that is multidimensional,

multilateral, multiorganizational, and total—an unrestricted, brutal, and more complex form of organized and hypercompetitive political violence.

The major policy suggestions advocated to contend with the new types of conflict (wars) focus on five fundamental educational and organizational imperatives: a) our civilian and military leaders need to learn about subversion and insurgency techniques and understand strategic and political-psychological implications of operational and tactical actions; b) civilian and military personnel must benefit from enhanced and revitalized interagency cooperation, cultural awareness and language training, and combined (multinational) exercises to be effective; c) leaders need to understand that increased intelligence capabilities are required for small internal wars; d) our peace enforcers must also be warfighters to contend with more sophisticated nonstate political actor conventional and unconventional weaponry; and e) governmental restructuring is necessary to achieve an effective unity of effort drawing upon civilian and military instruments of national power and obtain an agreed upon political end state in our foreign conflicts.

Positive aspects of the book—besides the main arguments and important US defense policy suggestions contained within it—include the chapter focuses that highlight some very informative case studies. The reviewer found the Sendero Luminoso, Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC), and Russian Nashi essays of great interest due to a general lack of exposure to those topical areas. The gaining of insights and context for these groups was in itself added value. A negative aspect of the work, if that is even a fair characterization, is that it seeks to peer into the “fog of still emerging conflict.” As a result, the reader is left at times with both a hazy vision of emergent forms of warfare and of the opposing forces the United States may be facing.

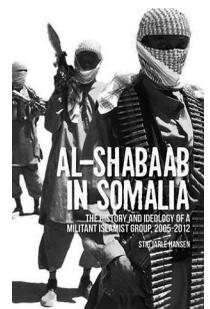
In summation, the work—and its two predecessor volumes—is of great relevance and value to senior members of the US defense community. While some of the discussions and analysis in the work may not be clear and crisp, even approaching the philosophical, Manwaring offers key mosaic pieces to help us understand the complex puzzle—which merges war, insurgency, revolution, terrorism, criminality, cyberconflict, and a host of other elements—into that which is twenty-first century conflict.

## **Al-Shabaab in Somalia: The History and Ideology of a Militant Islamist Group 2005-2012**

By Stig Jarle Hansen

Reviewed by Richard J. Norton, Professor of National Security Affairs at the US Naval War College

As the Kenyan government is still trying to piece together what actually happened during al-Shabaab’s 21 September 2013 attack on Nairobi’s Westgate shopping mall, this is a most timely book. Al-Shabaab, at least for a time, was the most favored and successful of al Qaeda’s so-called affiliates, racking up impressive victories and controlling large areas of the Somali countryside, including the capital Mogadishu. This



Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012

208 pages

\$31.80

period was followed by one of significant setbacks leading some analysts to predict the incipient demise of the organization. Clearly, these predictions were premature.

Scholar and author Stig Hansen has put together a remarkably detailed account of al-Shabaab's history. The book is filled with densely packed accounts of numerous Somali clans and their associated leaders and activities. While this level of detail may seem daunting to some, the book is still of great value to the lay reader. It is of greater utility to those analysts and practitioners who need or want to know about recent Somali history, or the rise of a surprisingly effective terrorist organization that may serve as a model for other such groups in the future.

Hansen comes from that small breed of what might be termed "adventure scholars"—although he himself might disagree with being identified as such. He does not rely on secondary source material but has travelled widely through Somalia for years and is personally familiar with many of the members and leaders of the movement. As a result, his description of events carries a powerful sense of legitimacy. While it is possible to debate what Hansen's observations mean, there is no doubting their authenticity.

There are surprises in this book. For example, it is easy to forget al-Shabaab's very modest beginnings. For example, in 2005, the movement could boast only 33 members. Within five years, they were nearly running southern Somalia. Hansen shows the reader how this happened. In the telling there are lessons and significant points to consider for those who wish to understand, and to potentially oppose, such groups.

The degree to which al-Shabaab used international events and a militant Islamic ideology was not insignificant. As Hansen chronicles, this broader dimension helped the movement's leaders align with disparate Somali clans and draw in significant numbers of foreign fighters and financing from not only Africa but also Asia, Europe, and even the United States. At the same time, al-Shabaab had to be relevant on the local clan level, which required them to be responsive to Somali issues that had little or nothing to do with a globalist ideology. Indeed, as al-Shabaab gained support among Somali clans, starting with some who were being sore-pressed by larger, more powerful groups, its leaders found themselves in a position similar to that of some politicians who, having come to power on glowing promises, now had to deliver.

This meant al-Shabaab was required to govern. It had to provide areas of stability where none had previously existed, ruling as neither an exploitative warlord nor a corrupt Somali government—neither of which Hansen argues provided real human security for Somalis in their areas of control. This was never an easy task and was often compounded by such adverse factors as drought and internal clan politics.

This is not to imply that the leaders of al-Shabaab were some romantic Robin Hood-like figures. They raised money through taxes and provided a form of justice through strict Sharia courts. They recruited heavily from local clans and established a powerful secret police, the Amniyat. The group relied on assassinations, roadside bombs, and suicide attacks in their rise to power. Interestingly, the majority of the suicide attacks were said to have been carried out by non-Somali members of the group.

At the same time, Hansen also makes it clear that al-Shabaab's link to al Qaeda was always more than just lip service. Although not centrally directed by al Qaeda, the relationship is important to both organizations. While al-Shabaab must follow a "Somalia-first" policy of necessity, its globally oriented ideology remains aligned with the larger group. One point where the local and global are able to be conjoined by al-Shabaab is the ability to blame any adversity on the United States or African actors identified as US proxies.

Al-Shabaab has also displayed a talent for creating a powerful propaganda arm and not above dealing with criminal elements—most notably Somali pirates—when it was beneficial to do so. In the latter case, al-Shabaab did not go to sea; it simply demanded a "piece of the action" from those who did.

Hansen's account also reminds the reader that violent extremist groups embrace terror and irregular warfare as tactics of choice because they are not capable of engaging their opponents in a more conventional fashion. Although al-Shabaab was able to hold its own against the forces of the Transitional Federal Government, it was unable to do so against Ethiopian, Kenyan, Ugandan, and African Union military troops. The success of these forces, whether acting independently or as allies, speaks favorably of their military skill and capability.

Al-Shabaab's subsequent defeat cost them territory, created dissension among the group's leadership, and led to a loss of credibility and defection by clans that were previously loyal. While not destroying al-Shabaab, the military victories obtained by other African forces serve as a reminder that violent extremist groups suffer much from loss of reputation and that bombing shopping malls and assassinating opposition leaders is what they do when they cannot hold their own against conventional forces. This lesson should not be lost on those who hope to defeat such organizations.

But Hansen also reminds us that al-Shabaab is resilient. The Amniyat is still a force with which to be reckoned and a large amount of Somali territory is still under al-Shabaab control. The organization can obviously still mount cross-border actions and it is unlikely that its leadership will not seek to regain their former positions of power.

It would have been interesting if Hansen had discussed al-Shabaab's military operations in greater detail as to tactics, training, command and control, and so on. This is not to imply that he ignores these areas, just that readers with a particular interest in such things may be left wanting more.

One could also wish Hansen had expanded this work to include more analysis to rest alongside his powerful historical account. Given his long and deep exposure to the group, it would be valuable to know what he thinks the chances of integrating al-Shabaab into a legitimate Somali government and what the al-Shabaab story means to Africa and the world.

That said, until the distant and unlikely day when something better comes along, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia* is likely to be the definitive book on the subject.



Washington, DC: The  
Woodrow Wilson Press,  
2013

273 pages

\$55.00

## New Security Challenges in Asia

Edited by Michael Wills and Robert M. Hathaway

Reviewed by Jeong Lee, a freelance writer and contributing analyst for *Wikistrat's* Asia-Pacific Desk

*New Security Challenges in Asia* (eds. Michael Wills and Robert M. Hathaway) is a collection of scholarly essays arguing that Asian security issues are determined by “transnational elements” that are shaped as much by external sources as the “preferred responses” of the actors involved. For this reason, the contributing writers focus on four core aspects of Asian security dilemma: water and food security, responses to pandemics, and transnational crimes, including cyberwarfare and terrorism. But as Wills and Hathaway concede in the introductory essay, such challenges are hardly “new.” Indeed, the book shows how complex foreign policy threats manifest themselves as an amalgamation of old and new challenges.

The book is divided into ten chapter-length essays. In each chapter, authors examine case studies and follow them with policy recommendations for American and Asian policymakers. The editors set the tone for the discussion by laying out factors hampering effective responses to transnational threats to Asian security which may ultimately undermine the legitimacy of the state actors involved. Hathaway and Wills argue that what makes it difficult to manage these challenges may be the complexity and the rapid pace with which they threaten the security of the region and the attendant problems associated with integrating the “new frameworks of cooperation” due to the lack of consistent policy approaches and capabilities.

Although none of the essays in this volume explores the military dimensions of security challenges, defense policy mavens and military officers may derive great insights from chapters on water security, cybercrimes, and conflict and transnational terrorism. For instance, in Chapter 2, Kenneth Pomeranz examines how limited access to water can lead to potential conflicts in the Himalayan-Tibet region due to domestic unrest over food and water security concerns.

Eric A. Strahorn delves into the historical roots behind conflicts over the Indus River Basin in Chapter 4. Strahorn argues that while the Indus Waters Treaty has been a political success, it ultimately “lacks flexibility” because it does not adequately address ecological dimensions of water usage by China, India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. Strahorn further argues that competition for the control of water flow may ultimately lead to interstate conflicts and potentially derail America’s security interests in the region.

In Chapter 9, Justin V. Hastings examines how post-colonial legacies in Southeast Asia have combined traditional instability with modernity to give rise to terrorism that continues to bedevil Southeast Asian states. To illustrate how Southeast Asia’s porous “political and economic networks” can complicate both economic policies and counterterrorism efforts, Hastings examines two case studies. Each case illustrates how imperfect border control can foster what Hastings calls “illicit political

and economic networks.” Since terrorism in the aforementioned regions can undermine American interests, Hastings argues that the United States should “reshape” the security environment in Southeast Asia by aiding its allies at all governmental levels.

Adam Segal’s essay in Chapter 10 examines how cybersecurity threats may undermine the underpinnings of global networks due to the rapid pace with which the Internet has spread and the difficulties of identifying perpetrators of cybercrimes. For these reasons, Segal argues that the militarization of cyberspace perpetuates traditional interstate rivalries. To prevent cyber threats from spiraling out of control, Segal suggests establishing the definition for what may constitute cyberattacks. Further, he argues the United States should combat cyber threats by fostering a “regional approach” to addressing cyberwarfare.

For diplomats and international relations scholars, this book may be impactful as it forces them to look beyond the confines of the existing international relations theoretical frameworks. As if to bear this out, case studies cited by the contributors demonstrate that no traditional international relations theories can easily explain the underlying causes of the challenges and threats posed by the plethora of elements involved nor can diplomats and scholars readily derive solutions from them.

The book, however, is not without its flaws. For one, military planners may find it difficult to apply lessons from the essays in the book. My chief complaint is the authors do not address the military dimensions of the transnational elements threatening Asian security. For instance, the authors dealing with water security, transnational crime, and cyber threats could have included policy recommendations for how the US armed forces can successfully deal with the new security challenges.

Furthermore, the contributors’ American-centric policy recommendations fail to address solutions from the viewpoints of allies who supposedly need our guidance. To give a few examples, Robert Pomeroy’s recommendations for resolving the fishery crisis in Southeast Asia in Chapter 5 entail top-down approaches directed by Washington, whereby the writer believes the United States must play a vital role in fostering sustainable growth and governance. Also, Segal’s solutions for dealing with cyber threats are flawed in that they fail to account for the recent diplomatic embarrassments wrought by the revelation that the National Security Agency has been eavesdropping on America’s chief allies.

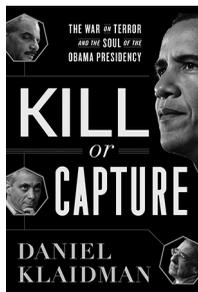
The aforementioned shortcomings notwithstanding, *New Security Challenges in Asia* may serve as an informative guide for how the United States can successfully rebalance to Asia. As the writers of this volume show, where little or no military solutions exist to deal with new challenges, the United States can lead from behind by relying upon its soft power.

## POLICY, TERROR, &amp; ESPIONAGE

**Kill or Capture: The War on Terror and the Soul of the Obama Presidency**

By Daniel Klaidman

Reviewed by Dr. W. Andrew Terrill, Research Professor at the Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College

New York: Houghton  
Mifflin Harcourt, 2013

304 pages

\$14.95

Daniel Klaidman's *Kill or Capture* provides an in-depth examination of the Obama administration's policies on terrorism-related issues including Guantanamo Bay prisoners, harsh interrogations, military commissions, and the use of armed drones to strike against terrorists. According to Klaidman, President Obama had emerged as a foreign policy realist by the time he was elected and repeatedly proved himself to be "ruthlessly pragmatic" on terrorism issues despite his liberal instincts. An ongoing focus of this book is the legal and policy disagreements within the administration and the ways in which these struggles influenced the internal debate on a range of contentious issues. The two most important factions within the administration were sometimes slyly referred to as "Tammany Hall" and "the Aspen Institute." The bare knuckles realists of Tammany (such as White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel) often won the most important debates, and the Aspen idealists often spent more time than they would have wished nursing their political wounds.

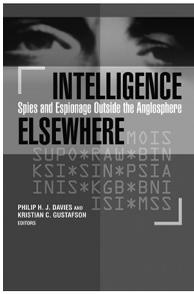
The author goes into extensive and sometimes painful detail about the debates among administration national security officials, attorneys, and other senior bureaucrats. According to Klaidman, "By the midway point of Obama's first year in office the White House's thermostat had swung toward Tammany." Rahm Emanuel is portrayed as tough and "transactional," focusing heavily on how any action could help the president's agenda without worrying about liberal ideals that were politically costly. Attorney General Eric Holder was often his chief foil and at least on one occasion was pushed to the brink of resignation. While Holder is one of Obama's closest friends, the president still tended to side with Emanuel on most important arguments in the belief that pragmatism was necessary to move the country forward. After over a year in office, Holder ultimately chose not to resign because it would have been widely assumed that he had been driven out by Tammany or become disillusioned with the administration to the point that he could no longer serve it. Holder understood the situation and remained a loyalist.

If the president needed any additional push to implement tough-minded policies, he clearly received it when on 25 December 2009 a member of the terrorist group al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) barely failed in his mission to destroy a commercial US aircraft with 289 passengers. The consequences of such an action would have been catastrophic for both the country and the administration. In addition, due to an appalling death toll, the attack could have produced serious political pressure to do something dramatic in retaliation and perhaps even undertake some sort of intervention in Yemen, which could have gone very badly. In meetings with his senior national security officials,

President Obama stated, “We dodged a bullet, but just barely. It [the attack] was averted by brave individuals [passengers], not because the system worked.” Five months later, the Obama administration was lucky again when the “Times Square bomber,” Faisal Shahzad, selected the wrong type of fertilizer for use in a car bomb and was arrested after his car smoked but did not explode. This incident was a second “dodged bullet” that influenced the security versus privacy/civil liberties debate in the administration. Under these circumstances, improving intelligence and security operations appeared increasingly vital if the United States was going to avoid a catastrophe. After the Christmas bombing attempt, Holder told his staff the increased danger of large-scale terrorist strikes had fundamentally changed the administration debate and they were now in a “new world.” The Times Square bombing attempt only confirmed this assessment. Aspen increasingly started to look like Tammany.

A central part of the administration’s response to terrorist near misses involved what the author calls “Barack Obama’s ferocious campaign of targeted killings” through the use of armed drones. While some administration officials were uncomfortable with the legality of drone strikes, Obama was prepared to escalate their use to end the terrorist career of Anwar al Awlaki and other individuals like him. Awlaki was the Yemen-based planner of the Christmas Day plot, whom Obama designated as the leading terrorist target for elimination, having priority even over al Qaeda leader Ayman al Zawahiri. Unsurprisingly, Awlaki was subsequently killed in a US drone strike, despite his status as a US citizen. Also, as is well known, the Obama administration continued to make extensive use of armed drones, which Klaidman describes as a “seductive tool.” In this political environment, some administration officials worried that capturing terrorists (who could possess valuable intelligence) was no longer a priority when they could be killed so easily. Yet, if President Obama remained a committed supporter of drone strikes, one hard-line policy he did not support was the continued use of the Guantanamo Bay prison to hold terrorism suspects. Rather, he had hoped to transfer these detainees to Supermax prisons such as the ones in Marion, Illinois, and Florence, Colorado, but was repeatedly and effectively thwarted by bipartisan Congressional objections.

In sum, this book is a particularly valuable resource since many of the issues it discusses provide important historical context for contemporary policy debates. These controversies include the arguments about privacy versus security involving the National Security Agency’s activities. Civil libertarians who maintain the scales have been tipped too far in the direction of security can usefully consider the very close calls with terrorism mentioned in this study, and what kind of political environment would exist if they had succeeded. Likewise, individuals on all sides of the Guantanamo debate will have the opportunity to consider how indescribably difficult politically it will be to close that prison in any near-term time frame despite potentially viable alternatives. The issue of drones has also continued to be with us and is likely to remain the seductive tool for not only Obama but also many future presidents.



Washington, DC:  
Georgetown University  
Press, 2013

320 pages

\$34.95

## Intelligence Elsewhere: Spies and Espionage Outside the Anglosphere

Edited by Philip H. J. Davies and Kristian C. Gustafson

Reviewed by LTC Joseph Becker, Faculty Member at the National Intelligence University, Washington, DC

Cultural analysis is an academic tool that holds considerable potential for understanding complicated issues outside an analyst's normal frame of reference. However, within the intelligence community, this tool is often misunderstood or misapplied, producing disappointing results that tend to discredit the discipline as a component in the production of quality intelligence analysis. The authors and editors of *Intelligence Elsewhere: Spies and Espionage Outside the Anglosphere* provide a different view. They claim that cultural analysis is beneficial and possibly vital to understanding both allies and adversaries. They build their argument by using comparative analysis to examine case studies written by multiple authors about a wide selection of intelligence services from non-Western countries. This book serves as both an example of how cultural analysis might be applied by practitioners of intelligence as well as an insightful collection of case studies about intelligence services that have often been neglected in the body of Western intelligence research.

This book devotes four early chapters to examining ancient intelligence traditions arising from China, the Maurya Empire in India, the Byzantine Empire, and the foundation of Islam. The authors and editors believe these traditions have a profound, but often unrecognized, impact on a swath of modern states and their security services. The book continues to describe individual countries and their security apparatus in terms of historical layers, each of which contributes a portion to the explanation of their organization's current status. As asserted by multiple authors throughout the text, the study of culture cannot predict what action a country or its leaders will take in any given circumstance, but it can offer great insight into how they will carry it out. Furthermore, even the individual actors themselves may not be fully aware of the influences that color their own decisionmaking processes.

The chapter on Russian security services, entitled "Protecting the New Rome," is a high point in the book. Russia's tilt away from the West since the end of the Soviet Union towards an authoritarian model has tended to baffle many Western observers. However, an examination of Russia's Byzantine influences provides a fascinating perspective on the culture that underlies this process. President Putin's patriarchal behavior toward the Russian Orthodox Church draws parallels to emperors of a millennium past, but far from being an isolated anachronism, this chapter demonstrates elements of this pattern have perpetuated, even during the Soviet Union. This culminates today in a security culture that has allowed Russia's intelligence services to weather extreme political change with surprisingly little impact.

Also of note, the authors of this work provide illuminating insight into the security services of both Iran and Japan. In the case of Iran, the chapter describes a "shatterbelt" of competing tensions, both internal and external to the current Iranian regime. This leaves Iran's intelligence

services in a position of crucial importance, while tying their hands so that none individually can threaten the political status quo. A combination of Islamic and Persian cultural influences defines an intelligence culture designed to protect a government whose very foundations seem to define the word “paradox.” Japanese culture, on the other hand, would seem straightforward by comparison. However, a number of cultural biases continue to relegate the field of intelligence to a second-class status in Japan. Furthermore, the traditional value placed upon the attainment of consensus in every major decision means that even the best intelligence information might be brushed aside once agreement has been reached on a course of action or policy.

For countries with freely and democratically elected governments, the authors use the term “democratization of intelligence” as a basis by which to compare and contrast the progress that certain intelligence services are making in their evolution toward supporting the institutions of democracy and accountable governance in those countries. In several cases, authors trace a given country’s political evolution side-by-side with its primary security services. It is interesting to note, as in the case of Argentina, that in spite of major political changes, elements of a country’s intelligence apparatus often have tremendous staying power and seem to run much deeper than the roots of any given organization or personality. This book demonstrates that intelligence culture is a product of history and changes to a given culture take considerable time.

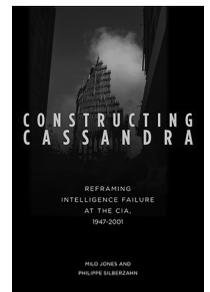
Although *Intelligence Elsewhere* is written by a group of authors, the style is academic throughout. It is well-sourced and precise in its assertions. Cultural analysis is a broad field of study encompassing a number of variables and a tendency toward ambiguity. Therefore, in order to scope their arguments, the authors have loaded some portions of the book with qualifications and nuanced deliberations, which can make for cumbersome reading, especially for the casual reader. However, for students and practitioners of intelligence, this will be a valuable addition to their collection. It is also worth mentioning that many of these case studies could stand alone as primers or reference material on individual countries and intelligence services.

## **Constructing Cassandra: Reframing Intelligence Failure at the CIA, 1947-2001**

By Milo Jones and Philippe Silberzahn

Reviewed by Mr. Ross W. Clark, Graduate Student, School of International Affairs, Pennsylvania State University

The Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA) shroud of secrecy allows for its effectiveness in addressing the nation’s security problems. On 22 September 1947, President Harry Truman created the CIA under the auspices of the National Security Act of 1947. Under this act, the CIA's primary goal was and remains not only to evaluate intelligence related to US national security but also prevent strategic surprises that threaten US national security. The CIA’s occasional intelligence failures and the potential reasons behind these inabilities are the topic of this book.



Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013  
375 pages  
\$53.18

*Constructing Cassandra*, by Milo Jones and Philippe Silberzahn, discusses the failures of the CIA, including those associated with—the Iranian revolution, the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the terrorist attacks of 9/11. However, in discussing these failures, it does not diminish the difficulty of the tasks at hand for CIA analysts and operatives. In this approach, the book clarifies the difference in opinions of the phrase “strategic surprise.” *Constructing Cassandra* defines “strategic surprise” as “the sudden realization that one has been operating on the basis of an erroneous threat assessment that results in a failure to anticipate a grave threat to ‘vital’ national interests.” Explaining the challenges of strategic surprises, challenging the Cassandras (individuals who anticipated the course of events but were ignored), and proposing recommendations are the main points of this study.

The culture and identity of an organization determine how it reacts to the environment and what problems it notices and addresses. CIA personnel’s threat perception and ability to decipher threats from intelligence reports is dependent on CIA structure and organizational culture which, therefore, need to be studied. This approach, called social constructivist, is the process used to examine the social setting of the organization and how it affects its ability to do its job originally established by the National Security Act. Throughout the work, multiple persistent features of the nature of the CIA are outlined, including but not limited to the homogeneity of the personnel, preference of secret over open source information, and the idea of a consensus-driven atmosphere. Until recently, upper-class White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) Americans dominated the CIA as a distorted protective mechanism against betrayal. In addition, there is a preference for only clandestinely obtained information and a belief that its reliability is guaranteed by the secret manner in which this information is obtained. Finally, there is a widespread view that the CIA is a consensus-driven organization and there are social and institutional pressures not to be an analytical outlier. One CIA veteran, Robert George, states, “Trying to argue against the current analytical line can be seen as undermining teamwork or even a sign of personal self-promotion.” What the above points do not describe in detail is how this identity is maintained and in what ways these aspects impact the decisionmaking process CIA analysts perform.

The selection process these analysts must endure speaks to the nature of the work CIA employees must complete. Personnel selection is important because of the intelligence profession and how the CIA trains analysts to gather data. The adaptation of the analysts to the CIA and their training processes play large roles in the socialization of that analyst. *Constructing Cassandra* reveals that no matter how good an individual’s starting qualifications, the on-the-job training by their colleagues and superiors usher in unexamined social practices, analytical methodologies, and cultural norms. A suggestion the book offers is that along with analysts, the CIA needs intelligence “synthesists” to evaluate the analytical approach and it is this failure that leads to a misdiagnosis of some analytical problems. Other fundamental failures that may lead to strategic surprises include the widespread cultural norm that the CIA often attempts to satisfy its bureaucratic superiors as opposed to producing superior analysis, and that compartmentalization makes it hard to

connect the dots in intelligence work. The failures examined throughout the book do not point to a single fault in the social mechanisms of the CIA or to the cultural norms instilled in its analysts; it rather states that the failures are products of a plethora of different aspects that make the CIA the entity it is today.

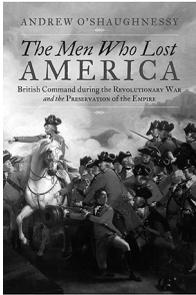
In conclusion, the book examines the future of intelligence gathering and analysis. It describes the need for a change in the intelligence cycle by establishing a hypothesis, followed by tasking, collection, analysis, production, and dissemination. *Constructing Cassandra* states that adding an hypothesis to the cycle will interject intellect and creative thinking into a process that often becomes too bureaucratic, and would assist the agency when its consumers demand answers. Jones and Silberzahn have crafted an insightful masterpiece to frame the true nature of the CIA. The depth to which their arguments are presented clearly shows the dangers a tight knit intelligence society may have when analyzing intelligence reports. Their purpose is not to craft lofty goals the agency will never reach but rather to examine the reasons why the agency failed in the past. I recommend this book to anyone with a passion in understanding the analytical framework of the CIA and who seeks to comprehend the theoretical approach, through the uses of organizational theory, in uncovering its internal mysteries.

## STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP IN WARTIME

**The Men Who Lost America: British Leadership, the American Revolution, and the Fate of the Empire**

By Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy

Reviewed by Dr. James D. Scudieri, Department of Military Strategy, Plans, and Operations, US Army War College



New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013

466 pages

\$30.00

This work provides a welcome reappraisal of the British loss of their American colonies, i.e., the American Revolution during 1775-83, in the context of British global strategic decisionmaking. The subject is not new. Author Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy credits Piers Mackesy, *The War for America, 1775-1783* (1964, reprinted 1992), on the first page of the Acknowledgment, highlighting Mackesy's belief that the war was winnable but was lost to poor generalship, among other things. O'Shaughnessy states clearly that American victory was not inevitable. It is a somewhat harder task to challenge the conventional wisdom that the British loss was due to "incompetence and mediocre leadership," both political and military. The author packages the monograph in nine biographical chapters, examining ten British leaders at policy, strategic, and theater strategic/operational levels, in sequence: King George III; Lord North as prime minister; the Howe brothers, Admiral Lord Richard and Lieutenant General Sir William; Major General John Burgoyne; Lord George Germain, Secretary of State for the Colonies, a third Secretary of State created in 1768; Lieutenant General Sir Henry Clinton; Major General Charles, 1st Marquis Cornwallis; Admiral Sir George Rodney; and John Montague, Earl of Sandwich, as First Lord of the Admiralty.

The work features senior leaders wrestling with an unprecedented set of problems, in the author's words "obstacles of such magnitude." He explains their decisionmaking in the overall context of the eighteenth century; the nature of the English state, extant political institutions, and their processes; global strategy; and ultimately the nature of the military element of power, land and naval. For example, despite the previously showcased ministry of Sir Robert Walpole in British history, O'Shaughnessy underlines the as-yet evolutionary nature of English government at the time, especially the gradual development of true cabinet government with collective ministerial responsibility. His interpretation is not without controversy, at least insofar as extant practice to ensure political survival resulted in conduct for collective shielding.

He believes the "most fundamental miscalculation" of these senior leaders was the belief that Loyalists constituted a majority of the population in America. Moreover, these same leaders did not understand the changes that took place in the war's nature. Its length, seeming without end, increased popular antipathy toward British military presence. Significantly, O'Shaughnessy cites the Declaration of Independence as a seminal document for genuine, revolutionary change: a radical republican creed which beckoned a better future.

Furthermore, in current terms, he sees a serious imbalance in ends, ways, and means. He highlights the major aspects of the post-war draw-down after 1748, following the end of the War of Austrian Succession.

He concludes that both the Royal Navy and British Army were too small for the task at hand. The latter simply lacked the strength to conquer and occupy the American colonies, especially given the alacrity with which Patriot forces had taken control of established institutions, further underlining Loyalist weaknesses.

Multiple demands upon military power exacerbated this imbalance. O'Shaughnessy repeatedly reminds readers to comprehend Britain's global responsibilities. War against the thirteen American colonies occurred with simultaneous concerns for Canada, the Caribbean, India, and Europe itself. These other theaters became ones of pressing urgency with French and others' active intervention in the war from 1778.

The author's analysis of the daunting logistical challenges to wage global warfare during this period could stand as a case study in its own right. He summarizes and synthesizes a considerable body of primary evidence and historical examinations. The reality that the British Army in America could not sustain itself in theater came as a shock, and drove major aspects of planning.

The dissection of such political and military decisions also accounts for the human domain. His ten main characters are not distant eighteenth-century aristocrats. They are individuals with strengths and weaknesses, and families upon whom they depended and who mattered greatly in their lives. He also shows how personalities mattered in the daily workings of governmental business and English society at large, including an explanation of the nature and role of the media in eighteenth-century England. He reviews the vocal, politically astute opposition to the war in England. Moreover, he hints at English leaders' ambivalence on how to fight this war, typified by the Howe brothers and the Peace Commission. Few today, on either side of the Atlantic, appreciate how such diffidence became official confusion. America was in revolt, but somehow the situation was not the same as previous experience dealing with Ireland and Scotland. Perhaps the best manifestation of this doubt concerns the British Army. It never obtained battle honors for any victories in the course of the American War against the colonists.

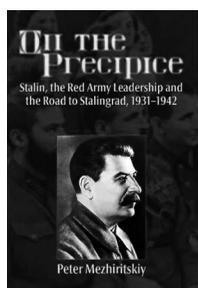
O'Shaughnessy's book does mirror earlier works in several ways. Besides Mackesy (already cited), Jeremy Black, *War for America: The Fight for Independence, 1775-1783* (1991) also asserted that American victory was not inevitable. In other words, there are cogent explanations why the Revolution could have failed, or conversely, the British could have won. Yet O'Shaughnessy's core thesis is well beyond the question whether the war was winnable. Herein is the freshness of the work.

O'Shaughnessy does not rest with the mere assertion the British could have won. Indeed, he concludes conditions generally were not favorable for British victory. However, he categorically denies the stereotype of British political and military incompetence, in stark contrast to William Seymour and W. F. N. Watson, *The Price of Folly: British Blunders in the War of American Independence* (1995). Indeed, he asserts chronic perceptions of incompetence have clouded how close and how often the outcome was in doubt. Moreover, his methodology is of particular interest to this readership.

His analysis of leaders at multiple levels, from the British king to senior commanders in the field, is a masterful case study in both vertical

and horizontal integration. The author delivers an early pledge to shatter “old shibboleths” in both the United States and the United Kingdom, as well as to challenge cherished aspects of American, national mythology. The specialist will find a few, minor errors. Regardless, this work stands as a major contribution with its phenomenal balance of primary and secondary sources and depth of synthesis across a staggering wealth of historiography on the American Revolution from the perspective of the subjects.

*The Men Who Lost America* is an important book. It dissects the senior-level “sausage making” of the British effort to reassert control over its wayward colonies. It provides a case study of especial resonance today. It showcases the misunderstanding inherent in stereotypical and simplistic explanations. Moreover, it does so in terms of special relevance to the readership of *Parameters*.



England: Helion & Company, 2012  
399 pages  
\$59.95

## On the Precipice: Stalin, the Red Army Leadership and the Road to Stalingrad, 1931-1942

By Peter Mezhiritsky

Reviewed by Dr. Stephen Blank, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, American Foreign Policy Council

There is a compelling need for a systematic study of the topic outlined in the title, especially as so much more has been learned about Stalin and the Red Army since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Unfortunately, this is not the book to fill that gap. Indeed, it represents a regression in our efforts to understand Stalin, the Red Army, and the Soviet system as a whole. In the last twenty years as some archives have been opened and Russian historians have enjoyed greater (though not full) freedom to publish about hitherto “closed” topics, we have learned a great deal about Stalin, his system, and the Red Army. Previously, and especially during the 1950s and 1960s, it was exceedingly difficult to obtain reliable information and evidence concerning these subjects. As a result, too much of the literature had to rely on what could fairly be described as rumor, hearsay, and—to be blunt—educated (or not so educated) conjecture. Fortunately, for the most part that is no longer the case.

Unfortunately the author of this book has reverted to the bad old days and this work is replete with the earlier form of source material and “evidence” instead of solid research backed by evidence. Page after page is replete with statements like “I was told by” or “X remembers that,” etc. Moreover, the lack of evidence causes the author to fail to ask—let alone answer—fundamental questions. The reader is left with what is essentially a thoroughgoing demonization of Stalin. The issue here is not that Stalin deserves that demonization. That is beyond doubt. But why did his helpers all the way down the line assist him in decapitating the leadership of the Red Army? Why did the Generals mentioned here, who fell victim to the various purges and arrests, not rebel if they were such paragons of bravery and virtue as the author suggests? Indeed, why did the armed forces as a whole not revolt against collectivization, the purges, etc? Absent evidence, it is impossible to formulate answers to

these questions, which are key issues for the study of the Red Army in Soviet affairs.

Despite the glossy production virtues of the book, these serious shortcomings invalidate it as a serious and useful account of the period under review and this is a great pity. Recent works by Roger Reese, David Glantz, David Stone, and others have shown the nature of the Red Army under Stalin, and the onset of the militarization of the Soviet economy as a whole. But since the pioneering work of John Erickson, which stands alone despite having been composed over fifty years ago when evidence was scarce, we have not had a systematic analysis of the Soviet High Command to use Erickson's title. Without such an analysis, it really is impossible to answer the questions posed above and others that may be of important analytical value for historians and students of the Red Army. If we take into account the centrality of the army as an institution to both Tsarist and Soviet rulers alike as well as the militarization of the Soviet economy, described by Oskar Lange as a *Sui Generis* war economy, we cannot understand either Stalin or the system in their totality.

Of course, in the absence of such an analysis, it would be virtually impossible to determine what expectations Moscow actually had during the thirties of the imminence of a European war, whether it would involve Russia and, if so, under what circumstances. Neither is it possible to guess at, let alone analyze, Soviet war aims without such an evidentiary and analytical foundation. Inasmuch as the Cold War, and possibly Operation Barbarossa, were triggered by Stalin's efforts to realize his war aims, these are not purely academic questions. Unfortunately for the serious reader looking for evidence or answers to these questions, those things are not found here. And that is everyone's loss.

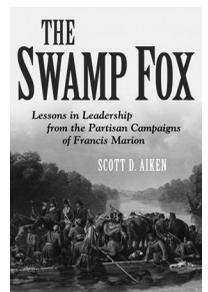
## **The Swamp Fox: Lessons in Leadership from the Partisan Campaigns of Francis Marion**

By Scott D. Aiken

Reviewed by Jill Sargent Russell, Doctoral Candidate in War Studies, King's College London

One approaches works on military leaders written by their lifelong fans with a sense of dread. Often, these works cannot escape the bounds of hero worship to provide commentary more useful than laudatory. Colonel Scott Aiken has managed to avoid the pitfalls of his inspiration on the way to crafting a really fine piece of scholarship on General Francis Marion's leadership and campaigns.

This is a work of two narratives. The first, and predominant one, covers the history of General Marion and his role commanding a partisan formation in the campaign to defeat the British in South Carolina. The second argues the relevance of this history to contemporary issues of war. Mastering the primary historical narrative, the work misses excellence for the relative weakness of its attention to the contemporary story. I am at pains to remind readers the critiques and issues brought out in this review are, in part, the result of how deeply engaged with the



Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2012  
384 pages  
\$42.95

narrative I felt; because it was interesting and challenging, it made me think.

This is not a book for novices to military affairs or the history of the American Revolution. The first is true because the military content is referenced according to technical and professional standards. The second is because the historical content is tightly concentrated in time, place, and type of activity. For the right audience, however, the work is valuable.

The book is dense and focused; anything more than a brief synopsis would exceed the bounds of this review. The primary argument of the work is that the strategic, tactical, and procedural choices made by Marion were successful and bear consideration in contemporary military practice. Taking a methodical approach to Marion's military career from the fall of Charleston in 1780 to the departure of the British from Charleston in December 1782, Aiken maintains attention upon this theme. Both independently and in support of the Continental Army under Generals Horatio Gates and Nathanael Greene, Marion is shown to make the best use of the skills and local knowledge of his irregulars against the enemy's critical and vulnerable points in South Carolina. The chapters provide detailed narrative, assessment and explication of the relevant concepts of military affairs while exploring the contours and content of Marion's campaign and his leadership and direction thereof, and could stand alone as independent case studies for classroom or research. Overall, it is well and interestingly written, relying on comprehensive sources and citations by way of endnotes.

One minor problem with the narrative concerns the role and relevance of the militias and partisan formations in the American Revolution. Within recent scholarship there is far greater scepticism regarding the utility of these forces than Aiken acknowledges. That is understandable given his argument relies on opinions attributing decisive importance to the militias and irregulars in that war. Furthermore, from the experience of Marion and his unit, there is certainly a case to be made for their unique value and effectiveness. However, whether this case can sustain a general assessment on the value of the military forces beyond the Continental Army is debatable. At minimum, the opinions of many senior leaders at the time regarding the reliability and costs of militias and irregular forces should have been a matter for Aiken's professional consideration. It would have been better to frame Marion's case as an outlier within the universe of the irregular forces in that war, as this would have made more impressive his military and leadership achievements.

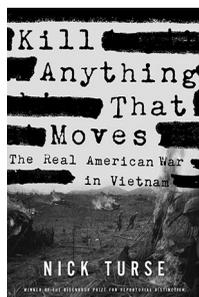
Reminding readers that I think this is a very strong work and comfortably recommend it, I cannot ignore that the lurking contemporary narrative Aiken suggests, but has largely neglected, is the great flaw of the book. Although contemporary examples regularly appear, their use too often seems disjointed within the Marion narrative. In most of the chapters these nuggets of information appear as appended to the ends of paragraphs and sections, almost as if bolted on as an afterthought. This is a shame, because they are sound and thought provoking. It is simply the case that they are too often undeveloped, either in detail or analysis. The exception is in the second part, with the chapter on "Information Warfare," in which the author examines contemporary

examples in detail. However, there is no explanation for this deviation from his practice in the other chapters, which leaves the reader at a bit of a loss. These are important comparatives, and they deserve the rigorous treatment the author applies to Marion's history.

A full chapter on the contemporary correlates is necessary because reading the narrative and taking into account the examples Aiken provided, one is irrevocably driven to certain conclusions. If it is critical to learn from the positive example of Francis Marion, then the British Army and Loyalist militias offer a negative lesson—what and how not to be. And, from the American perspective, one must then ask in whose image we have fought the last ten years. Or, concerning the tactics and operations of the enemy, nothing which has confronted American and allied forces in Iraq or Afghanistan should surprise. The means and targets of the insurgency, the use of the weight of our own operations and logistics against American forces, have been predictable and sensible according to the Marion narrative. Do we need to respect the enemy in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere more? Can we ever expect to win? And these questions don't even touch on the Vietnam example.

The problem is not that these issues must be proven. There is a deeper and more serious relevance to the history of Francis Marion, partisan genius. Rather, one sincerely wants to see the book completed, the entire narrative delivered, and particularly how Aiken would deal with the correlations to contemporary experience. Given that they run contrary to so much of the conventional and comfortable wisdom on the subjects, it would be useful for an author of his background, an infantry officer and veteran, to put these thoughts to a wider audience. Like Nixon in China, one needs a trusted figure to offer the radical as reasonable.

## NEW PERSPECTIVES ON VIETNAM

**Kill Anything That Moves: The Real American War in Vietnam**  
By Nick TurseReviewed by William Thomas Allison, PhD, Gen. Harold K. Johnson Visiting  
Chair in Military History, US Army War CollegeNew York: Metropolitan  
Books, 2013

370 pages

\$30.00

Investigative journalist Nick Turse offers a disturbing account of American atrocities in the Vietnam War in a commendable attempt to bring attention to the death and destruction wrought upon South Vietnamese civilians. His purpose is to expose “the scale of civilian suffering” in Vietnam, while claiming that American “command policies”—free-fire zones, body counts, search-and-destroy missions, and the use of excessively destructive conventional technology—established a deadly but accepted standard of “overkill” at the operational level. At the tactical level, this “overkill” created a caustic atmosphere among US forces, one that encouraged American troops to commit atrocities—rape, mutilation, murder, mass killings—with callous impunity. This is a very grim and chilling read indeed.

Turse bases his findings on his examination of the US Army’s Vietnam War Crimes Working Group collection in the National Archives. Collected by a then-secret group in the wake of the My Lai investigations, these records detail approximately 800 alleged and investigated incidents and cover-ups of atrocities committed by American military personnel. They range in scale from barbarous individual acts to the body-count mayhem orchestrated by the “Butcher of the Delta,” Major General Julian Ewell, who with his 9th Division conducted a multi-month mass killing spree called Operation Speedy Express in the Mekong Delta during 1968. Turse takes the reader through example after example of soldiers raping young girls in rural villages, intentionally running down children with deuce-and-a-half trucks, and shooting unarmed civilians, among other incidents. He supplements this material with extensive interviews of veterans and Vietnamese victims; these may be Turse’s greatest contribution and are a credit to his journalistic skills.

A harsh critic might suggest Turse cherry-picked his evidence; a more generous reviewer would criticize his data sample as too narrow. Absent is context beyond what fits Turse’s agenda. He ignores the very compelling stories of servicemembers who honorably performed their difficult duties, despite the dark character of the war in which they fought. He overlooks civic-action programs, the broader pacification strategy, and other nonmilitary efforts that, flawed as they were, worked alongside military operations in what was obviously a failed and tragically costly effort to stabilize South Vietnam. Missing is a balanced examination of the impact of atrocity allegations on the antiwar movement and the frustrating difficulty of prosecuting atrocities under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. To bring attention to civilian suffering would also warrant examination of Viet Cong atrocities committed against Vietnamese noncombatants—this, too, is absent.

The author also ignores the commonality of civilian suffering in all war. For example, did not the way in which American forces fought

World War II contribute to atrocities in Europe and the Pacific? Rape committed by American forces in France, for example, occurred just as it did in Vietnam (see J. Roberts Lilly, *Taken By Force: Rape and American GIs in Europe during World War II*, from Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). Turse quotes at length from Michael Herr's seminal book *Dispatches* (Knopf, 1977), citing the macabre photographs taken by GIs in Vietnam—posing with severed heads, showing off necklaces of severed ears, and dragging corpses unceremoniously behind various vehicles. Such acts, vile as they are, are not unique to Vietnam. Has not YouTube alone provided numerous examples of the same from Iraq? Afghanistan? This is a missed opportunity. The same argument the author applies to Vietnam could easily apply elsewhere, but viewing Vietnam, or any conflict, through this one lens dramatically skews the broader picture.

This is not to excuse or condone atrocities with Sherman's epithet "war is hell." But, war is hell, and atrocities occur despite diligent preventive efforts. Turse is certainly correct in that the way a war is fought can affect the occurrence of atrocities. History is replete with examples. While the author should be applauded for taking on such a grim and challenging subject, for exhaustive though narrow research, and for bringing attention to the immense suffering of the Vietnamese people during this awful war, he offers little that has not been previously discussed, suggested, or argued. No serious historian of the Vietnam War disputes that the way American forces fought the war contributed to an atmosphere of atrocity. None doubt that command at all levels may have swept allegations under the rug or that incidents went unreported. Few historians argue that My Lai, while an aberration in scale, was an aberration in practice. Historians focus on My Lai because it is symptomatic of the wider issues that Turse attempts to address. To claim they do so at the expense of the broader suffering of combatants and noncombatants, however, is off the mark.

The author states the "indiscriminate killing of South Vietnamese noncombatants . . . was neither accidental nor unforeseeable." This implies that American political leaders and military commanders wantonly pursued a war of mass indiscriminate killing. Turse does not convince that this was indeed the case. That needless deaths and wounding of hundreds of thousands of civilians, however, was the consequence of the way the United States fought the war has long been the consensus among historians.

The book's singular value lies in its brutal content. Turse does remind us of the extreme character and tragedy of atrocity. In the end, however, he offers an uneven view of a controversial war.



Lubbock: Texas Tech  
University Press, 2012  
480 pages  
\$39.95

## Vietnam Labyrinth: Allies, Enemies, and Why the US Lost the War

By Tran Ngoc Chau, with Ken Fermoye

Reviewed by Dr. William Thomas Allison, Harold K. Johnson Visiting Chair in Military History, US Army War College

Exciting new scholarship on Vietnam continues to expand our understanding of this divisive war. Scholars now apply multidisciplinary approaches to archival sources in Vietnamese, French, and English, revealing fresh, provocative perspectives, and new voices, to give the historiographic box of Vietnam a much-needed shake. Recent Vietnamese memoirs contribute significantly to this welcome trend.

Tran Ngoc Chau's *Vietnam Labyrinth*, is one such memoir. Chau's story is compellingly captivating and valuable. Rare is the story told of a Vietnamese soldier who in 1946 served with the Viet Minh against the French, changed sides in 1950, then became a key member of the South Vietnamese government, was imprisoned by that same government in 1970, then was imprisoned again by the North Vietnamese in 1975, then escaped to the United States in 1979. His story reveals much about loyalty and betrayal, service and sacrifice, hope and disillusionment, and perceptions and misunderstanding, among the Vietnamese, the French, the Americans, and even Chau himself. His is a truly distinctive lens through which to examine the thirty-year Vietnamese struggle for independence.

As a young man in September 1945, Chau rejoiced along with millions of his countrymen when Ho Chi Minh declared Vietnam's independence, but Chau did so as a nationalist, not a communist. Chau subsequently joined the Viet Minh, perceived by many in Vietnam at the time to be more nationalist than communist in its fight against France. An excellent officer and combat leader, Chau soon gained the attention of influential officers and political officials as he rose through the ranks. By 1950, however, Chau had become disillusioned with his comrades, as communist dogma resourcefully supplanted nationalism as the principal guiding force behind the Viet Minh. Ho's government conducted several mini-purges of nonbelievers while recruiting experienced and skilled leaders like Chau into the Vietnamese Communist Party. Born to a traditional Buddhist mandarin family with distant but deeply-held dynastic ties, Chau could not reconcile his love of country with his fear of what communism would mean for Vietnam. Thus, he made the difficult and dangerous decision to change sides.

It took time for Chau to prove his loyalty, but through courage, skill, leadership, and some well-placed guardian angels, he overcame his understandable doubters. Chau again quickly moved up the military/political chain—lieutenant colonel, province chief of Kien Hoa, mayor of Danang, representative in the National Assembly, and ultimately Secretary General of the National Assembly. Through his own evolution as a Vietnamese patriot, he experienced the unfolding wars for Vietnam's independence—first the French Indochina War, then the American War in Vietnam, conflicts that fused a war for independence, a civil war, a war of unification, and a Cold War-proxy war into one

confusing tragic conflict. Along the way, he formed close associations with Americans John Paul Vann (who claimed Chau knew more about defeating a communist insurgency than anyone in Vietnam) and Daniel Ellsberg (who wrote the foreword for *Vietnam Labyrinth*), among others. He was a military academy classmate of Nguyen Van Thieu, who in 1970 as president of South Vietnam had Chau unconstitutionally imprisoned and held in solitary confinement for almost four years for “advocating democratization of the South and political negotiation with the North.”

Chau’s memoir provides insight into the inner workings of the Viet Minh, the South Vietnamese government, and the French, then American, presence in South Vietnam. He gives powerful testimony to the trauma of thirty years of war on a small nation caught in the destructive vise between internal struggles and great power conflict. Chau’s most significant contribution, however, derives from his close work with American military and civilian personnel in South Vietnam. He witnessed their faulty perceptions, lack of understanding, and cultural arrogance that in his assessment undermined South Vietnam’s chances for independence. The preponderance of the American presence, the cultural illiteracy of American advisors and officials, the misplaced American backing of reactionary Vietnamese in high government positions, and the overuse of massive firepower while neglecting basic pacification principles fed South Vietnamese dependence upon the United States, undercut government legitimacy at all levels, and alienated the population.

While these conclusions are neither novel nor new, the context in which Chau presents them is original and insightful. His memoir, like Nguyen Công Luan’s *Nationalist in the Vietnam Wars: Memoirs of a Victim Turned Soldier* (Indiana 2012), is invaluable to moving beyond an American-centric history of the Vietnam War. Defense professionals should read history, and they should read *Vietnam Labyrinth* to understand the “other” in American wars, be they ally or enemy.

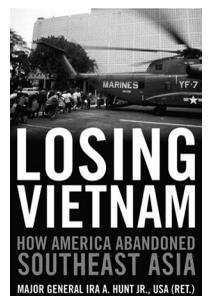
## Losing Vietnam: How America Abandoned Southeast Asia

By Ira A. Hunt, Jr.

Reviewed by Dr. David Fitzgerald, School of History, University College Cork, Ireland

Over forty years after the signing of the Paris peace accords, the “post-war war” in Vietnam continues to be relatively neglected, at least by the standards of the literature of that exhaustively documented conflict. With *Losing Vietnam: How America Abandoned Southeast Asia*, Ira Hunt adds to the literature by offering an analysis of the collapse of South Vietnam and the Khmer Republic and strives to correct misperceptions about the denouement of the war; instead, he accidentally offers a window into the mindset that contributed to America’s defeat in Indochina.

Part of the Association of the US Army’s “Battles and Campaigns” series, the book uneasily straddles the line between analysis and memoir. Hunt (who also served as Chief of Staff in the 9th Infantry Division in Vietnam from 1968 to 1969) certainly had a unique vantage point on this period of the war. As Deputy Commander of the United States Support



Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2013

416 pages

\$40.00

Activities Group (USSAG) in Thailand during this period, Hunt met frequently with senior military leaders of South Vietnam and Cambodia and had access to all Southeast Asia operational reports. He uses that perspective to produce an account of the efforts of various US military advisors and diplomats to keep American financial aid flowing into Indochina. The title of the book is something of a misnomer, as only half the book covers the final years of the Republic of South Vietnam, while the rest focuses on the war in Cambodia, with some brief codas on the *Mayaguez* incident, the insurgency in Thailand, and the war in Laos.

Throughout, Hunt argues the lack of US funding for the South Vietnamese and Cambodian war efforts doomed both governments to defeat. Hunt produces table after table highlighting the curtailment of ammunition expenditure and the drop in flying hours that meant the South Vietnamese and Cambodians were unable to hold off the final communist onslaughts in the spring of 1975. He argues ammunition shortages and rampant inflation created deep-seated morale problems in South Vietnamese and Cambodian forces. Somewhat tendentiously, he claims, despite all of this, “in early March 1975 South Vietnam was holding its own,” making a similar claim with respect to the Cambodians. Hunt is more willing to blame the institutional culture of the Cambodian Army than he is to seriously question the decisionmaking of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) leadership.

Hunt’s argument is thoroughly informed by his Thailand-based perspective. In many ways, this book is a distillation of various reports that crossed Hunt’s desk in Nakhon Phanom airbase. While he produces statistics for things as diverse as ammunition expenditures, precipitation in Indochina, enemy-initiated incidents, and a “won-lost” ledger for major engagements in South Vietnam in 1973 and 1974, there is something missing here. These data capture much about the war. The tables and figures enrich our understanding but not as much as the author might want us to believe. By focusing so much on the data flowing into United States Support Activities Group headquarters, Hunt completely ignores South Vietnamese or Cambodian perspectives, despite the fact that they, not the Americans, were the war’s chief protagonists at this time.

For instance, the author does good work in showing the impact of reduced US funding on ammunition supply and expenditure in South Vietnam, but we learn nothing about the origins of President Thieu’s “four no’s” decision, which committed RVNAF to a static defense of its territory and was a major factor in the South Vietnamese defeat (something even Hunt, who is eager to highlight American culpability for the fall of Saigon, admits). Nowhere in the book is there a detailed analysis of the culture of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam leadership or of the Government of Vietnam corruption. Reading Hunt’s account of the final collapse of South Vietnam, this reviewer was reminded of Arnold Isaacs’ point that “to acknowledge that South Vietnam’s collapse had moral and not just material causes was painful [because it] . . . meant there was no American remedy for Vietnam’s defeat.”

While part of this reliance on statistics and focus on material can be ascribed to where Hunt sat during the events he describes, much of this is a symptom of his general view of the uses of data and statistical analysis, which are always privileged over more qualitative assessments of South Vietnamese performance. The narrowness of the perspective

Hunt adopts means that those interested in the last years of the wars in Vietnam and Cambodia would be advised to turn elsewhere for more comprehensive analysis. For a complete picture, scholars would do better to read James Wilbanks' *Abandoning Vietnam: How America Left and South Vietnam Lost Its War* (University Press of Kansas 2004) or even Arnold Isaacs' classic journalistic account of the fall of South Vietnam and Cambodia, *Without Honor: Defeat in Vietnam and Cambodia* (Johns Hopkins University Press 1998). Hunt's book is still useful on two levels—as a semi-autobiographical account of the Vietnam War's final years and as an example of the quantitative-driven worldview that permeated American leadership throughout the Vietnam era. The author's attempts to quantify South Vietnamese and Cambodian battlefield performance through win-loss and combat initiation ratios are efforts of which Robert McNamara would have been proud.

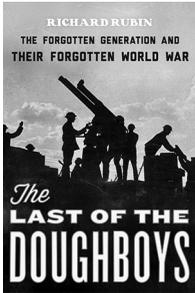
In Gregory Daddis's excellent work on the use of metrics in the American war in Vietnam, he pointed out the extent to which a data-centric approach informed US thinking on the war and concluded that “in short, there is more to winning than counting.” Surely the same applies to losing.

## REVISITING THE GREAT WAR

**The Last of the Doughboys: The Forgotten Generation and Their Forgotten World War**

By Richard Rubin

Reviewed by Dr. Michael S. Neiberg, Professor of History, Department of National Security Studies, US Army War College



New York: Houghton  
Mifflin Harcourt, 2013  
528 pages  
\$28.00

Richard Rubin travelled around the United States at the beginning of this century to find some veterans of the most important event of the last century. He managed to find several surviving World War I veterans, all of them 100 years old or older. To his surprise, and our good fortune, most of them were more than willing to talk to him and had excellent long-term memories. Rubin has done us all a great service by getting their recollections on paper and recording them for posterity.

Their stories are nothing short of astonishing, offering glimpses into a world, and an America, before the great calamity of 1914. For some of these veterans, military service was a highlight of their lives, giving them a chance to see some of the world and to participate in the most important event of their generation; for others, military service was an interesting (and sometimes terrifying) interlude in a life that went on as normal once they returned to the United States. They kept some memories alive and suppressed others, sometimes for decades. Rubin gave them a chance to talk about those memories.

Some common themes emerge from Rubin's interviews. Few of his interviewees showed much interest in geopolitics, and almost all of them joined the military for the same reasons young men have throughout history: for adventure; for a vague sense of patriotic duty; or because their friends were doing the same and they did not want to be left behind. Virtually all of them use the word "lucky" or some synonym to explain why they survived while so many others did not, reminding us all of the random and capricious nature of war. They were for the most part modest men, many of whom had not spoken seriously about the war in decades.

Between chapters featuring interviews with veterans, Rubin has spliced chapters about the war itself. Some of this material introduces the big concepts of the war to a reader who might be unfamiliar with trench warfare, the Meuse-Argonne, and poison gas. Others deal with elements of American culture in 1917, including a chapter on the most popular songs of the time, another on the books Americans would have been reading about the war in Europe, and one on soldier memoirs. The chapter on music is his best; Rubin collects old music and thus knows the subject well. He has introduced a new generation to the wonderfully-titled Tin Pan Alley tune "If He Can Fight Like He Can Love, Good Night Germany!" It contained the lyric "If he's half as good in a trench/ as he was in the park on a bench . . ." It wasn't such an age of innocence after all.

These chapters, however entertaining at times, break up the flow of the book and distract the reader from the book's core theme, the

recollections of the veterans themselves. Rubin is not an historian, and his lack of knowledge about some key components of the war will be transparent to those who have studied the war in any depth. As a result, he repeats several old myths and stereotypes about the war. He also has a tendency to simplify very complex topics into one or two sentences. A greater attention to the actual history of the war would have smoothed off some of the rough edges of these digressions. He might also have chosen to drop most of these chapters altogether, keeping the focus where it belonged, on the veterans themselves.

Rubin, a journalist, writes in an informal style that some readers will find engaging and others will find distracting. One three-page stretch of the book features the word “I” no fewer than 33 times. Rubin aimed for a conversational tone, trying to bring the reader along with him into the living rooms, retirement homes, and hospitals where he interviewed these men (and two women). That choice may work for some, but it also distracts us from the people at the center of the book, the best-known of whom, Frank Buckles, was the last surviving American veteran of the war.

And those people are the real reason to read this book. We learn about the intense racism and segregation that marked not just the Army but American society in general. We also learn about the complex identities of so-called hyphenated Americans; the tensions experienced by Americans in this time of transition from a rural to an urban society; and the difficulties of getting the United States involved in the most terrible war the world had yet known. The veterans he talked to told stories of comrades, most likely suffering from post-traumatic stress, committing suicide after the war. He also notes a veteran who never cashed the check the Army gave him on separation. He would rather, he said, have had that check (for one dollar) as a souvenir.

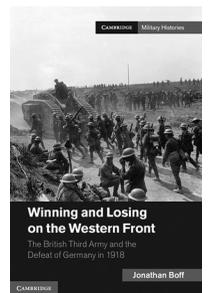
If not for the work of Richard Rubin, these voices and the stories they told would have been lost forever. His book, therefore, performs an important service to all of those interested in World War I, the experience of soldiers at war, and the history of the United States in these years. The criticisms above do not in any way detract from the real value of the book, a chance to listen to men and women who lived through an extraordinary age.

## Winning and Losing on the Western Front: The British Third Army and the Defeat of Germany in 1918

By Jonathan Boff

Reviewed by Dr. Dean A. Nowowiejski, COL (USA Retired), whose dissertation analyzed the performance of the American military governor of the Rhineland, MG Henry T. Allen, who commanded the 90th Division in the AEF before commanding American Forces in Germany during the occupation

Jonathan Boff takes the readers of *Parameters* into a different world in this book. Those who are American students of military history get to explore the British perspective. Those who have studied World War I receive a new argument that mines both British and German sources to understand tactics, operational art, and an analysis of the outcome of



New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012  
286 pages  
\$99.00

the 100 Days Campaign in the late summer and autumn of 1918. Boff focuses on the hitherto largely unexplored British Third Army defeat of the German Seventeenth and Second Armies, a lens that allows him to use both statistical and cultural terms of analysis. His developed story is complex, but convincing. Jonathan Boff demonstrates mastery of both English and German language sources, and his argument clearly addresses the historians who previously wrote about the British Army at the end of the Great War. In fact, one senses a mastery of the literature in his thorough presentation, and one of the advantages of his book is to connect to the British historiography of the war.

His level of tactical analysis resembles Mark Grotelueschen's insightful observations in *The AEF Way of War: The American Army and Combat in World War I*. Both accomplish detailed tactical examination through careful mining of the historical record. Jonathan Boff exhaustively analyzes available war diaries of both the British Third and the German Second and Seventeenth Armies to the Corps, Division, and sometimes Brigade level to understand the complexities of tactical result. His exploration of tactical detail also allows him to dissect the effects of battle on morale and reveal innovations in leadership at that level.

*Winning and Losing on the Western Front* addresses the four prevailing hypotheses (page 15) concerning the result of the "Hundred Days" campaign (from 8 August until the Armistice) and offers a clear conclusion concerning the validity of each one. The first is that the Germans were overwhelmed by superior numbers, both in men and materiel. Boff finds that the progressive attrition that took hold earlier in 1918 bore fruit in the Hundred Days campaign as the German Army became progressively less capable of defense in depth or effective counterattack, and its formations gradually disintegrated as they remained committed and the system of reserves broke down. The Germans also perceived they were at a materiel imbalance, particularly in tanks, and this weighed on their morale.

The second hypothesis: German Army morale collapsed. Boff adeptly reveals that this simply did not occur. The Germans may have suffered poor "mood" but not broken "spirit," a construct he develops in the lengthy chapter exploring morale in both Armies. Boff in fact claims that morale inside the German tactical formations was surprisingly resilient until just before the Armistice.

Third, the British by this point in the war were able to defeat the Germans because of superior tactical method. Here, Boff's analysis carefully takes apart the several factors involved in combined arms operations at this point in the war, and finds that elements such as the employment of tanks, aircraft, and signal were not all that effective for the British, that infantry and artillery cooperation accounted for the majority of instances of combined arms employment, and though this employment was more flawed than previously exposed, the British still exceeded the Germans in combined arms employment by this point in the war. But decline in German combined arms effectiveness accounted for much of the result, too.

Fourth, "British victory was the outcome of superior operational art." Boff finds here British operational command was far less flexible than previously revealed, and it was German failings in operational

command that contributed more to the British success. The failings of the German Army are a surprise emphasis in *Winning and Losing*. The Germans, contrary to popular perception, did not practice “mission command” as we now know it; in fact, their flexible system of command deteriorated ever more severely as they stumbled toward the end of the war, and their operational commanders tried desperately to exert strong control on events, to little avail.

Boff’s useful framework of analysis builds on these broad hypotheses, while recognizing some minor oversimplification and overlap in doing so. To achieve this result, the book explores the four hypotheses as outlined above, taking each in turn through sequential chapter level analysis. Boff begins with a summary of events then offers chapters on manpower and training, materiel, morale, and tactics for both sides. He winds up with operational analysis and a fine, concise conclusion. The use of a series of maps at the front as a common reference proves to be effective, and many of the photographs which dress the text are clear, interesting, and relevant.

Jonathan Boff’s argument is sometimes subtle, often nuanced, and always squarely in the context of existing historiography. You know exactly where he stands on the historical hypotheses of existing literature. His method does not allow for a fast read, because the prose is densely packed with research and meaning, and he offers many significant findings in the course of this short book. For those who want a model of tactical, and particularly operational, battle analysis, *Winning and Losing on the Western Front* offers many valid techniques. His book will be most satisfying, not for the general reader, but for the expert in operational history, World War I battle, and in the character of leadership and of armies. Thus, his book is recommended for many readers of *Parameters*.

