

**The War Lovers: Roosevelt, Lodge, Hearst, and the Rush to Empire, 1898.** By Evan Thomas. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2010. 480 pages. \$29.99. **Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Robert Gray Bracknell,** USMC, Kabul, Afghanistan.

American journalist and historian Evan Thomas has once again proven why he is among the foremost modern scholars of American history, culture, and politics. *The War Lovers* is a captivating chronicle of war fever and calculated crisis, manipulated by key leaders in the run-up to the twentieth century and culminating in the Spanish-American War. Thomas assembles a compelling historical record for the case that the Spanish-American War was a conflict of choice, shaped by powerful politicians and statesmen, and exploited by a rabid, sensational newspaper editor. Reasons for their conduct abound from simple machismo, to earnest belief in the national interest, greed, to pure self-indulgence and an insatiable appetite for controversy. In doing so, Thomas builds an instructive case study for current military and civilian national security professionals on the causal factors for war and the agendas that influence national decision-making. He weaves the archetypal cautionary tale, revealing that sometimes conflict is the product of irrational and intensely personal calculus, rather than the pure strategic realpolitik taught in universities and war colleges.

The author recasts Theodore Roosevelt, who was Assistant Secretary of the Navy at the time, from the conventional wisdom—a loyal, altruistic model nationalist—to a sophistic, scheming demagogue, willing to stage-manage US foreign policy for his own egotistic ends, driven by psychological factors including an extreme case of father worship. Roosevelt’s self-loathing is so complete that it transforms his total perspective on related issues; introspection was not a strong suit. Similarly, Thomas paints statesman and virtual New England hereditary peer William Cabot Lodge as a puppeteer, dancing marionettes across a stage to demonstrate his power and influence. William Randolph Hearst’s legend as a muckraking proprietor of “journalism that acts” needs little exposition, but Thomas fleshes out his character with a healthy degree of cynicism and edgy historical humor. The author develops a plot line of interaction between these three principal actors and the establishments—the Washington political establishment embodied by Speaker of the house Thomas Reed, the Boston Brahmin social establishment, and the Harvard set—showing the tensions and their resolutions in a way that makes the characters at once real, competent, ludicrous, vulnerable, haughty, adventurous, and patriotic. The author himself is of relatively high birth as the son of a literary editor and grandson of a Princeton graduate and presidential candidate, educated at Phillips Andover, Harvard, and the University of Virginia’s law school, yet he spares no mercy in describing the conceit and self-importance of fellow Harvard men Roosevelt and Lodge. Thomas heaps cynical observations on the pairs, casting them as ambitious to a fault, willing co-conspirators in a subconscious plot to engineer war out of thin air by marshaling and massaging every war decision in their favor.

The takeaway for this reviewer is that actors are more complex than the oversimplified caricatures the modern press, the academy, and political society sometimes make them out to be. Roosevelt is often caricatured as a cigar-chomping outdoorsman and man of adventure, leading from the front in the Cuban campaign and earning accolades and medals for altruistic heroism. In reality, the picture of Roosevelt

painted by Thomas is not nearly so selflessly patriotic and capable, but rather a man who was willing to subordinate the national interest to his own ends. Thomas shows that circumstances 100 years ago, were quite similar to many of today's political and personal agendas, perhaps for similar purposes. The image of Teddy Roosevelt, the purest American loyalist, charging up San Juan Hill to liberate Cuba from the malicious Spanish regime is insufficient to capture the total picture of the complex political, military, and strategic confluence that led to the Spanish-American War. The question for the polity is how to design a system that marginalizes these personal agendas and ideologies to ensure that questions of war are, indeed, answered with morality, proper state behavior, and national self-interest as the foremost considerations. Books like *The War Lovers* are instructive in ensuring we are not doomed to repeat history, or at least to recognize when we are.

**Keynes: The Return of the Master.** By Robert Skidelsky. New York: Public Affairs, 2009. 221 pages, \$25.95. **Reviewed by Michael J. Fratantuono,** Associate Professor, Department of International Business and Management, and Chair, Department of International Studies, at Dickinson College.

Via the three-volume biography that he completed in 2000, British historian Robert Skidelsky established himself as the world's leading authority on the life and writing of John Maynard Keynes, the man who pioneered thinking about macroeconomics; helped design the post-World War II Bretton Woods regime; and unabashedly asserted that "The ideas of economists and political philosophers, both when they are right and when they are wrong, are more powerful than is commonly supposed. Indeed the world is ruled by little else."

The assertion by Keynes is the impetus for Professor Skidelsky's latest book. He believes that the current Great Recession can be traced to intellectual, moral, and institutional failures that are either embedded in or emanate from the dominant strains of contemporary economic thought. The author also believes that if policy-makers hope to avoid similar crises in the future, they should reconsider the insight of Keynes.

During his university years, Keynes studied Classical Economics, the field launched by Adam Smith in 1776. In the nineteenth century, those shaping the discipline applied the mathematics of Newtonian physics to the concept of the market. That framework suggested that, starting from a state of equilibrium in which supply was equal to demand, an increase in supply of a particular good would lead to a reduction in price, which in turn would induce individuals to increase the quantity demanded of the good to the point where the market was once again in equilibrium. (Mirror-image adjustments would unfold in the event of a reduction in supply.) The logic was also applicable to markets for the factors of production, such as labor, and, of critical importance, to the interaction between the acts of saving out of current income and of borrowing in order to invest in productive capital.

Keynes, informed by his active participation in the financial markets and by the Great Depression, developed an alternative vision of economic processes. When people were confronted with irreducible and unquantifiable uncertainty about future economic events, they tended to hoard cash, the most liquid form of saving. If they did so, then that flow of saving was not made available to factory owners who wanted to borrow