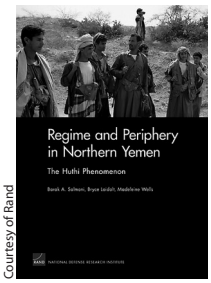
# Book Reviews




Courtesy of Rand

Santa Monica, CA: Rand National Defense Research Institute, 2010

410 pages

$52.00

## *Regime and Periphery in Northern Yemen: The Huthi Phenomenon*

by Barak A. Salmoni, Bryce Loidolt, and Madeleine Wells

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

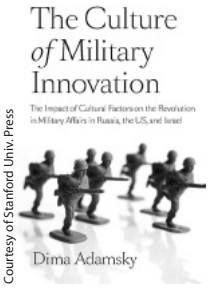
Yemen has become a country of considerable concern to the West and especially to the United States since December 2009 when an individual trained by Yemeni terrorists attempted to destroy a US civilian aircraft on its way to Detroit. Given such conditions, it is only natural for US Defense Department leaders to seek additional information and insight regarding this country. This book is an unclassified RAND Corporation study prepared for the Defense Intelligence Agency on the Huthi rebellion in northern Yemen. As such, it seeks to provide a straightforward account of many of the key aspects of Yemeni society as well as the nature of the northern rebellion. While the northern part of Yemen does not currently face a major threat from al Qaeda terrorists, the conflict is still a major challenge to the Yemeni government. The ability of the government to manage this challenge is critical if it is to restore acceptable civil order and avoid dissipating Yemeni military and intelligence resources better spent on counterterrorism.

For those seeking a policy-relevant study, this is a truly impressive work with an insightful and fine-grained analysis of the political, religious, military, and regional aspects of the Huthi rebellion. This revolt involves the struggle of northern rebels against the authority of the central government. The Huthi rebels draw their name from the leading family of the region that has provided leadership for the struggle since it began in June 2004. Currently, the fighting is in abeyance, but there have already been six phases of combat in Sa'da province punctuated by cease-fires, with key issues remaining unresolved. The potential for this struggle to reemerge is serious and of immediate interest to United States policymakers concerned about the future of Yemen. Moreover, as this work makes clear, the conflict is not well understood in the West. Additionally, there is not even the faintest wisp of an agreed narrative on the meaning of the conflict as defined by the government and rebels. Yemen's government charges that the Huthis seek to reestablish a political/religious leader (imam) drawn from their ranks as the new head of state. Such a development would certainly undermine Yemen's current government which has an elected president and parliament, although the electoral process is often viewed as flawed. Conversely, the rebels maintain that they do not desire an overthrow of the government. Rather, they maintain that they only want to protect their traditional autonomy and receive a fair share of government resources.

Huthis strongly object to what they see as the Yemeni government's willingness to support Saudi clerics who challenge the legitimacy of the region's Zaydi religion. Zaydism is a form of Shi'ism, although it is much less militant than the politicized Twelver Shi'ism found in Iran. The authors provide an excellent overview of the conflict between this religious sect and the more rigid Sunni Muslims know as Salafis. They carefully document the natural resentment that Huthis harbor for the Saudi-supported expansion of Salafi activities in northern Yemen and the assertions of Salafi clerics that Zaydism is at best a deeply distorted form of Islam. To many northern Zaydis, these clerics (with lavish funding from Riyadh) are a serious threat to the future of their religion and way of life. The Huthi rebellion is closely linked to the backlash of anger resulting from resentment of these assertive religious figures. The important "Believing Youth" organization originated as a Zaydi counterweight to the proselytizing activities of Salafi clerics. Many of its members later became the backbone of the Huthi military forces. Additionally, while the president of Yemen is a Zaydi, he is only nominally so and has little respect for their traditional leadership, adding an additional aspect of personal animus to the conflict. The Yemeni government charges that the Huthis are supported by Iran. This is also explored in depth in this work.

***. . . [It] is an important book because the current Yemeni president is entering . . . the "twilight" years of his reign.***

In sum, this book is exceptionally comprehensive and should be of particular interest resultant of an increased US concern regarding Yemen. While the focus of the book is the conflict in northern Yemen, it has a great deal to say about the country itself, including the Yemeni government, tribalism, and religion. It does an excellent job of drawing from Western and Arabic sources. It is well illustrated with an array of useful maps and pictures drawn from the Internet sites of various participants in the conflict. The work contains a good deal of background on Yemeni society including its gun culture. This is an important book because the current Yemeni president is entering what the authors refer to as the "twilight" years of his reign. President Ali Abdullah Saleh has been the president of North Yemen (the Yemen Arab Republic) since 1978 and the president of united Yemen since 1990. It remains to be seen how the country will do once he is no longer in office. Clearly, books such as this one will be extremely useful for US policymakers in the era of uncertainly following Saleh's rule.




Courtesy of Stanford Univ. Press

Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2010

230 pages

$26.00

## *The Culture of Military Innovation: The Impact of Cultural Factors on the Revolution in Military Affairs in Russia, the US, and Israel*

by Dima Adamsky

**Reviewed by Dr. Stephen Blank**, Research Professor at the Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College

For the last twenty years, the military operations of major powers have at times been executed under the auspices of the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA). This revolution involves the application of modern technologies related to precision guidance and strike, the systematic application of high-tech sensors, electronics, and information technology as they relate to existing and new weapons systems in an effort to achieve synergies and enhance combat power. But the history of the RMA is by no means one of uniform adaptation of concepts. Indeed, the Soviet Union and its successor, the Russian Federation, the home of the original concept, have been woefully unable to translate it into practice in its various conflicts since 1979. A number of analysts blame such efforts during the Soviet period for contributing to the demise of the Soviet Union.

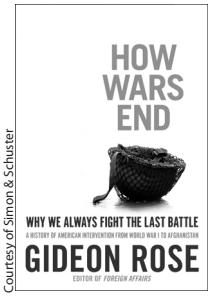
As these events were unfolding, Israel and the United States, the two states that actually materialized the RMA in practice over Lebanon in 1982 and in Operation Desert Storm in 1991, were only partially successful in translating its theory into victory. Subsequently, both states found it impossible to achieve a total victory, let alone decisive victory, despite the utilization of practices associated with the RMA. This was the case in Israel's war with Hezbollah in 2006, and in America's wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. In the Soviet Union, practice still has not caught up to theory; in the United States and Israel, practice has failed to lead to systematic or victorious theory and may have reached a strategic dead end.

One of the book's strong points is the author's attempt to determine to what degree cultural factors at the national level and within the respective militaries contribute to this phenomenon. Adamsky is well qualified for this arduous task as she has a mastery of a wide range of sources in Russian, English, and Hebrew. Predictably, she found that the reception of emerging technologies in the fields of information and electronics that have contributed to precision guidance, strike, and computational advances differ markedly in the three states. The author confirms that technology is not neutral at least in the manner in which its consumers attempt to apply it. Whereas the Soviet military culture was quite ready to grasp many of the revolutionary transformations inherent in these emerging technologies, it was unable to acquire them for its own use, while at the same time reshaping its economy and achieving what Marxists used to identify as the unity of theory and practice.

Meanwhile, the United States was able to achieve in practice what Moscow had only dreamt about (or to be more precise some in Moscow). Even so, the United States, based on predictable cultural reasons that are brilliantly detailed in the book, had little concept of what it was actually attempting to achieve. Indeed, Desert Storm, as Soviet leaders pointed out, emulated a Soviet operational design for a European offensive albeit on a smaller scale. Predictably, the lesson from that war emphasized the overarching importance of the RMA and its emerging technologies, a fact the United States believed gave it a decisive advantage and a better understanding of what technologies would ensure decisive victory. We are still paying the price for that delusion, as now there is little consensus or understanding of what the future of war might look like. As Adamsky points out, America's failure to grasp the inherent contextual factors and its preference for focusing on the task or phenomena at hand is of no small importance in viewing the RMA.

Similarly, Israeli culture is one of improvisation and anti-intellectualism that frowned on theoretical approaches that were the hallmark of Soviet experience. As a result, Israel designed a brilliant air operation against Syria over Lebanon in 1982, an operation that was the harbinger of the RMA (and recognized as such in Soviet writings). But it failed to capitalize on the RMA in any strategic sense or to use it to fashion a successful war-winning strategy. Instead, Israel was seduced by the mythology of air power, a fact directly responsible for its failure in the battle with Hezbollah in 2006.

The future of innovation in the military realm is by no means over. Indeed, in many respects we can only guess at what might await us or other nations in the future. The only thing that seems certain is the belief that conflicts such as Afghanistan and Iraq will represent future warfare, a belief that could lead us into any number of unpleasant surprises. Greater wisdom concerning novel innovations in technology and the nature of war is required. The analysis offered in this excellent book is a good starting place to acquire that wisdom.

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432 pages

$27.00

## *How Wars End: Why We Always Fight the Last Battle*

by Gideon Rose

**Reviewed by Dr. James Jay Carafano**, Director, Douglas and Sarah Allison Center for Foreign Policy Studies, The Heritage Foundation

There is a place for an important book that talks about how wars end. This is emphatically not that book. *How Wars End: Why We Always Fight the Last Battle* provides a superficial overview of the pitfalls in conflict termination from World War I to the present troubles in Afghanistan. The work concludes with three "straightforward" lessons. Rather than illuminate the challenge of fighting for peace, the

insight of *How Wars End* reflects the inherent flaws of trying to gloss history through the passion of the moment.

Gideon Rose is managing editor of the prestigious public affairs journal *Foreign Affairs*. He also did a turn on the National Security Council Staff, has a degree from Yale, a Ph.D. from Harvard, and taught at Columbia and Princeton. It is not his pedigree that is the problem. Likewise, it is difficult to impugn his motives. Who could watch the lives and treasure squandered as the United States has struggled to get control of rioting in Baghdad, IED-strewn highways in the Sunni triangle; blossoming poppy fields in Afghanistan; and greedy officials in Kabul, and not share his frustration that America seems to bungle war after war?

The problem is that *How Wars End* adds almost no new understanding to—how wars end. Rose's opening case study on Wilson's struggle to seal a series of international treaties that would make World War I "the war to end all wars" offers a case in point. The treaties' travails have been told well and often. Rose misses an enormous opportunity to do something fresh and, for example, link the geo-strategic troubles over treaties with some of America's postwar challenges. The US occupation of the Rhineland is a subject skipped by most historians. Even the American military ignored its own postconflict trials. There are eleven official volumes on Army's role in the war—ten on fighting, one on the occupation. The author of that one volume lamented that his own service's inattentiveness to understanding the world after war concludes, "despite the precedents of military governments in Mexico, California, the Southern States, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Panama, China, the Philippines, and elsewhere, the lesson seemingly has not been learned." Equally insightful would have been an attempt to delve into the American Expeditionary Force in North Russia in 1918, an equally important episode in evaluating how the United States tried to smooth over the ripples of the Great War with force—as well as diplomacy.

Rose's treatment of World War II repeats these mistakes. *How Wars End* assumes it is all about the deals cut by Washington signaling the formal end of the conflict that are all important. Ignored is the clean-up afterwards that might be as, if not more, important in determining how the future unfolds after the armistice. The Army did not even have a field manual on occupation management prior to 1940. A senior general was not appointed to plan overseas occupation operations until 1942. Even then, the military undertook its occupation duties reluctantly. When President Roosevelt wanted to free up more shipping to ferry civil affairs personnel to Europe for occupation duties, the Pentagon complained about diverting resources from its warfighting tasks. The best way to prepare for the postwar period, the Joint Chiefs argued, "is to end the war quickly." Yet, the scope of postwar occupations was breathtaking including Germany, Austria, Trieste, Japan, and South Korea. Rose skips all this history.

The opening chapters of *How Wars End* reveal that the author labors under a powerful bias—a structuralist view of international relations that places a premium on great power decisions. Rose's writing would be akin to a military

historian scribbling on strategy and assuming that operations and tactics have nothing to do with how things turn out.

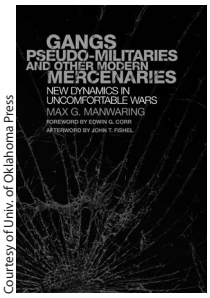
Rose's prejudice that smart people can set up smart systems and solve the world's problems is nowhere more powerfully illustrated than in his three conclusions—a short laundry-list of linear, structuralist solutions. His first proposal is "plan ahead and work backwards," an idea that could not be more wrong-headed for postconflict operations. War is a complex, nonlinear, competitive environment. The toughest task imaginable is to plan what the world looks like when the war is over. When World War I started, no one was thinking about the impact of the pandemic caused by the Spanish Flu. When World War II started, no one in Washington could have predicted the Holocaust and the Atomic Bomb. In the waning months of the Second World War (after the United States had been fighting for over three years), allied intelligence believed the Nazis would wage a struggle to the death from a remote Alpine redoubt and that American troops would have to fight guerilla war for years against tens-of-thousands of German insurgents—predictions that turned out to be "uber" wrong.

Arguably, Bush's Iraq occupation was totally screwed up because the Pentagon actually followed Rose's first rule to the letter. The US defined an end-state where they could just hand over the mess to a rump-Iraqi government and let them deal with it. Washington's great sin was not that it guessed wrong, it was that it failed to be flexible and agile enough to adapt to the reality on the ground.

The second rule of *How Wars End* is "define goals precisely and check prices before dying." When Rose finally can explain how to "quantify" terms like freedom, justice, genocide, right, wrong, and so on, then this might be a practical suggestion. The problem with international relations is that it often cannot be reduced to a cost-benefit analysis. Should the United States attack Iran before it becomes a nuclear state? What are the benefits? What are the risks? Such calculations, even after the fact are problematic. We are, for example, still struggling with how much did 9/11 cost. Global expenses were put at about $400 billion. Now, however, with the payouts for responders due to long-term illness issues that bill could jump by billions. It may be decades before we know whether it was cheaper to invade Afghanistan or just absorb a couple of more days like 11 September 2001.

"Pay attention to implementation and anticipate problems" is Rose's third proposal. There is, of course, nothing wrong with this advice. On the other hand, this could be said of virtually every strategic challenge. Most strategists would no doubt sign-up for this aphorism without having read a word of *How Wars End*. Rose writes about ending wars as if they were some kind of grand excursion, where if the Donner Party had just thought of everything beforehand they would not have had to finish eating each other.

Thucydides did a far better job of struggling to answer the question of why wars end badly. He called war a plunge into the dark and he was right. It is a big mistake to think that if leaders are just super smart on the front-end of war, things will all turn out all right on the back end. America needs a deeper and richer kit-bag of capacities and conceptual tools if it hopes to do better at ending wars.




Courtesy of Univ. of Oklahoma Press

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238 pages

$34.95

## *Gangs, Pseudo-Militaries, and Other Modern Mercenaries: New Dynamics in Uncomfortable Wars*

by Max G. Manwaring

**Reviewed by Major Jeanne F. Godfroy**, Department of Social Sciences, United States Military Academy

Since 9/11, the US military and policy communities have become more comfortable addressing the complex challenges associated with terrorism, civil war, and intervention. The adversaries whose asymmetric operations were both frustrating and daunting—terrorist and insurgent organizations—are now more familiar and manageable in the context of updated and evolving counterinsurgency and counterterrorism doctrine. In *Gangs, Pseudo-Militaries, and Other Modern Mercenaries,* Max Manwaring reintroduces another actor that necessitates attention in such conflicts—political gangs.

Manwaring's political gangs—alternately called "popular militias" and "propaganda agitator gangs"—are groups who take part in "well-calculated, multi-dimensional, and systematic attempts to coerce radical political change." These gangs can be state-sponsored or independent actors willing to hire themselves out to the highest bidder. They can be instruments of political agents or agents of political change of their own accord. On occasion, these gangs encourage political change via both means. They have many tools at their disposal to accomplish their political objectives: subversion of the state, humanitarian assistance, intimidation of the local population, demonstrations, strikes, riots, and armed resistance. Like insurgent and terrorist organizations, political gangs have a protean nature; their purpose, hierarchy, and operations can shift to meet the requirements of dynamic political and military situations. Their ability to adapt makes the challenges they present to state political legitimacy all the more demanding. What distinguishes these popular militias from insurgent or terrorist organizations, however, is that the political change they aim to encourage may not be regime change or establishment of a separate state; rather, these political gangs sometimes seek to subvert the political legitimacy of the state just enough to maintain "acceptable" levels of instability conducive to the social, political, and economic goals of their sponsors.

Throughout his analysis of political gang activity, Manwaring demonstrates a substantial depth of knowledge about the dynamics of civil war and 4th and 5th generation warfare. His analysis of this type of conflict, however, apart from the focus on political gangs as unique from terrorist or insurgent organizations, is not particularly new or startling. Drawing from strategists ranging from Sun Tzu to Lenin to Simón Bolivar, Manwaring builds his framework for understanding and countering political gangs within established tenets of revolutionary warfare, counterinsurgency, and democratic transitions theory.

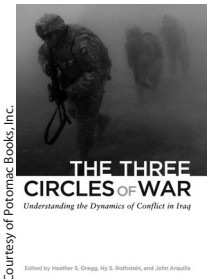
He identifies political gangs and their sponsors as competitors with the state for political legitimacy among the population. The author notes that weak or weakening state institutions control and create space for nonstate actors of this nature to develop and flourish. Manwaring highlights the importance of understanding and seizing control of human terrain in addition to physical terrain as a means of countering political gangs. Finally, he emphasizes the importance of unity of command between state security institutions and intervention forces to balance persuasive and coercive measures to restore state political legitimacy.

Manwaring's somewhat disparate case studies, too, make the book read more like an anthology of gang activity rather than a qualitative analysis of political gangs and state failure. He begins with a comparison of the *posses* of Jamaica and Hizballah in southern Lebanon as examples of political gangs who assume governance responsibilities in the absence of strong governments. He continues with a description of the Argentine *piqueteros,* which he aptly calls "rent-a-mobs" who are used to further political elite objectives in Argentina. Manwaring then transitions to the more complex conflict of Colombia and the United Self-Defense Groups of Colombia (AUC). These so-called "protagonists" in the conflict are characterized as agents supporting the goals of Colombia's political elites and the narcotics industry, often at the expense of the state and, occasionally, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). Manwaring subsequently gives Hugo Chávez an honorable mention for first mobilizing and then harnessing his popular militias in Venezuela to further his own personal political objectives.

It is at this point in the story that Manwaring's focus shifts from purely political gangs to an interesting mix of terrorists, transnational criminal organizations (TCOs), and more mercenary entities. He describes al Qaeda's use of subversive agents—termed as a "small body of propagandists and agitators"—to mobilize support for al Qaeda in Western Europe while simultaneously undermining Western governments like Spain. His final case study, Mexico, seems a little out of place in a collection of mostly politically oriented groups. The Zetas, for example, appear to behave more like a private military company than a popular militia; they serve as "guns for hire" to further what are probably more economic than political objectives of various Mexican drug cartels. Manwaring's assertions about the political goals of the cartels and groups like the Zetas to completely subvert the state seem a bit of a stretch; it is, perhaps, more likely that too much instability or complete subversion could prove untenable for the cartels, their logistics lines, and the narcotics market that sustains them.

Despite these small discrepancies, Manwaring's book contains rich descriptions of unique actors in diverse and unusual case studies. His framework and case analysis provides a comprehensive view of existing knowledge about civil war and counterinsurgency from the perspective of some distinctive theorists. His description of gangs as agents of political change also furthers our notions of knowledge-based war—the idea that managing conflicts and actors like these requires thoughtful, adaptable policymakers and warriors prepared to address both armed and political resistance in areas where the lines between

crime, terrorism, insurgency, and traditional warfare are blurred. Thus, his work provides the reader with a detailed portrayal of the probable future of intrastate conflict, internationalized civil war, and intervention. Although at times overly verbose and difficult to read, this book is appropriate for national security strategists and military leaders who see on the horizon a shift in US interventions from large-scale operations in Iraq and Afghanistan to a smaller footprint in regions of South America, Latin America, the Horn of Africa and, possibly, Mexico. Manwaring's book raises awareness about these actors and the changing international environment—an important contribution as we prepare for new and more varied security challenges.




Courtesy of Potomac Books, Inc.

Dulles, Virginia: Potomac Books, Inc., 2010

272 pages

$60.00

## *The Three Circles of War: Understanding the Dynamics of Conflict in Iraq*

by Heather S. Gregg, Hy S. Rothstein, and John Arquilla

**Reviewed by Major Scott A. Smitson**, Instructor, Department of Social Sciences, United States Military Academy

As American involvement in Iraq decreases, it is only natural that scholars and policy practitioners will increasingly examine the "big questions" that hover over the American-led endeavor in that country: what type of conflict was (is) it; how do we understand the causes and effects of the direction of conflict; what can be done to mitigate policy failures in Iraq with an eye towards the future? The coeditors of *The Three Circles of War*, Heather Gregg, Hy Rothstein, and John Arquilla, attempt to address these and other "big questions" that will dominate the analysis of the conflict for years to come. By incorporating contributions from academic fields as disparate as economics, ethics, the Internet, and systems dynamics, the coeditors (and the contributors of each chapter) have embraced a significant multidisciplinary approach to examining Operation Iraqi Freedom. The multidisciplinary flavor of *The Three Circles of War* is its greatest asset, and like any worthwhile intellectual endeavor, it addresses many of these "big questions," yet sets the conditions for the genesis of further scholarship related to even more questions that arise when studying the evolving nature of conflict in the 21st Century.

At its most elemental level, *The Three Circles of War* argues that the conflict in Iraq consisted of three types of war (interstate conflict, insurgency, and civil war), and that a solid, comprehensive study of the changing nature and dynamics of Iraq can only be achieved through an interdisciplinary analysis of the conflict. This interdisciplinary approach is applied through six sections, consisting of fourteen chapters, each with a unique perspective on the conflict.

Chapters effectively build upon the theoretical framework established by the coeditors, and brilliantly weave the three categories of conflict into their presentation. Tarek Abdel-Hamid's chapter on the application of systems dynamics modeling to the Iraq war stands out in this regard; his use of social contagion

forecast models to predict insurgent activity is intellectually appealing, as are his larger models that capture and link the three circles of war. In essence, Abdel-Hamid offers the reader a model to view the entire conflict holistically, making this chapter one of the strongest additions to *The Three Circles of War*.

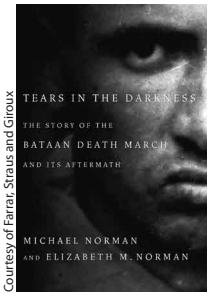
There are times when the marriage of the theoretical framework and a conceptual issue come together harmoniously, such as the chapters on identity politics and systems dynamics; however, there are also opportunities to link chapters together where it seems logical but for some reason they are not. For example, Dorothy Denning's excellent work on the relationship between the Internet and the war in Iraq is in no way structurally connected to Robert Reilly's chapter about 100 pages later critiquing the lack of a coherent plan for US strategic communication. It seems apparent that these authors are presenting related topics, but it does not appear that there is a dedicated synergy of their intellectual efforts. This structural issue is again seen when examining Josh Rovner's chapter on intelligence reform and Karen Guttieri's work on performance measurement in conflicts; both authors comment on weaknesses in data collection, the need for reconfigured intelligence assets, and the "learning trap" inherent in counterinsurgency. While these two chapters are excellent in and of themselves, combining presentations (or coauthoring chapters) along cross-cutting issues would only strengthen the book and provide value-added for the reader. To their credit, the coeditors do make a concerted effort to link many of the themes of the book in the concluding chapter, but the decisions to separate, rather than aggregate, certain chapters covering related topics is intriguing.

A central theme running throughout the book's chapters is the continued argument for security as an enabler and precondition for success in fields as far ranging as economic development, finance, and ethics. While this call for security may seem apparent to social scientists and policy practitioners, it does merit further consideration when examining what is meant by "acceptable" levels of security. Is it the creation of a security apparatus modeled solely off a Western understanding of what makes up a "proper" security force configuration? Are there other possible alternatives?

Hy Rothstein explores this issue to some degree in his chapter on creating indigenous security forces, arguing that the multiethnic "melting pot" approach to army building is flawed and that emphasis should be placed on the primacy of single-identity security forces. As an aside, it would be interesting to see a book compare and contrast the growth of the security sector in Afghanistan with that of efforts in Iraq, and see if the "melting pot" approach in Afghanistan suffers from some of the structural weaknesses that Rothstein identifies in Iraq. This search for optimal security mechanisms is an area of academic research that demands further attention beyond what is contained in the book, but *The Three Circles of War* does an admirable job of refining this conversation.

Despite some structural criticisms, *The Three Circles of War* is an excellent piece of scholarship that merits the time and attention of members of the defense community. The methods by which to study something as dynamic as the war in Iraq are as complex, layered, and multifaceted as the conflict

itself, and the coeditors and chapter authors of *The Three Circles of War* have assembled an excellent collection of thematic essays that inform our understanding of the complex nature of conflict in the 21st Century. One can only hope that the multidisciplinary approach of *The Three Circles of War* be further refined and applied to other conflicts, such as Afghanistan, and in a manner that continues to inform both the scholar and policy practitioner.




Courtesy of Farrar, Straus and Giroux

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496 pages

$18.00

## *Tears in the Darkness: The Story of the Bataan Death March and Its Aftermath*

by Michael Norman and Elizabeth M. Norman

**Reviewed by Dr. Steve R. Waddell,** Professor of History, United States Military Academy

In *Tears in the Darkness* Michael and Elizabeth Norman tell the story of the Bataan Death March through the eyes of Ben Steele, a twenty-two-year-old Montana cowboy who enlisted in the Army in 1940 and found himself in the Philippines when the Japanese invaded in 1941. They follow Steele as the US and Filipino forces retreat to Bataan and desperately resist the Japanese onslaught until hunger, disease, and lack of supplies finally forced the surrender of the 76,000 defenders. Forced by their captors to undertake a horrific 66-mile march (the Bataan Death March) to the rail station at San Fernando, Steele and his comrades suffered from a near total lack of food, water, and medical care. They endured the brutality of the Japanese guards and those lucky enough to survive witnessed the murder of massive numbers of their comrades who lacked the strength to continue. Steele survived the death march, making it alive to Camp O'Donnell. The authors follow Steele through his captivity in the Philippines, shipment to Japan on one of the hell ships, and his eventual liberation at the end of the war.

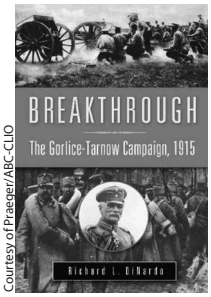
Michael Norman, a former reporter for the *New York Times* and Marine Corps veteran of Vietnam, is a professor of journalism at New York University. Elizabeth M. Norman is professor of humanities at New York University's Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development. The book they have written is a blend of history and literary journalism. That is both the strength and weakness of their approach. As such, it is both compelling and troublesome. One cannot help but get to know and admire Ben Steele. This work is not a comprehensive history of the Bataan Death March and the American prisoner of war experience in the Philippines. It is the story of Ben Steele with short sections on the Pantingan River massacre, 12 April 1942, and the hell ships. The authors manage to tell Ben's story of the Bataan Death March with little outward emotion. The story is told matter-of-factly. For such an emotional topic it reads more like a newspaper account than a history of one of the worst war crimes perpetrated against American forces during World War II. The Normans portray the American defenders as poorly led and trained,

which is for the most part true, and the Japanese as hardened fighters, bound by their culture, indoctrinated and trained to fight to the death with no respect for those who did surrender. While the author's explanation of the behavior of the Japanese soldiers rings true; the authors avoid making clear moral judgments. Understanding why many Japanese soldiers committed war crimes does not justify the commission of those crimes.

***[Tears in the Darkness] is more a journalistic story of Ben Steele . . .***

The final chapter of the book is problematic. It examines the postwar war crimes trial of General Homma. The authors spend a significant part of the book looking at the Japanese soldiers, portraying them as common soldiers carrying out terrible orders. At the same time, the authors are very sympathetic to General Masaharu Homma, the commander of the Japanese army in the Philippines. They portray him as a professional soldier overcome by events and unaware of the crimes his troops were committing. The argument is unconvincing. The authors describe a Japanese army trained to follow orders, facing severe discipline for failing to do so, and bound by honor. This very army is supposedly committing war crimes despite General Homma's instructions. General Homma was ultimately responsible for the behavior of his army. The war crimes committed were so widespread they were not the work of just a few individuals. Homma either issued orders which directed his subordinates to commit acts which resulted in war crimes, condoned the war crimes once he learned of them, or was negligent for unleashing a force that he could not or would not control. Forces under his command murdered or mistreated large numbers of American and Filipino prisoners of war. The United States chose to hold him responsible for such behavior. Unlike the American soldiers bayonetted, beheaded, or shot dead on the road to San Fernando, General Homma received due process. That others were not prosecuted, or that Homma was otherwise a nice individual who might have been one's friend at another time and place, is largely irrelevant.

*Tears In The Darkness* is well written and utilizes a considerable number of sources, to include archival materials. The drawings throughout the book, created by Ben Steele himself, contribute greatly to the story. The work includes endnotes and a solid bibliography. The book is well worth reading. Just be aware that it is more a journalistic story of Ben Steele than a comprehensive history of the Bataan Death March. Historians, history students, and anyone interested in the history of World War II, will find the story of Ben Steele inspiring. It is the story of an American soldier's triumph over adversity, and of his ability to survive the worst behavior of the Japanese army.




Courtesy of Praeger/ABC-CLIO

Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger/ABC-CLIO, 2010

215 pages

$44.95

## *Breakthrough: The Gorlice-Tarnow Campaign, 1915*

by Richard L. DiNardo

**Reviewed by Colonel James D. Scudieri**, Deputy Dean, US Army War College

This book is at least the fourth on the relatively ignored Eastern Front of World War I to appear within two years. It forms part of the publisher's War, Technology, and History series, whose editor highlights the series' aim to a wide readership and its emphasis on the link between technology and doctrine. DiNardo's work on the Gorlice-Tarnow offensive delivers a concise discussion of the strategic, operational, and tactical situations.

The book's first three chapters set the stage well. The author emphasizes some significant aspects of this offensive. First, it was a successful breakthrough following the onset of trench warfare. It restored some mobility, but without a substantive role for cavalry. The campaign marked Germany's first true coalition operation with equal partners since the final wars against Napoleon in 1813-15, the wars of 1866 and 1870-71 being Prussian-dominated. Gorlice-Tarnow was also the accomplishment of a new command team, August von Mackensen as commander and Hans von Seeckt as Chief Staff of the 11th Army.

These assertions warrant further discussion. Frankly, DiNardo's discussion of the controversial subject of German war aims is inadequate and omits the latest analysis prior to his publication. Nonetheless, he describes the challenging development and evolution of the alliance between Germany and Austria-Hungary. His dissection, from the highest government circles to the appointment of army commanders and their chiefs of staff, clearly confirms the adage that personalities matter and personal relationships make a difference. The author includes insightful biographical detail, mostly in the endnotes. Not surprisingly, two other prominent figures throughout the campaign are the German and Austro-Hungarian Chiefs of Staff, Erich von Falkenhayn and Conrad von Hötzendorf, respectively.

The strategic imperative, despite a focus on the West and a belief in an impending Anglo-Franco offensive, was the need to eliminate the Russian threat to Austria-Hungary in Galicia and establish a viable line of communications to Turkey by defeating Serbia. This strategic tension even inaugurated a reduction in the Table of Organization and Equipment (TO&E) of German divisions on the Western Front. While fewer than desired, DiNardo calls the available units "picked troops," veterans of the West under experienced commanders. They received considerable preoperational training. A commendably simple plan incorporated meticulous preparations, limited objectives, and the detailed, nuanced use of artillery. The degree of cooperation between the two allies was a major multiplier as well.

The Gorlice-Tarnow Campaign is a telling case study on the nature of warfare at the time. It consisted of three major operations. The first began with break-in actions to punch a hole in the Russian line on 2 May 1915. Its next phase required major shifts in operational focus. DiNardo cites this phase as the Germans at their most nimble. The troops executed a river crossing of the San and moved on. The anticlimactic capture of the fortress city Przemysl on 3 June was a significant accomplishment, a symbol of permanent change in Central Powers' fortunes on the Eastern Front. Its capture, however, was not sufficient to dissuade Italy from joining the war on the side of the Entente. Romania held back for now.

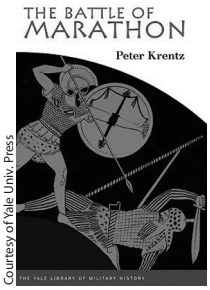
The triumph at Przemsyl initiated a particularly acrimonious analysis of strategic choices among the Germans and Austrians. Falkenhayn's solution to Italy's declaration of war on Austria-Hungary alone on 23 May was to buy off the Italians with territorial concessions. Conrad's retort was for Germany to do the same by ceding Alsace and Lorraine to France.

The second major operation strove for the capture of Lemberg. The main attack began on the night of 12-13 June; Lemberg was German by 22 June. The German 11th Army and three Austro-Hungarian armies had advanced 186 miles since 2 May. They had now liberated Galicia.

The third major operation, launched on 15 July, advanced north vice east, into Russian Poland. The Germans delivered another serious reverse by the end of August. Ironically, this third major tactical and operational victory did not knock Russia out of the war; indeed, large Russian forces escaped. The operation also revealed a new, strategic shortfall. The Germans and Austrians had no occupation policy, beginning with an elementary concept on how to stage the entrance into Warsaw.

The Gorlice-Tarnow Campaign clearly showed German troops at their best. DiNardo specifically cites their adept use of aerial reconnaissance, heavy artillery, and technical communications like telegraph and telephone. Realistic plans balanced operational objectives with critical operational pauses. Following initial breakthroughs, German units received deep objectives, but without cross-boundary coordination issues, while the Russians lacked sufficient opportunity to recover. This recipe for success highlighted major disagreements between OHL (the German High Command) and the German headquarters on the Eastern Front, *Ober Ost*. Additionally, both victory and defeat still bore serious losses. Mackensen's Galician operation alone cost 87,000 casualties. The year 1915 cost Austria-Hungary and Russia total losses on all fronts of 2,100,000 and 2,386,000 respectively.

DiNardo's style has presented a digestible and focused case study for the readers; a few editing slips are of little consequence. He articulates the daunting challenges facing the German high command in a war with unforeseen conditions and duration. Gorlice-Tarnow was far from a preordained success. His narrative is especially insightful to demonstrate the delicate balancing of strategic choices, especially in the context of alliance warfare.




Courtesy of Yale Univ. Press

New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 2010

256 pages

$27.50

## *The Battle of Marathon*

by Peter Krentz

**Reviewed by Dr. J. Boone Bartholomees, Jr.**, Professor of Military History, US Army War College

Peter Krentz, the W. R. Grey Professor of Classics and History at Davidson College, has written the definitive book on the battle of Marathon. In doing so, he examined all the available evidence from both historical and archaeological sources, utilizing that evidence, leavened with common sense, to expose myths and challenge conventional accounts. The analysis goes into detail on subjects about which the casual reader will have little interest. For example, the location of the Athenian trophy or the Plataean burial mound are generally unimportant to the military historian trying to learn about the battle itself. In the case of Marathon, Krentz argues such detail can give us otherwise unavailable clues. Because the ancient Athenians customarily placed their victory trophy at the turning point of an action, locating the monument tells a great deal about the battle. That example is perhaps more relevant than discussions of the location of the monument to Miltiades or the cave of Pan that are of primary interest only to the specialist. In any case, the examination is exhaustive, but regardless how esoteric, always interesting.

Krentz's investigation of the geography of the Marathon plain in 490 BC is informative and critical to understanding the battle. Based on the as yet unpublished work of archaeologist Richard Dunn, Krentz convincingly postulates a different shoreline and the presence of a small inlet where a marsh lies today. Although one should generally avoid such redesigns of battlefield terrain, in the case of Marathon where contemporary descriptions are skimpy and the alluvial nature of the plain lends itself to major change in the 2,500 years since the battle, it is probably justified. The fact modern experts cannot even locate the ancient town of Marathon only lends credibility to an attempt to understand the geography from other sources. Krentz is judicious about his assertions and backs them with plausible evidence, so the reinterpretation is easy to accept. The new understanding of the terrain shapes his entire interpretation of the battle—most significantly in that it reorients the armies so they fight parallel to the coast rather than having the Persians with their backs to the sea, and the Persian cavalry, quartered behind the inlet near the best source of water, has restricted access to the plain.

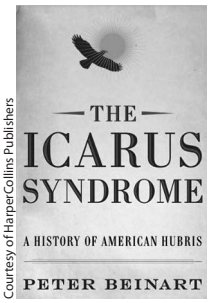
Following the pattern of his geographical investigation, Krentz also examines in detail the Athenian military system to help test one's knowledge about Marathon. For example, Herodotus, the principal primary source on the battle, says the Greeks ran 8 stadia (.9 of a mile) to attack the Persians. The modern accepted assessment is that, given the armor they wore, running such a distance would have been too exhausting to have been either possible or

practical. Besides, the only real need for speed was to cover the deadly ground within bowshot of the Persians—a couple of hundred yards at most. Krentz disputes essentially every piece of that interpretation. He finds, based on weights of existing period armor (adjusted for corrosion and missing leather or linen components), that the Greek hoplite carried between 28 and 45 pounds rather than the 70 or more pounds people had assumed. He provides evidence that modern soldiers can easily run the required distance with that load, especially if one assumes "run" to actually equate to a jog. Krentz's recreation of the tactics requires the Greeks to run to battle to avoid having to face the Persian cavalry, which would have been deploying from its bivouac position through a narrow passage at the top of the inlet. If the Athenians could nullify the Persian cavalry, they stood a good chance of beating their infantry.

***The Battle of Marathon is required reading for anyone interested in the battle . . . or ancient warfare . . . .***

With respect to the battle itself, Krentz is not a believer in the rugby scrum style interpretation of classic Greek combat where the front ranks stabbed while the rest of the phalanx pushed. That depiction never has passed the common sense test—assuming any kind of effective push from behind immediately nullifies effective individual combat in the front ranks, which would be squeezed too tightly against the enemy to be able to move very much. Krentz postulates a phalanx whose strength was in its cohesion rather than its mass. The Greeks formed, jogged to attack the Persians, and eventually won the hand-to-hand fight. The center was thinned to be able to cover the entire plain, and the flanks reformed after their initial victory to turn to help the center, which had been broken (no preplanned Cannae-like maneuver, which was probably beyond the training ability of the Athenians). The Greeks pursued the Persians to their boats, perhaps sloshing through the shallow waters of the inlet/lake/marsh, but much of the Persian force escaped. Krentz is conventional in his assertion that the significance of Marathon was its demonstration to the Greeks that the Persians were not invincible.

*The Battle of Marathon* is required reading for anyone interested in the battle, classic Greek warfare, or ancient warfare in general. The explanation of this critical battle is plausible and supported by the evidence. It will probably become the dominant interpretation or the new common knowledge in the near future. The book reads well, is informative, and contains new and interesting material. Highly recommended.




Courtesy of HarperCollins Publishers

New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2010

496 pages

$27.99

## *The Icarus Syndrome: A History of American Hubris*

by Peter Beinart

**Reviewed by Dr. John A. Nagl, LTC (USA Retired)**
President of the Center for a New American Security in Washington, DC

"The American Century" is the idea, first formulated by Henry Luce in 1941, that the United States was the most powerful and influential state on the world stage in the 20th century. Theorists of international relations suggest that a hegemon like the United States is necessary for the smooth functioning of the international system, and that the United States supplanted the United Kingdom in filling this role during the Second World War. It arguably continues to do so in this century, even as China rises inexorably to replace America as the world's largest economy in the next few decades.

In *The Icarus Syndrome*, Peter Beinart writes a revisionist history of the American Century, arguing that the intoxicating idea of American power has often led the country to overreach through hubris. The central analogy of the book is the Greek myth of Icarus, who flew too near the sun when escaping from Crete on wings made of wax and feathers; when they melted, he fell into the sea. Beinart applies the lesson of Icarus to explain three American decisions: Woodrow Wilson's pursuit of a League of Nations to abolish war in the wake of the First World War, a result of the "hubris of reason"; the "hubris of toughness" which prompted Lyndon Johnson's decisions to escalate the war in Vietnam; and the "hubris of dominance" that led to President Bush's decision to invade Iraq in March of 2003.

When they advocated for the League of Nations at the close of the First World War, escalated the war in Vietnam, and decided to invade Iraq in 2003, Beinart claims that "Politicians and intellectuals took ideas that had proved successful in certain, limited circumstances and expanded them into grand doctrines, applicable always and everywhere. They took military, economic, and ideological resources that had proved remarkably potent, and imagined that they made America omnipotent." In point of fact, these are hugely disparate cases, and the concept of hubris, powerful as it is, can only with great difficulty be stretched to explain all three; in fact, it is tempting to suggest that Beinart has himself taken an idea that has proved successful in certain, limited circumstances and expanded it into a grand doctrine, applicable always and everywhere.

This book is ultimately about the decision to invade Iraq in 2003—or, rather, about Beinart's own decision to support the invasion of Iraq. He says as much on the first page of *The Icarus Syndrome*, telling the story of a 2006 lunch with Arthur Schlesinger Jr., during which the grand old man of liberal foreign policy asked Beinart "Why did your generation support this war?"

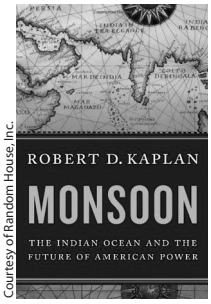
Beinart, who had used his perch at *The New Republic* to accuse critics of a war with Iraq of "abject pacifism," stammered to provide an answer at the lunch, and Schlesinger died not long after. He never got the chance to read Beinart's explanation that, just as Schlesinger had applied the lessons of World War II to advocate for American intervention in Vietnam, so Beinart and his generation applied those of the end of the Cold War, Bosnia and Kosovo, and Desert Storm to the case for invading Iraq in 2003. Beinart explains that "another generation—mine—had seen so much go right that we had difficulty imagining anything going wrong, and so many of us grew more and more emboldened until a war did go hideously wrong."

But Beinart, a talented student of international relations (and, in the spirit of full disclosure, a man to whom my think tank offered a perch at which to finish the writing of this book, although he amicably ended up at another), lets himself off too easy here. While his generation did not experience Vietnam, he certainly studied it at Yale and Oxford; he knew that wars could go horribly wrong, and often do. In fact, Vietnam was the dissertation topic chosen by another student of international relations a generation older than Beinart who played an important role in turning around the catastrophe in Iraq: David Petraeus, a man who strangely appears on only three pages of this nearly five-hundred-page tome. Petraeus, a skeptic of the invasion who famously asked "Tell me how this ends" when the initial operation appeared successful, did the hard work of making something tolerable come out of a war that was, to put it charitably, a dog's breakfast when he took command of the effort in early 2007.

This reviewer is not the first to note that "The Icarus Syndrome" may be a better analogy for the author of the book, who became the editor of the *New Republic* before he was thirty, than it is for the decisionmakers who guided American foreign policy through the American century. Woodrow Wilson's failed advocacy for a League of Nations was just one of the factors leading to American isolationism in the wake of the First World War, which in its turn was but one of the factors leading to the Second; American power, well applied without excessive hubris, prevented a third. Les Gelb and Richard Betts, in the classic book *The Irony of Vietnam: The System Worked*, have demonstrated that the decisions to escalate in Vietnam were perfectly valid when they were made, based on the information available. And many books have already been written, with many more certain to follow, that attempt to explain the decision to invade Iraq in 2003; American hubris is but one of the multiple causes for a moment in history that we know for certain will never result in a book subtitled "The System Worked."

The final verdict on the American Century has yet to be written; although the nation's conduct of international relations has been imperfect, it has certainly been distinguished by the exercise of power tempered with idealism to a greater extent than that of any great power in history. If hubris is one of the traits that marks our failures, it cannot explain our many successes; American foreign policy is too large a subject to wrap up neatly with one concept. When the system fails, as it did in the decision to invade Iraq, it has a tendency to

self-correct—and when it does, the credit for the turnaround, as the blame for the initial mistake, must rest not in the gods, but in ourselves.




Courtesy of Random House, Inc.

New York: Random House, Inc., 2010

384 pages

$28.00

## *Monsoon: The Indian Ocean and the Future of American Power*

by Robert D. Kaplan

**Reviewed by Robert Killebrew, COL (USA Retired)**, held a variety of planning and operational assignments during his 30-year Army career

"It is my contention that the Greater Indian Ocean, stretching eastward from the Horn of Africa past the Arabian Peninsula, the Iranian plateau, and the Indian Subcontinent, all the way to the Indonesian archipelago and beyond, may comprise a map as iconic to the new century as Europe was to the last one . . ." writes Robert Kaplan in his pathbreaking new book, *Monsoon; the Indian Ocean and the Future of American Power;* "For the sum-total effect of [US] preoccupation with Iraq and Afghanistan has been to fast-forward the arrival of the Asian Century, not only in the economic terms that we all know about, but in military terms as well."

With *Monsoon* Kaplan returns to his strongest suit—geopolitical primers grounded in first-person travel to the world's grittiest places. *Balkan Ghosts, The Coming Anarchy, The Ends of the Earth, and Soldiers of God*, take readers to places not many of us are liable to go willingly (though his excellent *Empire Wilderness* is revealing regarding the United States). This latest work is about the Indian Ocean and the lands along its rim; the Indian subcontinent to the north, eastern Africa to the west, Australia and Indonesia to the east, and the vast and lonely Southern Ocean to the south. First bound to the West by Portuguese explorers at the end of the fifteenth century, swept by monsoon winds whose predictable course favored sail, great civilizations and seafaring peoples flourished along its rim long before they were "discovered" and exploited by Europeans. As China and India emerge as future powers, the Indian Ocean and its littorals are likewise emerging as the future focal point for great-power struggle over the world's trade routes—the great choke-points are here; Bab el Mandeb, Hormutz, Malacca—and the energy resources of Arabia and Africa.

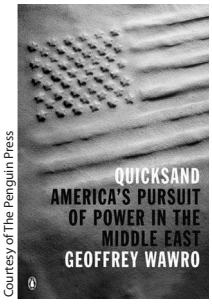
Struggles for influence and power in the region, though nothing new, take on extra meaning as China builds bases along the ocean rim to secure for itself the energy demanded by its economic boom and growth. Indeed, energy routes are the "silk roads" of the region's future, binding together giant emerging economies and the ageless, tribal cultures and politics of the region, many of which are absorbing the outward veneers of modern life—the motorcycles, cell phones, and AK-47s of the developing world—with little change to the older rthymns of their histories. Hence, the Baluch, fighting for an ancient homeland that spans three countries—India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan—who control the destiny, not of themselves, but of the ocean littoral that hosts Gwadar, potentially

a major shipping terminus on the Pakistani coast that is being built with Chinese money. So the future of the Baluch, like many traditional peoples in the region, is thus bound up not only in local interests, but also in the sweep of great-power politics whose origins are far beyond their reach. Likewise, the nations of the subcontinent—Afghanistan, tottering Pakistan, and booming India—the kingdoms of the Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula, and the long list of the states of eastern Africa, all are entering the mainstream of geopolitical events after being overshadowed for centuries by the histories of the two other oceans.

Behind Kaplan's vivid travelogue—"Monsoon clouds crushed the dark, seaweed-green landscape of eastern Burma. The steep hillsides glistened with teak, coconut palms, black and ocher mud from the rains and tall, chaotic grasses"—and his firsthand accounts of the shifting kaleidoscope of religion, tribe, and caste that make up the politics of the region are two larger themes. The first, the future position of the United States and its inevitable naval competition with China, suggests that the most likely place for the navies of the two nations to interact will be the Indian Ocean, where both nations, along with India, see a growing importance of the region. Chinese naval expansion, though it includes Chinese efforts to breach the "first island chain" of the Western Pacific, center most on China's need to safeguard energy routes through the South China Sea and thus into the eastern Indian Ocean. In Kaplan's view, China's vital concern over energy and concomitant interest in the sea routes it must travel do not inevitably presage conflict with the United States, but must be managed by both nations to ensure smooth sailing for all nations engaged in legitimate commerce on these vital seas.

The second, and potentially more profound, theme is the power shift underway along the great basin of the ocean as the masses of people, and their governments, become at the one time more aware of the limits of Western—which is to say, American—power, and self-aware of their own potential. More than at any time since Western imperialism split the region into artificial nation-states, there is growing unity. Certainly the relative decline of Western power has something to do with regional awareness, but there is something else—a growing consistency, perhaps supported by Islam that suggests that the United States and its allies, even as we provide present-day stability to rulers around the rim, are going to have to adopt new approaches for the future. Kaplan says "Realpolitik with a conscience is what India, and the West, too, require, for in the broader competition with China, the power with the most benign and cosmopolitan vision will ultimately have the upper hand." Lurking behind the decline of American influence, the emergence of the states of the Indian Ocean littoral, and the masses of desperate peoples living hand-to-mouth, is the question of what regional unity will eventually portend as Western influence subsides. One recalls the historian Arnold Toynbee's comment that the borders between civilization and barbarism are never static, and if civilization stops expanding, barbarism inevitably triumphs. What kinds of forces, of states and creeds, will eventually push forward as the Indian Ocean reemerges as the seat of global competition and trade?

As with all of Kaplan's work, the reader will find it best to have maps available while working through *Monsoon.* The book itself has an excellent series of usable area maps, but a reader who does not want to constantly be flipping back and forth would be well advised to spread a detailed regional map on the table before opening the book's covers. A glance at a good map, for example, will immediately tell the reader why Gwadar is so important, or why on the Arabian Peninsula it is Oman, and not larger Saudi Arabia, that is the vital kingdom. *Monsoon* is a must-have addition to anyone seriously interested in international affairs; it is by turns illuminating, thought-provoking, and instructive. I recommend it without reservation.




Courtesy of The Penguin Press

New York: The Penguin Press, 2010

612 pages

$37.95

## *Quicksand: America's Pursuit of Power in the Middle East*

by Geoffrey Wawro

**Reviewed by Dr. Christopher J. Bolan**, Professor of National Security Studies, US Army War College.

*Quicksand* is a valuable resource for anyone interested in the history of America's involvement with the Middle East. Wawro's academic background in military history and practical experience teaching at the Naval War College come through with force in a style that will particularly appeal to military professionals.

The first third of *Quicksand* is especially enlightening as Wawro offers a fresh historical perspective informed by his meticulous research of military and diplomatic archives in the United States and London. This compelling narrative begins with the Balfour Declaration in 1917, and it is perceptively written from the perspective of key American and British policymakers. This is the best part of the book and will prove beneficial to scholars, students, and foreign policy practitioners alike. These first five chapters effectively chart America's deepening relationship with Israel, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Egypt—countries that have frequently occupied center stage in American regional strategies.

The author's two chapters on Israel tell the tragic story of Britain's ultimately irreconcilable promises to the Jewish and Arab communities in Palestine. Wawro casts blame directly on British and American leaders for pursuing shortsighted strategies that left the problem of Palestine "insoluble" while providing "no practical means to intervene in Palestine and keep the peace between Jews and Arabs." At the same time, Wawro does not shy away from criticizing both Jewish and Arab leaders for their unwillingness to accept compromise, their failure to advocate mutual understanding, and their complicity in violence.

His chapter on Saudi Arabia identifies the centrality of oil to US regional interests and vividly illustrates America's transformation from one of relative energy autonomy to one of strategic dependence on oil production from the

Gulf. Faithful to his roots as a military historian, Wawro captures the essence of Saudi Arabia's importance to American strategy by describing the Kingdom in Clausewitzian terms as "The Center of Gravity of World Oil Production." Protecting these energy resources from outside intervention has been America's strategic obsession. Wawro identifies two other key American military and economic interests in the region that derive directly from this emerging dependence: namely, the expanding network of US military bases throughout the region; and the growing economic importance of "foreign sales of American weapons" to regional clients. This insightful narrative of America's evolving strategy is laced with colorful prose from such historical figures as Lawrence of Arabia who described the harshness of the Saudi desert as "Death in life." Wawro also successfully conveys the deeply seeded emotions inhibiting a solution to Arab-Israeli tensions by quoting King Ibn Saud who in 1945 responded to British Prime Minister Churchill's plea for help in "effecting a compromise" in Palestine by saying that "I will help the Allied cause, but I cannot destroy my soul and honor as a Muslim by compromising with Zionism."

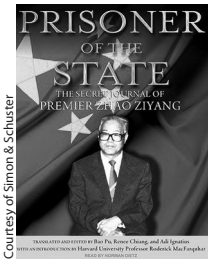
For anyone seeking to understand the palpable mistrust between present-day American and Iranian leaders, Wawro's chapter "Ajax" will provide much needed historical perspective. Operation Ajax was a jointly conceived British and American plan in 1953 to overthrow the popular and democratically elected Iranian Prime Minister Mossadeq who, like other leaders in oil-rich countries at the time, dared to advocate the nationalization of Western-owned oil companies. Wawro accurately notes that this covert operation signaled to Iranians "that the [US] priorities were to back the British, seat an anti-communist in power and secure an oil settlement that favored Western interests." Wawro keenly observes that as "Explicable as those aims were in the context of the Cold War, they were naturally taken for unpardonable meddling in Iranian internal affairs." This poisonous history helps explain why current calls from American leaders advocating democratic reforms in the Middle East can ring hollow in the streets of Tehran.

The second third of *Quicksand* outlines the development of American presidential doctrines in the Middle East. This portion will offer relatively little insight to long-time observers of US foreign policy. That said, Wawro artfully sketches the rise and fall of America's image with Arab leaders through several presidential administrations—reaching its zenith as President Eisenhower came to the defense of Egypt during the 1956 Suez Crisis (in the wake of the combined military attack by Israel, Britain, and France) and plummeting to its nadir with the bungled US military intervention into Iraq in 2003. One of the more salient features hastening this decline, in Wawro's view, is Washington's unbalanced political and military support to Israel. Of course, equally damaging to America's reputation in the eyes of the Arab public has been Washington's open support to Arab autocrats throughout the region—policies that have a long historical pedigree as Wawro amply demonstrates in this section.

In the last third of *Quicksand*, Wawro covers more recent regional developments including American support to the *mujahideen* in Afghanistan after the

1979 Soviet invasion, as well as the subsequent rise of al Qaeda as fueled by Saudi funding and religious inspiration and as further exacerbated by America's intrusive military presence in the region. Wawro delves into the details of the political-military strategies associated with American military interventions into Iraq and Afghanistan. While these recent events have been thoroughly investigated elsewhere, Wawro provides a useful overview for those unfamiliar with these alternative contemporary accounts. One glaring shortcoming for a book bearing a 2010 copyright is the absence of even a cursory assessment of the 2007 American "surge" strategy in Iraq.

The most disappointing aspect of *Quicksand* is Wawro's failure to suggest practical solutions to the strategic dilemmas that history has bequeathed to contemporary American policymakers. Given the strategic imperatives of fighting the Cold War and the constraints imposed by existing realities of regional and US domestic politics, Wawro in his concluding chapter asks, "what were Washington's options?" Unfortunately, this is one question not adequately explored in Wawro's otherwise superb history of America's evolving strategy in the Middle East.




Courtesy of Simon & Schuster

New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009

306 pages

$26.00

## *Prisoner of the State: The Secret Journal of Premier Zhao Ziyang*

translated and edited by Bao Pu, Renee Chiang, and Adi Ignatius

**Reviewed by Dr. Larry M. Wortzel, COL (USA Retired),**
Colonel Wortzel served two tours of duty as a military attaché at the US Embassy in China

Zhao Ziyang was the General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and Premier of China from 1987 to 1989. The Tiananmen Massacre, which the Communist Party prefers to call the "Tiananmen Incident," took place during his tenure. Zhao Ziyang's narrative presents his views on how and why senior CCP leaders decided to use force to suppress protests on 4 June 1989, during the demonstrations in Beijing. His censure by the CCP resulted in house arrest until his death on 17 January 2005, at the age of 85. He also provides important insight into factional struggles inside the Communist Party and how these struggles manifest themselves at the top of Chinese politics.

In telling Zhao Ziyang's story, the editors and translators provide fascinating insight into the secret inner workings of the CCP. In addition, *Prisoner of the State* confirms much of what Zhang Liang, Andrew Nathan, and Perry Link said about the machinations inside the CCP related to the Tiananmen in their edited work *The Tiananmen Papers: The Chinese Leadership's Decision to Use Force Against Their Own People-In their Own Words*.

Zhao Ziyang took over as General Secretary of the CCP in 1987, at the age of 68. His role, circumscribed and supervised by senior Party elders like Deng Xiaoping and the Politburo Standing Committee of the Party, was

to oversee economic transformation in China. Zhao also was expected to help shepherd limited political reforms without weakening the Communist Party or its control of the country.

Within two years of his accession as General Secretary, however, China was near chaos. Rampant inflation, internal discord, and corruption fueled popular unrest. Between April 1989 and 4 June, millions of students, workers, and retirees were in the streets protesting against the CCP and conditions in the nation. Beijing was brought to a standstill and other cities throughout China were in turmoil. Once the People's Liberation Army (PLA) acted, the death toll in Beijing was reported by one defector to be as high as 3,200 people.

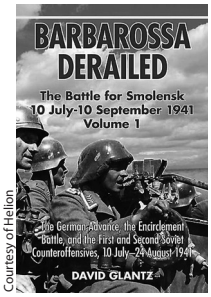
Ultimately removed from office by his peers and elders, Zhao Ziyang spent the remainder of his life in forced seclusion. Despite continuous surveillance under house arrest, the translators tell us he managed to "record his thoughts and recollections regarding some of China's most critical moments." Zhao produced thirty hour-long audio tapes, concealing them by recording over cassettes of Chinese opera and children's songs his jailors permitted him to keep around the house. Then he distributed the tapes to trusted friends, a few to each, in case the CCP discovered them and tried to confiscate the memoirs. Eventually the tapes were smuggled to Hong Kong.

This is an amazing look into the political maneuvers and squabbles at the highest levels of the Chinese Communist Party. Zhao lays bare the factional disputes, personal rivalries, and petty backstabbing that takes place in the inner sanctums of power in China. And the narrative rings true. Andrew Nathan and Bruce Gilley tell a similar story of events at the top of the CCP in *China's New Rulers: The Secret Files*. To confirm that things haven't changed much a decade into the 21st century, one needs only to read Richard McGregor's *The Party: The Secret World of China's Communist Rulers*.

Zhao Ziyang's memoir details the manner in which political factions fight internally for policy supremacy and ultimate power. *Prisoner of the State* is an amazing look at the formation of civilian and military networks, factional wrangling, competition for power, and high-level corruption in the world's largest Communist state.

Why is the memoir relevant today? It is because politics in China have not changed. China's current CCP Chairman, Hu Jintao, visited the United States for several days beginning 18 January 2011. At the joint press conference between Presidents Obama and Hu, while President Obama was calling his counterpart "President Hu," the Chinese translator was saying "Party Chairman Hu." Moreover, the drama described by Zhao Ziyang concerning his own accession to power is about to play itself out again in China. Hu Jintao is expected to turn over the reins to Xi Jinping in 2021 while attempting to pull the strings of power from behind the curtain of retirement, as Deng Xiaoping did to Zhao Ziyang.

This is an excellent book for China specialists and nonspecialists alike. *Prisoner of the State* lays bare the secret political struggles at the top of the Chinese Communist Party.




Courtesy of Helion

West Midlands, England: Helion, 2010

656 pages

$59.95

## *Barbarossa Derailed: The Battle of Smolensk, 10 July-10 September 1941. Volume 1: The German Advance to Smolensk, the Encirclement Battle, and the First and Second Soviet Counteroffensives, 10 July-24 August 1941*

by David M. Glantz

**Reviewed by David R. Stone**, author of A Military History of Russia and Pickett Professor of Military History, Kansas State University

Readers familiar with David Glantz know what to expect in *Barbarossa Derailed*—a meticulous operational narrative covering a key Eastern Front campaign. In keeping with his works on Manchuria, Kursk, Rzhev, Leningrad, and most recently Stalingrad, he provides precise accounts of maneuvers down to the level of individual divisions, documented by lengthy excerpts from situation reports and operational orders from Germans and Soviets alike. Glantz does not pretend to offer personal touches or gripping man-on-the-ground accounts. He does operational history exclusively and he does it very well. He also does it quickly; his preface notes this massive book took him six months to complete (breaking the hearts of lesser historians).

The book, first of two narrative volumes on the Smolensk campaign, is not easy: Glantz says it "must be studied as well as read." Readers must possess a firm grasp of mechanized warfare to understand what is going on. A good set of maps needs to be close at hand; sadly, the maps in the book itself are not enough. The maps in *When Titans Clashed* and *The Battle of Kursk*, Glantz's earlier collaborative works with Jonathan House, were models of clarity. This book, like Glantz's ongoing *Stalingrad Trilogy*, relies heavily on reproductions of contemporary German operational maps. These are not nearly as good. Unlike the colored German originals, these black and white maps make it far harder to distinguish between German and Soviet forces, and make all lines blur together: unit boundaries, rivers, and axes of advance. Glantz promises a third volume of documents and a fourth volume of colored maps; those might improve the situation.

This volume covers the first half of the Smolensk campaign. As the book opens, the first weeks of Germany's Operation Barbarossa had succeeded in smashing Soviet border forces, but the German high command was already facing difficulties. Its armor and mechanized infantry were penetrating deeply into Soviet defenses, leaving vast numbers of Soviet troops cut off and encircled. German logistics, however, could not keep up with the pace of the advance, and the bulk of German foot infantry was occupied liquidating vast pockets of Soviet soldiers far behind the armored spearheads. Only Fedor von

Bock's Army Group Center, having captured Minsk and now headed towards Smolensk en route to Moscow, was truly achieving unequivocal success; Army Groups North and South, possessing less armor, were advancing more slowly and failing to achieve the massive encirclements made possible by Center's 2d Panzer Group (under Hermann Hoth) and 3d Panzer Group (Heinz Guderian).

On 10 July 1941, Hoth and Guderian crossed the Dnepr River, headed for Smolensk against thrown-together Soviet forces competently led by Semyon Timoshenko. By 15 July, Hoth's tanks, looping north, had reached the outskirts of Smolensk and brought the Smolensk-Moscow highway under fire. Guderian, taking a southern approach, found himself hampered by the stubborn resistance of encircled Soviets in the city of Mogilev and persistent counterattacks on his right flank. Guderian's tanks and motorized units lacked infantry, and so failed to close the ring. Three Soviet armies were pocketed west of Smolensk, but they maintained a tenacious hold on a narrow lifeline to the east. Three weeks of stubborn resistance under Pavel Kurochkin before the final evacuation of the Smolensk pocket made a major impression on Hitler and the German generals, particularly when combined with clumsy but worrisome counteroffensives on Army Group Center's northern and southern flanks.

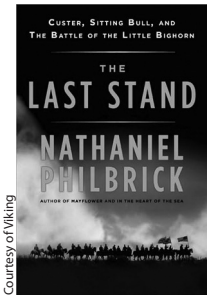
As a result, concern over Soviet successes and stiffening resistance on the road to Moscow, not merely overconfidence, led Hitler to issue a series of directives putting the priority to the north (Leningrad) and south (Ukraine) and delaying the central drive on Moscow. As early as 19 July, he declared that Army Group Center would advance on Moscow with infantry alone, sending its armor elsewhere. The result was that in early August the main German drive east halted, while Guderian and Hoth shored up their flanks and defended their gains. Taking advantage of the pause, Timoshenko launched Ivan Konev's 19th Army in a counteroffensive north of Smolensk, while Georgii Zhukov relentlessly pounded the German bridgehead across the Desna River at El'nia, just east of Smolensk. As both Soviet attacks lost momentum, the Germans launched a major offensive by Army Group Center's left wing on 22 August. As this first volume ends, that offensive had smashed a hole in the Soviet right, setting up what would become another massive encirclement of four Soviet armies at Vyazma.

Some might question the need for four hefty volumes on the Battle of Smolensk, one campaign among dozens on the Eastern Front. On the other hand, Soviet forces committed to the campaign outnumbered today's US Army; Soviet losses in killed, missing, and captured in this single campaign were greater than for all US forces in all the Second World War. Glantz goes beyond this to argue for the campaign's intrinsic significance. He charges previous historians with regarding the Smolensk battles as mere "bumps in the road," neglecting the terrible damage they did to the *Wehrmacht* and thereby leading to Hitler's ultimate failure at the gates of Moscow in December 1941.

Glantz certainly succeeds in providing the best account of Smolensk to date, but his relentless focus on operational narrative means that he spends less time on analyzing those broader questions of significance. First, he does not name those historians whom he regards as having slighted the battle. Indeed,

John Erickson, the only historian whose work approaches Glantz in comprehensiveness and rigor, calls the Smolensk battles "massive upheavals" which "drew no less than six Soviet armies into the Smolensk and [El'nia] whirlpools. . . . Almost a dozen Soviet armies . . . were flung into these fiery mazes of attack and defense" (*The Road to Stalingrad*). Certainly the Eastern Front deserves more attention; it's not clear Smolensk in particular has been slighted.

Next, it is quite possible the Soviets did themselves more harm than good by their fruitless battering of German lines in hasty counteroffensives. The Smolensk pocket trapped and destroyed three Soviet armies; the most successful Soviet counterattack (by Konev's 19th Army) succeeded in damaging a German infantry division. No Soviet counterattack at Smolensk ever succeeded in the breakthrough and encirclement by which the Germans routinely wiped out Soviet units wholesale. Although Glantz endorses Zhukov's view that "In fierce combat, it is far better to suffer losses and achieve your mission than not to achieve any sort of aims and suffer losses every day by marking time in place from day to day under enemy fire," in many cases the Soviets suffered losses and did not achieve their aims. As Chief of Staff Franz Halder remarked on the battering the Germans were taking in the El'nia bridgehead, "No matter how badly off our troops are, it is even worse for the enemy." It may be that the Soviet soldiers and material lost in disjointed counterattacks left the Soviets vulnerable to the disastrous Vyazma encirclement which immediately followed. Soviet counterattacks certainly shook Hitler's confidence, and Glantz may be right that they fatally weakened Army Group Center. More analysis is needed to prove it, though; perhaps the second volume will provide that.




Courtesy of Viking

New York: Viking, 2010

466 pages

$30.00

## *The Last Stand: Custer, Sitting Bull, and the Battle of the Little Bighorn*

by Nathaniel Philbrick

**Reviewed by Jim Shufelt, COL (USA Retired),** Center for Strategic Leadership, US Army War College

The combination of a troubled presidential administration, an unclear national strategy, an army equipped with inadequate doctrine and inappropriate materiel, and a skilled tribally organized foe describes situations that the United States has faced in recent conflicts; however, Nathanial Philbrick's account is about a battle that occurred on the Western Plains of America over one hundred and thirty-five years ago, the Battle of the Little Bighorn, popularly known as the Custer Massacre. While a virtual book-writing machine has thrived over the last century examining every aspect of this event, resulting in thousands of documents, Philbrick has successfully combined insight from first-hand accounts, official histories, campaign studies, personality studies,

and other sources to provide a new account that coherently presents a plausible explanation for the 7th Cavalry's tragic defeat.

While *The Last Stand* is more than just the story of George Armstrong Custer and the 7th Cavalry Regiment, Sitting Bull, and the Sioux and Cheyenne tribes; there is little coverage of the campaign plan, details on national strategy, history of American policy for its native people, or similar topics in Philbrick's history. Those details are found in numerous other sources, as explained by the detailed endnotes and extensive bibliography in this book. Despite the presence of so many sources, Philbrick notes that a truly accurate account of the battle remains difficult, if not impossible, due to the complete loss of Custer's battalion, the intentional manipulation of history by surviving participants, and the challenge of understanding accounts muddied by bad memory, culture misunderstanding, and poorly skilled interpreters.

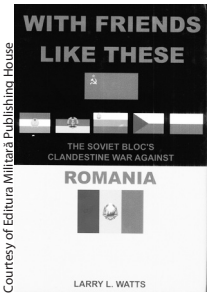
Philbrick's methodology in explaining the Little Bighorn battle is primarily chronologic, as he reviews the preparation, conduct, and aftermath of the battle, interspersed with brief historical vignettes that illuminate important aspects of the key leaders. Throughout this account, the author notes the importance of personal relationships. The interpersonal dynamics between Custer and his two key subordinates, Major Reno and Captain Benteen, significantly shaped the conduct of the fight, directly contributing to Custer's decision to split his force prior to the battle and influencing Reno and Benteen's actions when they were unclear about the status of Custer and his battalion. Similarly, Custer's complex relationship with his Commander, General Terry, resulted in orders that are still debated today.

One of the strengths of Philbrick's story is his discussion of the battlefield terrain. Anyone who has ever visited the battlefield can corroborate the impact of the complex rolling terrain on the bluffs above the Little Bighorn River. As Philbrick notes numerous times, the aspect of terrain clearly was not immediately understood by the 7th Cavalry Regiment, yet was known and successfully utilized by the native warriors. Because of the nature of the terrain, Custer could not fully comprehend the size of the native village until he reached a point in time and space where it was too late to abort his attack and was thus unable to avert his unit's defeat, if not utter destruction, at the hands of a much larger opposing force.

Philbrick addresses two other long-standing issues with respect to the tactical fight: Reno's personal decisionmaking and the actions of Custer's battalion during the time period between its last confirmed report and its final demise on the battlefield. Philbrick cites numerous accounts of Reno's intoxication before, during, and after the battle, and demonstrates that he believes that this had a direct impact on the timing and quality of Reno's tactical decisionmaking. Whether or not this was the single cause, the evidence is clear that Reno made many poor decisions throughout the battle. Similarly, Philbrick develops a plausible theory for the final actions of Custer's force, based on native accounts, the experiences of 7th Cavalry survivors, and archeological discoveries after

the 1983 battlefield fire which gave greater clarity to locations of the fighting positions held by Custer's battalion and by native warriors.

This book is highly recommended for contemporary strategic leaders. Both an entertaining and educational read, it highlights the complex nature of the battlefield, the impact of personality and personal relationships, and the numerous challenges of fighting a native tribal foe. Poignantly, Philbrick notes that there is plenty of evidence that both leaders, Custer and Sitting Bull, would have preferred a peaceful resolution to conflict. When the evolving situation placed their forces into direct conflict, any chance of success for Custer was tied to his personal vision on how the tactical fight would progress and the ability of his subordinates to execute in accordance with that vision, especially once he split his force prior to the battle. Unfortunately, Custer's vision was flawed, he failed to adequately relay it to his subordinates, and Reno and Benteen were, even if given clear guidance, ill-equipped to make the appropriate tactical decisions. As many historians will argue, the Army was lucky it did not lose the entire 7th Cavalry Regiment during this fight.

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733 pages

Price Unavailable

## *With Friends Like These: The Soviet Bloc's Clandestine War Against Romania, Volume I*

by Larry L. Watts

**Reviewed by Colonel Charles W. Van Bebber**, Ph.D., Director of National Security Policy and Strategy, US Army War College

During the Cold War, American diplomats, intelligence specialists, and scholars viewed Romania under the leadership of Communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu as something of a paradox. On one hand, it was a harsh, Stalinist regime that clearly fell within the Soviet orbit. On the other hand, it behaved internationally as a maverick state that often defied the foreign policy positions of Moscow and even withdrew from the Warsaw Pact command structure after the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Conventional wisdom asserted that such defiance could be tolerated by Moscow because Ceausescu's firm Stalinist control over the country gave the Soviets no expectation that Romania would deviate from communism. With the defection in 1978 of Romanian intelligence chief Ion Mihai Pacepa, the idea that Romania's autonomous foreign and security policy was actually a Moscow-orchestrated conspiracy to deceive the West (known as Red Horizon) became widely circulated and accepted by many. In fact, the idea that Bucharest was not a Warsaw Pact maverick but rather a "Trojan Horse" would become a contentious issue within the US policy community in the 1980s. In 1987, former US ambassador to Romania David Funderburk asserted in his book *Pinstripes and Reds* that the US Department of State had been deceived into giving Romania Most-Favored-Nation status

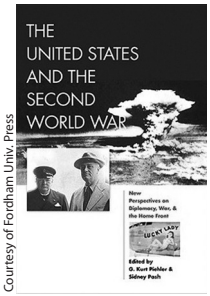
and that US diplomats had been hoodwinked by Ceausescu to believe the false pretense of Romania's independence from Moscow.

In *With Friends Like These*, historian Larry L. Watts provides the historical "coda" to the question of Romania's geostrategic orientation during the communist era. Using evidence gleaned from recently opened intelligence and defense archives of the Warsaw Pact, Watts examines Romania's strategic behavior during the Cold War and explains why this country earned a reputation from scholars and diplomats of the era as a so-called "maverick" and why some believed Romania's seemingly autonomous behavior was really a sham. By tracing Romania's relationships with Moscow and its Warsaw Pact satellites through the dimensions of intelligence and defense relationships, Watts confirms that Romania was at the very least a reluctant if not defiant member of the Warsaw Pact. Watts demonstrates that Romania never enthusiastically embraced its inclusion in the Soviet bloc and that its relationships with its nominal allies deteriorated from the early 1950s onward. Watts documents the clandestine disinformation campaign (beginning in the 1950s and heightening after the events of 1968) orchestrated by Moscow to discredit and isolate Bucharest. The archival evidence Watts reveals indicates that this premeditated effort to discredit Romania met with a large degree of success and Ceausescu's Romania would consequently become increasingly isolated both from the West as well as from its fellow Soviet bloc "friends."

This work is more than just an exposé of Cold War intelligence secrets. The author has written a geopolitical history of Romania and not, as the title implies, simply an examination of Romania's experience as a member of the Warsaw Pact. This lengthy first volume specifically spans a period from the early 19th century to 1978 and highlights the turbulent relationship Bucharest experienced with its allies—particularly its problematic historical relationships with Moscow and Budapest. The author takes the reader through this history in five of the first six chapters which are best skipped if the reader's focus is on the Cold War. Although the background provides an insightful context for Romania's subsequent defiance of Moscow, this book's real merit lies not in the breadth of the author's treatment of Romania's struggle for national autonomy from the region's great powers and irredentist neighbors, but in its particular focus on Romania's status within the Eastern bloc of communist states after World War II. It is Watts's detailed narrative of Romania's experience as a member of the Warsaw Pact that captures the reader's attention and justifies the title.

The author is well qualified to examine the topic of Romanian strategic culture and history. He has authored a biography of Romania's controversial Second World War leader Marshal Ion Antonescu, and has written extensively on contemporary Romanian military and intelligence affairs. He also served intermittently as an advisor to the Romanian government on defense and intelligence issues. Most notably, he was an advisor to General Ioan Talpeş, a former director of the Romanian foreign intelligence services and national security advisor to President Ion Iliescu, who penned the foreword to this work.

*With Friends Like These* represents a monumental effort by Watts to come to terms with Romania's Warsaw Past legacy. Although it is poorly edited and somewhat lengthy—at times it becomes mired in the details of covert activity—it is nonetheless a worthwhile read for those who wish to understand contemporary Romania. In particular, Watts's understanding of Romanian strategic culture and his access to communist-era archives combine to make this volume a must read for those interested in Cold War history and the Warsaw Pact.




Courtesy of Fordham Univ. Press

New York: Fordham Univ. Press, 2010

400 pages

$46.00

## *The United States and the Second World War: New Perspectives on Diplomacy, War, and the Home Front*

edited by G. Kurt Piehler and Sidney Pash

**Reviewed by Colonel Matthew Moten,** Professor and Deputy Head, Department of History, United States Military Academy

Editors Piehler and Pash gathered students and colleagues of John Whiteclay Chambers II to publish this anthology in his honor. Chambers is a prolific historian, author of *To Raise an Army*: *The Draft Comes to Modern America* and editor of *The Oxford Companion to American Military History*, to name just two of his many well-regarded works. This volume is part of the Fordham University Press series, *World War II: The Global, Human, and Ethical Dimension*, of which Piehler is also general editor.

Eleven essays range from Depression-era foreign policy to the American pacifist and antinuclear movements during the Cold War. The editors have arranged chapters into sections on foreign policy, the home front, the conduct of the war, and the end and aftermath of the war. Sidney Pash provides a useful and detailed introduction.

In their examination of the 1941 decision to provide convoy escorts for Atlantic shipping, J. Garry Clifford and Robert H. Ferrell portray FDR at his wiliest. Roosevelt cagily gave the appearance of leading while refusing to get too far in front of the public. Instead, he allowed events, such as the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, to create popular momentum for convoys. The authors poke holes in FDR's reputation for bipartisan war leadership, showing that he disdained politicking with the congressional opposition. In "Containment, Rollback, and the Onset of the Pacific War, 1933-1941," Pash explores prewar United States-Japanese relations. The Americans were largely successful in containing Japanese expansion, but they changed course in 1941, aggressively attempting to reverse Japanese gains. Pash deftly shows how an ill-considered policy shift helped bring on the war it was meant to avert. Secretary of State Cordell Hull's historical reputation continues to wane.

Two essays comprise the home front section. Justin Hart marshals a fascinating cast of characters—Archibald MacLeish, Robert Sherwood, and

William "Wild Bill" Donovan, to name a few—to tell the story of American wartime propaganda. The Office of War Information (OWI) had jurisdiction over both foreign and domestic information campaigns, but was it their prerogative to construct the message, or merely to present it? Bureaucratic wrangling over that question, and the nation's embarrassing race relations, hobbled the propaganda effort. Nonetheless, OWI set precedents for "projecting America" that continue to resonate in public diplomacy. In "Allotment Annies and Other Wayward Wives" Ann Pfau presents an impressive array of sources in her discussion of popular perceptions of service wives' sexual fidelity, readjustment problems for returning veterans, and women's roles in facilitating their soldiers' transitions to peacetime.

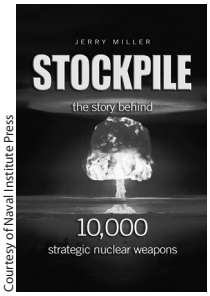
The bulk of the anthology treats those who fought and those who refused to fight the war. Two essays focus on maritime services. Barbara Brooks Tomblin's "Naval Gunfire Support in Operation Neptune: A Reexamination," offers an almost ship-by-ship, round-by-round narrative of naval operations in support of the US Army's D-Day landings on Utah and Omaha beaches. Her research is exhaustive, but her prose exhausting. Tomblin makes important points about what the Allies learned and failed to learn from earlier amphibious assaults, but the editors did her no favor by allotting her sixty-five pages, more than a sixth of the book. Mark A. Snell provides a more readable account of Operation Neptune, focusing on the US Coast Guard's critical but underreported role in ferrying American soldiers to the beaches.

Nicholas Molnar shatters General George S. Patton's risible public advocacy of the M4 Sherman tank. Molnar shows that the general was well aware of the Sherman's flaws, but championed it nonetheless for fear that unchallenged criticism of it would damage morale. "The War Winning Sherman Tank Myth" owes much to Patton's prevarications and continues to color World War II historiography. Kurt Piehler examines the unprecedented attention that FDR, General George C. Marshall, and others lavished on the need to capture the history of the war. S.L.A. Marshall, Forrest Pogue and other historians made path-breaking use of oral history to tell the stories of soldiers—from the grunts in the Pacific to the generals in the Pentagon. Because of their efforts, both military history and oral history grew in acceptance and influence in the postwar era.

Scott H. Bennett explores the experiences of tens of thousands of conscientious objectors, arguing that they, too, were part of the "greatest generation." Between 25,000 and 50,000 pacifists took noncombatant jobs in the military, while another 6,000 went to prison. The Civilian Public Service (CPS) employed 12,000 objectors, largely in roles reminiscent of the Civilian Conservation Corps, but some in dangerous occupations such as smoke jumping. Others volunteered as human subjects in medical research. All who served in CPS did so without pay, insurance, or workmen's compensation, causing many to condemn the program as "slave labor." Pacifists fought not only against the war, but for racial equality and humane treatment of the mentally handicapped, developing techniques of civil disobedience that the civil rights movement later perfected.

The final two essays examine preparations for the occupation of Japan and pacifist and antinuclear commemorations of Hiroshima Day.

Anthology is a fragile genre, depending as it does upon the skills of many to produce one work. The authors and editors are praiseworthy for the depth of their research and the general lucidity of their prose. Half the essays could stand on their own as articles in scholarly journals. Yet the question for readers is how well the chapters work together to form a book. The authors, joined in a *festschrift* to John Whiteclay Chambers II, are touching various parts of an elephant called World War II, and some have described those parts quite well. Alas, their collective efforts don't provide a clearer understanding of the animal itself.




Courtesy of Naval Institute Press

Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2010

273 pages

$37.95

## *Stockpile: The Story Behind 10,000 Strategic Nuclear Weapons*

by Jerry Miller

**Reviewed by George H. Quester**, Professor Emeritus of Government and Politics, University of Maryland, Shapiro Visiting Professor, George Washington University

This is in part a history of why the American (and Soviet) nuclear weapons stockpiles grew so spectacularly large, presented by someone who was a first-hand observer and participant in many of the crucial choices on strategy and targeting. As an eyewitness account of the decisions and of the decisionmakers, this book will be indispensible for anyone doing advanced research on the subject. Clearly written (if somewhat repetitious in places) with a view to making the physical choices clear for someone untrained in physics, it might also serve as a very useful text for undergraduate courses or graduate seminars in national security.

As with any eyewitness reconstruction of a memoir, there are points where some reader caution may be in order, as the author's opinions on the character of the people involved, and on the big issues at stake, come through sometimes with a bit of an opinionated tone. And memory can fail anyone four or five decades later, on the complete logic of the strategic decisions made, and on the paths that were chosen or not chosen.

The author spent an important portion of his career with the United States Navy's team in Omaha making inputs to the Single Integrated Operational Plan for waging nuclear war, and he has interacted with a wide variety of civilian arms control and strategic research centers since his retirement. He can thus in no way be typecast as a simple "retired admiral," for he is very attuned to the criticisms that civilians have made of the nuclear arms race. While some of his prose indeed betrays the normal biases of a military professional about civilian academics who have never been in uniform or in combat, he at the same time endorses the normal outsider's criticism that the nuclear arsenal was allowed to grow much too large.

The depictions of Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and some of his major assistants, for example Alain Enthoven, reinforce the standard picture of excessively self-assured civilian academics. The fact is noted several times that the American arsenal grew the most in the McNamara years. Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson is also depicted somewhat negatively, while Paul Nitze and Andrew Goodpaster are given a much more positive image, and President Eisenhower is also seen this way. Showing some of the possible pitfalls in memory, and a perhaps incomplete synthesis of all the strategic factors involved, the author portrays Eisenhower as someone who had decided never to initiate the use of nuclear weapons. Admiral Miller also details the extent to which Eisenhower chose to rely on extended nuclear deterrence, with the threat of escalation, for the protection of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), rather than choosing a costly erection of conventional defenses to counter the forces of the Warsaw Pact.

The author's account of the sheer growth in numbers indeed hardly settles on a single causal factor. Included in the account are the needs generated by various strands of strategic reasoning, and by various theories of targeting, but also the in-fighting between the Navy and the Air Force on who would have the larger role to play with nuclear weapons, and the role of the nuclear weapons laboratories. An entire chapter is devoted simply to the role of scientists. Some portions of the account thus would seem to be reinforcement for "bureaucratic politics" theories that have been so critical of the defense decision process, theories by which the taxpayer-citizen is badly served; as defense expenditures grow too large. Other portions of the account, however, seem to relate decisions about the numbers and characteristics of nuclear weapons much more to real defense issues. The reader is left with an interesting survey of bad reasons and good reasons why the nuclear arsenal evolved as it did, along with evidence that substantial cuts can now be made, and some cautionary notes against anyone's current dream of moving to "global zero" in nuclear weapons.

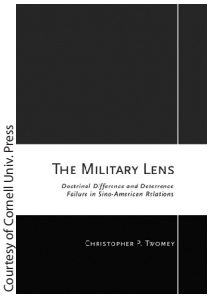
In later portions of the account, the author offers some strong support for the kind of unilateral reductions in nuclear forces that were undertaken by President George H. W. Bush (where either side makes a reduction, and then watches what the other side does), as compared with the kind of reductions that require the tedious litigation of a formal arms reduction treaty with the Russians.

The book is clearly written, in a very engaging and personal style. As an exercise in memory, it sweeps several times through a long period of nuclear history on varying themes. This style of presentation will help the reader new to the subject, but at other times will seem repetitious or even confusing. The book's bibliography is extensive and therefore valuable in itself for anyone researching this subject.

This book cannot be taken as a definitive primer on the choices and concepts of "nuclear strategy," even though the author is aware of all these important concepts and trade-offs, because Admiral Miller too often characterizes or dismisses one side or another of an argument without parsing it through to the end. But the author's memories of the various choices made, and of

the personal attributes and styles of the major decisionmakers, are indeed well worth reading, and important to take into account.

At a time when the public, professional military men, the Congress, and President seem much less interested in nuclear weapons and "nuclear strategy," the book amounts to another relevant "wake-up call."




Courtesy of Cornell Univ. Press

Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 2010

260 pages

$35.00

## *The Military Lens: Doctrinal Difference and Deterrence Failure in Sino-American Relations*

By Christopher P. Twomey

**Reviewed by Lauren Hickok,** Student of International Politics and Security

In *The Military Lens*, Christopher P. Twomey greatly advances the scholarly literature on deterrence, doctrine, and the causes of war. He warns that the risk of a great power war between the United States and China is considerable—mainly because the two countries have very different ideas about how wars should be fought and won. As such, *The Military Lens* is of great practical interest to policymakers and senior members of the defense community—in both the United States and China.

Throughout the first third of the book, Twomey establishes the theoretical model he plans to test. Most importantly, he acquaints the reader with two related hypotheses: (1) the Doctrinal Difference Misperception Hypothesis, and (2) the Doctrinal Difference Escalation Hypothesis. According to the first hypothesis, nations with divergent theories of victory—to include military doctrine—are likely to misperceive and underestimate each other's capabilities. According to the second hypothesis, this underestimation is likely to result in failure of deterrence, escalation, and conflict.

The real substance of *The Military Lens* is presented in Part II, "Chinese and American Puzzles." Twomey begins by characterizing the doctrinal differences that led to the Korean War. American thinking emphasized the utility of air power and general war—whereas Chinese strategic thinking emphasized ground forces, limited war, and the trading of space for time. Ultimately, these doctrinal differences resulted in two separate cases of deterrence failure—the US decision to cross the 38th parallel into North Korea and Mao Zedong's decision to cross the Yalu River. Next, Twomey provides an example of a deterrence success—China's decision in 1950 to postpone the invasion of Taiwan. Here, deterrence was successful because the United States and China had similar theories of victory. In the Taiwan Strait, the relevant forces were naval forces for amphibious operations—and the amphibious operations doctrine of the United States was in fact very similar to that of China.

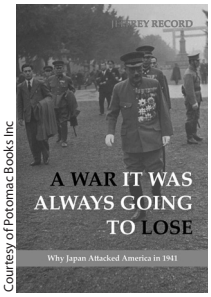
The final third of the book presents the reader with two additional cases describing doctrinal differences between Egypt and Israel—a fascinating

analysis that further establishes the reader's understanding of doctrinal difference theory, and raises new questions about how similar doctrinal differences might affect the United States and China in the future. A subsequent chapter generalizes about the theory's implications for the Taiwan Strait, and provides policy recommendations for reducing the risk of conflict.

What is most remarkable about *The Military Lens* is its interdisciplinary approach—which transcends traditional boundaries of political science, history, and public policy. *The Military Lens* begins in the realm of political science, developing a formal theory of doctrinal difference. Next, the cases provide historical context, and in some ways these chapters read like a history of the period, albeit one organized thematically. Indeed, the author quotes the principal historians of the Korean War, and he also references the statements of American and Chinese leadership. At times, the block quotations become cumbersome—but in most cases their inclusion is effective, demonstrating firsthand how each country assessed its adversary. Finally, the author provides a set of policy recommendations—something quite unusual for a formal work of political science.

The policy recommendations are one of the great strengths of *The Military Lens*—making the book an essential read for policymakers and senior members of the defense community. To minimize the effects of doctrinal difference, states should: (1) tailor signals to its adversary's perceptual framework or theory of victory; (2) red team their own net assessments of the adversary's forces, relying on area studies specialists, and; (3) develop military-to-military ties to help understand each side's theory of victory. The leaders of the United States and China should be sure to take note—because today, more than ever, the military doctrines of the two countries are diverging. The US military is currently pursuing a high-cost, high-technology revolution in military affairs. This differs markedly from the asymmetric assassin's mace (shashou jian) strategies that China's military has come to emphasize. The more that these approaches diverge, the greater the likelihood of missed signals and deterrence failure.

Ultimately, *The Military Lens* illuminates the way that doctrinal differences can lead to deterrence failure. As Twomey aptly summarizes: "When nations see the world through different military lenses, the risk of misperception and miscommunication in the conduct of their diplomacy and statecraft is even higher. Mitigating these dangers in the Taiwan Strait and beyond would help to advance the cause of peace and stability."




Courtesy of Potomac Books Inc

Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books Inc., 2011

184 pages

$24.95

## *A War It Was Always Going to Lose: Why Japan Attacked America in 1941*

by Jeffrey Record

**Reviewed by Dr. Anthony James Joes**, Professor of Political Science at Saint Joseph's University, and served on the faculty of the US Army War College 2001-2003

Jeffrey Record, Ph.D. Johns Hopkins, is Professor of Strategy at the United States Air War College, and the author of eight books, including *Wanting War; Beating Goliath; Dark Victory; Making War, Thinking History; Hollow Victory*; and *The Wrong War*. Most of these works are succinct; all of them bristle with provocative insight. The present volume is no exception.

After an introductory overview of the general question of why Japan attacked the United States, subsequent chapters examine historical sources of antagonism between the two nations: Japan's aggression in China and Indochina and the US response; assumptions behind the Japanese approach to war with the United States; why neither Japan nor the United States could deter the other; and American and Japanese miscalculations. The final chapter presents lessons from Japan's Pearl Harbor decision for today's national security decisionmakers.

Record rejects the classical realist model because it offers little allowance for the influence of fear, pride, and other emotions on the making of foreign policy, especially that of prewar Japan. On the contrary, "It is the central conclusion of this study that *the Japanese decision for war against the United States in 1941 was dictated by Japanese pride and Japan's threatened economic destruction by the United States*" (italics original). Convinced that fear and honor can motivate national actors as much as "objective" national interest, Record also insists that "Japanese racism, fatalism, imperial arrogance, and cultural ignorance" also powerfully influenced policymaking in Tokyo. At the highest ranks of the Army, "operational thinking remained essentially primitive, unscientific, complacent, narrow and simplistic." "Few Japanese leaders appreciated the limits of Japan's power." And according to constitutional arrangements, the Army could force out any cabinet it did not like simply by not permitting any serving officer to be Minister of War. That Japan's leadership would take the country, already tied down in an unwinnable war in China, into a conflict with the United States, proved its irrationality.

Record's discussion of economic sanctions, especially the famous Roosevelt oil embargo, is illuminating. The author thinks that serious economic sanctions need to be reassessed: they are not measures "short of war" but can be true acts of war in themselves. When it imposed the oil embargo against Japan in the summer of 1941, the United States was one of the world's great petroleum exporters, and Japan got most of its oil from the United States. The embargo confronted Japanese leaders with two choices: submit to America or

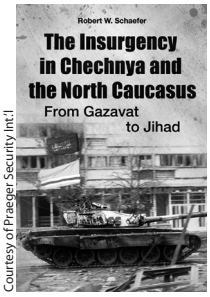
seize the natural riches of Southeast Asia. The American price for lifting the oil embargo was Japanese withdrawal not only from French Indochina, but from China as well, forcing Japan to write off all her conquests and their costs in wealth and blood.

This US demand may seem incredibly harsh, or even stupid, but Record cites several distinguished historians who maintain that a conciliatory attitude on the part of America would almost certainly have been interpreted in Tokyo as a sign of grave weakness. The embargo was intended to deter a Japanese advance into Southeast Asia, but Japan was, in fact, not deterred, but was instead spurred to further actions, seeing the embargo as an act of war that required a response in kind. In fact, the Japanese decision to go south, toward the British, French, and Dutch possessions, was taken before the embargo. The oil embargo was the response to, not the cause of, the decision to seize Southeast Asia. Record also points out that the American demand that Japan evacuate China was actually against US strategic interest. The United States needed as many Japanese troops tied down in China as possible so as to protect the Soviet Union, then engaged in a death struggle with the Nazis. In Record's assessment, the United States went to war with Japan over China, not over Southeast Asia.

As Record makes clear, if Japan had invaded the European colonies in Southeast Asia and not attacked US territory, it would have been close to impossible for President Roosevelt to get Congress to declare war. But viewing the American Philippines as a danger on the eastern flank of their southward drive, aware that the United States was getting stronger, the Japanese enraged the Americans with their attack on Pearl Harbor. The Japanese believed that by seizing and fortifying islands in the central and south Pacific, they would convince America that some sort of peace was preferable to all-out war. Many (not all) Japanese leaders also believed that Hitler would defeat the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Parenthetically, a Japanese occupation of Hawaii would have forced the US Navy to operate from California, adding another 3,000 miles to the distance between the home islands and America's Navy.

Among Record's major conclusions is one especially worth pondering—the story of Pearl Harbor abundantly illustrates the mistakes policymakers are prone to make when they are ignorant of the culture and history of a potential adversary.

Surprisingly, the final three pages of the book consist of a free-standing, hammer-and-tongs assault on the decision to go to war with Iraq. This reviewer is not able to understand why Record believed it was necessary to conclude his study of Japanese policy in this manner. But the infelicitous ending is a very minor blemish on a work that, like all of Record's books, is well-researched, vigorously written, intellectually challenging, and deserving of a wide readership among policymakers and indeed all students of international politics.




Courtesy of Praeger Security Int'l

Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Security Int'l, 2010

293 pages

$59.95

## *The Insurgency in Chechnya and the North Caucasus: From Gazavat to Jihad*

by Robert W. Schaefer

**Reviewed by Constance Phlipot**, Senior US Foreign Service Officer

Does the limited readership for Chechnya and the North Caucasus need another book? The uptick in violence and major terrorist acts in Moscow in recent months has sparked greater interest in the region, but arguably this need is more than filled by recent books and articles by such noted specialists as Thomas de Waal at Carnegie, Miriam Lanskoy (National Endowment for Democracy) together with the former Chechen Foreign Minister Akhadov, and Georgetown's Charles King. What does a Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Army have to offer to this intellectually rich literature?

A lot, it turns out. Robert Schaefer is sufficiently steeped in the complicated ethnic-religious-historical stew of the North Caucasus; he fully understands and successfully communicates the background against which the insurgency takes place. To this he adds his experientially based knowledge of counterinsurgency (COIN). He goes beyond a US-centric interpretation of COIN to look at the situation from the Russian government and military's point of view. His insight helps answer the paradox that most of those who have studied the region grapple with: Why have the Russians never succeeded in extinguishing this 300-year insurgency while, at the same time, the Chechens have never been able to win their independence? In part, it is because the Russians have successfully addressed aspects of the conflict in their own terms, but have failed to adequately address the essential "hearts and minds" aspect of COIN, preventing them from ultimate victory. The Chechens (and other peoples of the North Caucasus) have been highly skilled in the initial guerilla warfare stages of insurgency, but have failed to defeat the far more numerous Russian forces at the advanced stages of the conflict when there is a need to mass forces. The initial and outwardly successful "Chechenization" of the Chechen struggle in which resources poured into the area failed. Additionally, cessation of violence resulting from the former insurgent Kadyrov deftly playing Moscow and his local rivals is unraveling due to the failure to provide security and build trust among the local population.

A very useful introductory chapter, "Insurgency 101," sets the stage for Schaefer's thesis that the Chechen/North Caucasus rebellions should be analyzed as classic insurgencies. More than an "Insurgency for Dummies," the chapter underscores the key elements of an insurgency—lack of governmental control, available leadership, ideology, and vulnerable population—which Schaefer weaves throughout his account of the history of the North Caucasian struggles against Russian rule. Similarly, the clear distinction he draws between

insurgency and terrorism (the former a strategy, the latter a tactic) is important to understanding where the Russians have gone wrong in branding the insurgency as terrorism.

In his detailed history of the conflict-ridden region, Schaefer stresses that religion was a galvanizing force in the struggle since the 18th century—and not a new element resulting from the Chechen war of the mid-1990s. The Russian response to the Chechens was consistently violent and suppressive, including such tactics as forced resettlement—a pattern that continued in the Soviet Union and Russian Federation. The Russians consistently exploited the fissures in Chechen society, including those between followers of fundamentalist Islam and other local traditions.

The period of perestroika in the late 1980s gave hope to Chechen nationalists and other repressed people of the region for greater freedom and autonomy, but ultimately the turmoil and subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union created the preconditions for the Chechen wars. Presidents Yeltsin and Gorbachev played Chechen leadership that were competing in their own power struggle with disastrous results for the Chechen peoples. The loss of central government control, available leadership (in the form of Dzokhar Dudayev), an (always) vulnerable population and ideology (nationalism, Islam and criminality) were, as Schaeffer points out, a formula for an insurgency. Paradoxically, it was the Russians in 1994 that launched the insurgency against the newly declared independent Chechen Republic Ichkeria. The brutal war that followed was very unpopular among Russians—in part due to the free flow of information and the Chechen use of large-scale terrorism. The conflict ended with the Khasavyurt Accords negotiated by retired General (and presidential candidate) Alexander Lebed.

The interwar years (1996-99) were marked by conflict between the moderate Chechen President Maskhadov (elected after Dudayev's death) and radicals such as Basayev and the foreign Arab military leader Khattab. The Chechen government was poorly run and highly corrupt, and the nation was ripe for the Russian invasion in 1999. Schaeffer cites good evidence that the Russians had actually planned the invasion of Chechnya prior to a series of bombings in Moscow, but the author does not take a strong stand on whether the Russian government (security services) undertook the bombings, as the now-exiled oligarch Berezovskiy claims. That said, Schaefer cautions those who propose the idea that the Russians would commit such acts against their own people as unthinkable not to be trapped in their own ethnocentric world view. In any case, the Russian government clearly exploited the bombings to boost popular support for the war.

The Russians learned some lessons from the first Chechen War which they applied to the subsequent conflict. Beyond tactical improvements, they systemically controlled the flow of information to the Russian public, eliminating the domestic opposition that contributed to the earlier failure. Moreover, President Putin's high popularity gave the Kremlin free license to conduct the war as it saw fit, including the handling of the Beslan school terrorist attack

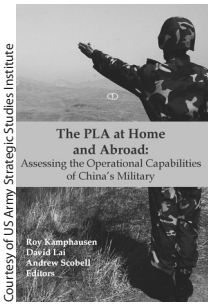
which resulted in the deaths of 200 children—and led to the defeat of the Chechen insurgency.

But that is not the end of the story, as is clear from the two recent terrorist acts in Moscow that were claimed by the North Caucasian insurgents and resulting in the almost daily list of casualties throughout the North Caucasus. Schaefer attempts to address why the insurgency persists and its ability to spread beyond Chechnya to much of the North Caucasus. The Russians, he submits, framed the problem as the existence of criminal and undesirable elements that are responsible for creating the instability. A strong dose of heavy-handed law enforcement and military action to root out the undesirables is the outgrowth of such thinking. Schaefer acknowledges that the high-value-target technique that the Russians employed can be useful in quelling a limited rebellion or terrorist activity, but does not address the issues contained in a deeply rooted insurgency. Khadyrov's appeal to the local traditional Islamic elements to fight against the foreign "fundamentalists," together with substantial economic assistance for rebuilding Grozny, resulted in relative peace in Chechnya over the past several years.

***. . . [ Schaefer provides] a new perspective on the academic literature on the North Caucasus conflict . . .***

This stability, however, like the rebuilding, is only surface deep. The Russian and "khadyrovtsy" heavy-handed law enforcement has not provided security nor built trust among the population. Instead, it has resulted in a reservoir of grievances and forced many young men to join the insurgency. In the meantime, the leadership of the insurgency has spread its reach beyond the issue of Chechen independence to a mantel of a broader, fundamentalist North Caucasus Emirate. The intensity of the insurgency outside Chechnya, particularly in Dagestan, shows that the insurgents have succeeded in broadening the conflict. At this point in the narrative, Schaefer could have addressed specific features within each republic which allowed insurgency to take root. He implies that the violence is principally an outgrowth of the Chechen revolt, rather than the result of economic and social conditions, or the Kremlin's highly centralized policies. This is a minor omission which does not detract from this otherwise thoughtful and comprehensive analysis.

In addition to providing a new perspective on the academic literature on the North Caucasus conflict, Schaefer's work is useful to the civilian and military policymaker charged with dealing with the Russian government on counterterrorism and security issues.




Courtesy of US Army Strategic Studies Institute

Carlisle, PA: US Army Strategic Studies Institute, 2010

645 pages

$29.95

## *The PLA at Home and Abroad: Assessing the Operational Capabilities of China's Military*

edited by Roy Kamphausen, David Lai, and Andrew Scobell

**Reviewed by Richard Halloran**, former foreign correspondent in Asia and military correspondent in Washington for *The New York Times*

For two decades, American political leaders of both major parties and senior military officers of all services have complained that China lacked "transparency" in its posture and policy on security. With due respect, but in all candor, that lament borders on nonsense. A Westerner who wants to know what the Chinese are up to could begin with any one of many excellent histories to trace the strands that have culminated in the drive of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to rebuild the Middle Kingdom, a concept dating from the Eighth Century BC. Then the explorer could delve into books like James Lilley's *China Hands,* in which the author recounts his time as US ambassador in Beijing during the 1989 massacre in Tiananmen Square and scholar Susan Shirk's *China: Fragile Super Power*, in which she convincingly links China's internal politics with its external ambitions.

In particular, this excellent study entitled *The PLA at Home and Abroad*, which fits into a flow of unclassified books, monographs, and papers on China's military posture from the Army's Strategic Studies Institute, does much to dispel any mystery that might surround the People's Liberation Army (PLA). "For a long time, American leaders have been surprised with the PLA's advances," the introduction concludes. "The emergence of a much more sophisticated PLA in the coming years should not be a surprise."

This work was edited by Roy Kamphausen of the National Bureau of Asian Research who qualifies as a "China hand"; David Lai, a scholar at the Strategic Studies Institute who was raised in China before becoming a naturalized US citizen; and Andrew Scobell, another scholar and a recognized "China hand" at the RAND Corporation. They were joined by eleven other specialists on China and evidently benefitted from wide-ranging discussions on China's military power at a conference in late 2009.

As China's economy surged in the early 1990s, then-President Jiang Zemin set three guidelines for the PLA: 1) to move beyond protecting the nation's borders to winning a local war against Taiwan, 2) to shift from a manpower-intensive force to one based on technology, and 3) to fight a "limited war under high-tech conditions, possibly involving hegemonic powers," with those powers to be read as the US and its allies.

Chinese apprehension about the strategic intent of the United States, wrote David Lai in the introduction, "is the driver for much of the PLA's modernization programs and doctrinal evolution encompassing all realms of

military operations from space to submarine warfare." In turn, he says, China's military modernization has "deepened US apprehension about China's intent." Moreover, "all of Asia is watching the dynamics of the Sino-American relationship." For Beijing to assert that the PLA does not pose a threat to other Asian nations is viewed askance in other Asian capitals.

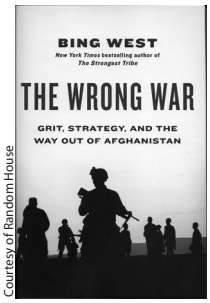
As might be expected, commanders of US forces in the Pacific, from Admiral Joseph Prueher in the late 1990s to Admiral Robert Willard in 2011, have repeatedly sought to assure the Chinese that the US plans no assault on China. At the same time, those commanders have sought, out of the public eye, to caution the Chinese not to miscalculate as did the Japanese when they mounted the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941. Less than four years later, Japanese delegates, their country in ruins, signed the surrender aboard the USS Missouri, now secured to a dock in Pearl Harbor.

Critical to understanding China's military power are relations between the CCP and the PLA, which are vastly different from civil-military relations in the United States. In the oft-cited declarations of the revolutionary leader, Mao Zedong, power grows out of the barrel of a gun and the party controls the gun. In reality, says this book, "China's transformation in military affairs is tearing apart the fabric of this relationship." Against the PLA's surging autonomy, they say, "the CCP is clearly fighting a losing battle."

American officers and diplomats who have dealt face-to-face with the Chinese have noted the change. Where Chinese diplomats have been civil, even if taking a hard line in differing with Americans, senior Chinese officers have been personally belligerent and harsh in blaming Americans for all the problems between the two nations. On the other hand, the authors find that "the increased frequency and sophistication of China's employment of military diplomacy as a tool of statecraft mirrors trends in the overall Chinese diplomacy as the PRC [Peoples Republic of China] becomes increasingly engaged in the international community."

This book has two strong points to further recommend it and two nearly fatal flaws. It evinces meticulous research and rests on a wealth of solid sources, many of them Chinese. The researchers have relied heavily on what the Chinese themselves say and that has given this work an aura of authority. And throughout the book and in the endnotes are parenthetical references in the original Chinese, an added plus for those who read Chinese.

The flaws: The introduction and eleven chapters are larded with military acronyms that obstruct the flow of the narrative and will almost certainly put off the nonmilitary reader who would benefit from this otherwise well-done book. And there is no index, a criminal omission in a 645-page work with diverse contributors whose findings often overlap. Readers who want to compare what David Lai says in the introduction with what Paul Godwin or Dennis Blasko or Susan Puska say in later chapters are doomed to tedious, time-consuming work. Publishers who permit such flaws should be punished with the Chinese torture of a thousand cuts.




Courtesy of Random House

New York: Random House, 2011

336 pages

$28.00

## *The Wrong War: Grit, Strategy, and the Way Out of Afghanistan*

by Bing West

**Reviewed by Robert Bateman**, a historian and prolific writer. He has taught at the US Military Academy and is currently assigned to the Office of Net Assessment, Office of the Secretary of Defense

If you are looking for an insightful analysis of operational, or strategic, or even grand strategic issues, let alone a "way out of Afghanistan," then this is the wrong book for you. Despite the title, the book exhibits no understanding, and contains little substantive text dealing with the issues, discussions, debates, orders, or campaign plans that occurred at any level above the battalion during the time that the author was visiting forces in country. A period which ended, it should be noted, in 2009. Instead, the book offers first-person accounts at the tactical level, and a broad but vague criticism of current counterinsurgency (COIN) thought which generally prioritizes protecting the population and helping them develop so that they can support the government, rather than seeking out and killing the enemy.

It was with regret that this reviewer found that *The Wrong War* was none of those things that one looks for in a book with such a grand title. And that, perhaps, is the core of the problem. The book has the wrong title. There is nothing simple at all about the selection of a title, particularly when dealing with a large publishing house. A freakishly disproportionate amount of time is devoted by editors into selecting a title, because profit does matter. I strongly suspect that is the case here. Particularly since, "Stories of My Time with Rifle Platoons and Companies in Western and Southern Afghanistan Several Years Ago," while honest, would create little interest. And that is the main problem.

In this book, as well as most of his others, the author witnesses and then writes about life in the infantry rifle platoon and company. At the same time he displays something akin to the "Hackworth Syndrome," a condition named after that (in)famous infantryman-turned-military-critic, David Hackworth, who considered the staff officers up at "battalion" to be weak, and anyone at brigade or above to be a "perfumed prince." West does not use those words, but his prose leaks with the same exact sentiments as did Hackworth's. In *The Wrong War,* the heroes are all enlisted men, lieutenants, and a few captains. The villains are, if anyone, not the Taliban, but the field grade officers at battalion, brigade, and presumably higher headquarters. One should state "presumably" because in passing through, Mr. West did receive briefings from higher level officers, but there is nothing here about any level of war above the tactical. Yet, because of marketing, and the lack of understanding of things military, he has been greeted by the civilian press as a savant on things strategic. For example, this personal profile from the *New York Times*.

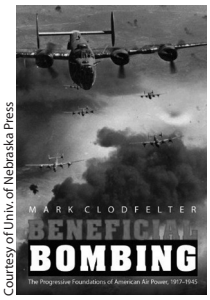
> No armchair general here: Bing West has climbed mountains in Afghanistan with American combat troops, watched rocket-propelled grenades streak over his head and come close to dying of cholera. At a lean and flinty 70, he can dodge bullets along with the 20-year-olds he accompanies on infantry foot patrols, although he admits he does it by leaving the body armor behind — an eye-popping risk — and wearing a Boston Red Sox cap instead of a helmet.
>
> Mr. West, whose book has received stellar reviews, would be easier to dismiss were it not for his pedigree: Assistant Secretary of Defense in the Reagan administration, Marine infantry officer in Vietnam and author of *The Village*, a war classic for 40 years on the Marine Corps' reading list, about 15 Americans — 7 died — who trained Vietnamese farmers to defend their hamlets against the Vietcong."

This endorser, sadly, did not notice the irony in what was being written—the fact that West's first book, *The Village*, was about living among the people and protecting the population so they might develop a normal lifestyle and support the central government, the very idea West is so critical of today. And, as so many not familiar with the military do, the endorser mistakes presence on a battlefield with generalship. If that were so, we would have literally hundreds of thousands of equally qualified generals in our ranks today. But the strangest thing is that Mr. West also contradicts himself, as he endorsed the United States' current strategy before he was against it. In the summer of 2009, just after he left his last embed which led to this book, Mr. West wrote the following (Inserts mine):

> Given the vast, harsh terrain and the immense open border, instead of 60,000 American soldiers we actually need 100,000 (US forces are now over 101,000 in Afghanistan, and total NATO forces over 135,000)—and many more helicopters . . . (there are, now) Gen. David Petraeus, the theater commander, knows how to defeat an insurgency. In the north, we don't have to occupy every remote valley. (We do not.) Tribal rebels who just plain like to fight can be isolated in the harsh mountains to enjoy their privations. (They are.) In the south, the Marines and the British are cleansing Helmand Province of the toxic mixture of drug smuggling and insurgent dominance. (Which is what they are doing now.) As he did in Iraq, Gen. Petraeus wants to recruit local forces to protect their own villages. That will expand the Afghan forces to 300,000 and stabilize the situation. (Afghan regular forces are now climbing to over 352,000, let alone the Local Police, which should bring total Afghan forces to over 400,000.)

One needs to ask, if we are now actually doing, or exceeding, all that Mr. West proscribed back in 2009, and have been for more than a year, what is he criticizing? Unless one considers the possibility that the criticism, like the title, is designed for a different purpose.

In short, while an enjoyable read, in the gun-fight-level sort of way, this is not a book about anything but the lowest level of tactical storytelling, circa 2007-2009. If that is what you are looking for, then by all means, buy this 2011 book.




Courtesy of Univ. of Nebraska Press

Lincoln, NE: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 2011

392 pages

$40.00

## *Beneficial Bombing: The Progressive Foundations of American Air Power, 1917-1945*

by Mark Clodfelter

**Reviewed by Tami Davis Biddle**, Hoyt S. Vandenberg Chair of Aerospace Studies, US Army War College

It is a strange title: "beneficial" and "bombing" are not words that seem likely to appear in close proximity to one another. How, a reader might ask, can the concussive, explosive, and incendiary effects of aerial bombing—including the splintering of infrastructure, the destruction of dwellings, and the loss of human life, sometimes on a vast scale—be considered "beneficial"? Author Mark Clodfelter contends that US advocates of aerial bombing, reacting to the great battlefront slaughter of World War I, offered an alternative form of war that would lead to quicker—and thus more humane—resolution to conflict.

Clodfelter argues that the carnage and waste of the Western Front "sparked the beginning of a progressive effort that was unique—an attempt to reform war by relying on its own destructive technology as the instrument of change." The airplane "offered the means to make wars much less lethal than conflicts waged by armies or navies." He contends that the American contribution to this general idea was the envisioning of a precision bombing campaign based on sophisticated technology: "The finite destruction would end wars quickly, without crippling manpower losses—maximum results with a minimum of death—and thus, bombing would actually serve as a beneficial instrument of war."

The author is by no means the first to describe and explain the origins of American faith in "precision" bombing, and the "industrial fabric theory of war"; these have been the subject of extensive work by such authors as Conrad Crane, Richard Davis, Michael Sherry, Donald Miller, and others. But Clodfelter adds a new twist, arguing that the views of American airmen were rooted in the progressive tradition that, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, had influenced American political and social behavior, and driven the reforms advocated by Theodore Roosevelt and others. The author does not, however, offer a robust description of what the progressive movement was, or precisely why or how it would have such a dominant impact on American airmen. Sometimes the author equates "progressive rhetoric" with the idea that bombing would shorten wars; sometimes he links it to the more specific notion of the precision bombing of key industrial targets.

Reviewing the book proved frustrating for this reviewer; while not convinced by the thesis, I nonetheless found the history itself to be informative, engaging, and well-articulated. The author writes well; in particular he has a marvelous ability to sketch characters on the page, bringing them to life with

just a few deft brushstrokes. And the book is based principally on primary source material, making it rich in detail and illuminating. Clodfelter adds texture and insight to our knowledge of an important topic. And, in his final chapter, the author includes an intelligent and perceptive critique of contemporary United Sates Air Force (USAF) doctrine. Aside from its rather sweeping and shaky theoretical claim, the book is certainly a worthy contribution to the literature.

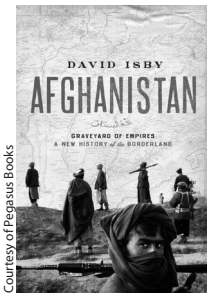
To really test the author's thesis, though, we need to look outside of the United States. Many non-Americans embraced the idea that long-range bombing would create a dramatic change in the nature of warfare and would hold the potential to deter or shorten wars. Guilio Douhet, an Italian modernist and technological determinist, was an early and vocal advocate of the idea that bombing would shorten wars. Air war, he claimed, would be so terrible that it would be, ultimately, more merciful. And Sir Arthur Harris, head of the Royal Air Force's (RAF) Bomber Command from 1942 to 1945, became the strongest and most persistent air advocate of his generation; he insisted to the end of his life that long-range bombing was the preferable alternative to bloody land warfare, and that, indeed, an Anglo-American ground campaign in World War II would have been unnecessary had he been given more latitude to fight the air war as he had seen fit. In May 1940, Winston Churchill's contention that Britain should continue the fight with Hitler rested heavily on the idea that British bombardment would be an invaluable source of leverage over the Third Reich. British bombers, he hoped, would target and destroy the heart of the German war-making machine. (Churchill also hoped that the RAF would develop a long-range escort, and that the bombers would be accurate and highly effective.) Interestingly, Clodfelter says very little about the British effort, early in World War II, to carry out just such an air offensive. Oriented against German transport and oil supplies, the British bombing campaign of 1939 to early 1942 had much in common with the industrial fabric theory, and what the author claims was the American progressive heritage.

In dealing with the realities of warfighting that ultimately drove American airmen to indiscriminate forms of bombing in both the European and Japanese theaters, Clodfelter acknowledges the degree to which the Americans strayed from their interwar aspirations. He argues, "The reality of war . . . generated a momentum of its own that undermined several of the progressive notions that had guided American airmen before the conflict. By 1945, 'progressive air power' meant quickly ending the war to reduce American casualties." But stretching the definition to this degree takes away its explanatory power. If you replace "American" with "British" in that sentence, then you have the driving motivation for British area bombing, implemented formally in 1942 by the RAF's Bomber Command under Sir Arthur Harris.

It seems to this reviewer that, rather than having their roots in the progressive tradition, the ideas of the early 20th century air advocates (of many nationalities) came from a shared reaction to the Western Front—a reaction which then took on slightly different characteristics depending on national proclivities and circumstances. As Clodfelter points out, the earliest articulation

of what would later be called the industrial fabric theory had been penned by the British in 1917. The quest for efficiency that Lord Tiverton sought in his early air plan (written as the British were gearing up to wage a long-range air campaign against the Germans), impressed the Americans. They would later embrace and further his ideas in the context of the Great Depression in the United States and the lessons it seemed to hold about the frangibility of modern industrial societies.

Clodfelter is correct to insist that American airmen based their actions and decisions on a specific body of ideas that were shaped and honed by contextual influences in the United States; the latter, this reviewer would argue, included, in particular, our geographical distance from our enemies and a strong tendency to orient on technological solutions. But many of the foundational ideas—largely reactions to the First World War—were not unique to Americans, and those that were did not necessarily derive from the progressive movement. American airmen were compelled by a driving conviction, held by all US military professionals (and indeed nearly all military professionals who serve in democracies), to win wars as quickly and efficiently as possible, and with the fewest casualties possible among one's own forces. The American airmen of the interwar period felt they had found the perfect means to this end in the combination of the high altitude daylight bomber and a sophisticated bombsight. And the modern day USAF still seeks a means to this same end, using the updated tools of a new millennium.

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440 pages

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## *Afghanistan—Graveyard of Empires: A New History of the Borderland*

by David Isby

**Reviewed by Colonel Robert M. Cassidy**, USA, Instructor, US Naval War College, and Senior Fellow, Center for Adavanced Defense Studies, served as a special assistant to the Operational Commander in Afghanistan

Although the market for books on Afghanistan has not witnessed any dearth in quantity or in variegation of quality in the last ten years, this history by David Isby offers excellent value to this growing corpus of works. The author spent considerable time in Pakistan and Afghanistan since the Soviet-Afghan War. Isby has also testified before Congress as an independent expert, and he has appeared on a host of news media, including CNN and C-Span. He has authored three books and hundreds of articles on Afghanistan and national security topics. This book offers a comprehensive, candid, and timely insight on the prospects and costs of success or failure in South Asia. The author understands what is at stake in Afghanistan and he is sanguine about the effort succeeding. He does not, however, relent in his clear and cogent candor regarding the impediments and risks that jeopardize the prospects for

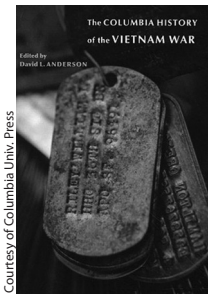
success in the region. This reviewer would be remiss if he did not pillory the staleness and inaptness of the title. The graveyard of empires metaphor indeed belongs in the graveyard of clichés. The Coalition in Afghanistan is not some imperial conquest, is not the Soviets, and is not the Victorian British. Nor do the Afghans perceive it as such.

Isby postulates that the war in Afghanistan is still winnable if the Afghans and their Coalition partners can implement a strategy to undermine the Taliban insurgency and prevent it from again taking over the Afghan state before time for the West runs out. In other words, before the international community loses patience and the will to see the war through to a successful conclusion. The book is comprised of three major parts that offer comprehensive analyses on the history of what the author describes as the "vortex" in South Asia; the source of conflict in Afghanistan and Pakistan; and the author's prescriptive recommendations for winning the wars against insurgents and terrorists operating in and from this vortex. The author frames his analysis in terms of five interrelated conflicts in South Asia: the conflict against al Qaeda's international terrorist movement; the war against the Afghan Taliban insurgency; the fight against narcotics production and trafficking; the internal multifaceted conflicts inside Afghanistan; and, finally, the insurgency inside Pakistan linked to the insurgency in Afghanistan. The transborder insurgencies threaten stability and security in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the region.

For the purposes of brevity, however, and given the grave risks and strategic impediments engendered by the insurgent and terrorist sanctuaries in Pakistan's border areas, the rest of this review focuses on the author's insight related to Pakistan. Pakistan's willingness and capacity to provide support and sanctuary to the Taliban is one of the gravest risks to Coalition success in Afghanistan, to stability in Pakistan, and to the security of the US homeland. The insurgents benefiting from sanctuary in Pakistan's tribal areas cooperate and collude with all manner of fanatical Islamist groups that have the intent and the capacity to kill those who do not subscribe to their distorted *takfir* view of the world. Many experts would tell you that Pakistan is a most lamentable excuse for an ally. They base these beliefs on its pretense of support to the United States while at the same time elements in its security organizations perfidiously promote proxy insurgents and terrorism against Afghan and Coalition civilians and soldiers in an effort to protract the war and exhaust their will. To be sure, the Pakistani army and its Inter Services Intelligence Directorate call the shots on all security-related issues. For 33 years of its 64-year existence, Pakistan has seen military dictators in charge, and for 38 years of its existence, Pakistan supported proxy insurgents fighting in Afghanistan. Sustaining both tyrants in Pakistan and guerrillas in Afghanistan are in that polity's DNA. What's more, if the Taliban were to revive the Islamist emirate in Afghanistan, there is every reason to predict a future that will see an increase in attacks against the West, planned and orchestrated from Afghanistan's and Pakistan's tribal region.

In the end, *A New History of the Border Lands* does a commendable job of detailing the complexities and impediments for a successful outcome of

the war in Afghanistan. The book sees success as possible, as an imperative in fact, since the consequences of an unsuccessful disengagement would serve to embolden al Qaeda, allow Taliban organizations to continue to undermine Afghanistan and Pakistan, increase the threat of attacks against the United States, and increase instability in the region. Quitting the fight would likely encourage the terrorist agenda toward more heinous acts of armed propaganda. The good news is the current strategy, resources, and leadership in Afghanistan is the soundest since the war began in 2001. The combined operations of Coalition and Afghan forces have reversed the Taliban's momentum and achieved operational momentum, driving the Taliban out of key areas and safe havens in places like Helmand and Kandahar. The bad news is the stark reality that the United States and the international community have not developed a viable approach that can compel Pakistan to change its strategic calculus. The latter drives Islamabad to continue its support for insurgent and terrorist proxies operating safely from sanctuaries inside Pakistan. It is exceedingly difficult to win in counterinsurgency when the insurgents benefit from relatively unimpeded sanctuary. The crux is that Pakistan poses as a partner in the war while at the same time it duplicitously provides succor and support to the likes of the Afghan Taliban and the Haqqani Network.

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$65.00

## *The Columbia History of the Vietnam War*

edited by David L. Anderson

**Reviewed by James H. Willbanks**, Director of the Department of Military History,US Army Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, KS

In the preface of this book, David L. Anderson states that his aim is "to provide a reliable historical perspective on the Vietnam War to advance accurate scholarship and sound policymaking," while demonstrating that the war has striking relevance to contemporary issues and challenges. In pursuit of this goal, the editor provides a collection of essays on the Vietnam War by fourteen of the most recognized and acclaimed scholars of the war; the essays focus on the political, historical, military, and social issues that defined this controversial conflict and its continuing impact on the United States and Vietnam.

Anderson, professor of history at California State University, Monterey Bay, and former president of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations is eminently qualified to preside over this retrospective; his ten earlier books include *Trapped by Success: The Eisenhower Administration and Vietnam, The Columbia Guide to the Vietnam War*, and *Facing My Lai: Moving Beyond the Massacre*.

Anderson opens the book with a short and concise overview of the Vietnam War that addresses the war's major moments and explores some of its major themes. He begins with a discussion of early Vietnamese history, French

colonialism, the First Indochina War, and a focus on the American war in Vietnam. The author presents the historical antecedents of American involvement in Southeast Asia and continues through the fall of Saigon in April 1975. Anderson closes the introductory essay with a discussion of "The War That Will Not Go Away," addressing a number of topics, such as American Vietnam veterans, the war in film and literature, and American foreign policy in the aftermath of the war. This brief introduction sets the stage for the essays that follow.

The book is divided into three sections. The first section takes a chronological approach to discussing the war. Mark Philip Bradley provides a reexamination of Vietnamese revolutionary nationalism and the Vietminh-led war against the French. Richard H. Immerman looks at nation-building efforts and relations with the Ngo Dinh Diem regime in South Vietnam during the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations. Gary R. Hess examines America's military commitment under Kennedy and Johnson, enumerating eight steps made during these administrations that deepened the American commitment. Lloyd C. Gardner discusses the motivations behind Johnson's escalation of force. Robert J. McMahon addresses the pivotal period before and after the Tet Offensive. In the last essay in this section, Jeffrey P. Kimball discusses Nixon's paradoxical decision to end US intervention while pursuing a destructive air war and sending forces into Cambodia and Laos (in that instance providing rotary and fixed-wing aviation to South Vietnamese forces).

The second section takes a more topical approach, beginning with two essays on America's military strategy. John Prados concludes that the worst impact of the US strategy in the Vietnam War was that it substituted statistical measures for visible goals. Eric Bergerud focuses on the war in the villages, maintaining that the Americans did not lose the war as much as Hanoi and the National Liberation Front won it.

Helen E. Anderson examines the war's impact on Vietnamese women followed by Robert K. Brigham's consideration of the war's impact on Vietnamese society as a whole. Melvin Small addresses American domestic politics and the tensions created by America's involvement in Vietnam, demonstrating how "Few wars in [US] history have been so affected by domestic politics . . . ." Kenton Clymer rounds out this section with a discussion of the impact of the Vietnam War on Laos and Cambodia.

The final section of the book provides two excellent post-war perspectives addressing the contemporary relevance of the Vietnam War experience. Robert D. Schulzinger analyzes the legacy of the war on both Vietnam and the United States, as well as relations between the two nations. In the final essay, George C. Herring diagnoses the symptoms of the "Vietnam syndrome" and demonstrates how, despite repeated efforts to dispose of it, the syndrome "remains a prominent part of the American political landscape," continuing to have a major impact on US foreign relations.

This is a timely book with contemporary relevance, published at a time when America's experience in Vietnam continues to figure prominently in discussions about strategy and defense with regard to Afghanistan and Iraq. The

essays are well written and the quality and authority of the authors make it an invaluable addition to the continuing discourse on the war. Addtionally, each essay is accompanied by a very useful list of suggested readings. For those reasons, this book is highly recommended for general readers who want to better understand the intense and significant debate over a complex and controversial war that ended over thirty years ago.