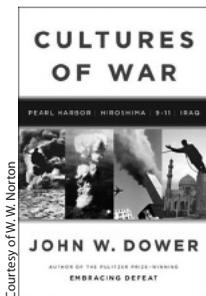


abroad.” The modern law of war possesses a fairly extensive historical trail, and an overwhelming argument can be made countering Goldhagen on this point. This, however, goes beyond the scope of this review, but the point should be taken that readers from varied occupations and specialties may find other interpretations of fact, theory, and history in this book open to challenge.

Goldhagen’s willingness to take provocative and debatable positions opens potentially crucial lines of inquiry avoided by many other writers. His section on “New Threats” is particularly worth reading primarily due to his views on trends in the Islamic world. He writes that “Political Islam is currently the one expressly, publicly, and unabashedly genocidal major political movement.”

Despite its problems, the book is worth the substantial investment of time required of readers who want an interdisciplinary perspective on genocide or those who may find themselves tasked with the responsibility of countering such horrors. Recent history points toward more of these threats and this book is a pioneering interdisciplinary effort to analyze and explain them.



New York: W. W. Norton, 2010

596 pages

\$29.95

Cultures of War: Pearl Harbor/ Hiroshima/9-11/Iraq

by John W. Dower

Reviewed by Jeffrey Record, Professor of Strategy, Air War College, and author of *A War It Was Always Going to Lose: Why Japan Attacked America in 1941*

John W. Dower, a Professor Emeritus at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, is America’s leading historian of modern US-Japanese relations and the prize-winning author of *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* and *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*. The 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks

on lower Manhattan and the Pentagon prompted him to begin writing a book comparing them to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor 60 years earlier. Dower believed both Pearl Harbor and 9/11 exposed a disastrous failure of American imagination—i.e., a failure to recognize, much less understand, the motivations and capabilities of Imperial Japan and al Qaeda, respectively. American analysts and decisionmakers were “simply unable to project the daring and ingenuity of the enemy.” Japan’s decision for war with the United States also had much in common with the American decision to invade Iraq: “Like Japan’s attack in 1941, America’s war of choice against Iraq was tactically brilliant but strategically idiotic In neither case did [planners] give due diligence to evaluating risk, anticipating worse-case scenarios, formulating a coherent and realistic endgame, or planning for protracted conflict.” Indeed, in both pre-Pearl Harbor Tokyo and post-9/11 Washington, “[i]deology, emotion, and wishful thinking overrode rationality at the highest level, and criticism was tarred with an onus of defeatism, moral weakness, even intimations of treason once the machinery of war was actually set in motion.”

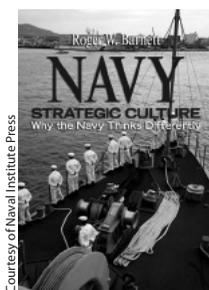
Further reflection led Dower to compare 9/11 and the US incendiary and atomic bombing of Japanese cities in 1945, which in turn, especially as Operation Iraqi Freedom degenerated into a fiasco, prompted a comparison of the American occupation of Japan and the George W. Bush administration's performance in post-Saddam Iraq. "[M]uch that was associated with September 11 had an almost generic familiarity that accounts for the immediate analogies to Pearl Harbor and World War II; surprise attack, a colossal failure of US intelligence, terror involving the targeting of noncombatants, the specter of weapons of mass destruction and 'mushroom clouds,' rhetoric of holy war on all sides."

Part I of *Cultures of War* examines the attacks and intelligence failures on the US side in 1941 and 2001, including the "institutional, intellectual, and psychological pathologies" involved. Part II uses the designation of the devastated World Trade Center site as "Ground Zero" as a departure point for "reconsidering the emergence of terror bombing as standard operating procedure" in the British and American strategic bombing campaigns of World War II. Mass slaughter from the air was hardly a novelty in 2001. (Think of what Osama bin Laden could have done to New York City with the armada of B-29s that Curtis LeMay used to burn Tokyo!) Part III assesses the ingredients of post-1945 American political success in Japan—early and comprehensive US planning for postwar Japan, the moral legitimacy of the American occupation, the presence of competent Japanese administrative machinery, and Japan's social cohesion and geographic isolation—and why that success could never have been repeated in Iraq. The historical analogies relevant to Iraq, Dower correctly points out, were the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan from 1981 to 1989 and the Israeli occupation of the West Bank beginning in 1967. "To lightly choose to invade and occupy yet another region in the Middle East in the face of such precedents, and without intense contingency planning, was hubris bordering on madness."

Cultures of War is a study of great power arrogance and ignorance, especially in dealing with enemies whose material inferiority masks an offsetting determination, imagination, and skill. Despising a small enemy (Japan in 1941, al Qaeda in 2001) can be dangerous. Dower writes well, argues provocatively (some might say polemically), and offers intriguing insight. His treatment of the contentious issues of the US strategic bombing of Japan and the origins of the US-Soviet nuclear arms race is second to none, as is his devastating critique of "faith-based thinking," which blocks critical appraisal of one's own assumptions and decisions while simultaneously giving short shrift to the circumstances, attitudes, and capabilities of others. When Admiral Husband Kimmel, who commanded the US Pacific Fleet in Hawaii in December 1941, was later asked why he left the fleet in Pearl Harbor even after receiving a warning from Washington that war with Japan was imminent, he replied: "I never thought those little yellow sons-of-bitches could pull off such an attack, so far from Japan." Nor is Dower afraid to assert parallels between Pearl Harbor and OIF, or for that matter between George W. Bush and Osama bin Laden: "After 9-11, [both men] came to personify holy war in the old-fashioned sense of a clash of

faiths, cultures, and civilizations. They quoted scripture, posited a Manichaeian world of good versus evil, and never ceased to evoke the Almighty and portray themselves as His righteous and wrathful agent. Both were deeply religious men who lived in realms of certitude fortified against doubt and criticism.”

If *Cultures of War* has a downside, it is Dower's attempt to keep too many themes and narratives in the air at the same time. *Cultures of War* can be read as several smaller books sheltered in a single volume. It is occasionally repetitious and somewhat disorderly. It is not on par with his magisterial *Embracing Defeat* or compelling *War Without Mercy*. That said, *Cultures of War* is an outstanding historian's convincing employment of Pearl Harbor, Hiroshima, and the American occupation of postwar Japan to improve our understanding of 9/11 and why things went so wrong for the United States in Iraq. It is reasoning by historical analogy at its best.



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256 pages

\$28.95

Navy Strategic Culture: Why the Navy Thinks Differently

by Roger W. Barnett

Reviewed by Albert F. Lord Jr., CAPT (USN Retired),
former US Navy Senior Service Representative to the US
Army War College

Roger Barnett is a master at describing the “peculiar psychology” of the Navy. Why naval officers look at the world in a unique way has mystified fellow military officers and civilians since at least the time of Henry Stimson's famous quote about the “dim religious world.” The author peels back the curtain and very effectively shows why the maritime environment shapes the world view and shows the tactical, operational, and strategic thought process of those who live and fight at sea.

The strength of this treatise lies in the first two-thirds of the book. He weaves naval history, an appreciation of the ocean environment, today's complex geopolitical situation, and military science throughout. Barnett builds his argument carefully, and his language will be familiar to recent graduates of US military war colleges.

The book starts with the recent ascension of Navy officers to the chairmanship of the joint chiefs of staff and the highest visibility combatant commands. He asserts the unique background of senior Navy officers and their appreciation for the day-to-day nature of military influence in the worldwide security arena allows them to think strategically. Culture specific to the US Navy is examined in depth and placed within that of the larger military. Not surprisingly, the demanding ocean domain is the greatest influence that gives the Navy its singular outlook. The ship is the embodiment of Navy culture and it builds teamwork, self-reliance, and an independence that culminates in the governing concept of command-at-sea. The faith and confidence placed in ship captains, those closest to the action, fosters a disdain for doctrine and limits to