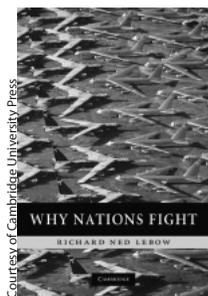


logistics is valuable. However, the discussions are largely about the construction of such weapons and their characteristics. There is limited analysis of the significance of these “cold weapons” on the nature of warfare and the conduct of war (although there is discussion of the limitation of the chariots in the text). Students of war are interested in these issues because they seek to know what impact these weaponries had on later Chinese ways of thinking and conducting war. Humans do not have fangs and claws, but they have an intelligent brain and useful hands to make weapons. In so doing, humans also changed the “face of war.” For instance, with the invention of daggers, axes, and knives, warfare had become more lethal. Slings and bows allowed combatants to inflict damage to their opponents in a distance. Chariots and horses presumably made warfare mobile. Logistics supply became an important part of military conflict for defensive as well as offensive purposes. Sun Tzu’s *Art of War* has discussed the advantages and difficulties associated with military logistics. Attacking the opponent’s supply has been a classic tactic in warfare. All of these are important topics of ancient Chinese warfare.

A final note on the book is about the provision of Chinese characters. With today’s state-of-the-art word-processing capability, the author, or the publisher, should provide the Chinese characters for the special Chinese terms, names, places, and concepts in the text. When the Chinese characters are provided, it does not matter whether the author uses *pinyin* or the Wade-Giles spelling. There is no confusion in Chinese. It is correspondingly easier for the readers to understand and to find them in the original Chinese classics. Unfortunately, there are no Chinese characters in the current text.



Courtesy of Cambridge University Press
Cambridge:
Cambridge
University Press,
2010

249 pages

\$29.99

Why Nations Fight: Past and Future Motives For War

by Richard Ned Lebow

Reviewed by Dr. Stephen J. Blank, the Strategic Studies Institute’s expert on the Soviet bloc and the post-Soviet world

The question Lebow poses in his title is perhaps the oldest and most vexing question in the history of both international relations and its study. Perhaps this is why there have been so many continuing answers from philosophy, biology, anthropology, economics, history, and other disciplines that still strive to resolve this question. And because there are so many vintners tilling this vineyard it probably takes an intrepid man and scholar to enter into this issue and say something original. But Lebow proves that he is well equipped to do this.

Anyone writing such a book does so because he or she is obviously dissatisfied with the answers and thinking that now attaches itself to this question. Indeed, for example, a fair amount of social science literature, or perhaps more precisely literature aspiring to call itself scientific, has announced that war is

a form of bargaining. While there may be something to this kind of bloodless analysis, a subject so lethal and terrifying as the reasons for war cries out for something which accounts for the role of the passions and for thinking that goes awry in our lives. Lebow clearly is dissatisfied with answers that exclude critical elements of the human psyche (whether individually or collectively in the form of nations) in accounting for the origins of war. And as often has been the case in intellectual history fruitful innovations in thought arise from a return to the classical wellsprings of wisdom that we find in the classics.

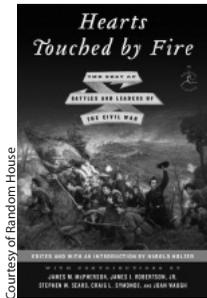
That is what Lebow has done. He analyzes war initiation in terms of the motives and relative power of states. He finds that earlier and often well accepted or conventional explanations for war are unsatisfying. Analyses in terms of security, material, or economic interest prove to be of declining relevance in accounting for the motives for war initiation. He also believes the nexus between war and standing, or perhaps prestige, is also declining and as the Anglo-American war in Iraq suggests it is no longer necessary to initiate wars to gain what the author calls standing in world politics. Likewise, wars of revenge, initiated to recover lost territory, are also declining in frequency. He analyzes the motives for the initiation of war in terms of classically derived attributes, i.e., from Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy of what they called appetite, spirit, fear, and reason.

This does not mean that material capabilities or ideas are simply discounted as motives for war. Indeed, Lebow finds that they are both omnipresent and interdependent. But he also finds that war as a popular instrument for the achievement of wealth, standing, or rational political purposes is declining. And certainly the romantic aura of war that lasted into the twentieth century is no longer present, especially in the West. Thus, wars have come to be seen as excessively costly and destructive, and as being fundamentally antithetical to any concept of rational statecraft.

Using these aforementioned classical concepts as the basis for analysis allows Lebow to account for not only the destructiveness of past wars but also the presence of wars today, which he sees as being the outcome of what he calls a perfect storm. This storm is the interaction of these classical factors with the possibly unique elements of American wealth, political culture (i.e., material and cultural factors), the continuation of the subculture of the southern concept of honor, along with a powerful defense industrial complex. The concluding observations may possibly vitiate the power of the earlier analyses, but the title promises an account of why nations have fought and will fight in the future and as Plato wrote "only the dead have seen the end of war." And it is true that the United States since 1990 has been engaged in many protracted wars, a factor that must be accounted for in any analysis of the phenomenon of war.

In sum, this book is well worth reading and thinking about. Many will find the author's arguments uncomfortable. But that is to Lebow's credit. War and its initiation is not a subject about which we should become comfortable. Even when necessary, it is a scourge and if we understand how and why wars have happened, occur now, and may still occur in the future we might actually

progress towards achieving the intellectual comfort that is commonly accepted as being part of peace.



Courtesy of Random House

New York: Random House, 2011

1,264 pages

\$38.00

Hearts Touched by Fire: The Best of Battles and Leaders of the Civil War

Edited by Harold Holzer

Reviewed by COL (Ret.) Cole C. Kingseed, former professor of history at the US Military Academy, writer and consultant

Originally conceived in 1883 by the editors of *The Century* magazine, *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* appeared four years later and contained first-hand accounts from senior officers from both sides, documenting the significant battles and events of this nation's bloodiest conflict. Now, to coincide with the sesquicentennial of the war, editor Harold Holzer has compiled a new collection of the best writing from the original four-volume series with the stated purpose of creating an accurate account of the conflict. Assisting Holzer are some of the most renowned contemporary historians, including Pulitzer Prize winner James McPherson, James Robertson, Stephen Sears, Craig Symonds and Joan Waugh, each of whom provides a contextual introduction of a specific year of the Civil War.

Holzer brings impressive credentials to *Hearts Touched by Fire*. He is one of the country's leading authorities on the political culture of the Civil War era. Holzer is also a frequent guest on television programs such as *The Today Show*, *Charlie Rose*, Fox News, and the *NewsHour* with Jim Lehrer. In addition, he has authored, coauthored, and edited thirty-six books, including *The Confederate Image* (1987), *The Union Image* (1990), *Eyewitness to War: The Civil War* (1996), and *In Lincoln's Hand* (2009). Most recently, Holzer was awarded the National Humanities Medal and he currently serves as the senior vice president for external affairs at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The original articles that appeared in *Battles and Leaders* were written by Union and Confederate generals who had commanded the engagements two decades earlier—"or, if he were not living," by "the person most entitled to speak for him or in his place." Consequently, a number of senior commanders immediately signed on to contribute to the project. Ulysses S. Grant, initially dismissive of the project, changed his mind when his personal economic fortunes precipitously declined. At Grant's urging, so did Generals William T. Sherman and Admiral David Dixon Porter, quickly followed by Confederate Generals Joseph E. Johnston and James Longstreet and a host of subordinate commanders. What Holzer hopes to accomplish in *Hearts Touched by Fire* is "a new cycle of public attention, with the best of *Battles and Leaders* again at its very core."

What makes this particular volume particularly informative are the introductions provided by current historians that place the contemporary essays into perspective. Craig Symonds examines the initial ten months of the