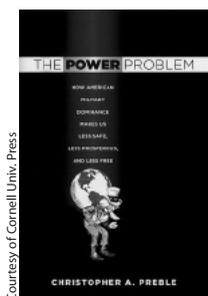


revelations are in the section about Geneva, where Smith's deft maneuvering, which included some unique personal diplomacy with the Chinese, was essential in obtaining a qualified American success from the agreement on Indochina that Crosswell calls "the last hurrah of the Ike-Beetle team."

The rest of the book parallels the earlier volume in its focus on the establishment and workings of that leadership team that had such an important impact on the course of World War II. The general narrative of the material will be familiar to those who have read the earlier biography, but most of the coverage has been significantly enriched with more detail and added research. Crosswell has mined archives in the United States, Europe, and Asia. Besides revealing as much about Eisenhower as Smith, the book is also very good showing how the "tyranny of logistics" shaped their decisions in a command system involving contentious allies and prickly personalities. Smith's career was additionally influenced by a relationship with George Marshall, whom he idolized. While Smith felt in later life that he had been exploited as "Ike's prat boy," in death his wife made sure that he was buried in a ceremony just like Marshall's, and in an Arlington grave site in close proximity to Marshall's.

Sometimes it is possible to have too much of a good thing. For a general reader seeking to learn about "Beetle" Smith and his underappreciated and often overlooked role in history, the shorter original biography is the best beginning source. For those serious researchers and scholars looking for more detailed behind-the-scenes information about the personalities and decision-making that produced "Victory in Europe," they will profit greatly from this thoroughly-researched, well-written, and reasonably priced new opus.



Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 2009

232 pages

\$25.00

The Power Problem: How American Military Dominance Makes Us Less Safe, Less Prosperous, and Less Free

by Christopher Preble

Reviewed by MAJ William C. Taylor,
Instructor of American Politics, Public Policy and Strategic Studies, US Military Academy

Moments of national distress give us pause to reconsider our founding principles as a nation as well as to reconsider the viability of our current grand strategy. As Christopher Preble rightly illustrates in *The Power Problem*, much has changed in the 200 years since our country's founding. The nation's political culture has evolved from one which distrusted standing armies, feared a strong executive, and avoided foreign entanglements to one which demands an active defense, chastens weak executives, and pursues numerous alliances. Today, amidst 10 years of war, the United States should reconsider the merits of military activity abroad. Are US foreign

policies commensurate with its national resources? When is the use of US force counterproductive and indeed deleterious to its national security?

With panache, Preble offers a timely monograph in which he chastises the use of the military as a panacea for US foreign policy. American policy makers have confused power—the capacity to affect change and the ability to influence others—with force—a tool that a state employs as an extension of its power. Power undergirds force, but an overreliance on force can erode the power foundation. Paradoxically, the expanding use of military force in the world has actually served to erode US power both domestically and internationally. As such, Preble contends that policy makers should rely more on America's vibrant culture and economic prowess and reserve the use of military force for clear issues of national defense. Specifically, the US should deploy military force only when: (1) there are vital American security interests at stake; (2) there is a clear and attainable military mission; (3) there is broad public support; and, (4) there is an exit strategy based on a clear understanding of what constitutes victory.

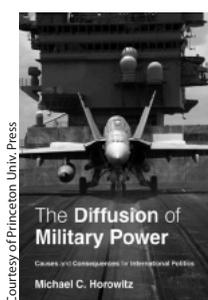
Preble provocatively questions the rationality of US grand strategy. If states pursue policies which further their economic wealth and national security (as many scholars of international relations assert), then on a mere cost-benefit analysis, the United States is acting quite irrationally. Preble meticulously provides a ledger of the visible costs of maintaining a military (procurement, personnel expenses, waging war, deaths, and medical care) as well as the hidden opportunity costs (military costs preclude rebuilding our infrastructure, military interventions inadvertently threaten others, and the use of our military in one location inhibits its use elsewhere). Indeed, Preble's stark listing of the military's price tag (currently \$2,065 per US citizen per year) as well as the opportunity costs (the cost of building one B-2 bomber equals constructing 171 elementary schools) accentuates his point—the costs of our current defense are too high, and these costs eclipse the supposed benefits.

One might forgive the costs the US invests in its military if it returned a profitable dividend of national security. Yet Preble argues that our investments have languished due to false assumptions, allies who ride free, and the unintended consequences of military intervention. Unlike previous authors, Preble argues that the United States is not the major beneficiary of the global economy. Other states, especially US allies that ride free off American security guarantees, are the primary benefactors of US military expenditures. Preble also discounts the false notion that the world will slip into chaos if America no longer fulfills its role as the global policeman. States will peacefully fill the power vacuum left by the US military to protect their economic interests. Finally, military interventionism engenders negative externalities, or “public bads,” which prove counterproductive to US security. A doctrine of preventive war decreased US security vis-à-vis Iran and North Korea, and the presence of American soldiers in Saudi Arabia elicited the ire of Muslim extremists. In short, the idea that a heavy US military presence in the world equals increased security for America is naïve, profoundly flawed, and will serve as a catalyst of

hegemonic decline. The United States should slowly withdraw its international commitments and allow other states to fulfill their fair share of the international provision of public goods. This will not lead to internecine state conflict; rather, it will further US power abroad.

While Preble rightly questions the merits of utilizing US military force abroad, readers must also carefully plumb Preble's myriad assumptions. Will other states peacefully and cooperatively rebuild their militaries to fill the US power vacuum? Will US allies forgo nuclear proliferation as Belarus and Ukraine did or accelerate their development like Iran and North Korea? Will states continue to promote economic openness due to complex interdependence, or will states succumb to regional security dilemmas? Does the world truly admire US culture and economic practices as much as Preble suggests? Preble's critique of American military adventurism is sound, but US policy makers should carefully consider the unintended consequences of reduced American military activity abroad.

The author's *The Power Problem* is an important work which all foreign policy practitioners should carefully examine. As we are witnessing in Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, and North Korea, the use of military force has its limitations. A tragedy of hegemonic foreign policy is that in the pursuit of national security, hegemons often pursue a grand strategy which catalyzes their decline. As previous scholars have clearly demonstrated, military interventions do not always increase state security. The use of force, while reliant on power, may often erode a state's power in the long run. The strength of any state resides in a robust, resilient, and regenerative economy. Foreign policy decisionmakers should be mindful of bureaucratic groupthink and wary of military solutions as a panacea for international problems. As Preble rightly argues, in many cases the construction of 171 elementary schools instead of one B-2 bomber would go much further in advancing our national security.



Princeton, NJ:
Princeton Univ.
Press, 2010

273 pages

\$26.95

The Diffusion of Military Power: Causes and Consequences for International Politics

by Michael C. Horowitz

Reviewed by Stephen J. Blank, Research Professor of National Security Affairs, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College

It is a truism of military studies that technological innovations do not stay confined to the state which first makes or presents them. But it also is equally true that states do not follow each other in mechanical lockstep. Some innovations are improved upon, others are ignored, and often attempts to emulate an innovation fail to realize the original intent. Horowitz's book represents an effort to impart a theoretical basis to the question of how and why nations emulate leaders