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Editor's Note

It is with a strong appreciation for American and international academic institutions and their scholars that PRISM’s Center for Complex Operations publishes this collection of Book Reviews. This compilation of previously published reviews is intended to serve as a resource and baseline for scholars and educators in the field of complex operations, and covers a wide range of issues including reconstruction, stabilization, insurgency and counterinsurgency, state-building, whole of government approaches, and irregular warfare operations. Whether referencing citations, developing class syllabi, or merely keeping up with the literature at the forefront of security studies and foreign affairs, I am confident this PRISM Reviews issue will provide you valuable insight. The growing literature based particularly on the past several decades of experience has promoted noteworthy debate in the policy, practitioner, and scholarly communities, and the PRISM staff encourages scholars to reexamine authors’ personal chronicles, theoretical inferences, and contemporary world experiences. As always we are grateful for your interest in and support of PRISM, and welcome your feedback.

Michael Miklaucic
Editor
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On the western edge of Peshawar, Pakistan, a sign at a military check-point prohibits the movement of foreigners into the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) where the Pakistani government essentially claims no control. On the edge of the FATA, women who once showed their faces now walk fully covered, and images of women on billboards are obliterated with paint—two eerie reminders of Taliban reemergence.

The sanctuary afforded to the Taliban and al Qaeda in the FATA is something that RAND analyst and Georgetown University adjunct professor Seth Jones argues the United States must eliminate to have any chance of winning the war in Afghanistan. He contends that history—and not just the commonly misunderstood Soviet experience—provides some valuable lessons on Afghanistan. Past empires from Macedonia, to Great Britain, to the Soviet Union have entered Afghanistan, only to find themselves caught up in local resistance. To understand the motivation of key actors and assess what factors contributed to the current insurgency, Jones analyzed recently declassified material from the Soviet Politburo and the Central Intelligence Agency and interviewed numerous prominent Afghan, Pakistani, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, nongovernmental organization, and U.S. officials.

Jones offers insight into the rise of the Taliban and al Qaeda’s ideological origins through an examination of the impressions Islamic fundamentalists Sayyid Qutb and Abdullah Azzam had on al Qaeda leaders as they struggled over issues such as Takfir and the targeting of the near versus far enemy. Ayman al-Zawahiri and Osama bin Laden generated a shift in radical Islamic thought acknowledging the far enemy (that is, the United States) was the true target, rather than apostate regimes such as Egypt that were viewed as that enemy’s puppets. This point resonated among the population as al Qaeda sought sanctuary among remote Afghan tribes and civilian casualties mounted in the face of U.S. pursuit of al Qaeda and the Taliban. Slowly, villagers accepted radical thought labeling the United States as the enemy while taking up arms themselves to become what David Kilcullen calls “accidental guerrillas.” Jones’ analysis of Afghan history and radical Islamic thought progression significantly contributes to the understanding of the complexities involved in Afghanistan. Had policymakers better understood the dynamics of the Afghan situation, recognition of the budding insurgency may have focused efforts toward counterinsurgency sooner rather than just terrorist capture/kill missions.

At the war’s onset, U.S. officials kept the lessons of the Soviet experience in mind. The
Soviets deployed a large force, which U.S. officials believed created a quagmire that resulted in large-scale popular resistance. However, Jones contends that the U.S. decision to deploy a “light footprint” was misreading the Soviet experience. The lesson was not in the number of forces deployed; it was in how the forces were deployed. Much like the Cold War-era U.S. military, the Soviet military of the 1970s and 1980s was trained to fight a conventional battle with a modern enemy along the Fulda Gap. The Soviets used conventional tactics to fight an unconventional enemy. Alexander the Great encountered the same problem in his Afghanistan campaign. His army of mounted cavalry and foot soldiers armed with 20-foot pikes and javelins was barbarously fought by the tribesmen and horse warriors of the region’s steppes and mountains. The results of the Macedonian and Soviet invasions are analogous. The adoption of the light footprint strategy by U.S. officials actually served as an incubator for the looming insurgency.

In summer 2006, the United States learned through over 100 interrogations that Taliban support had little to do with religious ideology; rather, it had to do with poor governance and economics. The Afghan government was unable to extend control beyond Kabul and actually fostered the formation of peripheral power players. Afghanistan’s weak governance was a major component of what Lieutenant General Karl Eikenberry phrased “the perfect storm”: the Taliban and al Qaeda had sanctuary in Pakistan, local governance was not taking hold, narcotrafficking and associated criminality were emerging as significant security threats, and the planning and implementation of critical infrastructure projects were lagging. In addition, Afghanistan efforts were severely underfunded. Ambassador Ronald Neumann asked for a much-needed $600 million for fiscal year 2006 and received only $43 million. A U.S. Civil Affairs officer told Jones, “We’re like the Pacific theater in World War II; we will get more resources when we defeat Berlin,” alluding to the U.S. focus in Iraq.

Jones concludes there is hope that Afghanistan will eventually stabilize and prosper, but America must completely rethink its involvement in the region. The rise of the insurgency after victory over the Taliban was unfortunate but not inevitable. To avoid the disastrous fate of previous world powers that entered the region, America must take three critical steps: confront corruption, partner with local (not just national) entities, and undermine sanctuary in Pakistan.

First, Jones stresses that corruption needs to be addressed at the local and national levels, with emphasis on drug trafficking, bribery, and the pervasive extortion of police and judges. Anticorruption efforts should follow the pattern of successful cases in Singapore, Liberia, and Botswana, beginning with the immediate firing of corrupt officials, the bolstering of the justice system, new staff professionalization, and the implementation of incentive/ performance assessment programs. Jones addresses the second step through the balancing of top-down and bottom-up efforts, both critical for security and the provision of public services. The historical weakness of the Afghan state, the local nature of politics, and a population deeply intolerant of external forces require a strong local government to support national level efforts. Accordingly, bottom-up strategies require supporting and empowering legitimate tribal leaders and providing them with security and aid, since they are bound to be targets of insurgents. The predominantly top-down approach employed thus far is inappropriate for a weak central government in a tribal society.
Finally, enforcement of the denial of Pakistani must be through measures designed to close the structural gap that exists in many of Pakistan’s border regions—specifically the FATA, where weak government institutions are coupled with incredibly poor social and economic conditions. It is imperative that the United States persuade Pakistani officials to conduct a sustained campaign against militants who threaten the local and international community. The United States can identify pressure points that raise the cost of stalling for the Pakistani government—such as the $1 billion annual military and economic aid package provided to Pakistan. In addition, Jones argues that the United States needs to make a concerted effort in engaging both Pakistan and India, which have competing interests in Afghanistan.

The goal of Jones’ proposed strategy in Afghanistan is to improve the competence and legitimacy of national and local Afghan institutions to provide security and services to the local population. Comparable books, such as Ahmed Rashid’s Descent into Chaos (Viking, 2008), provide similar perspective but stop short of clearly identifying the way ahead. Jones’ policy recommendations and implications are applicable to the policymaker as well as the soldier. Given the complexities and dynamics of Afghanistan, decisionmakers would be hard pressed to find a more comprehensive study. PRISM
"It has taken a desperately long time for the idea to take hold that mass atrocities are the world’s business: that they cannot be universally ignored and that sovereignty is not a license to kill" (p. 11). Gareth Evans opens his book with this condemnation of the international community’s decades of practical indifference to gross and systematic human rights abuses in its wide range of manifestations. Evans, a former Australian state minister, had more than 20 years in government service behind him and was just starting nearly a decade of public interest service as president and chief executive officer of the International Crisis Group, a Brussels-based nongovernmental organization, when he was appointed to co-chair the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS). The commission produced a report that outlines the responsibility to protect (R2P) concept.

Despite the universal vow of “never again” at the conclusion of World War II, the United Nations (UN) and member states have floundered or even looked the other way when faced with the mass atrocities committed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, Somalia, Kosovo, and elsewhere, citing traditional notions of state sovereignty and agreements drawing upon the UN Charter as a prohibition for interference. Evans does not accuse the international community of seeking to avoid action but rather describes it as being faced with a dilemma that previously seemed irreconcilable.

This dilemma is reflected in the text of the UN Charter. Article 2.1 states the guiding principle of the equal sovereignty of all members. Article 2.7 expands on this concept and maintains that “nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state.” While sovereignty often is cited as a bar to intervention of any form, article 2.7 does not frame this right as absolute and qualifies sovereignty rights. Chapter 7, article 39 allows for intervention in the cases of a “threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression.” Yet even under the provisions of chapter 7 of the charter, the dilemma remained: when do otherwise domestic issues of rights abuses occurring within borders, or state indifference to the plight of its people, rise to the level of international concern, justifying and even requiring intervention?

Clearly, the path of creative legal interpretations of the international community’s right to breach state sovereignty was not a productive way to get at the problem of internal
threats to a nation’s population and an external right to intervene. Evans describes how the debate shifted in the 1990s from state security to human security. While human security as a basis for outside intervention was not widely embraced, this shift in perspective nevertheless opened the door for a debate centered on individuals and the state’s role in providing for and protecting their rights. Evans relates how Francis Deng, a former Sudanese diplomat and Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons from 1992 to 2004, articulated the concept of sovereignty as a duty in 1996: “I am wholly respectful of your country’s sovereignty, but the essence of being a sovereign country these days is not just protection from outside interference—rather, it’s a matter of states having positive responsibilities of their own citizens’ welfare, and to assist each other” (p. 36).

At the UN Millennium Summit in 2000, this debate crystallized with Secretary-General Kofi Annan calling for a reconciliation of state sovereignty principles and the reality of gross and systematic violations of human rights. The ICISS was formed by Canadian foreign minister Lloyd Axworthy on September 14, 2000, as an independent international body with a mandate to “promote a comprehensive debate on the relationship between intervention and sovereignty, with a view to fostering global political consensus on how to move from polemics towards action within the international system.” Axworthy appointed Gareth Evans as co-chair of the commission.

The concept of R2P marks a shift in the traditional formulation of sovereignty and states rights, as it seizes upon the human rights paradigm. The concept of human rights begins from the position that rights intrinsically include associated duties and that states have certain duties to their citizens, including recognizing the “inherent dignity and equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family.” Drawing upon this well-established principle of the international human rights—duties continuum, R2P finds that states’ sovereignty rights have corresponding duties and responsibilities. Furthermore, in the event of mass and gross breaches of such duties, the international community has a responsibility to intervene to protect against mass human rights abuses. Thus, R2P refers to the duties of a state—and to the duties of the international community when the state cannot or will not fulfill these duties—to prevent mass atrocity, to react when such atrocities occur, and to rebuild after atrocities and/or interventions (p. 43).

R2P encompasses these three dimensions: prevention, reconstruction/rebuilding, and, in the most extreme cases, military action. While many emphasize R2P’s interventionist element, Evans is firm in his description of its multifaceted quality and the implications for the international community. Herein is the link of R2P to new concepts of national security and complex operations prevalent in the United States and elsewhere in the international community, which, arguably, are consistent with R2P, although not explicitly so.

As the 2002 U.S. National Security Strategy concluded, “America is now threatened less by conquering states than we are by failing ones.” National Security Presidential Directive 44 of 2005 expands on this position through the policy determination that the United States “has a significant stake” in assisting countries “at risk from conflict or civil strife . . . to anticipate state failure, avoid it whenever possible, and respond quickly and effectively when necessary and appropriate to promote peace, security, development, democratic practices, market economies,
and the rule of law.” Likewise, Department of Defense (DOD) Directive 3000.05, first issued in 2004 under the Bush administration and revised and reissued in 2009 by the Obama administration, identifies stability operations as a core mission, on a par with combat operations, and directs DOD to have the “capability and capacity to . . . establish civil security and civil control, restore or provide essential service, repair critical infrastructure, and provide humanitarian assistance.” Similarly, Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Australia, and other members of the international community have come to view stability and reconstruction operations for failed and failing states as security imperatives and national duties.

Evans admonishes those who invoke R2P inappropriately and points out the negative results to which this leads: too narrowly, as an exclusively interventionist doctrine justifying military force, or too broadly, in contexts in matters of human security such as the ravages of HIV/AIDS, weapons proliferation, and the destabilizing effects of climate change (p. 64). According to Evans, the overly narrow interpretation not only ignores the preventative facets of the responsibility, but also confuses the necessary with the sufficient: “It is necessary for a case to be really extreme for coercive military force to be an option, but the fact that it is extreme is not itself sufficient that force should be applied” (p. 59). Evans warns that using R2P too broadly risks diluting its capacity to mobilize international consensus in the cases where it is really needed (p. 69).

Prevention, in fact, is described by Evans as the most important dimension of the responsibility to protect: prevention of conflict, of human rights abuses, and of suffering resulting from state actions or failure to act where action is needed. Prevention encompasses a full range of actions—political, diplomatic, legal, and economic—and rests primarily with the sovereign state itself. Only when the state fails or refuses to prevent widespread human rights breaches is the international community’s responsibility triggered, and even then, “a very big part of its preventative response should be to help countries to help themselves.” This element of prevention in R2P is consistent with and builds upon UN Charter chapters 6 and 8, to help protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. Evans outlines that the UN World Summit’s acceptance of the ICISS report takes this concept a step further, extrapolating a responsibility of “helping states to build capacity to protect their populations . . . and to assisting those which are under stress before crises and conflicts break out” (p. 80).

What sets Evans’ treatment of R2P apart are not only his insider perspective on the development of the concept, his comprehensive research, and his refined writing style, but also his extension of analysis to the operational level. This renders his treatment particularly useful for practitioner and policymaker alike. Evans examines what it means, in practical terms, to seek to prevent conflict, to stabilize, reconcile the harms committed, and rebuild; who should participate in such activities; the importance of developing a standing capacity to respond; what tools are available short of military intervention; and what criteria determine when it is legal and legitimate to intervene.

As Evans reminds the reader throughout, and as the ICISS report maintains, the responsibility to prevent conflict is the single most important dimension of the responsibility to protect.

Evans outlines the four sector-based dimensions for stabilization and reconstruction, which are the foundations of conflict prevention and
post-conflict stabilization in R2P: security, good governance, justice and reconciliation, and economic and social development. He argues that best practices indicate that these objectives must be pursued “more or less simultaneously and in an integrated manner” (p. 149). Sustainable security cannot be achieved in the absence of justice, reconciliation, and economic development unless the wrongs of the past are addressed, systems for justice and rule of law are instituted, and a sound economic base is established. Likewise, justice, rule of law, and security will be tenuous in the absence of economic development, if much of the population lives in dire poverty and without hope.

An essential cross-sector dimension of the stabilization process is disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR), which cuts across security, justice and reconciliation, and economic development elements. DDR means that former combatants relinquish their weapons, stand down from belligerent activities, ideally engage in a reconciliation processing addressing the harms that were committed, and reintegrate into the economic and social base of society. Evans notes the complexity of DDR and the importance of identifying and engaging all stakeholders, including women (p. 156) who may not have carried arms, but could have been forced into dependency roles or subjected to gender-based crimes such as rape as a weapon of war.

As to who should participate in peace-building, Evans argues that, short of military intervention, the responsibilities of conflict prevention, stabilization, and reconciliation rest squarely with civilians rather than military actors—with the local government being the first line of defense. In the absence of capacity or will, R2P means that the responsibilities fall to the international community to fulfill. He describes the advances in civilian preparedness in prevention, stabilization, and reconstruction in the European Union (civilian rapid reaction capabilities) and United States (Civilian Response Corps). The UN has a number of standby arrangements, mostly to address surges in its peacekeeping force needs. Additionally, the UN has been developing a capacity to respond to conflict prevention and stabilization needs with “quick impact projects,” and, after the writing of this book, the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations announced a shift in strategy to “develop a small standing capacity of civilian police, other rule of law elements, and human rights experts for complex peace operations in post-conflict environments.”

Evans also emphasizes the critical importance of what is often referred to as “local buy-in” to the peace, stabilization, and reconciliation processes, to “win . . . a deeper understanding among the major parties . . . that they have shared interests, a common vision, and must learn to live and work in collaboration with each other” (p. 150). Evans notes that history has demonstrated that imposing a peace settlement and reconciliation programs on the population, for example, inevitably will end in failure, and that local engagement and local buy-in must be part of the mindset of the international community from the outset and throughout the whole process (pp. 150–151).

Where prevention and stabilization efforts fail, a range of tools are available to the international community, short of military humanitarian intervention. Evans echoes the recommendations of the ICISS Report and the 2005 UN World Summit document: that R2P encompasses a responsibility to react, and that the reactions by the international community should proceed “from the less to more intrusive and from less to more coercive” (p. 105). Evans
discusses the place and time for diplomacy, political sanctions and incentives, economic sanctions, and other nonmilitary means of influence. He also examines the transitional justice strategies that seek to prevent the return to conflict. Evans is realistic in his analysis of the effectiveness of each option and offers practical examples of what has worked—or failed to work—and what seemed to be the driving forces of success or failure.

As a last resort, when all other efforts have failed, R2P allows for military intervention. As Evans observes, “Hard as it may be for many to instinctively accept, if there is one thing as bad as using military force when we should not, it is not using military force when we should” (p. 128). Evans conducts a legal analysis of the factors that justify the use of military force under R2P, examining the UN Charter and arguments of customary international law obligations. He scrutinizes criticisms levied against the UN Security Council as being outdated or crippled by inaction through the veto power.

Evans discusses the several criteria of legitimacy defined in the ICISS report. Legitimacy is a matter of process and perception—that decisions have been made on solid evidentiary grounds and are perceived to be just and right—whereas legality refers to abiding by the law. Legitimacy criteria for the use of force under R2P include analysis of the seriousness of the harm if intervention were not to occur; assuring that intervention is for the proper purpose of averting a threat of mass atrocity; determining whether all other available options have been exhausted, that force is proportional to the harm to be prevented, and that the minimum force necessary to prevent the harm is utilized; and balancing the consequences—whether the ultimate results will be worse in the event of military action or inaction (p. 141).

Taken as a whole, these factors inform legitimacy determinations. These criteria were reiterated by the Secretary-General but were left unaddressed by the UN World Summit of 2005 and have not been taken up by the UN Security Council.

The responsibility to protect is an important and compelling concept, one that is far more complex than common usage would imply. Gareth Evans takes the reader beyond a casual understanding, debunking the myths surrounding R2P that undermine acceptance and dilute its potential effectiveness. He also correlates the abstract with the practical to create a useful guide for the practitioner. Finally, Evans outlines the gaps that remain in capacity to respond in potential cases of R2P and presents recommendations for mobilizing political will. PRISM
A cursory glance at the foreign policy section in your local bookstore would reveal many volumes of output and analyses generated over the past few years by the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq and its aftermath. Selections vary from wide-ranging strategic reviews to gripping accounts of the house-to-house fighting that occurred in places like Fallujah and Sadr City. However, until 2009, no one had produced a comprehensive analytical study of the Coalition Provisional Authority’s (CPA’s) occupation of Iraq, when it operated as the country’s de jure and de facto government from early May 2003 to the end of June 2004.

Ambassador James Dobbins, the leading authority on overseas contingencies, and his co-authors have filled this reportorial gap with this landmark work, which will stand as an authoritative history of the CPA for years to come. Occupying Iraq paints a diverse picture of the early postwar administration in Iraq, identifying some successes (based largely on CPA documentation) and concluding that the CPA, which was led by Dobbins’s long-time State Department colleague Ambassador L. Paul Bremer III, did the best it could, given poor resourcing, insufficient staffing, and the lack of an established interagency structure for support. Among successes, the authors credit the CPA for promoting the development of the most liberal constitution in the Middle East, initiating reforms of Iraq’s civil service and judiciary, and restoring some of Iraq’s essential services to near-prewar levels (at least for a short while). In explanation of shortfalls, they point to inadequate direction and insufficient support from the Federal interagency community in Washington as the chief cause.

When it formed in Iraq in May 2003, the CPA had no integrated plan or system from which to develop operations. It thus was expeditiously and expeditiously cobbled together as the management successor to the Office for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA), the ad hoc Pentagon-led entity created in late January 2003 to manage postwar Iraq. The CPA’s very distinct mission was to occupy and govern Iraq. This notably diverged from and expanded greatly upon the postwar plan President George W. Bush approved only 2 months earlier, in March 2003. The President’s first plan anticipated the expenditure of about $2 billion in relief and reconstruction money, a
limited continuing military footprint, a quick transition to Iraqi governance, and a rapid U.S. withdrawal. This original conception essentially sought to replicate what had happened in Afghanistan a year earlier.

But hopes for an alacritous shift to Iraqi control vanished quickly with CPA’s inception, as it quickly superseded ORHA’s modest reconstruction effort with visions for a program 10 times as large. Because the authors do not explore why this fundamentally transformative expansion happened, others will have to unpack the political twists and improvisational turns that occurred in the late spring and early summer of 2003, which led to what is now a 7-year stay in Iraq, at great cost in blood and treasure.

The study begins by tracing the brief, troubled life of ORHA, which was led by retired Army Lieutenant General Jay Garner. ORHA was stood up a scant 61 days before the invasion, was undermanned from the start, and failed to garner sufficient interagency buy-in. It thus arrived and operated in Iraq lacking the civilian expertise necessary for effective nationbuilding. ORHA existed long enough to expose the serious interagency coordination problems that would plague the entire Iraq endeavor. As one example, Ambassador Dobbins recounts how Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld vetoed many of Garner’s staff selections for ORHA simply because they came from the State Department.

ORHA’s days as the lead reconstruction agency came to an abrupt end with Bremer’s arrival on May 12, 2003. (Interestingly, the Bush administration never formally dissolved ORHA, but Garner left Iraq shortly after Bremer’s arrival.) The nature of Bremer’s authority presented inherent problems. On the one hand, he was President Bush’s special envoy to Iraq; but he was also the CPA administrator, reporting to the Secretary of Defense. The dual chains of command and the consequent multiple lines of communication created discontinuities for Bremer at both the Pentagon and the White House. Deeper disconnects stemmed from interagency short-circuits in staffing and support. There was no coherent system or structure from which to draw. This structural and resource problem was not Ambassador Bremer’s fault; it long preceded 9/11, and it still exists today.

_Occupying Iraq_ devotes substantial attention to the very real constraints under which the CPA operated. The organization was hampered in executing its relief and reconstruction mission by the coalition’s failure to deploy a sufficient military force to secure the country after the conclusion of major combat operations. The security situation deteriorated through the end of 2003, dropping to its first nadir during the spring of 2004, with the explosive Sunni uprisings in Anbar Province and spike in Shia militia attacks in the south and around Baghdad.

Even if the security situation had been better, the CPA still lacked the necessary resources to accomplish the ambitious relief and reconstruction mission it undertook. In large part, this stemmed from the lack of a developed U.S. interagency system that could efficiently staff, resource, and manage the mammoth program under way in Iraq. _Occupying Iraq_ reports that the CPA was never more than 65 percent staffed, suffering particularly from a lack of mid-level supervisors—the very people who should have populated the primary liaison positions between Bremer and the Iraqi ministries. Dobbins is also critical of the short tours served by many CPA staffers, noting that only seven people stayed for the entirety of the CPA’s existence. In short, the staffing problems confronted by Ambassador Bremer exemplified the ad hoc impulses that would burden the ever-evolving U.S. effort to stabilize postwar Iraq.
Occupying Iraq ultimately is useful, not as a paean to the CPA, but as a case study of what can and will go wrong when nationbuilding ambitions outstrip U.S. Governmental structural, management, and resource capacities. This important and well-founded insight should inform subsequent studies and drive further reform. However, the book occasionally is handicapped by its unwillingness to measure the CPA in light of what we now know was the failure that followed quickly upon the heels of Bremer's departure in June 2004. The security disaster that ensued led to the loss of most CPA gains. For example, to promote rule of law, the CPA had created two new national anticorruption institutions. But these offices were underresourced, and they proved to be a poor fit in Iraq's legal and bureaucratic cultures. Their lack of capacity to enforce the rule of law contributed to the security breakdown. Six years on—notwithstanding the well-intended efforts of many brave Iraqis and their well-meaning U.S. advisors—public corruption remains a severe existential threat to the legitimacy of the Iraqi state.

The heart of Occupying Iraq is its analysis of the CPA's decisionmaking process. The authors trace how and why Ambassador Bremer decided on a number of controversial courses of action, including, most notably, CPA Order Number 2, which, among other things, dissolved the Iraqi army. On March 10, 2003, the President approved a plan that would keep the army intact after the fall of Iraq. Shortly after the successful March 20 invasion, U.S. military commanders began to work with Iraqi army commanders to reconstitute scattered forces. These efforts came to a sudden stop with the CPA's mid-May order dissolving the army. Although Bremer acted quickly to amend the order and restore certain payment and pension provisions for disbanded soldiers, its ill effects were nevertheless harshly felt in the form of riots, which U.S. troops had to counter. General David Petraeus said that the dissolution order certainly helped foment the insurgency that followed.

The decision to disband the Iraqi army stands as a stark example of poor interagency planning. The order was not reviewed on an interagency basis until Ambassador Bremer informed the President and his advisors the day before he published it. Dobbins criticizes Bremer for not involving ORHA's Garner and other subject matter experts from the Department of State in the decisionmaking process, and he suggests that more considered deliberations involving all relevant stakeholders would have yielded a better solution.

In May 2003, Ambassador Bremer also ordered a “de-Ba'athification program,” which prohibited certain party members from the Saddam era to hold public office. This program, which some have described as more severe than the President’s plan anticipated, was handed over to Iraqi control too quickly, as Bremer has acknowledged. Although ostensibly approved by the Pentagon, the program’s implications failed to receive sufficient scrutiny from the interagency community. Nevertheless, Dobbins defends the CPA's decision, arguing that strong de-Ba'athification was necessary to ensure Shia support for the coalition.

Occupying Iraq favorably reviews the CPA's transformative economic agenda, which aimed not just to bring Iraq out of its post-invasion freeze but also to institute ambitious free market reforms. The authors highlight the high economic growth rate achieved during the CPA's tenure as evidence of the program's success. But because the war had driven the Iraqi economy to a virtual standstill, growth from this stasis point inevitably would appear substantial in
percentage terms. The fact is Iraq’s economic progress—then and now—is driven by the sale of oil and gas; no other sector produces positive revenue flow.

As a central part of its free market economic agenda, the CPA discontinued support for Iraq’s state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and pursued an ambitious privatization effort. The SOEs operated at a loss in Iraq’s authoritarian economy and produced shoddy merchandise. But they also provided employment for hundreds of thousands of Iraqi citizens; moreover, the SOEs in the hydrocarbons sector played significant production roles. The SOE shutdown program nevertheless quickly came to fruition, despite some dissenting voices within the CPA. The juxtaposition of the military’s dissolution and the SOEs’ closure pushed well over half a million Iraqis into unemployment in less than 6 weeks. The Department of Defense later acknowledged the importance of SOEs to Iraq’s economy by creating the Task Force on Business Stabilization Operations and charging it with restarting many of the SOEs that the CPA had closed. Interestingly, RAND’s *The Beginner’s Guide to Nation-Building* points out that processes such as reforming SOEs “need to be managed in ways that draw the society’s major contending factions into a process of peaceful competition and away from violent conflict.”

A helpful complement to the many important issues raised in *Occupying Iraq* is *Integrating Civilian Agencies in Stability Operations*. This book explores the existing weak structure for interagency coordination of overseas contingencies. While Dobbins and company illustrate the structural and systemic symptoms of what went wrong during the early U.S. experience in Iraq, *Integrating Civilian Agencies* proposes pathways toward redressing their causes by analyzing current planning systems for civilian-military integration and cooperation in complex contingency operations. *Integrating Civilian Agencies* identifies several major shortcomings in the current U.S. approach: a lack of financial resources, a shortage of deployable personnel, and weak interagency planning and management structures.

As *Occupying Iraq* shows, the CPA encountered each of these problems. When U.S. leadership called for interagency collaboration on Iraq in 2003, the existing system provided no incentive for agencies to work together. Moreover, the lack of capacity at most civilian agencies to move beyond their domestic missions inhibited them from responding effectively. This critical structural problem must be remedied.

*Integrating Civilian Agencies* suggests a series of national level reforms to improve civilian-military coordination:

- Establish an interagency Goldwater-Nichols Act that would increase unity of effort and decrease compartmentalization.
- Set up a standing, integrated contingency planning capability.
- Increase the capacity of the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development through a long-term, joint congressional and Presidential plan.
- Hold U.S. Government agencies accountable for overseas contingency efforts with specific benchmarks and metrics to measure progress. The Defense Department and the combatant commanders need to be willing to share military contingency plans with their interagency partners, and both
civilian agencies and the military need to be held accountable for the planning and execution of stabilization and reconstruction operations.

❖ Fund and train a civilian reserve corps.

Over the past few years, the U.S. Government has pursued a variety of contingency reform initiatives, but none yet has solved the problem. The Department of State’s Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization possesses new civilian expertise and resources to conduct reconstruction and stability operations, but it has lacked institutional and financial support to truly tackle the interagency mission. The Department of Defense, driven by Directive 3000.05, “Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction Operations,” has fostered a robust and well-funded stability operations capability, but housing reconstruction and stabilization operations at the Pentagon runs the risk of a perceived militarizing of U.S. foreign policy. Finally, the Reconstruction and Stabilization Civilian Management Act of 2008 placed the paramount burden for planning and managing the civilian response to overseas contingency operations on the State Department—but the resources to sustain this burden have not been provided.

Discussions continue in Washington on how to implement necessary reforms of the U.S. Government structure and system for managing overseas contingency relief and reconstruction operations. Although a variety of options remain on the table, there is widespread agreement that further reform is needed. Whither—rather than whether—reform is the question; and getting to the right question is progress. But enduring answers remain to be found.

One innovative suggestion on the table proposes developing an agency or office specifically tasked with overseeing, integrating, and managing interagency contingency relief and reconstruction efforts. This entity would coordinate and integrate work already accomplished by extant agencies, thereby institutionalizing many of the solutions suggested in Integrating Civilian Agencies, which would obviate the possibility that the United States could again face the kind of painful impasses described in Occupying Iraq. PRISM
Climate change has reemerged in the mainstream of U.S. Government policy as a central issue and a national security concern. President Barack Obama, addressing an audience at the Massachusetts Institute for Technology in October 2009, identified climate change and fossil fuel dependence as a national security threat needing innovative, science-based solutions to “prevent the worst consequences of climate change.” President Obama asserted that “the naysayers, the folks who would pretend that this is not an issue . . . are being marginalized.”

The climate change debate—the existence, underlying sources, and need for mitigation—has met with controversy in the United States for more than a decade and a half. U.S. policy has evolved from the Clinton administration’s active support in 1997 and signing—but not submitting for ratification—the Kyoto Protocol of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to President George W. Bush withdrawing support in 2001. The pendulum quietly swung back with President Bush later acknowledging climate change as a security matter in 2007, issuing a climate change mitigation policy strategy, and signing America’s Climate Security Act. Over the past several years, former Vice President Al Gore has heightened domestic and international public awareness of climate change, and in testimony before Congress in April 2009, Gore identified climate change mitigation as a “moral imperative.” Complicating matters, in November 2009, leading up to the quadrennial meeting of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), questions about the transparency of data behind certain United Kingdom scientific reports informing work of the panel led some in the U.S. media to dub the climate change debate as “Climate-gate whitewash.”

U.S. military and intelligence planners have examined the challenges posed by climate change for years. Last year, the National Intelligence Council completed its first assessment of the national security implications of climate change, the potential geopolitical impacts, and military and humanitarian responses. The assessment concluded that resulting storms, droughts, and food shortages would increase humanitarian relief demands, which “may significantly tax U.S. military transportation and support force structures, resulting in a strained readiness posture and decreased strategic depth for combat operations.”

Climate change has gained prominence in the Pentagon as well, and the 2010 Quadrennial
Defense Review (QDR) identifies climate change as a national security threat in three ways. First, it is a force-multiplying driver of conflict, as changes in temperature, precipitation levels, and the increasing frequency of extreme weather events “contribute to food and water scarcity . . . increase the spread of disease, and may spur or exacerbate mass migration.” Second, climate change impacts national security as a wildcard variable skewing military plans. Third, climate change burdens military and civilian resources by creating additional humanitarian response obligations. As the QDR states, “While climate change alone does not cause conflict, it may act as an accelerant of instability or conflict, placing a burden to respond on civilian institutions and militaries around the world.”

Following the lead of the Pentagon, the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development are drafting the first Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR), modeled on the QDR and expected to be released in the fall of this year. Like the QDR, the QDDR will incorporate climate change issues.

A wicked problem, as coined by Horst Rittel and Melvin M. Webber, is one that is difficult or impossible to solve because of incomplete, contradictory, and changing requirements that are often difficult to identify, and the solution is not true or false, but better or worse options. Climate change is said to be a super wicked problem, which has the added complications of a time imperative, no central authority to resolve the problem, and the fact that the entities seeking to solve the problem are also involved in causing it, thus creating a deepening cycle of complications.

At this critical juncture in the climate change and national security debate, the Routledge Studies in Peace and Conflict Resolution book series has published Climate Change and Armed Conflict: Hot and Cold Wars, by James R. Lee. Professor Lee, of American University’s School of International Service, is an international relations expert with a geography background. His treatment of climate change is exceptional among contemporary analyses in that it essentially sets aside the debate over the underlying causes—natural versus human induced—and focuses on mapping a path for understanding the climate change phenomenon based on historical cases, extrapolating conflict trends, predicting alternative outcomes, and suggesting practical options.

Lee begins by tracing the history from the prehistoric period, beginning with the relative adaptive abilities of and territorial competitions between Cro-Magnon and Neanderthal man through the present. Lee interposes periodic variations and dramatic changes in climate, with corresponding human factors: social, political, and economic development; population growth; human migration; competition for scarce resources; and territorial-induced conflicts. He thereby demonstrates linkages between climate change, social growth, and conflict.

Building on these links, Lee then juxtaposes the climate change predictions of the IPCC with the Fund for Peace Index of Failed States and the U.S. Department of Defense conflict forecasting tool, ACTOR (Analyzing Complex Threats for Operations and Readiness). Through this study, he extrapolates conflict trends—“projections of unhealthy convergences between climate change and conflict” (p. 118).

Given that conflict arose even where climate change was mostly slow and periodic, if climate change is accelerated, then the ability
to adapt to such changes may be stretched beyond sustainable limits, particularly in those regions already politically fragile, resource-deprived, and experiencing population, ethnic, and other stresses.

Significantly, the regions subject to greatest stress from climate change lie along the “Equatorial Tension Belt,” which includes Mexico, Central America, and the northern portion of South America, North Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia. Lee predicts that climate change in these regions will exacerbate internal conflict and competition for scarce natural resources—water, food, and sustenance agriculture economic livelihoods—and result in “Hot Wars” of internal strife.

Paradoxically, climate change warming may enhance natural resource abundance in polar areas previously unfit for human habitation. Such changes too can lead to conflict, characterized by Lee as “Cold Wars” of interstate conflict, resulting from competition for the exploitation of the new natural resources and competing territorial and sovereignty claims made acute by new human migration patterns.

Lee predicts that climate change also will impact the comparatively politically stable territories of the United States and Northern and Central Europe, despite their greater resource abundance, aggravated by territorial competition from mass migrations and increased demands for humanitarian relief responses. The adaptive capacity of these regions may stave off conflict initially, but likely not indefinitely.

Lee notes that the rate of climate change for the first half of the 21st century is predicted by the IPCC and other scientists to be highly accelerated, regardless of intervening mitigation measures—essentially, for the immediate future, the damage has been done and the course set. This suggests a corresponding accelerated rate of struggle and instability. The second half of the 21st century remains malleable, depending on the measures taken and outcomes of the first half. Lee discusses various possible scenarios based on “realists and pessimists” contrasted with “idealists and optimists” models. Lee concludes with a series of long-term suggestions to mitigate conflicts, uncouple climate change and violence, and preventative measures that reduce human contribution to climate change. He asks “whether the goal of good global policy or the goal of national interests will win out in shaping human impacts on future climates” (p. 162).

Lee’s treatment of climate change and conflict is simultaneously technical and historical, primarily utilizing political science methodology. He draws on a diversity of disciplines from a distinctive wide range of sources from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and continental Europe. This is a significant work, illuminating and instructive, and not encumbered by political underpinnings, which can be useful in objectively informing the climate change and national security policy discussion.
In his introduction to this new edition of War of Necessity, War of Choice, Richard Haass states that the “book’s core is a distinction with a difference. There are wars of necessity and wars of choice. Confusing the two runs the danger of ill-advised decisions to go to war.” He might have added “or to continue a war.”

The new edition comes at a time when Americans are considering the rationale behind continuing one war (Afghanistan) and perhaps initiating another (Iran). The public debate includes strong voices concerning the appropriate U.S. action in both countries. That makes this edition both timely and important.

In the Bush 41 administration, Haass was “special assistant to the president and senior director for Near East and South Asian affairs on the National Security Council.” He was responsible for North Africa, the Middle East, the Persian Gulf, and South Asia. He notes that at the beginning of the administration, his focus was on Israel-Palestine, post-Soviet Afghanistan, and India-Pakistan, as well as responding to congressional investigations of previously approved Commodity Credit Corporation loans to Iraq. Otherwise, Iraq simply was not a priority. Key decisionmakers were even busier. Thus, like many crises, the potential Iraqi invasion of Kuwait did not get the full attention of these decisionmakers until very late. Even when the administration’s focus turned to the crisis, it failed to understand that Saddam Hussein was serious about invading Kuwait and thus missed the opportunity to prevent the invasion.

As a close inside observer of the decision-making process that led to Operation Desert Storm, Haass argues that it was a war of necessity. He writes:

_The United States had vital national interests at stake. A Saddam who controlled Kuwait would dominate the oil-rich Middle East, given the value of Kuwait’s oil and the likelihood that other Arab states would fear standing up to him lest they suffer Kuwait’s fate. It would only be a short while before he gained nuclear weapons. Israel’s security would be badly compromised. At the same time, there is little in the history of sanctions that suggested that they alone would provide enough leverage. . . . This was a war of necessity if ever there was one. The stakes were enormous, and we had tried and exhausted the alternative to employing military force._

Interestingly, Haass weakens his own argument that Desert Storm was a war of choice. He states, “A different president and set of advisors
might have tolerated Iraqi control of Kuwait and limited the U.S. response to sanctions so long as Saddam did not attack Saudi Arabia.” In short, another administration might not have seen this as a war of necessity.

After leaving during the Clinton administration, Haass returned to Government service with the Bush 43 administration as director of the Policy Planning Staff at the Department of State. While admittedly more distant from the decisionmaking process, he argues that Operation Iraqi Freedom was a war of choice rather than a war of necessity. Haass believes that “wars of choice tend to involve stakes or interests that are less clearly ‘vital,’ along with the existence of viable alternative policies.”

While Haass provides interesting views of the decisionmaking process as seen from his post at State, he is not totally convincing in calling the 2003 invasion of Iraq a war of choice. In fact, the Bush 43 administration used some of the same reasons that Haass lists above for Bush 41 to justify action against Iraq, such as the fear of Iraqi nuclear weapons and the weakness of sanctions as a deterrent.

Later, he concedes that “not once in all my meetings in my years in government did an intelligence analyst or anyone else for that matter argue openly or take me aside and say privately that Iraq possessed nothing in the way of weapons of mass destruction.” This statement weakens his argument that the invasion of Iraq was a war of choice since the key justification for the war was the “fact” that Iraq was working to obtain nuclear weapons.

Haass’s narrative and honest opinions indicate that, except in the case of responding to an attack, the difference between necessity and choice is primarily one of judgment. While not the intention of the book, his statement that different people using essentially the same facts will arrive at different conclusions about the necessity of an action does seem to point to judgment rather than to indisputable facts as the determining factor. This should not be surprising. The problems that lead to war are inherently “wicked problems,” and, by definition, experts will strongly disagree about both the definition of the problem and its potential solutions.

While the title of the book focuses the reader on determining whether a war is necessary, the author provides thought-provoking observations on two other topics. First, he notes the importance of proper process in developing a solid understanding of the potential conflict and in particular its costs and benefits. Second, he highlights the critical role assumptions play in the decision process and how failure to ensure a common understanding of those assumptions can lead to misunderstanding—and poor decisions.

His narratives highlight the wide difference between the approaches taken by Bush 41 and 43. He clearly describes the way Bush 41 used the formal National Security Council (NSC) process and included the key executive branch departments in a thorough, effective cost/benefit analysis of the decision to drive Iraq out of Kuwait. Just as important, the process ensured an effective analysis of the probable cost of continuing the war into Iraq. He makes the point that once Saddam was ejected from Iraq (his war of necessity), any decision to continue to Baghdad would represent a war of choice. Thus, Desert Storm achieved its goals at a reasonable strategic cost.

In contrast, in the run-up to invading Iraq, Bush 43 short-circuited the process and moved the bulk of the cost/benefit evaluation to a close circle of trusted advisors who were predisposed to invade Iraq and highly optimistic about the outcome. Thus, Bush was never
confronted with the potential costs of his decision. Compounding the problems created by the poor decision, Haass notes, “The lack of any meaningful interagency process or oversight of the aftermath made it all too easy for the Defense Department (which was essentially left by the NSC to oversee itself) to ignore advice from the outside” (p. 228) in its planning for the invasion of Iraq. The end result was a massively costly effort in Iraq for strategic results that are dubious at best.

Another issue Haass explores is the vital importance of clearly articulating the assumptions upon which a plan is based. He notes that the assumptions underpinning the first Gulf War were clearly stated and thoroughly vetted. In contrast, the 2003 assumptions were deeply flawed—in particular the ideas that all Iraqis would see U.S. forces as liberators and that the Iraqi government would continue to function and rapidly evolve into a democracy. The failure to use the process to develop and examine these assumptions led to massive failures in establishing security and reconstructing Iraq.

This caution has particular applicability as we begin to execute the new strategy in Afghanistan. Neither the Obama administration nor the commanders have ever publicly stated the assumptions upon which our population-centric approach is based. How can the American people evaluate whether they should continue to support the effort if they have no idea what assumptions underpin it? The Senate clearly failed to demand a serious discussion of assumptions prior to acquiescing to invading Iraq, and it has not questioned the assumptions underpinning our new approach in Afghanistan. If we lean toward military action against Iran’s nuclear weapons program, the Senate must demand that the administration state clearly the assumptions upon which they based their plans.

In summary, Haass’s book remains both useful and relevant. He focuses on the idea that a nation should know whether it is embarking on a war of necessity or of choice. However, he also highlights how devilishly difficult it is to determine to which category a conflict belongs. His narrative shows how honest people, even experts, can disagree based on their interpretations of the situation. However, Haass makes it clear that it is essential to effectively use the process to truly understand the nature of the problem and the potential costs/benefits of each course of action. Part of that examination must be a careful vetting of the assumptions behind the proposed actions. While the leaders may still decide to go to war, they will at least be aware of the range of potential costs as well as benefits.

A final caution may be appropriate. Wars of choice usually do not turn out well for those who start them. In the last couple of centuries, only the Germans under Bismarck and the Japanese against the Russians in 1905 seem to have achieved their aims when they chose to go to war—and the Japanese paid a high price. Looking at others who chose to go to war—the Germans twice in the 20th century, the Japanese against the United States, the North Koreans, the United States when it chose to enter Vietnam and Iraq, the Argentines in the Falklands, the Chinese against the Vietnamese, the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia, the French attempt to reassert control over Vietnam and Algeria, and even the Israelis in 1967—indicates that those starting a war rarely achieved the results expected and usually suffered significant strategic losses. Perhaps the major point of Haass’s work is that wars of choice should be avoided. PRISM
Civil-Military Relations: Theory and Practice

Civil-military relations are a hardy perennial in the study of politics, international relations, and inter-agency policymaking. In the Clinton era, we worried about a military too big for its camouflaged britches and a potential “crisis” in civil-military relations. Compounding the strife was statistical proof that the officer corps increasingly self-identified as Republicans. In the post-9/11 era, we worried about an overly reticent military leadership whose professional expertise was muffled by civilians, who allegedly micromanaged military plans and operations. Much of the recent analysis reads like a political version of People magazine with larger than life admirals and generals—Anthony Zinni, William Fallon, and David Petraeus, for example—jousting with cabinet officers and making “power plays.” Retired officers have created their own controversies, endorsing political candidates and even calling for the resignation of cabinet officers. Often absent from these vivid articles are an analysis of the theoretical foundations of civil-military relations or accurate data on what the military actually thinks and believes. Two new books do a great job in filling in some of those blanks. Both books came from officers associated, as I was years ago, with the Department of Social Sciences at West Point. All three of the authors are from the Military Academy’s “second graduating class,” alumni officers who came back to teach at the Academy and then returned to the Army to reinforce its corps of Soldier-thinkers.

Suzanne Nielsen and Don Snider’s book is an edited volume. Such works are too often uneven and not worth the time or tedium to read. The best edited volumes, however, compound the wisdom of the individual authors and are worth their weight in gold. To get to this stage, the book has to be organized along a clear theme, be an original work, and be well designed, and it has to be tightly edited.
American Civil-Military Relations: The Soldier and the State in a New Era is such a volume, and it is a highly valuable addition to the theoretical literature on civil-military relations.

The book contains original contributions from experts who attended the West Point Senior Conference in 2007, a festschrift on the 50th anniversary of the publication of Samuel Huntington's epic, The Soldier and the State. Huntington's classic is best remembered for suggesting that the optimum division of labor is for civilians to make policy and for the admirals and generals to give military advice, avoid politics, and, in return, be accorded professional space in the conduct of tactical and operational affairs. After a few days of discussion and months of subsequent editing, the contributors to this volume—including Columbia's Richard Betts, the University of North Carolina's Richard Kohn, and Duke University's Peter Feaver—had thoroughly analyzed the classical issues, not only critiquing Huntington's basic theory but also bringing the analysis forward to the present day.

New issues are also well covered in this edited volume. Colonel Matthew Moten, USA, of West Point's History Department, wrote an excellent chapter filled with new material on the Shinseki affair, where General Eric Shinseki, the serving Chief of Staff of the Army, was harshly criticized by senior civilians in the Department of Defense for giving an honest answer (which turned out to be presciently correct) to a pointed but fair question about postinvasion Iraq from Senator Carl Levin, now the Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee. Nadia Schadlow, of the Smith-Richardson Foundation, and Colonel Richard Lacquement, USA, of the Army War College faculty, discussed with skill and passion how the Armed Forces should broaden their view of themselves and include stability operations in their concept of military professional competence. Unfortunately, even this large collection was not able to look at the other side of that coin. While many today accept that stability operations are a part of the military's competence, the importance of the whole-of-government approach was not covered in this volume, which was focused only on the military. Noted historian Williamson Murray made important recommendations for future professional military education, and Colonel Chris Gibson, USA, and Richard Kohn suggested commonsense (but generally conservative) rules for active and retired officers to build trust with their civilian superiors, and vice versa. In the end, the civil-military game and its rules belong to the elected and appointed civilian officials in the chain of command. Professor Kohn laid out the conservative interpretation of civil-military interaction that is also pertinent to civilian servants, intelligence professionals, and Foreign Service officers:

_Civilians determine the extent of military responsibility and authority and what will be delegated, and even whether to listen or to consult. They are subject only to the limitations they impose, for various reasons, upon themselves; to the legal checks of other branches of government when they disagree; and to the military and political conditions at any given moment. . . . Thus, civilian control means that the elected leadership, and those whom they appoint, have both the right and the authority to be wrong._

In the end, no plan survives contact with the enemy, and no classic work from 1957 could endure for 50 years without serious corrections and amendments. Each of the authors builds on and rejects aspects of
Huntington’s original theory. In their excellent conclusion, Don Snider and Suzanne Nielsen summarize nine major conclusions on Huntington’s theory. In their words, “The most significant shortcoming of Huntington’s construct was its failure to recognize that a separation between political and military affairs is not possible—particularly at the highest levels of policymaking” (p. 291). Politics, policy, and strategy are strands in the same rope. To be immersed in the politics of national life at the highest levels of government, a senior officer cannot be a neutral vessel of knowledge who limits his or her input to strictly military concerns. Nearly 200 years ago, Carl von Clausewitz recognized the same phenomenon. He wrote that the most senior military officers required a “thorough grasp of national policy” and, without losing sight of their professional role as generals, they had to become statesmen. And therein lies the rub, as well as the importance of studying civil-military relations in general and this new book on Huntington’s theory in particular.

Lieutenant Colonel Jason Dempsey, USA, adds current data and analysis to Nielsen and Snider’s treatment of the basic theory of civil-military relations in his excellent book, Our Army: Soldiers, Politics, and American Civil-Military Relations, which focuses on the political and social attitudes and behaviors of officers and enlisted personnel in the U.S. Army. The author not only seeks to understand Soldiers, but he also wants to remind those same Soldiers of the “importance of political neutrality” (p. xv). Dempsey gives us an invaluable insight into the complexities of political attitudes within the officers and enlisted personnel of the entire Active Army. In the process, he demolishes a number of commonly held myths about a monolithic, politically active officer corps. His book is one of the first to look analytically at the attitudes and behaviors of the enlisted ranks as well as the officer ranks.

Dempsey begins by tracing the history of U.S. civil-military relations and covers George Washington with special attention. General Washington while still in uniform began our tradition of a nonpartisan military and established the principle of subordination to civil authority. Over the years, with some ups and downs, the nonpartisan, apolitical tradition became so strong in the 20th century that many senior officers such as Omar Bradley and George Marshall never even voted. The author describes the breakdown of this apolitical, nonpartisan ethos in the Cold War era, paying particular attention to the period from the Carter presidency to the present. Throughout his excellent volume, almost every observation is backed up by detailed analyses of survey data, some of which Dempsey gathered in the 2004 Citizenship and Service Survey that he himself designed.

Dempsey expertly traces the dominance of Republican Party preference identification in the Army officer corps. Citing various surveys done under the supervision of Duke’s Ole Holsti and Peter Feaver, Dempsey chronicles the gradual “Republicanization” of senior officers from 46 percent after the Carter presidency, to 61 percent a decade later, to 67 percent in 1998. (New, less scientific surveys by the Military Times suggest that this trend may be changing and that political party preferences among officers are becoming more balanced.) Dempsey’s own data partly confirms the Republican leanings of the officer corps, but he points out that enlisted personnel, ignored in most other surveys, have different and more balanced political preferences than their superior officers. On top of that, newly commissioned officers are shown to be politically savvy, more active than their predecessors, but “almost evenly split” (p. 150) in their political leanings between the parties.
In an interesting side note, Dempsey’s surveys showed a majority of cadets enter West Point as self-identified Republicans and that some cadets sensed peer (but not institutional) pressure to identify with the Republican Party.

Political identification, however, is not political participation. Dempsey found that overall, “Members of the army participate in the political process to a lesser degree than their civilian counterparts” (p. 149). Contrary to unscientific declarations in the media, only the officer corps appears “to vote at rates approaching those of their civilian counterparts. Members of the Army are also less likely to display a button, bumper sticker, or sign in support of political campaigns or candidates . . . . Finally, the Army overall appears to donate money at a lower rate than the civilian population” (p. 149). Again, officers were more likely to donate than enlisted personnel or civilians.

Dempsey strongly makes the point that the Army today should serve in the nonpartisan manner exemplified by George Washington. In particular, he decries the activities of retired flag and general officers who, using their military titles, endorse political candidates and make speeches at Presidential conventions. He notes: “At times it seemed as if a virtual arms race had been initiated as both parties sought retired members of the armed forces to sit onstage behind their candidates” (p. 3). These appearances, which are clearly within the civil rights of private citizens, may reflect poorly on the force, sow confusion among its members, and make life more difficult for serving officers who have to deal with insecure civilian superiors. While the Nielsen and Snider volume tells one how to think about the theory of civil-military relations, Dempsey’s book analyzes the political orientations and behaviors of the people in the Army today. While these two books were markedly different in their subject matter and approaches, they share a number of commonsense recommendations on civil military recommendations. First, the military is a distinct profession with its own areas of expertise. The most senior officers participate in decisionmaking with civilians, who at the limit are superior to even the most senior uniformed personnel. Civilian prerogatives derive from the will of the people and are clearly recorded in the Constitution and various laws. Civil-military discourse is thus characterized by “equal dialogue, unequal authority” (p. 293), as Richard Betts reminded us in the Nielsen-Snider volume. To succeed in the highest councils, the leaders of the Armed Forces must know their subject matter, present their arguments convincingly, and earn the trust of their superiors. To do so, they must be scrupulously nonpartisan in word and action. Anything that casts doubt on the nonpartisanship of our most senior leaders is likely to harm the profession and the Armed Forces.

Potential conflicts between citizenship and service have been a constant in our history. Secretary of War Elihu Root told the officers of the Army War College in 1908 that they should serve in a manner characterized by “self-abnegation.” He enjoined these Army officers to “never forget your duty of coordination with other branches of service” and ended with a thought on the duty of citizenship: “Do not cease to be citizens of the United States. The conditions of army life are such as to narrow your views. Strive to broaden your sympathies by mingling with those outside of the service and learning from them the things they can teach you. As you are good soldiers, be good citizens.” PRISM
With the failure of the U.S. military and Coalition Provisional Authority to stabilize Iraq after the successful 2003 invasion, military analysts have noted that a lesson learned is a need for better coordination between the civilian and military powers. This book by Robert Egnell explains how civil-military integration improves both military effectiveness and operational success.

The book rejects Samuel Huntington’s theory of complete separation between military and civilian affairs to maximize effectiveness, as espoused in his seminal work *The Soldier and the State*. While Huntington proposes military autonomy to protect domestic powers and military capabilities to conduct conventional warfare, his nonintegrated approach has limitations when the Armed Forces are tasked with counterinsurgency, stabilization, democratization, and economic development. If the mission goal requires an approach to win the “hearts and minds” of the population, unity of effort with the civilian components is essential for military effectiveness. The hearts and minds approach requires demonstration to the local community that the military is going to provide stability and security, and rout opposing forces. However, these military goals must be combined with minimum force, flexibility, and civil tools.

Egnell conveys his theory by contrasting British and U.S. civil-military relations, their methods of conducting warfare, and their Iraq operational failures. As he points out, the British experience in Iraq cannot serve as a complete comparison to the U.S. experience because the United Kingdom (UK) served as the junior coalition partner, was only in the Shiite south, and was not part of the main postconflict planning failures. However, Egnell’s lessons learned are useful. The British military was successful fighting counterinsurgency in the colony of Malaya and establishing stability in Sierra Leone due to strong civilian-military cooperation on the ground and within UK central ministries. In Iraq, the British civil-military structures had insufficient cooperation for the military to properly work with local dynamics and politics in order to fulfill long-term stability goals. Furthermore, Egnell notes that the British military was constrained with Iraq by the failure of the interagency process to facilitate coordination at the highest levels, despite a British system designed to encourage this process.

When examining the U.S. civil-military system—founded on checks and balances and with the military largely independent from civilian influence—Egnell suggests that tensions created through the divided system prevent interagency cooperation. Only at the highest levels, with the President as Commander in
Chief and Secretary of Defense providing civilian oversight of the Department of Defense (DOD), does integration occur. Numerous task forces, working groups, and the National Security Council have all failed to create interagency coordination. The divides even exist within DOD itself, with the structural divide between the civilian and military staffing. These divisions prevent the sharing of expertise and directly harm the conduct of nontraditional military operations.

One of Egnell’s fundamental principles for increased effectiveness is the establishment of process-based trust. Interpersonal trust stems from social similarities, shared values, and persistent relationships. Military, development, and diplomacy personnel each develop strong interpersonal trust within their own institutions, while maintaining different organizational cultures and interests that conflict with those of the other institutions. Thus, trust must come from process-based interactions, reciprocity, mutual understanding, and respect across organizational boundaries. When this is not possible, institutional trust and common goals must exist to prevent tension, conflicting decisionmaking, and turf wars. The process-based trust develops through structural solutions, which encourage cross-exposure and cooperation through integration of officers and civil servants to overcome any civilian-military divides.

An example of how trust can overcome cultural divides is the British and U.S. armored divisions’ cooperation in Iraq because of strong professional connections. The military cooperation contrasts with the isolation of the U.S. State Department from DOD post-conflict planning and the refusal of the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (later the Coalition Provisional Authority) to share headquarters with the U.S. military command in Baghdad.

Egnell accurately captures an important issue: The U.S. military and U.S. State Department have begun to recognize the need for integration both at the highest levels of command and at the mission level. The civilian-military partnership is shown through the promulgation of the “3 Ds” (diplomacy, development, and defense) in the U.S. national security strategy and in the planned integration of civilian and military capabilities at U.S. Africa Command. If the military is going to continue with complex peace operations and “military operations other than war,” Egnell correctly suggests that there must be a coordinated role with civilian capacities for the effective planning and implementation of postconflict operations.

Egnell’s goal is to develop Armed Forces fit for the purpose assigned to them, especially when these functions increasingly involve threats to society stemming from asymmetric warfare, failed or failing states, and transnational criminality. While institutional culture is entrenched in the U.S. military and policy structures, Egnell’s recommendations for better integration, more complete contextual understanding, and increased exchange of knowledge and ideas between the civilian and military components are essential to confront the threats of the future. Egnell’s work should be well received by U.S. military and civilian personnel seeking to improve military effectiveness in complex operations.
Winston Churchill once famously declared, “Gentlemen, we have run out of money. Now we have to think.” Churchill’s admonition underlies the theme of The Frugal Superpower, a slender but trenchant work presenting a chastening forecast for American foreign policy in the 21st century. Michael Mandelbaum, who is the Christian A. Herter Professor and Director of American Foreign Policy at The Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, DC, explains how economic constraints will curtail America’s post–World War II role as the “world’s de facto government” and the consequences of that diminished role. The era of “American exceptionalism” has waned, he maintains; henceforth, the United States will behave more like an ordinary power. Written with verve and pith, this is a book for all readers, professional and general alike, who are concerned about America’s place in the world.

The financial crisis of 2008–2009 and stimulus spending to overcome it, the cost of the Iraq War, soaring deficits and debt, and a ballooning entitlement burden for retired boomers will severely limit resources available for foreign policy. For seven decades, “more” was the answer for domestic and foreign problems. Mandelbaum contends “less” will set the parameters for foreign policy in the future.

Nonetheless, for the foreseeable future America will remain the world’s major power, although its leadership will be in question. Unlike the anti-American polemicist Andrew Bacevich, who regards America as a malign force in world history, Mandelbaum thinks the world’s peoples will be worse off with a retrenched America. Since World War II, he writes, “the United States play[ed] a major, constructive, and historically unprecedented role in the world,” bringing peace and prosperity to much of the globe. It did so, of course, out of enlightened self-interest, not altruism. Foreign policy is not missionary work. America’s challenge in the new century will be “to provide leadership on a shoestring.” The age of scarcity, however, could have the benefit of restraining U.S. “carelessness” in foreign policy.

Mandelbaum judges President Bill Clinton’s eastward expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) the first “careless” blunder of the post–Cold War era. A crass partisan ploy to capture East European voters in the 1996 election, this move broke our promise to Russia not to advance to its border and sapped Russia’s trust in the United States.
as a partner. Ambassador Jack Matlock supports Mandelbaum’s argument. Matlock was the note taker at a meeting on February 9, 1990, when Secretary of State Jim Baker persuaded Mikhail Gorbachev to allow a reunited Germany to remain in NATO with “a promise that NATO jurisdiction and troops would not expand to the east.” Matlock confirms that Gorbachev’s belief “coincides with my notes of the conversation except that mine indicate that Baker added, ‘not one inch.’” Oddly, Gorbachev did not ask for a written confirmation of this pledge.

The second careless blunder was President George W. Bush’s ill-conceived, bungled occupation of Iraq, tarnishing America’s standing in the world. Mandelbaum hopes an age of austerity will foster “prudence” thus far absent from our record in East Europe and the Middle East. A pinched pocketbook will prompt the United States to seek international cooperation, but Mandelbaum doubts Japan and Europe will offer much security assistance. He cites NATO’s anemic role in Afghanistan, a conflict sanctioned by the first invocation of Article V in NATO’s history. The viability and credibility of NATO have caused Defense Secretary Robert Gates to refer to the emergence of a “two-tier alliance,” where some members do the fighting, while others, not to put too fine a point on it, freeload. At a NATO meeting in February, Gates voiced alarm at NATO’s serious undertsvestment in collective defense for over a decade and, particularly, at the “demilitarization of Europe.” The pacifism of European publics, Gates warned, poses an “impediment to achieving real security and lasting peace in the 21st century.”

In August, the Netherlands became the first NATO country to end its combat mission in Afghanistan, announcing the departure of its 1,900 troops. Canada says it will withdraw its 2,700 soldiers in 2011, and Poland plans to pull out its 2,600 troops in 2012.

With a cash-strapped America upholding global security and prosperity on a “bluff,” as the author puts it, he considers whether discontented powers such as Russia and China might contest the international status quo in Europe and East Asia. For the near term, Mandelbaum concludes, domestic problems, including a demographic crisis in both countries and economic incentives, will discourage China and Russia from calling our bluff and challenging the status quo.

Demography is destiny. Chinese and Russian demographic trends have historical salience. China’s rice bowl will not remain so full in coming years. On top of grave environmental degradation and other internal woes, China’s graying population will make the country old before it gets rich. The Communist Party’s one-child-per-family policy has lowered the fertility rate from 5.8 in the 1970s to 1.8 today, below the population replacement rate of 2.1. Moreover, the widespread practice of sex-selective abortion has produced excess males. A declining working-age population will drive up labor costs, eroding one of China’s key competitive advantages, and a large cohort of young, unattached males threatens social stability. At the same time, life expectancy has risen from 35 in 1949 to 73 today. By 2050, China’s elderly will increase from 100 million people over 60 today to 334 million, including 100 million over age 80. China lacks the means to care for this elderly nation.

If China faces dire demographics, Russia is caught in the throes of demographic suicide. Demographer Nicholas Eberstadt has documented Russia’s unstoppable depopulation due to a “death crisis” among working-age men and women, a trend that continued unabated...

Mandelbaum believes the Middle East will occupy the center of geopolitics in the new century. Oil is the crux of the matter. A sustainable foreign policy, he argues, requires a steep reduction in our oil consumption, which would strengthen international security as well as our own financial solvency. Americans’ demand for cheap gas represents the “single greatest failure” of U.S. foreign policy in the 21st century. The obvious solution is a stiff gas tax. Mandelbaum’s case makes common sense. But he acknowledges that Energy Secretary Steven Chu, having endorsed a gas tax while a private citizen, decided once in office that it was “not politically feasible.” Mandelbaum foresees dim prospects for a world with an economically constrained Uncle Sam. The world will suffer the baleful results of a United States with too little power: “One thing worse than an America that is too strong, the world will learn, is an America that is too weak.”

The age of austerity has arrived. Former National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft has also spoken of its implications for foreign policy, noting that austerity will force us to assess goals and costs more carefully and to set priorities. A theme of the Obama administration’s national security strategy has been “mutual rights and responsibilities,” or burden-sharing. Other nations, however, have experienced the same economic problems that have beset America. NATO members have not met their defense-spending commitment of 2 percent of gross domestic product annually for the last decade and will certainly make deep reductions in the future. Last spring a senior Pentagon official stated in a briefing, “Of the world’s top 25 debtor nations, the number that are U.S. allies: 19.” The National Intelligence Council and European Union undertook a study of what the world would look like in 2025. The team interviewed officials in China, Japan, Brazil, South Africa, India, Russia, and the United Arab Emirates. The team found concern about the problems lying ahead, but not a will to solve them. One official connected with the study remarked, “What’s interesting is how little any other nation feels responsibility.”

In a May speech at the Eisenhower Library, Secretary Gates cited President Obama’s invocation of Dwight D. Eisenhower’s counsel to maintain spending “balance in and among national programs.” Gates stated that the splurge of military spending cannot continue as it has, doubling in the last decade: “The gusher has been turned off, and will stay off for a good period of time.” He noted the Department of Defense’s (DOD’s) staggering health care costs (at $50 billion, roughly equal to the State Department’s entire foreign affairs and assistance budget), unsustainable weapons programs, and bureaucratic bloat (overhead comprising 40 percent of DOD’s budget). His favorite example was how a request for a dog-handling team in Afghanistan had to obtain approval from five four-star headquarters before being dispatched. All this for a guy and his dog! The solution, Gates maintained, is not more study or legislation, but the political courage to make hard choices.
This summer Gates made a down payment on his commitment, announcing a decision to cut thousands of jobs and a major military command to streamline operations and ward off a budgetary meat-axe approach by Congress. He recommended dismantling the U.S. Joint Forces Command, employing about 2,800 military and civilian personnel and 3,300 contractors, eliminating two other Pentagon agencies, reducing intelligence advisory contracts by 10 percent, paring flag officers’ ranks by 50 positions, and shrinking contractor funding 10 percent annually for 3 years. Gates’s proposals aim to trim the tooth-to-tail ratio, shifting resources from overhead and bureaucracy to troops and weapons.\(^\text{15}\)

As Gates announced Pentagon spending cuts, the State Department found itself $400 million short for its mission, beginning in September, to take over Iraqi police training from coalition military forces. State also plans to replace its current 16 Provincial Reconstruction Teams across the country with five consular offices outside Baghdad. To provide security for civilians now guarded by the U.S. military, State proposes to hire its own army of 2,700 security contractors and reinforce facilities for diplomats and police trainers beyond specifications now considered safe for military personnel. To transport civilians around Iraq, including medical evacuation if necessary, State has asked DOD to leave behind two dozen UH–60 helicopters and 50 bomb-resistant vehicles, heavy cargo trucks, fuel trailers, and high-tech surveillance systems, all to be maintained and operated by as-yet-unfunded contractors.

Congress has not given a warm reception to State’s request for additional funding. “They need a dose of fiscal reality,” said one senior Senate aide involved in the negotiations.\(^\text{16}\) “If they miscalculated by hundreds of millions of dollars, they need to tell us where they propose to find the money. . . . It’s not going to come from [funds allotted to] Afghanistan or Haiti.” Deputy Secretary of State Jacob Lew, now Obama’s nominee to head the Office of Management and Budget, told Congress the department will not deploy civilians where it cannot protect them. He warned that if more money was not appropriated for State’s operations budget, it would have to be taken out of development assistance programs for Iraq and elsewhere. “So now you have security, but no programs,” said a senior House staffer. “That’s what drives us nuts about them. They screwed this one up, and we have to fix it.”\(^\text{17}\)

The days of a spendthrift superpower may be over, but the United States will not become quite an ordinary power either. Uncle Sam cannot be an all-purpose 911 number. Being a quixotic doer of all manner of good works—armed humanitarian interventions, feckless state-building where no state exists, the fool’s errand of “democratic transformation”—would forever entangle the United States in other states’
domestic affairs and prevent a match between financial resources and national goals. America must shed the hubris of “the indispensable nation.” A realistic acceptance of limits, a focus on vital interests, and acting in concert with other nations when our mutual interests coincide are essential steps toward reshaping a viable American foreign policy.

Notes

4 Ibid., 319.
7 In contrast, Robert Kagan sees the return of traditional power politics in The Return of History and the End of Dreams (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008).
12 Ibid.
14 Ibid.
17 Ibid.
18 Fear can be a useful spur to realism and cooperation. A concert of mutual interest is forming in Asia, where Southeast Asian nations, led by Vietnam, are augmenting their military power and want a robust U.S. presence in East Asia to counter China’s aggressiveness. See John Pomfret, “Concerned About China’s Rise, Southeast Asian Nations Build Up Militaries,” The Washington Post, August 9, 2010, A8.
T
he Vietnam War, long viewed as an example of a U.S. military and political failure best to be forgotten, has reemerged as a hot topic of historical revision. With counterinsurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan, analysts and pundits are drawing parallels between American mistakes today and those of 40 years ago. Unfortunately, too many merely offer polemics over reasoned analyses, either restating long-held assumptions about Vietnam formulated in the immediate aftermath of the war and unquestioned since or providing shallow summaries of the war intended to prove preconceived points. The Vietnam War, according to much of the literature, remains a fiasco directed by arrogant politicians and inept commanders and fought by luckless troops who stumbled about the countryside blind to the realities they faced. Yet the Vietnam War—as with all wars, to include today’s—proved to be a far more complex conflict than some would have us believe. If there were those whose hubris failed us, there were also dedicated military and civilians who fought mightily to achieve success. The inept served side by side with the skilled. While blame for ultimate failure can be fairly apportioned, in the end the United States eventually succumbed as much to the conditions and, with due credit not often granted by historians, the competent and well-led enemy it faced as to its own incompetence. Whether or not the Vietnam War could have been won (assuming winning is ever the objective of counterinsurgencies) remains a question that cannot be reduced to simple formulas or indictments of individuals or institutions. Instead, understanding the complexities of counterinsurgency, both then and now, demands a far more nuanced examination of the challenges inherent in these types of conflicts.

It is an understanding of these nuances that makes Why Vietnam Matters, by Rufus Phillips, such an engaging and informative read. A personal memoir by a self-professed idealist and somewhat accidental Army, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and then Foreign Service officer, Phillips’s story is one of discovery and intuitive adaptation to the challenges of complex operations, as well as of opportunities lost. It is also an informed narrative of innovative attempts at building grassroots capacities during the first decade of America’s involvement in the Vietnam War. During that critical period, the author labored to solve the root maladies fueling the conflict, both at the local level and as an advisor to both Vietnamese and American senior leaders. His book presents a candid, often impassioned, eyewitness account of the increasing violence that swept the country after French withdrawal in the mid-1950s and the subsequent American intervention.

Dr. R. Scott Moore is Deputy Director of the Center for Complex Operations.
He chronicles his frustration as he watched the United States seek a military solution to what was a largely political problem. If the Vietnam War remains half a century removed from the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, its track as recounted by Phillips possesses an eerily present contemporaneous relevance.

The book begins with the early experiences of the author in Vietnam in the mid-1950s. A bored law student at Yale, Phillips jumped at the enticements of adventure and elitism offered by CIA recruiters. In the shadowy civil-military world that characterized the agency at the time, he arrived in Vietnam ostensibly assigned to the U.S. military advisory group formed in the wake of France’s defeat and withdrawal. He was assigned to a small band of independently operating iconoclasts whose mission remains, to this day, clouded in secrecy, but that, at its roots, involved restoring Vietnamese governance and control in the countryside. They were led by the now famous (or infamous, depending on one’s historical sense) Edward Lansdale. An outspoken Air Force colonel and CIA official, Lansdale had already established his reputation as a highly controversial expert in counterinsurgency. As the personal advisor to Philippine minister of defense, and later president, Ramon Magsaysay during the Huk Rebellion a few years before, he overturned the policies of the American military advisory effort by dealing directly with Magsaysay (much to the chagrin of his nominal military commander in the U.S. advisory mission) to transform the Philippine army. Eschewing conventional military wisdom focused on combat operations against insurgents, Lansdale instead pushed for an army designed not only to provide security to the population, but also to address the political and economic ills underpinning the insurgency. Rather than conducting ineffective combat sweeps that inevitably disrupted and sometimes terrorized the rural population, Lansdale convinced Magsaysay to retool the army so it could not only establish security but, far more important, also serve as the initial face of governmental legitimacy by providing essential services, rebuilding shattered infrastructure, and restoring local faith in the government. Once feared and distrusted by villagers, the army soon garnered respect and admiration, in the process isolating the Huk guerrillas and making them highly vulnerable to the special units hunting them. Within a few years, the insurgency withered and died.

Phillips came to unabashedly admire Lansdale, who sought to implement a similar philosophy to rebuild the Vietnamese army. Initially frustrated by his quixotic commander’s apparent randomness and often perceived inaction, the author soon came to understand Lansdale’s gift for building personal relationships, gaining an understanding of problems in Vietnamese (rather than American) terms, and only then moving forward with his ideas. Sent to meet and observe the Vietnamese, Phillips and others on Lansdale’s team cultivated the same qualities. Gaining the trust of Vietnamese leaders, not surprisingly along with the animosity of much of the U.S. military advisory mission, they proceeded to remodel the Vietnamese army, whose units were demoralized by the French retreat. At a time when the French were leaving behind a fractured state and the political and security vacuum was being filled by well-organized and armed Viet Minh cadres, Phillips found himself retraining and then accompanying Vietnamese units as they reoccupied parts of the Mekong Delta and then the Central Highlands. Establishing the authority of the newly independent Saigon
regime, rebuilding infrastructure, providing food and medical care in villages, conducting what today would be called information operations not only through the media but also using such culturally specific tools as highly entertaining plays and musical concerts, and addressing civil as well as military problems, the army units proved to be remarkably popular. If perhaps not capable of fighting a well-equipped enemy in stand-up battle, it showed itself to be a highly effective political force, one able to neutralize Viet Minh encroachments and restore government authority.

In describing these innovative approaches, the author also details the bureaucratic infighting and competing priorities among American agencies operating in Vietnam, perhaps not surprisingly for those who have dealt with interagency planning and operations today. His ire becomes evident as he recounts policymakers in Washington and Saigon stubbornly issuing guidance that had little relevance to the countryside, supporting corrupt leaders, placing American interests in Saigon over democratization and development, and failing to integrate operations by the many U.S. agencies in the country. Notably, the author also cites the patriotism and integrity of Ngo Dinh Diem, president of Vietnam and eventual victim of assassination who, Phillips asserts, alienated American leaders largely due to his staunch nationalism and unwillingness to compromise Vietnamese sovereignty for U.S. purposes. It was, according to the author, this nationalism that Lansdale and his team understood, and that also caused them to butt against policies and priorities of the U.S. Operations Mission (USOM), responsible for all aid and assistance. While USOM concentrated on ensuring American influence in the capital, Phillips worked to rebuild government authority in the countryside in the face of a growing communist insurgency from the north.

His comments on the dichotomies make telling and uncomfortable reading for observers of American counterinsurgency efforts over the past several years. They recount a theme that seems not to have altered in the decades since. In the author’s words, “Everything was centralized, from the top down. Not only did they appear incapable of understanding the bottom up idea of village development but they seemed to perceive it as a threat to their own programs.” When he departed Southeast Asia in late 1959, Phillips admits to being demoralized by the American effort and fearful of the consequences. He responded by leaving government service.

After a 2-year hiatus in the business world, the author returned to Vietnam in 1962, and much of the rest of the narrative recounts his deep involvement in the Rural Affairs and Strategic Hamlet Programs while working for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). His details of village problems, misguided programs and metrics, and lack of accountability have been documented by many historians and observers of the period. His is a tale of growing frustration carried over from his earlier experiences, with particular wrath directed at American leaders who failed to understand the Vietnamese context of the growing war, and the increasing militarization of the American effort leading to inevitable disaster. He bitterly recounts the coup and subsequent assassination of Diem, a series of events he sees as the direct result of duplicity and wrongheadedness. Even more bitterly, he describes the marginalization and eventual discarding in 1967 of Lansdale, his mentor, as the large-scale deployment of U.S. military forces changed the character of the war. Lansdale’s demise, Phillips asserts, is the result of the clear failure of American leaders to comprehend the causes of the conflict. Indeed, much of the
second half of the book is an indictment of that failure. His memories spare no one. USAID officials are castigated for their unwillingness to venture beyond Saigon, which directly led to the policy drift experienced by the Rural Affairs Program, then headed by Phillips. Particular venom is directed at James Killen, sent to Saigon in 1964 to direct the USAID mission. Killen’s penchant for bookkeeping and his unwillingness or inability to see beyond Saigon led him to downgrade the role of Rural Affairs, cancel many of its grassroots programs (he cites Killen as characterizing well-digging projects in villages as a “boondoggle”), and systematically remove many of those involved in the program—some of whom, perhaps not coincidentally, had been nurtured by Lansdale, who was also increasingly being marginalized, even though he was nominally an advisor to the Ambassador. By 1966, Lansdale’s relationship with Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., had become so strained that the once-hailed expert of counterinsurgency had little influence on decisionmaking. Instead of relying on long-term patience and cumulative effects to help the Saigon government regain control of the countryside, U.S. leaders in Vietnam, pushed by Washington, demanded instant results. The United States needed to win a war, the Vietnamese to build a country. The two could not be reconciled.

Why Vietnam Matters is a story of competing approaches to counterinsurgency and nation-building, one top-down and the other bottom-up, and the inability to link the two. It is also one of divergent strategic and operational goals between a country engulfed in its own internal war and another seeking to achieve global objectives by rapidly winning that war. Yet the book suffers from what may be a fatal flaw: it lacks context. The personal experiences and frustrations of the author that give the book its authenticity and its urgency to today also make it suspect. An avid admirer of Lansdale, and obviously bitter at the controversial figure’s demise, Phillips views all events through a one-sided lens. His memories may be accurate depictions of what he experienced, but they are hardly balanced. His staunch defense of Diem, for example, dismisses contemporary and historical charges of ineptness and corruption as American excuses for duplicity. He fails to delve into many of the decisions and policies made early in the war, and thus his complaints appear somewhat shallow. The reader is not given the opportunity to decide for himself. Nonetheless, Phillips’s memories of those struggles in the countryside and among key decisionmakers, as a participant and an observer, are both interesting and instructive. One cannot help but draw analogies to the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. In addition, his discussion of Lansdale’s innovative approaches, especially retraining indigenous security forces for a larger purpose and his focus on local political and economic development, is instructive and relevant to today. His evident frustration with the political infighting between agencies, inability of American leaders to understand the root causes of the conflict at the local level, and incessant demands for progress from officials far removed from the scene leads the reader to reflect on just how little we have progressed in the past four decades when it comes to these types of wars. These insights, if for no other reason than they will cause the reader to stop and reflect, make the book a worthwhile read. One would do well, however, to have a working knowledge of the history of the era beforehand. PRISM
In Exporting Security, Derek Reveron provides a thorough analysis of the changing security environment within which the U.S. military operates, and throughout the book he makes the case why military strategy and engagement must continue their evolution beyond combat. There is compelling rationale why the face of the U.S. military must change, why the phasing of military operations must include the creation of a stable environment for development efforts, and why different approaches to security cooperation and efforts to promote maritime security are needed to suit 21st-century missions.

Reveron details recent military action within this new security environment that encompasses combat, counterinsurgency operations, foreign security force training, and foreign development assistance. These actions have changed the face of the U.S. military at times, even without an agreed upon definition of the role the new military should play around the world:

Current views of the security environment require that the United States “address security from a holistic perspective and integrate our efforts across the U.S. government.” But the military has painfully learned that it cannot rely on international organizations, allies, or other government departments to fill the void among national ends, ways, and means. It is accepted in doctrine that civilians should perform civilian tasks, but civilians (NGOs [nongovernmental organizations] included) have limited ability to deploy in sufficient numbers in violent or poorly developed areas of the world. . . . Consequently, the U.S. military has changed to deliver comprehensive solutions through a new model of defense-security cooperation.

Yet from the perspective of the NGO community and, I suspect, many civilians involved in diplomatic and development functions within the U.S. Government, Mr. Reveron takes his case too far.

The framework of the book is based on an expanded definition of security and the concept of exporting security to other realms, from diplomacy to development, that have not traditionally adopted the primacy of a military-defined security frame to shape their strategy and global engagement. While security is
important, and there is a role for the military to shape a security environment by preventing and preparing the ground during a phase zero of military operations, there are other approaches to U.S. global engagement that are just as valid. Advancing the Millennium Development Goals, promoting economic development, supporting human rights principles, creating democratic institutions, shaping environmentally sustainable growth, or ensuring the space for a diplomatic dialogue are all frames that should shape how the United States engages with the world. While a broader definition of security is part of this list, it is not the overarching frame. Each approach to global engagement has a cadre of professionals within the U.S. Government and public, from diplomats and development experts to environmentalists and human rights activists. The role and importance of these other professions are largely ignored in the book, and the overwhelming resources of the military become the primary reason why the U.S. military must broaden its scope to include, among other skill sets, warrior-diplomats and humanitarian soldiers.

International security has fundamentally shifted twice in the last 20 years, once with the fall of the Berlin Wall and again with the destruction of the World Trade Center. These two occasions, one filled with joy and relief and the other with shock and tragedy, have altered the way diplomacy, foreign and development assistance, and national security are carried out worldwide. Simultaneously, the nature of conflict has been shifting from a framework of interstate aggression to one of intrastate political power struggles and transnational armed networks. All of these complex security and combat shifts need to be reflected in U.S. military strategy.

As a major, if not the primary, global power, the United States has taken the initiative to rapidly adapt its military policy and apply these changes in Iraq, Afghanistan, and throughout Africa. Reveron expertly analyzes this new behavior, which includes maritime security aid in Africa's Gulf of Guinea, security cooperation and training with national armies, and humanitarian assistance under the auspices of regional commands, such as U.S. Africa Command. The community of development-focused NGOs welcomes the U.S. military’s involvement in the professionalization of foreign forces. Such activities contribute to respect for civilian rule of law and human rights as well as to the overall stability of the countries receiving the help. These activities prove that the U.S. military has become more than a combat force; it is now also a security trainer, advisor, postwar reconstruction actor, and, if Reveron’s ideas are accepted, a diplomat and a development professional. The issue is not whether the face of the military should be altered from active combatant to security advisor to reflect these changes in international security, but where the roles of development actor and diplomat should lie.

Development actors and senior U.S. military personnel in Washington, DC, have noticed the civilian capabilities gap uncovered by the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates highlighted this issue when discussing U.S. civilian agency efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, and more specifically the “ad hoc and on the fly” manner in which the interagency Provincial Reconstruction Teams were created, which is untenable in a “climate of crisis.” The lack of civilian expertise has created a burden for the U.S. military as it attempts to fill the gap between development needs and capabilities.
These reflections and warnings have not stopped at Secretary Gates’s desk, but they have rather reverberated throughout the foreign policy community in Washington. Aid to many frontline states such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Jordan, and Pakistan increased in 2008, but as this aid increased, the responsibilities for oversight shifted to, or have been shared by, the Department of Defense (DOD). This has led DOD to grow into a major development funder at the expense of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), which was once the foremost foreign assistance agency in the world. As aid programs have become increasingly fragmented across the U.S. Government, the USAID staff has decreased to less than half the size of 15 years ago. Recent studies by the RAND Corporation and the Government Accountability Office show that the lack of trained and experienced diplomatic staff has resulted in inexperienced U.S. diplomats filling positions in conflict zones instead of seasoned professionals or aid experts. This diminished civilian capacity led the military to take action to fill a perceived vacuum.

The expansion of the military to traditionally civilian activities complicates civilian efforts as well as the foreign perception of the U.S. military. In 2007, Secretary Gates warned of the “creeping militarization” of U.S. diplomacy and development functions, and emerged as a leading advocate for increased civilian-led development funding. This included voicing the need for increased funding for the Department of State and USAID. During the annual Landon Lecture at Kansas State University, Secretary Gates observed that “one of the most important lessons of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is that military success is not sufficient to win.” At a later event Gates stated, “America’s civilian institutions of diplomacy and development have been chronically undermanned and underfunded for far too long—relative to what we traditionally spend on the military, and more important, relative to the responsibilities and challenges our nation has around the world.” While Reveron may not agree, it is apparent that U.S. development agencies and senior military staff believe that civilians should be the diplomats and should be taking the lead on U.S. development and humanitarian assistance projects.

It is important, however, to recognize that the U.S. military does have a critical role in humanitarian relief and, to a lesser extent, development efforts. In large-scale natural disaster emergencies, such as the recent Haiti earthquake and in the aftermath of the December 2004 tsunami in Indonesia, the U.S. military often plays a crucial role in disaster response by providing logistical resources, air and marine transport capabilities, and engineering services. Relations and operational norms between the military and NGOs have become increasingly routine in such settings. Beyond this critical role, as a general rule, experienced civilian agencies, especially USAID with its professional development and humanitarian staff, are best placed to support effective development, humanitarian assistance, and reconstruction activities that address the needs of the poor.

While the U.S. military provides tireless assistance in these emergency situations, its involvement in complex humanitarian environments can be deeply problematic. The U.S. military’s chief focus is security, so its relief and development activities emphasize winning the “hearts and minds” of a population, not the humanitarian imperative of saving lives, doing no harm, and ensuring local ownership of reconstruction efforts. Moreover, the military
generally lacks specialized humanitarian and development expertise, so quick-impact projects and other activities motivated by security objectives often undermine sustainable development projects, community participation and ownership, and relationships built by the United Nations (UN) and NGO workers over years or decades. Quick-impact projects address the symptoms of development ills such as poverty instead of the causes. This is further complicated when well-intended projects may have negative consequences and may be unsustainable due to the military’s short-term goals and high turnover. Relief activities by the military can also compromise the security of U.S. NGOs in or near conflict areas by blurring the lines between humanitarian and military personnel, which can heighten insecurity for NGO staff, local partners, and beneficiaries and restrict access to the communities served.

This diminishing security for humanitarian NGOs is a major factor that shapes the views of the broader NGO humanitarian community and its relationship with an evolving U.S. military. Sadly, humanitarian workers have been directly targeted in armed attacks. Some 260 humanitarian aid workers were killed, kidnapped, or seriously injured in violent attacks in 2008. That year’s fatality rate for international aid workers exceeded that for UN peacekeeping troops and the 155 American soldiers killed that year in Afghanistan. Whether it is the direct targeting of NGOs by radical groups or the shrinking of neutral humanitarian space by the U.S. military, the safety of NGO staffs in war zones continues to deteriorate. Aid groups are now being attacked because they are perceived as Western or in partnership with Western governments and militaries, even though the majority of NGO staffs are of local or national origin. NGOs have begun to cooperate with militaries and private security contractors in order to address these issues.

To establish mutually acceptable boundaries, InterAction and DOD, working through the United States Institute of Peace, negotiated “Guidelines for Relations between U.S. Armed Forces and Non-Governmental Humanitarian Organizations in Hostile or Potentially Hostile Environments.” The guidelines determine how the military is to work with other stakeholders on the ground, including NGOs and interagency colleagues. The publication provides recommended processes to improve the nature of the military-NGO relationship. The recommendations for the military include the wearing of uniforms or distinctive clothing to avoid confusion with NGO representatives, avoidance of interfering with relief efforts toward civilian populations considered unfriendly by the military, and respecting NGO views concerning the carrying of arms in NGO sites. The guidelines’ recommendations for NGOs are equally critical and shape the behavior of humanitarian NGOs working in war zones to ensure the U.S. military can conduct its operations effectively. These guidelines have been integrated into U.S. military field manuals and have facilitated greater cooperation between military and civilian organizations throughout the world.

Even though action is being taken to improve civilian-military relations and to limit humanitarian worker kidnapping, it should not be forgotten that Reveron’s vision of warrior-diplomats and development workers exceeds the military’s capabilities and core skill set. As Secretary Gates stated, the militarization of U.S. foreign policy and civilian activities is not the solution to underfunded civilian agencies. Allowing the expansion of the U.S. military into civilian sectors will not only continue the understaffing of civilian agencies and
complicate the mission of the military, but it will also contribute to a variety of obstacles, including insecurity, within the development community.

While the U.S. military provides much-needed technical and operational assistance to other nations during military training, humanitarian disasters, and transnational operations, the effectiveness of DOD as a development and diplomatic actor remains very much in question. Even after years of programs in Iraq and Afghanistan, DOD does not appear to have a methodology for measuring the effectiveness of its development, humanitarian, and diplomatic activities. Best practices and sensibilities of the 21st century require that development organizations assess the community’s needs for the type and placement of buildings and for goods and services, including education and skill development, prior to taking any action. The military lens is necessarily different and often cannot be the same as the lens through which U.S. civilian aid workers and the NGO community view their tasks. The unfortunate result can be unusable buildings that feed the very “hard” feelings the military’s diligent work was intended to transform. The civilian diplomat is similarly shaped by a different skill set and broader orientation to diplomatic relations between states or with nonstate actors. Reveron’s argument for changing the nature of military and security in the world is well founded and unavoidable, but the expansion of the military into development and broader diplomatic fields requires skills and flexibility the military does not have, nor are they skills it should develop. Civilian agencies should lead development operations, and Reveron’s warrior-diplomats should adopt the more focused roles of ensuring better security cooperation, training peacekeepers, and building armed forces in the developing world that respect rule of law and human rights. As the U.S. military evolves and adapts to the lessons of Iraq and Afghanistan, it must cooperate with and help strengthen the U.S. State Department and USAID to align diplomatic, development, and defense policies and capacity. PRISM

Notes


Gideon Rachman has an intriguing notion. The broad assumptions of most analyses of world politics since 1989—that the major and middle powers of the world are agreed on a set of shared interests, that globalization has created a positive-sum context in which all can benefit at the same time, that a sort of modern alliance of like-minded states opposed to major conflict and other annoyances such as terrorism and environmental degradation will work to preserve stability—may be breaking down. The “international political system has . . . entered a period of dangerous instability and profound change,” he writes, which will fracture the foundations of the positive-sum, like-minded-powers world.

There is growing evidence for such a proposition, and a persuasive case for it ought to be laid out. Unfortunately, this book is not that case. It is, instead, a series of frustratingly brief nuggets that try to encapsulate everything about the post–Cold War world, from neoconservative philosophy to the Thatcherite revolution in Britain to the Gulf War to Islamic terrorism. These chapters, generally 7 to 10 pages each, represent a sort of “pop history” and read as if Rachman read the relevant chapters from a few popular historical treatments, sat down at his keyboard, and summarized the fundamental themes for a high school–level audience. He disposes of the rise of China in seven and a half pages. There is no depth of analysis, no new insight, and no particular argumentation that connects these brief summaries to his overall argument—that the positive-sum, “end of history” moment is ending.

The result can also be misleadingly simplistic. He refers in some places to the “democratic peace” thesis as the idea that “capitalism, democracy, and technology would advance simultaneously—and global peace would be the end product” (p. 5). This sounds like an interesting and persuasive notion, but it is not the democratic peace thesis. This limits its explanatory variable to political democracy, and says nothing about capitalism or technology. He later writes that “The theory of the ‘democratic peace’ looked less persuasive as Russia flexed its military muscles” (p. 168), when in fact a more authoritarian Russia would, by this theory, have been expected to become more aggressive.

The pop-history approach—apparently an effort to appeal to a broad audience—results in many loose, vague claims and statements. Rachman refers to problems in global governance on key issues (a very real problem), and then immediately conflates it with “world government,” a totally different notion, weighted with political significance. He claims that “American conservatives fell prey to their own form of technological euphoria” (p. 120), arguing that “they became firm believers that the technology-driven ‘revolution in military affairs’
had created a new era of unanswerable American dominance.” I know at least a number of “conservatives” who believed no such thing; this is a broad and generic claim that cannot be true—it is just lazy writing. He equates globalization with the rise of “an enticing vision of a ‘new world order’” that emerged after 1989, when in fact students of globalization would make no such parallel—globalization as a phenomenon has been emerging for centuries.

The real problem with the book, however, is that, after laying out a provocative and potentially important thesis—that world politics may be making a U-turn, or at least a left hook—Rachman then himself veers off into an unsatisfying tour of the last couple of decades, ground that has been amply covered in hundreds of books and thousands of articles. He had a compelling thesis to support; he ought to have spent 150 of his pages supporting it. Instead he throws many of his eight-page summaries at the reader, which tell us nothing we do not already know, leaving him precious little space to make his true argument: that a combination of nationalism, zero-sum rivalry, and most of all the legacy of the 2008 financial crisis is creating an “Age of Anxiety” in which rivalry between states will become much more pronounced than it has been. In theory, this section begins on page 167 of a 280-page book, but even then some of the chapters that follow remain devoted to back-ground throat-clearing.

There are suggestive nuggets that point to analysis that could have been broadened considerably. Rachman quotes an American professor at a Chinese university who is astonished at how many of his students “have been taught that war with America is inevitable” (p. 179).

There is the descrip-tion of Russian President Vladimir Putin’s spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, apparently ultramodern and Westernized—yet a man who carries a “tough and nationalistic” message—who believes that “the West had taken advantage of a period of Russian weakness in the 1990s,” who insisted that Russia was “not going to be pushed around anymore.” There is Rachman’s argument that Russian and Chinese governments are turning to nationalism as a chief source of legitimacy.

These and other glimpses of an emerging world of proud, nationalistic, mutually suspicious states with self-interest at the top of their list of priorities, followed by . . . self-interest, and then self-interest, and several notches below that, some vague notion of the sort of collective responsibilities celebrated during what Rachman terms the “Age of Optimism” that began in 1989—these point to the sort of book that could have been written: deeply researched, strong on reporting from the ground in these countries, less about the past and more about the future, giving the reader an intimate sense of the mindsets of emerging leadership generations, not only in China and Russia, but also in places (which, to be fair, Rachman certainly mentions, and emphasizes) such as India, Brazil, Turkey, and Pakistan. But again, that is not this book.
Ongoing engagements in Afghanistan and Iraq have resurrected one of the most important and challenging questions facing political and military leaders in the United States and other nations: how to set objectives, conduct operations, and terminate wars in a manner that achieves intended political outcomes. The collective track record leaves much to be desired, and results of even the most recent conflicts would argue that we have not yet learned the necessary lessons from wars in the 20th century to prevent making many of the same mistakes and suffering similar consequences in the 21st century.

Until now, there has not been an in-depth look at and comprehensive treatment of decisions influencing the termination phase of major conflicts. Providing a rigorous and thorough analysis of conflicts spanning from World War I to the ongoing war in Afghanistan, How Wars End presents key factors that have shaped U.S. decisions on how to conduct and terminate each conflict. It then provides an insightful look at factors surrounding and influencing these key decisions. Finally, based on lessons learned from previous wars, the author provides recommendations to help guide leaders through the endgame choices they are certain to face when terminating future conflicts.

How Wars End identifies several key factors that helped shape and explain American war termination decisions in each war. First, Gideon Rose draws on Carl von Clausewitz’s definition of war as “an act of policy . . . simply a continuation of political intercourse, with the addition of other means.” He then notes that the United States, as a matter of practice, has often created a division of labor where civilians deal with political matters, military leaders deal with military matters, and control is handed off from the political leaders to the generals when the conflict starts and then back to the diplomats when the conflict ends. Rose states that this approach delineating a clear division of labor and a handoff between political and military decisionmaking is flawed because the decisionmaking related to political and military actions needs to be highly interactive before, during, and after the war. The second key factor shaping U.S. war termination decisions was that in addition to fighting against aggression, the U.S. effort was also fighting for a vision of a future international political and economic order. This influenced how decisionmakers interfaced with allies and adversaries during and after the conflict. A third key factor was how the freedom to choose between the various courses of action on terminating any specific war was enabled by the relative power of the United States—while
at the same time, the freedom of action was constrained by the need to maintain political solidarity and a consensus with the other allies during the fighting and after the fighting had stopped. Finally, Rose postulates that the thinking of U.S. policymakers on how to terminate conflicts was often dominated by lessons drawn from recent wars, whether or not those lessons were appropriate for the challenges at hand. He cites several examples where U.S. leaders, concerned with not repeating past errors, improperly applied lessons from the last war, which often prolonged the conflict or resulted in unintended negative consequences.

Then, in a brilliant in-depth analysis of each conflict from World War I through the ongoing conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, Rose explains the factors cited above as they relate to the complex political options being decided when the end of the fighting was in sight. For example, the consequences of agreeing to an armistice rather than unconditional surrender in World War I colored Franklin D. Roosevelt's decision to insist on unconditional surrender in World War II for both the European and Pacific theaters—even though an armistice with Japan, if reached, might have precluded the use of atomic weapons and ended the war prior to the Soviet entry into and seizure of additional territory in the Pacific theater. In a second example, the moral dilemma of forced repatriation at the end of World War II influenced Harry Truman's decision to insist on voluntary repatriation of all prisoners at the end of the Korean War. This decision extended the fighting for 18 months and resulted in an additional 25,000 United Nations casualties, while the final settlement on the ground was practically identical to their positions 2 years earlier. In a third example, Rose highlights that the lack of prior planning for the wars' aftermath tarnished the overwhelming military victories in both the Gulf War and the Iraq War. It is also clear from how Rose addresses the U.S. manner of terminating involvement in limited wars such as Korea, Vietnam, and the Gulf War that he portends potentially dire consequences for Iraq and Afghanistan unless the United States commits to the “secure, hold, and build” strategy used in Korea rather than extracting U.S. support and turning the “hold and build” responsibilities back to the host nation as was done in Vietnam and in Iraq during the Gulf War.

The author concludes by providing the following recommendations to inform both political and military leaders on key steps needed to ensure that the termination of future wars will be properly planned and executed:

**Plan ahead and work backward.** Political and military leaders should focus on the desired end result as the starting point for all war planning, with all supporting activities serving as building blocks and preparatory stages for the final outcome.

**Define goals precisely and keep the ends and means in balance.** To ensure that a war achieves its intended political purpose, policymakers should have a clear sense of what will happen on the ground when the fighting stops, what political and security arrangements will look like, who will maintain them, and how.

**Pay attention to implementation and anticipate problems.** This requires decision-makers to identify critical assumptions underpinning their plans and to develop a backup plan in advance on what to do if the assumptions prove invalid.

In summary, this is a masterful piece of research on the decisions and actions leading to war termination in each of the conflicts. It was clear that while the conditions and circumstances in each conflict were unique,
decisions on how to terminate prior conflicts often influenced the mindsets of politicians, the military, and the public on how to deal with terminating the conflict in hand. In many cases, with the benefit of hindsight, it is apparent that many of these decisions prolonged the conflict, resulted in additional casualties, or sowed the seeds of a repeat conflict between the same nations. The examples from each conflict need to be studied by political and military leaders alike. And while the political and military circumstances of each conflict will never be exactly replicated in future wars, we need to learn the core lessons that political and military actions should be planned and conducted with the end result in mind; that we need to have a plan to manage what happens on the ground after the fighting stops, and backup plans to address unanticipated events; and most importantly, that it is necessary to tailor individual approaches to war termination to the unique circumstances of each conflict. PRISM
In his latest book, Joseph Nye presents a comprehensive examination of the multifaceted dimensions of power and advances a framework for what he calls “liberal realism.” Nye writes for the “intelligent reader” rather than an academic audience and offers a set of recommendations for a smart power strategy in the 21st century. Smart power, he explains, is “the combination of the hard power of coercion and payment with the soft power of persuasion.”

In what he calls liberal realism, Nye proposes an American “smart power strategy” centered on multilateralism and partnering in the context of a global information age. Based on a synthesis of interests and values, this strategy gives priority to national interests, but considers values “an intangible national interest.” Tradeoffs and compromises are inevitable, Nye concedes. While according an unexceptionable primacy to securing national survival, his grand strategy recommends all manner of multilateral, economic, and soft resources in a multilateral approach to confronting threats.

Nye notes that his concept of smart power has influenced the Obama administration’s policy. And so it has. In two speeches before the Council on Foreign Relations, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton outlined the smart power strategy “central to our thinking and our decision-making.” The “heart of America’s mission in the world today,” she stated, is to exercise “American leadership to solve problems in concert with others.” Taking a multilateral approach, the administration will mobilize all available resources in a “blend of principle and pragmatism” to revitalize international institutions, reach beyond governments to nonstate actors and people, and join others to solve shared problems. Setting forth an ambitious global agenda in a “new American Moment,” Secretary Clinton seemed heedless of limits and the need to set priorities. America must do it all. “What do we give up on? What do we put on the backburner?” she asked. Council President Richard Haass raised the awkward question of money. With U.S. debt nearing the size of gross domestic product and deficits running at $1.5 trillion a year, Haass objected, how can America conduct foreign policy as if it had unlimited resources. The Secretary answered that making the right decisions will be “very tough.”

Neither the Secretary’s agenda nor Nye’s book takes sufficient account of the Nation’s fiscal peril and its consequences for America’s role in the world. Nye claims that the country can solve its debt problem with consumption taxes and expenditure cuts to pay for entitlement programs once the economy recovers. He overlooks the daunting political task of reducing entitlement programs themselves, the main driver of the country’s unsustainable debt. Richard Haass and Roger Altman have issued a dire fiscal forecast entailing huge spending cuts and substantial tax hikes, and Michael Mandelbaum has written a bracing book explaining how economic constraints will inevitably curtail America’s post–World War II activist foreign policy with baleful effects for the stability and prosperity of the world.

Nye counsels restraint in democracy promotion, but he elevates our values to an “intangible national interest,” and his liberal realism invites an ambitious foreign policy. The Obama administration’s smart power strategy joins interests and values. Secretary Clinton declares that “democratic values are a cornerstone of our foreign policy” and rejects what she calls a false choice “between our security and our values.” This expansive view of foreign policy recalls the habits of “democratic transformation,” what Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice termed a “uniquely American realism,” according to which our national interests require an international order reflecting our values.

Professor Nye’s book has won wide acclaim, yet how new is smart power? Apart from a novel diffusion of power in the cyber age, if smart power means the adroit marshaling of hard and soft resources in a multilateral approach to common problems, what, if not smart power, was the post–World War II American statecraft that created the international security and politico-economic architecture that underlay several decades of security and prosperity benefiting much of the world?

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According to Nye, the problem confronting all states in the new century is the increasing number of threats (for example, international financial instability and terrorism) outside their control resulting from a diffusion of power from states to nonstate actors. Military power has not become obsolete, but will continue to understate to nonstate actors. Military power has not control resulting from a diffusion of power from number of threats (for example, international and attraction.”

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Nye counsels restraint in democracy promotion, but he elevates our values to an “intangible national interest,” and his liberal realism invites an ambitious foreign policy. The Obama administration’s smart power strategy joins interests and values. Secretary Clinton declares that “democratic values are a cornerstone of our foreign policy” and rejects what she calls a false choice “between our security and our values.” This expansive view of foreign policy recalls the hubris of “democratic transformation,” what Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice termed a “uniquely American realism,” according to which our national interests require an international order reflecting our values.

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During the 2008 Presidential campaign, Senator Barack Obama often distinguished between the bad war of choice (Iraq) and the good war of necessity (Afghanistan). On March 19, a U.S.-led coalition initiated a humanitarian war against Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi, launching Operation Odyssey Dawn to create a no-fly zone to neutralize Qadhafi’s air force and enforce an arms embargo in order to protect civilians from his suppression of rebel forces. In a March 28 speech to the Nation, President Obama justified this optional war in a third Muslim country, asserting America’s responsibility to mankind and “who we are … Some nations may be able to turn a blind eye to atrocities in other countries. The United States of America is different. And as President, I refused to wait for the images of slaughter and mass graves before taking action.”

As he spoke, the President proclaimed mission accomplished for our limited objective and transferred leadership to our North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) partners. However, the shape of Obama’s “coalition of the willing” and of the mission itself are unclear. The war has divided NATO and demonstrated the irrelevance of the European Union, from its inception the creature of French foreign policy. History will forever remain replete with cruel tyrants and their atrocities. No end to humanitarian warmaking for a nation with a vain attempt to reform them according to supposed “universal values.” This need for self-restraint becomes more exigent particularly in Muslim lands, where no Lech Walesa or Vaclav Havel waits in the wings to lead. Former Defense Secretary Robert Gates warned, “We have to be very realistic about our capacity to shape the world and to shape other countries that have their own history and their own culture and their own traditions—and particularly, to shape them in our image.”

Professor Nye hails President Obama’s Libyan war as smart power in action. If he is correct, the future of American power is bleak. Smart power offers a guide to the implementation of foreign policy, but smart power will be to no avail if policy goals are dumb. Armed humanitarian intervention, particularly if irresolute, and opportunistic regime change are profoundly ill-conceived goals for U.S. foreign policy. History will forever remain replete with cruel tyrants and their atrocities. No end exists to humanitarian warmaking for a nation that would assume the moral custodianship of mankind. As Henry Kissinger and James Baker write, “our idealistic goals cannot be the sole motivation for the use of force in U.S. foreign policy. We cannot be the world’s policeman. We cannot use military force to meet every humanitarian challenge that may arise. Where would we stop?”

The United States will not have a credible foreign policy until it adopts a more modest conception of its national interests and ceases to meddle in other states’ domestic affairs in the vain attempt to reform them according to supposed “universal values.” The United States is strong enough to get away with it. Nor will the United States punish a far more monstrous regime than Qadhafi’s—North Korea. Kim Jong-il knows the reason. That is why he is not going to give up his nuclear weapons. The ancient Athenians, who also boasted of who they were and their values, taught the Melians a harsh geopolitical lesson. Practical people understand, Athenian envoys informed the Melians, “the standard of justice depends on the equality of power to compel and that in fact the strong do what they have the power to do and the weak accept what they have to accept.”

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During the 2008 Presidential campaign, Senator Barack Obama often distinguished between the bad war of choice (Iraq) and the good war of necessity (Afghanistan). On March 19, a U.S.-led coalition initiated a humanitarian war against Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi, launching Operation Odyssey Dawn to create a no-fly zone to neutralize Qadhafi’s air force and enforce an arms embargo in order to protect civilians from his suppression of rebel forces. In a March 28 speech to the Nation, President Obama justified this optional war in a third Muslim country, asserting America’s responsibility to mankind and “who we are. . . . Some nations may be able to turn a blind eye to atrocities in other countries. The United States of America is different. And as President, I refused to wait for the images of slaughter and mass graves before taking action.”

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Some countries may draw a less benevolent lesson from America’s moralistic intervention, as Russia did from President Bill Clinton’s Balkan humanitarian intervention.4 The bald fact is that Libya is weak and, unlike Saudi Arabia or Bahrain where we have bigger fish to fry,5 of marginal strategic interest. The United States is strong enough to get away with it. Nor will the United States punish a far more monstrous regime than Qadhafi’s—North Korea. Kim Jong-il knows the reason. That is why he is not going to give up his nuclear weapons. The ancient Athenians, who also boasted of who they were and their values, taught the Melians a harsh geopolitical lesson. Practical people understand, Athenian envoys informed the Melians, “the standard of justice depends on the equality of power to compel and that in fact the strong do what they have the power to do and the weak accept what they have to accept.”

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Notes


Imagine a debate erupting in the United States over how much the government should invest in cancer research. (Such a debate might well emerge from the budget cutting that we are going to face over the next few years.) One school of thought argues that we should continue to fund the research generously because men have about a 1 in 2 chance of developing cancer at some point in their lives, and women have a 1 in 3 chance. Impressive statistics, says the other side, but while millions may contract cancer, the actual number of cancer deaths is estimated to be less than 600,000 in 2011. Millions of Americans may suffer and we should make them comfortable, but cancer is not an existential threat to America. We need not continue funding the search for a cure.

Stewart Patrick’s book on fragile or failing states is the national security equivalent of the “it’s-not-so-bad-after-all” school of thought. And it is equally unpersuasive.

This is an unexpected conclusion because Patrick starts off well, citing prominent foreign policy leaders on both sides who have warned of the dangers of failing states, including George W. Bush, Barack Obama, Condoleezza Rice, Robert Gates, Hillary Clinton, and former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Michael Mullen. Nevertheless, Patrick thinks they are all wrong. He states, “The relationship between state fragility and transnational threats is more complicated and contingent than the conventional wisdom would suggest.” He coolly declares that “globally, most fragile states do not present significant security risks, except to their own people.”

Patrick is a respected foreign affairs analyst with the Council on Foreign Relations. Some years back, when he was working at the Center for Global Development, he collaborated with United Nations Ambassador Susan Rice, then with the Brookings Institution, to produce an Index of State Weakness in the Developing World. In his new book, Patrick uses this index to explore the relationship of state fragility and five major issues: transnational terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), transnational crime, energy security, and infectious disease. Unfortunately, in trying to quantify linkages, he misses the forest for the trees, making several conceptual and methodological mistakes.

To begin, Patrick applies an American yardstick to the analysis, even though he asserts that he is looking at state fragility “globally.” Repeatedly, he makes his assessments on the basis of how state fragility affects U.S. security interests, giving little significance to its impact on other states, regions, peoples, and world order generally.

Pauline H. Baker is President Emeritus of The Fund for Peace. She led several programs focused on state fragility, including the development of The Failed States Index, an annual global index of 177 states that has been produced by The Fund for Peace and published in Foreign Policy since 2005.
Second, he claims that he has a new approach: he matches the five transnational issues with the countries that have the worse rankings in his index. This is a new, but not necessarily better, approach. Eleven others are mentioned in a brief boxed insert entitled “Existing Attempts to Define and Measure State Weakness,” all of which are dismissed in a page and a half. It looks as if Patrick inserted this as an afterthought to cover possible anticipated criticism that his analysis ignores insights from other research, which, in effect, it does.

Third, while his approach is original, his conclusions are overly simplistic, based on an index that, for these purposes, is flawed. A summary chart of the Patrick-Rice Index (sometimes referred to as the Brookings Index) lists three categories of state fragility: the “truly failed and critically weak states,” “weak states,” and “states to watch.” However, the criteria by which Patrick matches the links between the three categories and the five issues are not altogether clear. For example, he asserts that “weak but functioning states” are the most hospitable and preferable environments for those who want to foster disorder in the world, but he does not say whether he means that they target the “weak states,” the “states to watch,” or both.

The lack of clarity stems in part from the fact that the index is selective and static—selective in that it leaves out stable, strong, and well-performing states, including states from the developed world, and static in that it was produced using data from 2008 (or the next closest year) and was produced only once. Thus, not only is the sample too narrow, but the timeframe is also too short to make the kind of generalizations contained in this book. The index does not tell us whether there has been improvement or deterioration in these states, or whether the observations and findings are valid for other periods. There are no trend lines. In sum, Patrick's conclusions are based on skewed evidence collected at one point in time.

In addition, Patrick makes his judgments based on a single calculation: whether there is a statistical correlation between the number of fragile states in the bottom two quintiles of his index and the number of incidents or links occurring in each of the five transnational issues. This is quantitative analysis at its weakest, for it ignores qualitative differences among the states and threats. For example, it might be useful to compare aggregate criminal incidents of transnational crime in different states as a proxy indicator of potential WMD smuggling opportunities. However, a low correlation does not necessarily mean a low threat potential. After all, only one successful incident of significant nuclear, biological, or chemical smuggling is needed for a catastrophic incident to take place. To be of value to policymakers, researchers have to find the unexpected and unpredictable events, not limit themselves exclusively to the typical or frequent ones that we already know about.

There are also major blind spots. One typical shortcoming is Patrick's tendency to confuse “strong states” with “strongman states.” Strong states have legitimate, competent, and representative institutions that can manage society’s problems peacefully, without an external administrative or military presence. Strongman states, on the other hand, may appear to be strong due to authoritarian tactics and large security forces, but they are really weak and often brittle entities, held together by corrupt dictators, oligarchs, or thugs who deliberately undermine institutions that are not personally loyal to them. State institutions cannot govern successfully once the strongmen are removed—through revolutions, coups, assassinations,
popular uprisings, invasions, or death by natural causes. Things tend to fall apart when they go. Before the Arab Spring, many would have classified Egypt as a strong, albeit authoritarian, state. Actually, it was a strongman state that was weak at the core, similar to the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and many others. Not all strongman states are destined to collapse or disintegrate, but they all contain the seeds of their own downfall if they do not adopt reforms or initiate fundamental change before those seeds germinate. By that time, the risk of collapse will be much greater, and the nature of the change will likely be more violent.

In every one of the five transnational issues examined, Patrick concludes that the threat may be real, but it does not come directly from the weakest of the weak, as is so often assumed. On WMD proliferation, for example, he states that it is not failing states that offer opportunities for proliferation. Rather, “the most problematic group of countries may be relatively ‘strong states to watch’ that have or seek nuclear weapons capabilities.” In his framework, states to watch are defined as the more functional ones that still perform poorly in the bottom quintile of his index in at least two areas of state performance. This is where things get confusing. Such states, he argues, may include fragile democracies and authoritarian regimes, as well as regionally or globally significant countries such as Russia, China, Egypt, India, Venezuela, and Turkey. There is some truth to this observation, but Patrick underestimates the dangers of nuclear smuggling in fragile states, which are quite real. Border guards can be bought, illicit transactions are common, smuggling is endemic, and terrorist financing can be used to transfer nuclear materials. In ungoverned or poorly governed territories, there is little law enforcement and meager adherence to international norms of nonproliferation.

Patrick states that “Arguably, the only weak states that could pose a direct military threat to the United State are North Korea and Pakistan.” Technically, this is true if one defines direct military threat as a full-scale nuclear attack on our homeland, but that is a 20th-century definition. Besides 9/11—a direct military attack on our homeland that originated from a failed state—there are more potential threats from states such as Iran and China. Although neither is likely to launch a full-scale direct nuclear attack on the United States anytime soon, they could be dangerous adversaries in other ways and under other conditions. Then there are threats that come in the form of rogue or complicit groups and individuals in weak and failing states, such as Pakistan’s A.Q. Khan, who, alone or in concert with government officials, supplied nuclear know-how and materials to North Korea and Libya. In the 21st century, we face complex challenges including “threat convergence”—where the multiple threats of weak and fragile states, WMD proliferation, and terrorism overlap. This is a difficult concept to measure statistically, but it presents serious dangers nonetheless.

Patrick observes that “weak states do have certain vulnerabilities that proliferators might attempt to exploit,” but that “globally, . . . state fragility does not uniformly correlate with proliferation potential” (emphasis added). Does any correlation apply “uniformly”? Is that sufficient reason to invalidate the association entirely? On whether weak states attract terrorists, Patrick similarly writes, “with the important exception of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, weak states do not appear to have provided disproportionately large pools of recruits or targets for recent terrorism operations” (emphasis added). What, exactly, constitutes “disproportionally large”? And why should Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan be seen
as exceptions and not prototypes that can be imitated elsewhere? How does he know the recruits who flocked to Iraq have not dispersed to other areas? Patrick tries to cover himself with rhetorical qualifications throughout the book, stating that correlations are imperfect, threats are not disproportionately large, and conclusions about future dangers are exaggerated.

Equally thin assertions about fragile states and transnational terrorism generally are based only on al Qaeda and its affiliates, excluding all other terrorist organizations. Like his conclusion on WMD proliferation, he finds that “rather than truly failed states, what terrorists [read al Qaeda] and other illicit transnational groups find most conducive are weak but functional states,” such as Pakistan and Afghanistan. Putting aside the questionable notion that these two countries are “functional states,” the main problem with this view is that it is outdated. Terrorism experts argued this line for years, but it appears to have grown out of fashion. Experience shows that al Qaeda and its affiliates use whatever territory offers them the freedom to operate, even if they are basket cases that provide more difficult environments. Somalia and Yemen, two “truly failed and critically weak states,” are regarded by the U.S. Government as containing the greatest terrorist threats since the death of Osama bin Laden. If that is so, then Patrick is pointing us in the wrong direction. Al Qaeda may be in retreat from its traditional strongholds, but its affiliated groups have metastasized. In any event, a blanket statement disassociating terrorism and state fragility does not hold when so many other terrorist organizations, such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), Shining Path, Jemaah Islamiya, Hizbollah, and Lashkar-e Tayyiba, are omitted from the analysis.

And so it goes with each of the five threats, including energy security, transnational crime, and infectious diseases. None, in Patrick’s view, rises to the level of being linked to state fragility in a significant way. In each instance, Patrick cites situations in which linkages might be made, and they may even be serious, but then he turns around and debunks his own initial analysis, concluding that, overall, they are insignificant.

The book is strongest when the focus is on the qualitative description of the five transnational threats. Indeed, if readers were to ignore the simplistic correlations, subjective exceptions, selectivity of the sample, static nature of the data, and rhetorical qualifications, they would get a better understanding of the real world threats facing us today. Indeed, the analysis of the five issues is so strong, and the linkages with state fragility so evident, that most readers would gain real value from reading these sections that can stand on their own. Nevertheless, in the end, these readers are likely to come to very different conclusions from those of the author.

Despite downplaying the threat, Patrick ends on a solid note. He maintains rightly that the United States should have a national strategy toward weak and failing states. It would have been preferable for him to have examined how to construct such a strategy, and what its central components should be, than simply calling for one after discrediting the importance of the issue.

Weak and failing states represent a new class of states whose internal weaknesses became evident after the Cold War, when superpowers lost interest in propping up foreign proxies. Their internal weaknesses had existed for decades, but they were suppressed by local leaders and papered over by external allies. “Big
men” in weak states ruled as tsars for decades, surviving in a bipolar world by exploiting the wider competition between the superpowers who did not want to rock the boat by pointing out human rights abuses and exposing oppression by allies. The time for tolerating such state pathology is fast running out. The Arab Spring is but one byproduct of that trend. Others will follow, at least for the next decade or two, as the growing pressures from globalization, youth bulges, economic hardship, inequality, mass migrations, international trade, information technology, and popular discontent combine to sweep away dictatorial rule. The results of festering state fragility will be seen in many ways, from famines, natural disasters, and other humanitarian disasters that overwhelm local authorities, to popular uprisings, extremist movements, and regime changes that will shake the world’s power structures. To ignore or dismiss state fragility is to invite more human tragedies and violent unrest, which will affect the security and well-being of strong states as well as weak ones and transform the nature of the international political order.

A U.S. global strategy toward state fragility need not require significant new resources. It simply requires smarter investment of existing resources, a shared and coordinated international response, solid early warning techniques, culturally sensitive and well-timed interventions, and, most of all, a core group of officials committed to addressing the problem with enlightened leadership. The last thing we need is an Alfred E. Neuman who says, “What, me worry?”
I began the task of reviewing Robert Johnson’s *The Afghan Way of War: How and Why They Fight* not expecting to enjoy the book at all. I have deep interests in Afghanistan, but am the type of reader who prefers my military history as told by Bernard Cornwell through the eyes of Richard Sharpe in his successful string of historical novels. But to my surprise, I found the book quite compelling. Johnson has produced a readable account of Afghan conflict over the past couple of centuries that, while not profoundly challenging any of my perceptions or expectations, has certainly enriched them and reinforced them by grounding them in history.

*The Afghan Way of War* fills a significant gap in our understanding of the context surrounding our current imbroglio in the region, though the author cautions against trying to draw direct policy guidance from his observations. Johnson notes that most of the historical sources on the various Afghan conflicts reflect a Western perspective. He makes it clear that the lack of thoughtful analyses of how and why Afghans fight *from an Afghan perspective* is a serious impediment to accurate understanding of how and why both our friends and enemies in the region behave as they do. He also notes that even our concept of “friends and enemies” is not necessarily part of the Afghan way of war. The consequences of this gap in knowledge are made clear, as Johnson cites Patrick Porter, who “pointed to a predilection to stereotyping in the Western episteme which is so pervasive as to threaten to prevent accurate judgments being made in the policy sphere” (p. 3). Johnson assesses the Afghan way of war and attempts to use Afghan materials—to the degree possible, given limited non-Western source material—to understand why and how the Afghans fight the way they have. He then challenges some of the assumptions commonly made about how Afghans fight that have emerged from an ethnocentric Western historical perspective.

As an example of how Afghan behaviors, viewed through Western lenses, tend to be misunderstood in ways both profound and significant, he cites various (Western) historians and authors describing the proclivity of Afghans to switch sides and realign their loyalties when necessary as being without honor or loyalty. An Afghan perspective of that same behavior would be based on a more pragmatic understanding of a fully acceptable behavior that has evolved over centuries as a mechanism for survival. Likewise, the brutality of Afghan combat has been described as the “ruthless mass murder and mutilation of their enemies” and “an expression of Afghan backwardness and lack of restraint” (p. 7). Johnson notes that “There

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**The Afghan Way of War: How and Why They Fight**

*By Robert Johnson*  
*Oxford University Press, 2011*  
*400 pp., $29.95*  
*ISBN: 978-0-19979-856-8*  

**REVIEWED BY DONALD LARRY SAMPLER**
was no acknowledgment of the need to annihilate those who would otherwise return to seek revenge” (p. 7)—a need that would have been clear to an observer who was informed by an Afghan perspective.

In reviewing the marginalia that I scribbled throughout the book, I found a surprising number of exclamation points that I use to draw attention to particularly good points or well-phrased and clear statements worth remembering. For example:

*Afghan Pashtuns were not entirely anarchic, forming alliances through marriage and relations to increase military power and deter rivals. However, once qaum, or descent-locality group, reached a size likely to threaten the available resources, then suspicion and anxiety increased and served to undermine the alliance to which a family or an individual might belong. Pashtuns valued the idealism of gheryatmun (courageous independence), rendering qaum alliances inherently temporary, unstable, and liable to disintegration. . . . [T]he Pashtun needed to engage in alliances that were convenient but avoid military obligations that might incur his or his family’s destruction. This helps to explain the fluidity of Afghans on the battle field, rushing to assist another clan in the hope of spoils or an alliance, but equally quick to retreat and disperse if the engagement turned unfavorably against them (p. 17).*

This passage describes behavior that anyone spending any amount of time in the region would have experienced first-hand. But Johnson’s clear explanation of the how and why of such behavior brings new rigor and resilience to our understanding. Rather than dishonorable or illogical behavior that we might hope to modify, such fluidity on the part of Pashtuns is a sensible part of their coping mechanisms for the environment in which they live. Later, Johnson describes various attributes of how and why Afghans negotiate in war, citing five stages of their negotiations, four main themes common to Afghan negotiations, and so forth. These insights, while not always new, are useful for practitioners in helping to clarify our expectations of the Afghans in various situations. Viewed through a Western lens, a particular trait might be seen as aberrant. But through Johnson’s Afghan-centric historical lens, that same trait can now be understood and, if not predicted, at least anticipated.

In contrast to his clarity, there are also examples of academic rhetoric that I presume are of value to the military historians among his audience, but which made my eyes bleed as I read them: “Ethno-nationalist mobilization and contestation are macrohistorical processes that operate over both short and long timespans. It may take decades until perceived humiliation and unfair ethnic status hierarchies give rise to political mobilization and conflict. . . . [I]n extreme cases of path dependency, actors may find themselves trapped in self-sustaining cycles of violence” (p. 17). Fortunately, such academic prose is used sparingly.

In many ways, the intellectual “heavy lifting” of the book is accomplished in the introduction and early historical anecdotes at the beginning of the second section of the book, where Johnson establishes the Afghan-centric perspectives of behavior. The latter sections then examine those behaviors in various temporal settings. The examination of the Afghan way of war during “Dynastic struggles and Popular Resistance in Afghanistan” was astonishing for its relevance. Consider, for
example, his descriptions of the problems affecting the Afghan military forces of Ahmad Shah Duranni and his son in the late 1700s: First they lacked any secure financial-logistical system. Second, the resistance against their central army learned and stiffened. Third, the loyalty of the army was often in doubt (p. 42). He goes on to suggest that “Duranni Shahs faced the dilemma of staffing governorships with weak men who might be unable to rule effectively, or stronger men who might be tempted to rebel,” and cites a traditional proverb that “An Afghan Amir sleeps upon an ant heap” (p. 42). Hamid Karzai faces many of the same dilemmas as his Duranni ancestors.

And it is not only President Karzai: International Security Assistance Force leaders might appreciate Johnson’s description of the British situation in 1841, noting that “The biggest oversight has been the failure to acknowledge that it was the under-resourced nature of the occupation, with small and isolated garrisons, both those of the Shah, and the British, and the consequent under-financing of the project, that led to the crisis of 1841” (p. 62).

The number of times a passage or particular insight generates immediate and blindingly obvious parallels to contemporary issues of today might be one of the most surprising constants of the book. In describing the Pashtun uprising at the end of the 19th century, for example, Johnson notes that “Various explanations [for the uprising] were offered, but it was generally accepted that recent encroachments into tribal territory, with fears that the British meant to occupy the region permanently as a prelude to the destruction of Afghan independence and their way of life, led to the initial fighting” (p. 149). Pages later he quotes Winston Churchill, who served as a lieutenant during the “Pathan revolt,” as stating, “Great and expensive forces, equipped with all the developments of scientific war, are harried and worried without rest or mercy by an impalpable cloud of active and well-armed skirmishers. To enter the mountains and attack an Afridi is to jump into the water to catch a fish” (p. 154).

In a telling precursor to today’s debates among Western military strategists with respect to counterinsurgency and/or “population-centric engagements,” Johnson cites Secret Dispatches from the India Office in 1898: “The India Office concurred with Lord Curzon’s thoughts on the need for a change of policy in tribal territories: ‘it has always been an axiom that the good will of the tribesmen affords the best guarantee for the success of a frontier policy—the friendly attitude of the frontier tribes would be of much greater moment than the absolute safety of any single pass, however important’” (p. 171).

And, as a last example of relevant precursors, Johnson cites Captain H.L. Nevill, writing in 1912, “To compel the surrender of guerrillas, such as the frontier tribes of India, by the usual process of breaking down the means of defence would entail operations so prolonged and costly as to be out of all proportion to the interest at stake” (p. 172). The book is rife with such parallels, and they are uniquely instructive to those operating in and on Afghanistan policies.

Johnson’s discussion of the Soviet period, ending (more or less) with the Geneva Accords of 1988, clearly and strongly supports his thesis that there is no immutable “Afghan way of war.” When faced with the dramatically different technologies brought to bear by the Soviets, the Afghans again adapted their own tactics, making effective use of the terrain and resources available to them. His subsequent coverage of the civil war, the Taliban, and the present insurgency is comparatively less
detailed, yet still there are revelations: the 1989 battle for Jalalabad, between the Mujahideen and government forces, is compared with respect to brutality to the Battle for Stalingrad. It was a critical moment for the Mujahideen, and yet I had known virtually nothing about its scale or significance before his exposition.

His coverage of the contemporary insurgency, in contrast to the depth and constant delightful discoveries of the earlier sections of the book, is not particularly revealing. He quotes a Special Air Service officer as stating that “Killing was a way of life for [Afghans] and they would pick up a weapon for the slightest of reasons and fight under the flimsiest of flags” (p. 269). But the reader, having the benefit of Johnson’s previous chapters, would have expected no less and could, in fact, provide an Afghan-centric perspective on why such behavior is understandable and culturally acceptable. The Afghan behaviors described in this last section of the book come not as revelations, but as the expected—which is perhaps evidence of the efficacy of Johnson’s thesis.

The final section, entitled “Lessons Learned,” is not particularly insightful or helpful. And in direct contrast to the rest of the book (and particularly the earliest sections), the analyses are somewhat shallow and general in nature. One observation in this section is that “Afghans are not culturally determined in their actions, but are reactive and adaptive. Their operations are shaped and influenced by a cultural ‘lens,’ but they are also pragmatic” (p. 305). While both may be true, the sentences seem almost to contradict each other and, regardless, are not particularly new or useful insights.

If there is a particular thesis for the book, it might be that “there is no fixed and unchanging way of war for Afghanistan” (p. 8), but that Afghans have long been a learning, adaptive society that made war (and accommodations related to war) based upon contemporary constraints and relationships.

The true lessons learned in Johnson’s excellent book are buried among the historical recitation of battles fought in centuries past where a particular attribute of Afghans of the past or particular idiosyncrasy of their cultural dynamic is highlighted and resonates clearly with a modern, contemporary attribute or action. Harking Johnson’s admonition not to make too direct a connection between historical antecedents and current policy, it is still possible to mine from this book much in the way of context and depth of understanding and knowledge for those whose job it is today to fight with or—and perhaps even more usefully—negotiate with Afghans.

Now if only he could retell these stories through the eyes of Richard Sharpe and his Irish Sergeant Harper.
Two Recent Takes on Where We Are in Afghanistan, and How We Got There

A Vulcan’s Tale: How the Bush Administration Mismanaged the Reconstruction of Afghanistan

By Dov S. Zakheim
Brookings Institution Press, 2011
320 pp., $32.95

Understanding War in Afghanistan

By Joseph J. Collins
NDU Press, 2011
158 pp.
ISBN: 978-1-78039-924-9

A REVIEW ESSAY BY JAMES KUNDER

For serious students of Afghanistan specifically, and stabilization operations more generally, two recent books are worth a look. Both Joseph J. Collins’s Understanding War in Afghanistan and Dov S. Zakheim’s A Vulcan’s Tale: How the Bush Administration Mismanaged the Reconstruction of Afghanistan focus on U.S. policy toward that tortured South Asian country.

Dr. Collins’s book, which draws on his broader writing on the topic, is, in his own words, “an intellectual primer on war in Afghanistan.” And it strikes its target admirably. As the word primer suggests, the work is spare, focusing on the essential facts about Afghanistan and the nature and history of warfare there. Simply put, the book is a gem, summarizing in its short 158 pages an enormous treasure trove of information on everything from the topography of the land to the tribal code of the Pashtun ethnic group to Western policy options to conclude the Afghan war.

Here the reader finds important data on the ethnic makeup of Afghanistan, historical roots of many current rivalries, and insights into topics that otherwise might be invisible to the soldier or reconstruction worker encountering Afghanistan for the first time. An example of the latter is Dr. Collins’s short but useful foray into the trilateral dynamics among Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India, an invisible but potent interplay that affects the actions of all three important nations.

Scattered throughout Understanding War in Afghanistan are “mini” analytical syntheses that, without this book, would be distilled only after extensive research by readers. In the chapter on “Land, People, and Culture,” for example,
Dr. Collins notes that Afghanistan history and current politics result from a complex interplay of four factors: the rugged, landlocked topography; the low level of factor endowments that “makes poverty a natural condition”; local and tribal power structures; and the nation’s location among more powerful neighbors contending over its fate. My personal favorite, since I grappled with this set of issues while working at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), is the book’s treatment of the counterpoint between “a drastic need for modernization,” on the one hand, and the “entrenched interests” and “very conservative populace in the countryside that jealously guards its autonomy,” on the other. Without an understanding of this dynamic, and the related “center versus periphery” issues that Dr. Collins also covers, it can be extraordinarily difficult to reconcile the seemingly conflicted attitudes of many Afghans toward programs to improve their lives.

Even when Dr. Collins moves beyond the facts of geography and culture, he retains an admirable economy of words and objectivity. His summation of four broad policy options (essentially large-scale counterinsurgency [COIN], counterterrorism, capacity-building, or “reconciliation”) makes the complex political/security situation digestible for newcomers, without insulting more sophisticated readers.

This is the book I wish I had when USAID deployed me to Kabul to reopen its office in January 2002. It is the book that military personnel and civilians deploying to Afghanistan now, even if for the second or third time, should take the time to read. I do not know if anyone at the Pentagon, State Department, or USAID is contemplating buying this important book in quantity for those deploying to Afghanistan, but—I am not Dr. Collins’s agent—all of those institutions should be doing just that.

The work by Dr. Zakheim, former Department of Defense Comptroller and Chief Financial Officer during the early days of the Bush administration, goes in a different direction. It, too, concludes with a number of policy recommendations related to COIN and effective U.S. Government policy more generally, and it too covers a brief history of Afghanistan policy during the Bush years. But as the word tale in the title suggests, this work is a more sequential, personal recounting of the events surrounding the formulation of U.S. policy toward Afghanistan and, especially, how the decision to go to war in Iraq affected that policy.

The author’s self-identification as a “Vulcan” (from the Roman god of fire and war, and implying one who forges products from hot metal) refers to former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice’s characterization of eight foreign policy experts, including Dr. Zakheim, who were early and influential advisors to then-candidate George W. Bush in 1999–2000 in a manner chronicled in James Mann’s 2004 book, Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush’s War Cabinet. As befits someone who was “present at the creation,” Dr. Zakheim’s recollections are full of first-person experiences with the primary architects of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars. So for those ready and eager for another insider account of politics, bureaucratic and personal, during this intense period of our nation’s history, then the former Under Secretary of Defense’s work is a must-read.

The straightforward premise of the book—which, while it would have been stunning if Dr. Zakheim had articulated it during early Iraq policy deliberations, now seems a bit pedestrian—is that the decision to invade Iraq, and the subsequent unanticipated insurgency there, distracted senior Bush administration policymakers from Afghanistan. This distractedness
contributed, the author convincingly argues, to an underresourcing of the Afghan conflict at a time when modest additional assets might have been decisive. As a USAID participant in many of the National Security Council (NSC) and other interagency deliberations at the time, I find myself concurring wholeheartedly with Dr. Zakheim’s hypothesis and conclusion. The policy and operational burdens of managing the Iraq conflict, especially as the insurgency heated up, nudged the Afghanistan conflict into the background, not as a matter of policy but as a matter of practicality. This downgrading of the Afghan effort was magnified by the reality that virtually the same cast of senior U.S. Government officials from Defense, State, Treasury, and other key departments were attending recurring, high intensity NSC sessions on both conflicts.

Structurally, A Vulcan’s Tale is a bit of a ramble, equal parts personal reflection, a primer of its own on Federal budget procedures, a travelogue on Dr. Zakheim’s globe-trotting efforts to dun donors from the Gulf to East Asia, and collection of policy recommendations on improving U.S. Government decisionmaking. The ramble can sometimes be distracting. In the middle of the book, a chapter titled “Engaging Syria” pops up, recounting the author’s diligent efforts to ensure Damascus would repatriate frozen Iraqi financial assets. Although interesting enough in its own right as an example of how diplomacy is conducted between contending countries, five pages into the chapter, I found myself asking what this Syrian foray had to do with the book’s central premise about a distracted U.S. Government ignoring Afghanistan.

Beyond the interplay between Iraq and Afghanistan, Dr. Zakheim’s work has a second unifying theme: senior policymakers within the U.S. Government often undervalue operational and institutional concerns when deciding among courses of action. Stating his diagnosis in his own words, while recalling the obstacles to progress in Afghanistan, he writes, “No one in a position high enough to matter appreciated the institutional design function of leadership. So absorbed were policymakers with the ‘why’ and ‘what’ questions of policy direction, no one bothered with the ‘how’ questions of policy implementation.” The author also summarizes this argument more pungently by reporting that “details are not for heroes and visionaries.” This is an important and complex hypothesis about how the U.S. Government works. Since the author served as the Chief Financial Officer at the Defense Department (as well as the department’s coordinator for Afghan reconstruction), he was well placed to support his thesis with personal experience. He had,
These quibbles aside, for all those who cannot put down the latest insider revelation on the inner workings of the Bush administration, and all those who relish a personal recounting from an author who was in a position to know, I highly recommend *A Vulcan’s Tale*. Also, for those concerned about how U.S. Government policy formulation, institutional capacity, and operational details interact, especially as to the linkage between resource mobilization and effects on the ground, this book is a useful addition to the reading list.

Dr. Zakheim wraps up his final chapter with a series of recommendations on how the U.S. Government can better structure itself both “to make policy and to implement it.” Several of these observations are well worn, as when he calls for “reining in” a “micromanaging” OMB. Others, including proposals for an enhanced role for the Treasury Department, a reconfiguration of the deputy secretary slot at Defense, and a bit of restructuring at the NSC, merit consideration. I must admit, however, to being a bit disconcerted when the author’s list of recommendations, despite ample critiques throughout the book of State Department and USAID inadequacies, failed to address two of the major institutional innovations now under way: the rebuilding of technical staff capability at USAID and the creation of a State Department Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations.

during his tenure, direct access to the most senior policymakers in Defense, the White House, and elsewhere, while his day-to-day responsibilities were squarely in the realm of the arguably undervalued “details” of implementation.

As he argues his thesis, the battles to mobilize sufficient financial resources for both Afghanistan and Iraq figure prominently in Dr. Zakheim’s recounting of events. This is the book for those who will relish the details of congressional appropriations confrontations, struggle to induce allies to make good on their financial pledges, and iniquities of senior Office of Management and Budget (OMB) officials (named by name).

These quibbles aside, for all those who cannot put down the latest insider revelation on the inner workings of the Bush administration, and all those who relish a personal recounting from an author who was in a position to know, I highly recommend *A Vulcan’s Tale*. Also, for those concerned about how U.S. Government policy formulation, institutional capacity, and operational details interact, especially as to the linkage between resource mobilization and effects on the ground, this book is a useful addition to the reading list.
Hybrid Warfare and Transnational Threats: Perspectives for an Era of Persistent Conflict

Coedited by Paul Brister, William H. Natter III, and Robert R. Tomes

Council for Emerging National Security Affairs, 2011 318 pp., $15.00
ISBN: 978-098382-800-6

Reviewed by John Arquilla

There are over 20 armed conflicts under way around the world today—and none of them are straightforward conventional clashes. To be sure, there are recognizable battle lines in some places, such as Somalia, where al-Shabaab fighters contend against central government and intervening foreign forces. But much of the violence there is irregular as well, with hit-and-run raiding, piracy, and acts of outright terrorism forming part of the mix. Such a roiling brew—conventional fighting, guerrilla tactics, terror, and strategic crime—is the prototypical kind of “hybrid war” addressed in this remarkable volume.

The editors and contributors all write with a clear sense of concern, perhaps because of the perceived need to challenge the still widely held view that warfare has not fundamentally changed—a perspective that is given its due in the book. For all the fairness in their approach, though, the weight of the evidence and argument presented leave the reader in no doubt about the overarching belief that, as Congressman Adam Smith puts it in his thoughtful foreword, “better solutions” are needed. Given the travails of American arms over the past decade—and not forgetting the debacle in Somalia nearly 20 years ago—one can only nod in agreement with the call for improvement and lean forward in anticipation of fresh ideas.

Hybrid Warfare and Transnational Threats is replete with new insights into the nature of conflict in our time. The rise of networks and other nonstate actors receives full coverage as a high-priority issue area. As Stephen Biddle and Jeffrey Friedman assert in their chapter on the lessons of the Israeli-Hezbollah war of 2006—a quintessential conflict between a nation and network—the “future of non-state military actors is a central issue for U.S. strategy and defense planning.” Other contributors are just as sensitive to this theme, including Frank Hoffman—one of the “founding fathers” of the hybrid warfare concept. He mines other conflicts for insights and finds some rich veins of ore, as in the Russo-Chechen war of the mid-1990s. Hoffman notes that the “Chechens’ fusion of conventional capabilities, irregular tactics, information operations, and deliberate terrorism makes this case an excellent prototype [of hybrid warfare] against a modern power.”

The mention of information operations in the Chechen case is just a hint of the comprehensive analysis of this subject that comes later in the book. For example, there are useful observations about the skillful Russian use of cyber attacks, in close coordination with
conventional and irregular military operations, in the 2008 war with Georgia. In her chapter on cyber warfare, Chris Demchak goes further, making the case that cyberspace-based attacks can create “historically unprecedented advantages.” The virtual domain aside, there is also, in several chapters, close examination of the various “softer” forms of influence operations being used in most of the world’s conflicts most of the time—by all sides.

For all the attention given to analyzing the nature and extent of the hybrid warfare phenomenon, there is also a significant effort to think through the responses the U.S. military ought to make as it traverses the new landscape of conflict. In her chapter, Jackie Sittel keys, among other things, on the “transformation of the services into an agile force,” a concept that has made its way into the new strategy that President Barack Obama rolled out in the Pentagon in January. James Hasik next homes in on the problems posed by our “absurdly long development cycles” and outlines a new approach based on “rapid learning and responsive development.” Daniel Magruder offers a compelling argument for pursuing military organizational redesign along networked lines—with special operations forces serving as exemplars. On this networking theme, Steven Miska rounds out the book’s prescriptive agenda by making the forceful case for including in the mix many key nodes from the nonmilitary departments of government.

There is also considerable examination of American military performance in Iraq and Afghanistan—and, to some extent, British operations in the latter case. Perhaps the most wideranging and thought-provoking contribution in this section comes from the eminent military historian Martin van Creveld. His chapter has a kind of haunting quality, placing these wars in a larger, six-decade-long context, and using them to pose the question of whether the leading states really can master the challenges posed by insurgents and terrorists. The answer, as he sees it, is still “blowing in the wind.” For Guermantes Lailari, this “wind” is at the backs of the world’s jihadists, helping to propel them along in the ways of hybrid warfare.

It is against the backdrop of the wide range of topics covered in Hybrid Warfare and Transnational Threats—with its far-ranging survey of odd, irregular, and mixed conflicts—that the outlines of the future world are now being sketched. The editors and contributors have convinced me that developing an understanding of hybrid warfare and mastering the challenges it poses are the most important strategic concerns of our time.

But before understanding and mastery comes acceptance of the phenomenon itself. My own experience suggests that acceptance comes slowly. It took nearly 20 years from the time David Ronfeldt and I introduced our concept of cyberwar for the Pentagon to formally declare cyberspace a “warfighting domain” in July 2011. It took 15 years from the time we first asserted that “it takes a network to fight a network” for these words to become widely repeated throughout the military and national security apparatus. In both cases, it seems that these long delays had costly but not grave consequences.

The same is not true of hybrid warfare. Every day the validity of the concept is denied, and understanding and mastery are delayed, is another day that sees the spread of conflict, suffering, and the deaths of countless innocents. So let me wish the editors and contributors to this volume Godspeed—and the same to those who I hope will become a large legion of their readers.
In his January 24, 2011, memorandum entitled “Strategic and Operational Planning for Operational Contract Support (OCS) and Workforce Mix,” Secretary of Defense Robert Gates stated:

At the height of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, contractor numbers well exceeded the military footprint; a similar situation is occurring in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. I do not expect this to change now or in future contingency operations.

Although there is historic precedence for contracted support to our military forces, I am concerned about the risks introduced by our current level of dependency, our future total force mix, and the need to better plan for OCS in the future.

The memorandum concluded by stating, “The time is now—while the lessons learned from recent operations are fresh—to institutionalize the changes necessary to influence a cultural shift in how we view, account, and plan for contracted and CEW [Civilian Expeditionary Workforce] support in the contingency environment.”

In short, the Secretary stated that the United States will continue to use contractors as half of any deployed force, so the Defense Department should figure out how to do it right. Molly Dunigan’s Victory for Hire: Private Security Companies’ Impact on Military Effectiveness is a good place to start. Dunigan is an Associate Political Scientist at RAND and is also author of its study “Hired Guns: Views About Armed Contractors in Operation Iraqi Freedom.”

In Victory for Hire, Dunigan set out to achieve two goals. First, she wanted to illustrate the impact that private security companies (PSCs) have on military effectiveness and the probability that a democracy can use them well. Second, she wanted to understand the way differences in structure and identity affect military forces composed of a mix of national militaries and contractors “with an eye to providing policy prescriptions for current U.S. policy.” In doing so, Dunigan first explores the theoretical considerations of democratic states using contractors. She then examines both the positive and negative aspects that affect both the providing state and the receiving state. While Dunigan frames her argument within the literature of international relations, her observations are pointed and have practical impacts. She notes:

❖ Private security contractors allow weak state leaders to outsource violence and thus never have to develop a state apparatus. Funding is spent...
on contractors rather than building state capacity.

❖ Strong democratic states can outsource interventions to contractors. This preserves the strong states’ own military forces but hinders the prospect of the host nation developing its own security institutions.

❖ Contractors allow leaders of strong states to avoid restrictions imposed by either the international community or its own legislative branch (a particular concern to this reviewer).

Dunigan then takes on the issues generated when contractors operate alongside active military forces—operational coordination issues, morale impact of pay differentials, and impact of contractors on the host nation population’s perceptions of U.S. forces. Dunigan concludes that PSCs “serve as force multipliers in Iraq and Afghanistan and thus have a beneficial impact on quality [but] they have a negative impact on integration through the structural and identity-based hindrances to their effective coordination.” In particular, she stresses the negative impact that contractor actions have on the perceptions of the population—particularly when the United States is running a population-centric (legitimacy of governance) counterinsurgency campaign.

This reviewer traces this negative impact to three facts. First, the United States does not really know whom it is hiring when it hires contractors. We screen our military personnel carefully before enlistment and then train them for months before deployment. In contrast, except for special programs, we do not screen private security companies except on paper. We have even less knowledge concerning subcontractors. Yet we authorize these personnel to use deadly force in our name. Second, unless a U.S. Government employee travels with contractors, we do not know what they are doing in the society at hand. Finally, despite not knowing who they are or what they are doing, the United States is held responsible by the host nation population for everything contractors do or fail to do. This third fact is what makes it a strategic level issue. Counterinsurgency is a competition for legitimacy between the government and insurgents. The presence of essentially unaccountable, illegitimate agents directly undercuts that legitimacy.

In the next chapter, Dunigan examines the operational effectiveness of contractors through the lens of four case studies. The first two are cases where private firms have been hired to execute missions in place of military forces: Sandline in Sierra Leone and Military Professional Resources, Inc. (MPRI), in Croatia. The second two examine where U.S. agencies were employed to accomplish somewhat similar tasks: the Lebanese Civil War (1982–1984) and the Iran-Contra Affair. In conclusion, she notes that Sandline was at least as effective in supporting the Sierra Leone government as the U.S. Government was in supporting the Contras in Nicaragua. And MPRI proved as effective as the U.S. military in training forces. Her primary objection was that the use of contractors allowed governments to get around either international sanctions (United Nations arms embargoes in the case of Sierra Leone and Iran) or national laws (the Boland amendment banning support to the Contras).

Next, a brief chapter on the historical use of contractors provides important background for how the state, contracting companies, and individual contractor relationships have changed over time. These examples also show
how they might be shaped in the future. Dunigan makes the point that the presence of contractors can often improve the effectiveness of the force but, at the same time, reduce its legitimacy. Despite the passing of over 600 years since the Italian city states hired mercenaries, the public’s perception of contractors as mercenaries remains. The contractors themselves understand this repulsion and argue vehemently that they are PSCs or, at worst, private military companies. Despite their arguments, armed contractors are still widely perceived as mercenaries, and Defense Department planners must understand this. There will be situations where the increase in operational effectiveness may not be worth the negative political impact.

Dunigan closes with six lessons and recommendations for policy and regulatory improvements. The lesson that struck this reviewer as most important was a restatement of an idea from her introduction: “PSCs can be and are indeed used by democratic policymakers—often in a covert fashion—to avoid accountability to the citizenry for the decisions to go to war.” In addition to the examples given in her book, it has recently come to light that the United States is using contractors to train African troops in Somalia. The Central Intelligence Agency or Defense Department have traditionally conducted these kinds of missions, and as a result, Congress has developed systems to provide oversight of their activities. However, the contractors in Somalia work for the U.S. State Department. This is another illustration of Dunigan’s point that PSCs can avoid accountability—either intentionally or unintentionally.

The author might have added that PSCs can also be used to sustain an unpopular conflict. One has to question whether President George W. Bush could have marshaled the political support needed to surge to 300,000 troops in Iraq, or President Barack Obama to 200,000 troops in Afghanistan, instead of the 150,000 and 100,000 totals used for the respective campaigns. Yet, if one counts contractors, those were the actual peak strengths in Iraq and Afghanistan. Whether it is a good or bad thing that contractors make it politically easier for the United States to enter and sustain wars is certainly an issue that should be debated. But to date, there has been remarkably little discussion of this key aspect of how the United States decides to go to war.

Despite the absence of debate, Secretary Gates stated that contractors in large numbers will be part of U.S. operations. At the same time, he urged caution about the risks involved. Clearly, both policymakers and voters need to understand the implications of contractors more clearly. Victory for Hire makes a great primer.
As the U.S. military enters its 11th year of operations in Afghanistan, public support for the effort dwindles, according to recent polls, as a solid majority of Americans now believe the war is going badly and is not worth fighting. In *The Operators*, journalist Michael Hastings explores the recent history of America’s longest military campaign through the prism of General Stanley McChrystal and his staff. Not long after his story broke in June 2010 in *Rolling Stone* magazine, General McChrystal was forced to resign. The episode illustrated the deepening division between the White House and Pentagon over the appropriate prosecution of the war.

Hastings begins his story in the autumn of 2008, when conditions noticeably deteriorated in Afghanistan. At that time, some major media outlets—including the New York Times—suggested that the United States was losing the war. Under the leadership of General David McKiernan, USA, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) had reached a stalemate. McKiernan’s main problem seemed to be a matter of style, as he preferred a low-key public relations approach with the media. Though well respected by his peers, McKiernan was looked upon as a member of the “old school” generation of generals, unlike General David Petraeus, who championed the popular counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine. McKiernan refused to resign, and Defense Secretary Robert Gates effectively fired him, which amounted to the first sacking of a wartime commander since President Harry Truman removed General Douglas MacArthur at the height of the Korean War. By removing McKiernan, the Pentagon saw an opportunity to escalate and reset the war in Afghanistan.

McKiernan’s replacement, General McChrystal, was the first Special Forces Soldier to assume such a prominent battlefield command. Over the course of his career, McChrystal learned to walk a fine line in the rigid military hierarchy yet still succeed. He first entered the public spotlight in March 2003 when he served as the Pentagon spokesman during the invasion of Iraq. Later that year, he took over as commander of the Joint Special Forces Operations Command, overseeing the most elite units in the military, including Delta Force, Navy SEALs, and Rangers. Relentlessly, his special forces rooted out terrorists, most notably Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the recognized leader of...
al Qaeda in Iraq. His willingness to get results endeared him to Donald Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney, even when it included bending the rules or skipping the chain of command. Controversy seemed to follow him. For instance, in Iraq, he oversaw a network of prisons where detainees were beaten and tortured. Furthermore, he was accused of attempting to whitewash the friendly fire death in Afghanistan of Pat Tillman, the NFL star who joined the Army not long after the September 11 terrorist attacks.

The pitched political battles that occurred over troop levels in Afghanistan are recounted by Hastings. Essentially, there were two major camps in the debate. The Pentagon wanted a big footprint in order to launch a comprehensive COIN program. The other camp, led by Vice President Joe Biden, favored a small footprint consisting of U.S. Special Forces that would focus on hunting and killing the remnants of al Qaeda. Through sporadic and strategic leaks, McChrystal was able to force President Barack Obama’s hand. In September 2009, Washington Post writer Bob Woodward published McChrystal’s confidential assessment of the war in Afghanistan, which concluded that the U.S. military was on the verge of “mission failure.” The story spurred Washington to take action, and, in the end, Obama agreed to the 40,000 additional troops that McChrystal requested with the proviso that they begin leaving in July 2011, a year earlier than the general wanted.

President Obama, who voted against the 2003 invasion of Iraq as a Senator from Illinois, pushed for fixing Afghanistan, which he identified as the most important theater in the war on terror. But civil-military relations had been strained by the Afghan war, which led to disagreements over planning. As Hastings explains, several members of McChrystal’s staff questioned Obama’s ability to lead the war effort. Early into his term, military leaders sensed that the new President was uncomfortable with the military. The Pentagon—filled with many Republicans from the Bush years—viewed him with suspicion.

McChrystal was disappointed over Obama’s lack of engagement in the war. Hastings relates the tenuous relationship between U.S. Ambassador Karl Eikenberry and McChrystal as they clashed over strategy. McChrystal also had difficulty selling his COIN plan to Afghan President Hamid Karzai, whom Hastings depicts as a less-than-competent leader of very questionable legitimacy who effectively rig the presidential election in 2009.

McChrystal operated in the shadow of General Petraeus, whose COIN campaign in Iraq—the surge—did much to stabilize the security in that country. But applying the same template in Afghanistan has been more challenging. Petraeus, in The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual, argued that the cornerstone of the new strategy was to protect and gain the trust of the population. So-called kinetic operations—that is, killing and capturing the insurgents—were given less emphasis. The goal was to recreate the Afghanistan of 1979, before it was wracked with foreign invasion and internecine warfare. For McChrystal, it was imperative to switch from the “shoot-first-and-blow-shit-up” soldiering of the Special Forces to the COIN emphasis on protecting the civilian population. To that end, he issued a tactical directive that encouraged soldiers to avoid shooting in situations in which civilians could be harmed. Over time,
however, soldiers became frustrated with the new policy, which hampered their ability to fight back. Currently worrisome is the growing insularity of the U.S. military from the rest of America. As Hastings points out, less than 1 percent of the U.S. population serves in the military or has any connection to the ongoing wars. According to his reasoning, the guilt of the general public for not having served in the military is covered up by an uncritical attitude toward those who have. As for what motivated the soldiers, Hastings found it was not so much the objectives of the war, but rather a nearly metaphysical quality that one attained through tribulation that involved sacrifice and the risk of one’s life. To his loyal entourage, McChrystal was a historic figure who gave them a sense of identity.

Why, Hastings asks, did McChrystal agree to the Rolling Stone story? According to his take on the man, the general sought to immortalize his image as a “badass” and a “snake-eating rebel” that would be cultivated by a cover story in the magazine. As the war in Afghanistan extended to the end of the decade, it is not surprising that Hastings found that McChrystal and his entourage often comported themselves irreverently in the style of soldiers on the frontline, displaying “frustration” and “arrogance” and “getting smashed” and “letting off stress.” Not long after the story was released, President Obama fired McChrystal and named General Petraeus as the new commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan. According to Hastings, what was most troubling about the story to the White House’s national security team was not that it questioned the competence of the President and his advisors, but rather its suggestion that the troops were in near revolt against McChrystal.

In a protracted guerrilla campaign, perceptions are important. According to Hastings, the “military-media-industrial complex” in large measure shapes policy on the Afghan war. Ostensibly, Operation Enduring Freedom was launched to capture Osama bin Laden and crush al Qaeda in retaliation for the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Over time, however, bin Laden was practically forgotten in the U.S. military effort in Afghanistan. In a sense, his death at the hand of SEAL Team Six was anticlimactic. Nevertheless, it gave the Obama administration the political cover it needed to declare victory in Afghanistan and begin the draw-down of troops. White House officials could now make the case that the Afghan surge had worked.

The war on terror, Hastings explains, did not unfold as it was originally planned. When it commenced, President George W. Bush announced that there would be no “battlefields or beachheads.” Rather, there would be a secret war, conducted in the dark with no holds barred. As it turned out, however, there were battlefields and beachheads after all, as evidenced by the fighting in Kabul, Kandahar, Baghdad, Fallujah, and Mosul. To Hastings, the military approach was misguided. Citing a 2008 RAND study—“How Terrorist Groups End: Implications for Countering al Qa’ida”—Hastings insists that the best way to defeat terrorist networks is through law enforcement rather than military force. Rejecting the “safe havens” pretext for the war, Hastings argues that terrorists do not need to take over a country and establish a sanctuary insofar as numerous terrorist plots have been planned and carried out in the West.

Overall, Hastings paints a grim picture of the U.S. experience in Afghanistan. After
Nevertheless, according to a 2011 survey conducted by the Asia Foundation, the proportion of respondents expressing some level of sympathy for the insurgents groups reached its lowest level that year (29 percent). Moreover, despite serious concerns about government corruption, security, and economic future, nearly half of all Afghan respondents said that their country was moving in the right direction according to the Asia Foundation. Considering the daunting challenges of building a functioning state and civil society in the tribal and war-torn country, problems are to be expected. Still, the U.S. mission in Afghanistan is far from accomplished and Hastings provides a window to view it warts and all.

Moreover, Afghan soldiers have occasionally opened fired on U.S. and ISAF soldiers, bringing into question their long-term loyalty to the new regime. Despite the substantial cost in blood and treasure, Hastings avers that the United States was getting its ass “kicked by illiterate peasants who made bombs out of manure and wood.” His pessimism, though, is arguably overstated. To be sure, gauging progress in a guerrilla war is inexact due to the tenuous quality of the metrics used to measure success.
Amidst his notoriety and acclaim, there is a limited amount of information about who exactly David Galula was and how his military record measures up—specifically his successes and failures. Grégor Mathias has finally shed light on Galula’s previously opaque personal history. He juxtaposes Galula’s eight principals from Counterinsurgency Warfare and his success in applying these theoretical constructs in Algeria in methodical detail. Through Mathias’s exhaustive research and primary source evidence, the real historical narrative of Galula in Algeria has now been brought to light. After examining all eight principals as applied by Galula in Djebel Aïssa Mimoun in Algeria (the district he commanded), the results were abysmal.

Particularly salient steps to current U.S. COIN doctrine are the second, “Assign sufficient troops to oppose the insurgent’s comeback and install these troops in each village,” and the fourth, “Destroy the local insurgent political organizations.”

Galula’s second step is interesting because this is where “[he] practiced the ink-spot strategy. . . . The ink spot refers to the idea of creating military posts that are gradually extended with economic and social development (markets, clinics, schools) and the establishment of local government, control of the populace, elimination of adversaries, and arming supporters before moving on to another region” (p. 23). This obviously sounds familiar to us all by now. It is commonly and simplistically referred to as “clear, hold, and build” in Afghanistan. By no means was this a new strategy; in fact, it was not even original to Galula. As Mathias points out, it was “invented by Marshall Gallieni in Tonkin from

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successful in their campaign. This begs the question of why Galula was promoted if he failed. Mathias articulates the answer. Galula published his work from Algeria in such a manner that it was easily comprehensible and undeniably successful. He wrote extensively in the public media and made sure his commanders were well informed about his success in the field. As Mathias points out in his discussion of one of Galula’s failed steps, he “exaggerated his operations in giving a quantitative account in terms of populations and numbers of peoples treated by the AMG [assistance medical gratuite]” (p. 93). With advancement and personal gain in mind, he resorted to inflating his achievements. Although he experienced short-term success, this approach was unsustainable and ultimately led to the failure of his strategy.

Galula’s failure continues to become clearer as Mathias provides further context for his exploits in Algeria. For instance, it is not evident how short a period these operations were conducted over. Galula states, “I set out to prove a theory of counterinsurgency warfare, and I am satisfied that it worked in my small area. What I achieved in my first six or eight months in Djebel Aïssa Mimoun was not due to magic and could have been applied much earlier throughout Algeria” (p. 96). However, Mathias counters this claim by rightly asserting that “In reality, Galula’s activities at Djebel Aïssa Mimoun lasted a short time, just over 14 months, from August 1956 to October 1957. Over this period, a month was taken up in policing Tizi Ouzou, where he was cited for having contributed to the arrest of 27 rebels. The period was too short to reasonably expect the subdistrict be pacified [emphasis added]” (p. 96). This now makes all the more sense when looking at Galula’s *Pacification in Algeria*. 

1892 to 1896 and developed by Marshall Lyautey in his article ‘Du rôle colonial de l’armée’ (The Army’s role in the Colonies) in the journal Revue des Deux mondes” (p. 23). Galula’s experience in applying this strategy was the primary point of influence on current U.S. doctrine; therefore, one would assume that it would have been further investigated before it became the centerpiece of American strategy. Unfortunately, if we had looked deeper, as this book does, we would have realized that Galula’s application of this was not successful. Although the platoons’ presence in Djebel Aïssa increased security, it did not prevent or slow down the insurgent political cadre from exerting effective control over the population.

Similarly, when examining the forth step, we realize that although there was initial success in the implementation of this principle, it was short lived. However, at the time Galula continued to publicize his self-proclaimed successes. Indeed, he wrote in Lettre d’informations that:

[I]n four purged villages, five members of the OPA [insurgent political organization] were killed, two imprisoned, 30 members were arrested and released on conditional liberty, and several became council-men or harikis. . . . The community work is done voluntarily and without coercion. . . . It is easy to evoke Sisyphus when speaking to the destruction of rebel cells. On the contrary, if this operation is properly conducted, it is irreversible. [p. 39]

Galula had successfully decapitated the OPA, but its demise was far from imminent. Subsequent to Galula’s promotion to the Division of Information in Paris and his departure from Djebel Aïssa Mimoun, the insurgents were able to adapt and were ultimately
He makes no mention of his activities from 1958 to 1962, a span that was spent at the Division of Information in Paris. Galula’s experience was limited not only in scope but also in time. Exploring further into Mathias’s work, it becomes apparent that Galula’s theories were not original to any degree. They were paraphrased or truncated theories and thoughts from contemporary revolutionary war thinkers of the time. Indeed, when looking at Galula’s *Pacification in Algeria*, he cites only one author, which as Mathias points out, is really quite puzzling given the numerous published works on the topic during that time. More startling is the fact that when Galula published his two books, he was a researcher at the Center for International Affairs at Harvard (1962–1963). How would a bibliography not be among his duties at that time? According to Mathias, “The apparent simplicity of Galula’s counterinsurgency doctrine actually issues from the lack of bibliographical references to works of other thinkers. . . . Moreover, he deliberately avoids citing a number of references such as British general R. Thompson, the architect of the anti-guerilla war in Malaya (1948–60)” (p. 97).

Galula’s simplicity served as the impetus for his rediscovery by contemporary U.S. strategists and generals grasping for doctrinal synthesis of simple solutions for complex problems. The fact is there are no simple solutions to complex issues—particularly in counterinsurgency. That said, as previously stated, these decisions were made in a compressed timeframe and at a critical juncture.

Through the years, there have been minimal challenges to Galula’s claims of his reported successes. He remained unchallenged throughout the U.S. war in Vietnam despite the fact that the RAND Corporation incorporated his work into its study to establish a COIN doctrine for that conflict. With his contemporary rediscovery, he went largely unchallenged until recently. This book represents the most concerted effort in questioning his claims and ideas. We must continue to challenge our assumptions in stability operations writ large. We cannot simply apply Galula’s “eight principals” of *Counterinsurgency Warfare* to any given operation. But this is what we have ostensibly done in Iraq and Afghanistan given the undeniable influence of Galula’s work on Field Manual 3-24. Take the example of “force ratio” in the manual where there is an actual minimum ratio force for success in COIN operations across the board. Such simplistic constructs, which have been used in a “plug and play” fashion, have hamstrung critical thinking in Iraq and Afghanistan. This search for a blueprint solution is emblematic of the historic rigidity in U.S. doctrine.

This book should be a mandated accompaniment for subsequent reading with any of David Galula’s work. It is straightforward and meticulously sourced, and it ultimately “prepares the battlespace” for understanding the work and life of Galula. There is no doubt that Galula’s work should be taken under consideration when considering solutions in a given COIN operation. With that said, it cannot be the only source. There is not one answer to a hundred different questions. We should bear that in mind when taking a strategic view of perceived challenges in the future. We must be ready for COIN operations, but not every threat will be unconventional just as not every threat will be conventional. Hopefully, Galula in *Algeria* will be one of many works that challenge current COIN doctrine and compel us to keep all tools sharp in the U.S. strategic bag of options. PRISM
I was given a copy of Rachel Kleinfeld’s *Advancing the Rule of Law Abroad: Next Generation Reform* just as I was in the process of trying to codify my own lessons from more than three decades of working in and around conflict countries to restore and strengthen rule of law. Since 9/11, “rule of law” has had a flavor-of-the-month feel to it, and a number of authors have weighed in on the subject. As a practitioner, however, I have found that while most of the current thinking is helpful for advancing academic dialogue and debate, very little is of practical use on the ground.

To my surprise, Kleinfeld’s book turned out to be an exception. She has presented a solidly researched, common-sense analysis that does not gloss over the complexity of her subject. Her underlying thesis—that power structures and not institutions are the most crucial objects of change—parallels my own experience in the field. She studies the impact of what she refers to as “first-generation” reform efforts and offers the reader a “second-generation” approach for planning and implementing sustainable programs and activities that are contextually and culturally appropriate and genuinely make sense. Her book should be required reading for anyone who contemplates reforming the rule of law abroad.

In 2010, I was asked by the commander of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Training Mission–Afghanistan (NTM-A) to join the military mission as the first (and only, as it turned out) senior civilian rule of law advisor to the policing development mission. The NTM-A leadership at the time was concerned there was no clear vision for the future of the Afghan National Police that connected policing with rule of law. Without a vision, there could be no strategy, and the generals knew that as NTM-A’s train-and-equip mission matured, that gap had to be filled.

On my arrival, I asked what I thought was a very simple question: “What do the Afghans need their police to do?” I discovered that no one had asked this of the Afghans themselves. When we finally did, the question triggered a larger effort to understand what “Afghan right” looked like and, furthermore, how NTM-A could translate that understanding into more effective Afghan-appropriate training and leader development.

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This type of inclusive, Afghan-focused adjustment is what Kleinfeld would characterize as “second-generation rule of law reform.” She summarizes, saying, “Second-generation rule-of-law reform starts with the actual problems of a country and then looks at which part of the rule of law must be improved in order to address those problems. Reformers consider a society’s sociology to determine reform efforts that locals would support and to locate the best fulcrum for reform.”

She accurately points out that “first-generation reform” tends to focus on altering laws and institutions to make them look more like those in what we generally think of as “rule-of-law countries,” by which she means the United States and European countries. I saw first-generation reform thinking behind almost every rule of law program in Afghanistan, where even the governing National Priority Plan, “Justice for All,” was conceived by international donors and contained a set of milestones that the Afghan government refused to endorse. Afghanistan may be the most prominent example of first-generation thinking in action, but it is hardly the only one. While conducting a strategic security sector reform assessment in Albania in 2009, I asked the American attorney who headed the prosecution development team why she was training Albanian prosecutors in U.S.-style adversarial techniques when Albania had a civil law system. Her answer? “Our [U.S. common law] system is better.” For 2 years, this chief of party had focused all her efforts on creating an Albanian national-level institution that mirrored the U.S. Attorney’s office in the small southern state where she had previously worked. As Kleinfeld, who also uses Albania as one of her case studies, phrases it, “Too often [reforming] laws and institutions become ends in themselves, altered toward no clear goal other than modernity.” Rather than focusing on institutional reform for reform’s sake, she argues, second-generation reforms pay greater attention to power and cultural norms. Legal and institutional reforms then become the means to influence these more core challenges that enable adherence to the rule of law.

Kleinfeld requires her readers to do a bit of soul searching as to why we conduct rule of law reform activities at all. She presents a historical perspective on U.S.- and Europe-led rule of law reform efforts that contradicts some of the conventional thinking about who in our governments should be engaging in rule of law development and why. While it may not have been an intended result, her analysis challenges assumptions that largely exclude the military as a core rule of law enabler.

Viewed through the lens of history, Kleinfeld presents Western involvement in rule of law capacity-building as the evolution from a pragmatic focus on building security, through the relatively recent policy shifts toward frameworks that emphasize democracy and human rights, in order to enable economic growth. Her narrative demonstrates that until the 1980s, most rule of law development was tied to military objectives, whether as part of postconflict stabilization or to address the desire for security against a communist threat. Early practitioners in the rule of law field did not come from the civilian development community that claims ownership of the rule of law agenda today. Instead, they were soldiers, and later, in the post–Vietnam era, cops.

The tension between the goals and objectives of security-focused rule of law development, and the goals and objectives of the democracy and human rights movement, is examined in sufficient detail for the
practitioner to understand and anticipate the necessary relationships, risks, and rewards. Unfortunately, as Kleinfeld points out, current funding authorities, legal restrictions, and practitioner resistance to working with police and militaries increasingly separate security reforms from other rule of law goals, resulting in the lack of strategic thought and coordination that exists across the government today.

Kleinfeld’s review of efforts to spur economic growth and market development through rule of law reform raises even more questions about why we are doing what we are doing. Using a multitude of examples both modern and historic, she reminds us that the linkage between the formal commercial aspects of the rule of law and economic development is mostly based on guesses and assumptions that remain largely unproved. She makes a compelling case that the security-focused law and order aspect of rule of law development may be central to the goal of enabling economic growth, whereas the impact of commercial and civil law reform may be negligible.

The real value of any study of rule of law development is what it offers to the practitioner in terms of planning and implementation advice, guidance, and lessons learned. In this regard, Kleinfeld is partially successful. Her practical contributions fall into four categories.

First, Kleinfeld’s suggested sequencing is spot on. She starts with identification of the “real” problem, as seen by the local population. In my Afghan policing example above, for instance, when I asked members of the NATO coalition what the Afghans needed their police to do, I was told, “They need to keep the insurgents out of the battlespace.” When I asked the Afghans, the answers varied depending on region, rural versus urban, acceptance of central government authority, and the degree of tribal homogeneity. However, in general, I heard things such as “They need to talk more with their mouths and less with their weapons.” Local government officials in particular saw a requirement (and desire) for the police to stop conflicts before they escalated into something that was beyond their ability to resolve. For the Afghans, first-line dispute resolution was seen as both a security imperative and a way to demonstrate that the government could respond to the immediate needs of the governed. Ironically, however, dispute resolution was not part of the basic police curriculum, and there were many in the coalition who questioned why this was a police concern at all. Instead, went the argument, we should be focusing our development efforts on strengthening the formal justice system in order to demonstrate to the Afghan people that a formal system, with which few had any experience or understanding, could address their needs.

Kleinfeld points out that first-generation reformers often talk about the need to “create” demand and tend to focus on institutions they believe need to be improved. The emphasis on creating formal justice systems to address problems that are traditionally handled informally is a good example of this tendency. Second-generation reformers, however, take a locally generated ends-based approach, and work backward to help the locals achieve sociologically appropriate capacity. Sequencing toward an ends-based result requires that a great deal of time be spent on collaborative problem identification rather than direct, quick action, and it does not deliver an immediate result. Kleinfeld illustrates the success of this approach using case studies from Indonesia, and her arguments make sense.
Second, *Advancing the Rule of Law Abroad* contains some of the best discussions on the role of power structures, politics, and culture in rule of law development of any book on the market. This is central to Kleinfeld’s thesis, and she addresses the issues with confidence. Her illustrations of the linkages between power structures, power brokers, and formal and informal rule of law institutions will be useful even for novices in the field.

Kleinfeld’s third contribution to actual practice is her emphasis on mainstreaming accountability, presented in terms of accountable governance rather than as some sort of discreet technical reform. As I read, I found myself reflecting on the many heated discussions that I have had over the years with military officers, diplomats, and so-called experts who argued that accountability and oversight are things that can be built into a system or institution after the recruiting, training, and equipping is complete or security is restored, and should be treated as separate lines of effort rather than as an integral part of every other program and activity. At that point, they argue, we have the so-called luxury of professionalization, and can work on the “less urgent” qualitative issues of accountability, transparency, and strict adherence to the law. In *Advancing the Rule of Law Abroad*, the theme of accountability permeates both the analysis and the approaches. Kleinfeld uses a great example from Romania to illustrate the success that can be achieved when accountability is a mainstream issue. She demonstrates that upfront, adaptable, and coordinated top-down and bottom-up approaches are not luxuries and can actually work.

Finally, Kleinfeld’s analysis of lessons from legal reform is outstanding. She is highly (and rightly) critical of the current default position among rule of law practitioners that changing a host nation’s law is a necessary predicate to rule of law reform. She illustrates a series of lessons not learned in this regard, and points out that while legal change can matter, it must be deployed in conjunction with other tactics focused on and sensitive to the power structures and the culture behind them.

Kleinfeld is less successful when she attempts to craft practical lessons for the use of diplomacy. While her analysis is not necessarily wrong, it is superficial, and her conclusions are vague and somewhat contradictory. Her suggestion, for example, that “It is often preferable that rule of law programs—especially bottom-up programs—not be coordinated diplomatically, but simply consulted” contradicts an earlier conclusion that diplomacy, when it can be used successfully, is a powerful tool. It is difficult to decide whether she sees diplomacy as essential to reform or not, and getting caught up in her own discussion, she overlooks the role of military force as a diplomatic lever. As a result, she loses the opportunity to explore the positive role the military can play as a catalyst for reform and/or the guarantor of governance space in an otherwise unsecure, ungoverned environment.

Rachel Kleinfeld is an important and rational voice in the growing field of rule of law development. One hopes, based on the quality of *Advancing the Rule of Law Abroad*, that she will continue the quest to discover what works and what does not, and, more importantly, that her analysis will be used to guide the next generation of Western involvement in rule of law capacity-building and development abroad. **PRISM**
The Art of Intelligence—Lessons from a Life in the CIA’s Clandestine Service

By Henry A. Crumpton

338 pp., $27.95

REVIEWED BY NATHANIEL L. MOIR

The nexus of conflict, intelligence, government, and society is perhaps the most complex realm to navigate as a career intelligence professional. To accomplish that feat through distinguished service and then, upon retirement, concisely delineate these intersections through shared personal experience in a publication is a rare achievement. The Art of Intelligence—Lessons from a Life in the CIA’s Clandestine Service compellingly recounts a critical period of transformation in conflict. It also presents significant analysis and reflection on the failures and successes of intelligence and what should ideally be its symbiosis with policy formulation. As Henry Crumpton demonstrates, the relationship between intelligence and policy is often messy, but it is an increasingly critical key to wise and effective decisionmaking.

As a career operations officer in the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Cladestine Service, Crumton served in diverse positions and contributed to national security in several pivotal roles. Foremost of these was his experience as a deputy to Cofer Black in the Counterterrorism Center, which deservedly constitutes the majority of the book. Prior formative positions, such as serving as an operations officer in Africa and working with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) as the deputy chief of the International Terrorism Operations section, are chronologically presented. These, along with accounts of his upbringing in Georgia, his tenacious efforts to join the CIA, and his development as a career trainee, are recounted anecdotally and with a great deal of humility. Early in chapter 2, “Training,” for example, Crumpton writes, “I was the youngest in my CIA Career Trainee class, the least educated, and the least experienced. I had no military service, no foreign language, no graduate degree, no technical skill, and no professional pedigree” (p. 25). What becomes apparent through the course of The Art of Intelligence is how Crumpton mobilized his keen self-awareness and strong work ethic to create an evolving and downright fascinating career.

A number of narratives, particularly in chapters 3 and 4, demonstrate how the author developed as an officer by describing the recruitment of sources and collection of intelligence. In one case, Crumpton details how he and a member of the Office of Technical Services conducted an operation in Africa to recover a listening device emplaced to record the conversations of a potential informant.

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Unfortunately, over the span of 6 months, nothing of use was divulged by the individual, and the device had to be retrieved to close the operation. What follows is a riveting sequence of events. While it makes for great reading and is just one example, Crumpton uses the incident as a mini–case study to explain how both technical and human-based intelligence skill sets form a composite that exemplifies the most reliable intelligence. In this particular incident, the operation would have failed without integration of both, the lesson being that no single source of intelligence provides everything needed to formulate good decisions, even at small-scale, tactical levels. Such lessons learned through the course of Crumpton’s early and middle career demonstrate the cumulative preparation that led to him becoming Cofer Black’s deputy and the individual responsible for the CIA’s global counterterrorism operations in September 1999. This was a position through which Crumpton would have significant impact as events unfolded in 2000 and 2001.

Established in February 1986, the CIA’s Counterterrorism Center was developed in response to the April 1983 bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Beirut and the October 1983 bombing that killed 241 U.S. military personnel, also in Lebanon. Crumpton details the growing importance of the center’s mission as the later 1980s, and especially the later 1990s, progressed. Of the six key geographic regions he noted once he arrived, Afghanistan was a particular focus. This, as is well known, was because of al Qaeda’s presence in Afghanistan, which provided it with the sanctuary to plan attacks in Kenya and Tanzania in August 1998. The East African attacks also provided Crumpton with further lessons learned regarding the role of law enforcement as practiced by the FBI and limits to how both the CIA and FBI shared information and common operating procedures:

*My disappointment had to do with the FBI’s exclusive focus on law enforcement, on capture and indictments of specific criminals for specific crimes. Forward-looking intelligence collection and analysis were almost nonexistent. The FBI sought justice, not prevention. Their information was potential evidence, which they had to protect for the prosecutors to use in courts. The agents, for the most part, could not envision others outside the Department of Justice having a legitimate need for FBI-derived information. Sharing evidence as intelligence was anathema to them (p.110).*

The differing bureaucratic cultures and the disconnected approach to intelligence between the CIA and FBI were further compounded by disjointed relationships between intelligence agencies and policy decisionmakers. This is notable in Crumpton’s frustration with the Clinton administration’s failure to address the al Qaeda attacks on U.S. Embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam as acts of war. However, it is notable that Crumpton later discusses how the United States was entering a new type of conflict that was clearly difficult to understand; the confrontation with asymmetric warfare would be further complicated by the decision to invade Iraq.

Returning to the incidents in East Africa, these, as well as the attack on the USS *Cole* in late 2000, foreshadowed problems that prevented the Intelligence Community from stopping the attacks of September 2001. On the other hand, Crumpton provides a balanced look that includes successes, such as preventing the December 1999 Millennium Plot.
This event "underscored the importance of understanding Al-Qaeda’s plans and intentions as an intelligence collection imperative. This meant penetrating their primary safe haven in Afghanistan" (p. 145). Crumpton then focuses chapters 9 and 10 on Afghanistan, which, along with Gary Schroen’s First In and Gary Berntsen’s Jawbreaker, provide perhaps the most detailed look at CIA operations in Afghanistan from September 2001 to early 2002.

There are few authors able to provide first-hand accounts of meeting with Ahmad Shah Masood prior to September 2001 or Hamid Karzai shortly thereafter, and the portrayals of these and other events are cogent and well written. Furthermore, Crumpton’s professional experience and interactions were far-ranging. Concerning technical innovations, he and his close associate have had an impact on equipment used in current operations, both conventional and unconventional. He describes the increased incorporation of Geographic Information Systems into targeting, which in the Intelligence Community is highly significant, and also his involvement with the development of the Predator from a collection platform to a weaponized one with Hellfire missiles. Despite the contentious debate surrounding drones, Crumpton indicates that had this platform contained weapons earlier, Osama bin Laden could have been targeted in the summer of 2000 when he was viewed through the video stream provided by a Predator over Tarnak Farm in Kandahar: “We had Bin Laden in our electrical-optical sights, but we had no realistic policy, no clear authority, and no meaningful resources to engage the target with lethal speed and precision. It was all sadly absurd” (154–155). Despite this missed opportunity and the obvious frustration in Crumpton’s narrative, it is possible that had he not taken the next step in his career, many of the important lessons learned from an intense 3-year period (1999–2002) might have been scattered. Fortunately, this was not the case as the publication of The Art of Intelligence indicates.

In 2002, Crumpton attended the School of Advanced International Studies at The Johns Hopkins University to examine public policy. Through this experience, due to having time and room to reflect, the analysis provided in The Art of Intelligence is thought-provoking and it deserves a wide readership. The author’s desire to further expand his education is also demonstrated by another influential individual in U.S. national security, U.S. Special Operations Command’s Admiral Bill McRaven, who completed his study, Special Ops: Case Studies in Special Operations Warfare Theory and Practice, while at the Naval Postgraduate School. Perhaps there is irony in that Crumpton directly contributed to, and McRaven oversaw, the eventual demise of Osama bin Laden. While perhaps not a direct result of furthering their education, it is likely that their greater contributions to the United States are a result of being afforded time to reflect on how operations and policy must work together to more effectively achieve national security.

The Art of Intelligence is a major contribution and, when carefully considered by the reader, it reveals how Henry Crumpton provided both a positive example and a lifetime of dedication to his country. The reflection and analysis the author gives to this, as to most of his recounted operations, demonstrates the book’s edifying value. In sum, this may indicate that the art of intelligence itself is learning from experience and having the humility and perseverance to honestly assess and adapt to change not only on an individual level but also on a strategic level as a nation.
Understanding the underlying dynamics of political and social life is not easy in any society and particularly in authoritarian ones. The challenge is even greater when the society in question is remote and has been isolated for decades as Central Asia was under Soviet rule. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan emerged as reluctant independent states in 1991 when the Soviet Union dissolved.

We knew very little about these countries at that time. Our knowledge of Central Asia has certainly increased since. This is evident in the large number of books and articles authored each year on the region; and also in the multiplication of Central Asian centers at universities across the Western world. Despite this, we still have only a rough idea of the factors that produce political decisions and the motivations that drive the peoples of the region. Much Western commentary on Central Asia is framed by our own political and societal experience: specifically the historic movement from a faith-based social order to a secular one and from monarchies to democracies. Much writing on political life in Central Asia focuses on the region’s struggle toward an open and democratic society and seeks to explain the absence of progress.

The significant issue of the emergence of Islam in Central Asia is at times presented as an adjunct to this question. The growing influence of Islam in especially Uzbekistan and Tajikistan is often presented as a consequence of the harsh authoritarian rule in Tashkent and its weaker variant in Dushanbe. By this interpretation, the crackdown on the secular opposition in Uzbekistan is the decisive reason – or at least the one we harp on – for the growth of political Islam, because the mosque provides the most effective channel for dissent. The fact that this analysis is also applied in the Arab world gives reason to pause and ask if this analysis is more about a paradigm in the mind of the analyst than the reality of the diverse regions being studied.

For this reason, any study that moves beyond our own paradigm in examining Central Asian society is valuable; and any study that gets a handle on the internal dynamics of the region is critical. Martha Brill Olcott’s *In the Whirlwind of Jihad*, a study of Islam in Uzbekistan, is the rare book that does that. In a career that began in the late 1970’s, Olcott has established herself as the dean of American scholars on Central Asia.

*In the Whirlwind of Jihad* takes the reader on a tour of the development of Islam in Central Asia and especially Uzbekistan. She starts with the Islamic conquest of Central Asia early in the 8th century in order to underscore the point that Central Asia has been a critical part of the Islamic

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world and a center of Islamic learning from nearly the beginning. Many luminaries of Islamic thought hailed from Central Asia including hadith scholar Imam Bukhari, and the philosophers Al Farabi and Avicenna. Olcott notes that the relatively liberal Hanafi school of jurisprudence has predominated in Central Asia and Sufism has exerted a profound influence. In short, a tolerant version of Islam took root in the region. Of particular relevance to our subject, the Hanafi school accepted the idea that Muslims could be ruled by non-believers or infidels so long as Muslims could maintain their faith unhindered and had access to sharia (Islamic law).

This line of thinking made it easier for the Muslims of Central Asia to accept Russian rule in the 19th century, as it left the Islamic community free to practice its faith. The establishment of Soviet rule in the 20th century was a different matter because of its suppression of traditional religion. Indeed the Soviet period exerted a critical influence on the Islam that has emerged in post-Soviet Uzbekistan. The repression of religious practice had several important consequences: it drove practicing Muslims underground and a small but influential community of Uzbeks out of the country, some of whom settled in Saudi Arabia and prospered; it isolated Muslims in Central Asia from the wider Islamic world; it secularized Central Asian society at least in the major cities.

Olcott’s work is particularly strong describing the development of Islamic thought during the Soviet and Independence periods. While anti-religious Soviet policy drove much religious life underground, Islam did not disappear. Islamic preachers remained active, at least after Stalin’s death. The Hanafi school maintained its leading position in the region in part thanks to the work of Muhammadjon Hindustani, who, after his release from jail following Stalin’s death, worked at Dushanbe’s Oriental Institute of the Academy of Sciences, preached in a local mosque and gave illegal religious instruction in hujra’s (classes) outside of the mosque. Through these hujra’s he became a major influence on the imams prominent in Uzbekistan at independence. Interestingly, the Soviet period witnessed the introduction of Salafi influences in the region with the settling in Tashkent of Shami Al Tarabulsi in 1919, a religious thinker educated at Al Azhar in Cairo and who had spent much of his life in Xianjiang. Under his tutelage, the groups Ahl-i-Hadith and Ahl-i-Quran emerged, opposed to Hanafi teachings and Sufi practices and calling for a return to Islam based on hadith and the Quran.

Not all of Hindustani’s students remained members of the Hanafi school. Influenced by Salafi thinkers Sayid Abul Ala Maududi and Sayid Qutb, Rahmatulla-alloma and Abduvali Qori preached that certain Central Asian religious practices – venerating “saints,” reciting certain verses from the Quran at funerals, or paying for recitation of the Quran – were “un-Islamic.” In addition, they pushed for a return to the hijab (head covering for Muslim women). It is worth noting that these developments took place before the Soviet Union fell.

The importance of these developments was evident when the Central Asian states became independent. Abduvali Qori’s influence was strongest in the Ferghana cities of Andijan and Namangan, where his followers took over local mosques. In Namangan, Islamic militias appeared – Islom Adolat and Islom lashkarlari – who openly challenged secular authorities by seeking to establish a Sharia-based society. As part of this effort, they forced merchants to stop selling alcohol and to close their shops during the Islamic call to prayer. By 1990, Tohir Yuldoshev and Juma Namangani – the future leaders of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) – had emerged
as key players in Islom Adolat. In short, an energetic and radical Islam appeared in Central Asia at independence because of developments in Islamic thought in the region – partly reflecting imports from elsewhere in the Islamic world.

Olcott also pays significant attention to the policies toward Islam of the Uzbek President Islom Karimov. She notes Karimov’s recognition that, as a major element of Uzbek culture and tradition, Islam would play an important role in post-Soviet Uzbekistan, and how he agreed to the opening of many mosques. She provides a good account of Karimov’s reaction to the challenge of radical Islam in the Ferghana Valley and a description of his famous meeting with Yuldoshev and other Islamic leaders in Namangan in December, 1991. These developments heightened his already well developed sense that Islam must play a major role in independent Uzbekistan, but also that it must be contained. Individual preachers or activists could not be permitted in the name of Islam to challenge the authority of the state. To deal with this challenge, Karimov launched a crackdown on Islom Adolat and the mosques advocating the establishment of a shariah-based society.

Karimov’s policy toward Islam was also influenced by the outbreak of civil war in neighboring Tajikistan with the prominent role of the Islamic Renaissance Party in the opposition. Following Karimov’s repression of radical Islam in the Ferghana Valley, Namangan and other Uzbek Islamists went to Tajikistan to fight with the opposition. With the ceasefire in Tajikistan, Yuldoshev, Namangani and their followers were ready to return home, newly organized in the IMU, dedicated to the overthrow of the Karimov government and the establishment of a shariah-based society.

This set the stage for a decade of IMU-organized or inspired terrorist attacks – starting with the February, 1999 assassination attempt on Karimov – and government crackdowns on radical Islam. Government sweeps against Islamists were not limited to the IMU. They were directed also against Hizb It Tahrir – a radical group that, while eschewing violence at this stage of historical development, wants to re-establish a caliphate to rule the Islamic world – and other groups that pursued Salafi goals.

Olcott demonstrates that despite the strong-arm tactics of the Uzbek government, there remains a “marketplace of ideas” in Uzbekistan where traditional Hanafi beliefs compete with their Salafi rivals, and the government must adjust its policies to the realities of an evolving situation. This is evident in the government’s treatment of Uzbekistan’s most prominent cleric, Muhammad Sodiq Muhammad Yusef, who headed the Muslim Spiritual Administration of Uzbekistan at the time of independence. Karimov removed Muhammad Sodiq in 1993 for not containing Islamic radicals and he went into exile. Yet Muhammad Sodiq returned from exile in 2000 because the Karimov government thought that his presence might be useful in containing the growth of radical Islam.

Olcott’s discussion of controversial developments is fact-based and nuanced. In treating the violence in Andijon in 2005 concerning the Akromiya movement, she notes that Uzbek authorities believed that the attack on the armory and the prison break proved their point that radical Islamic thought promotes terrorism. Even while Uzbek officials may have privately agreed that their harsh response -- the indiscriminate shooting of protestors -- went too far, they could not understand why the United States and other Western powers condemned only the Uzbek response and not the initial violence of the protestors.

Olcott has produced a serious work on a major topic that is all too often simplified in public discussion of Uzbekistan. PRISM
In Great Game, Local Rules the New Great Power Contest in Central Asia, Alexander Cooley develops an excellent analytical framework for looking at the activities of China, Russia and the United States in Central Asia. Cooley offers three broad arguments. First, he observes that the three big powers have pursued different goals in Central Asia, which has meant that their interests do not necessarily conflict. China’s main objective has been to stabilize Xinjiang by ensuring cooperative relationships on Xinjiang’s border. This prompted Beijing to resolve border disputes with Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan on favorable terms for its Central Asian neighbors. The U.S. has sought to stabilize Afghanistan by establishing supply and base arrangements in Central Asia. Despite the ups and downs with Tashkent which led to the closing of the U.S. base at Karshi Khanabad in 2005, Washington has largely achieved its objectives in the region. Russia has sought to remain the major power or hegemon in the region. Despite this ambitious goal, Moscow has been willing to accept efforts by the U.S. to establish bases in Central Asia because it also is interested in containing, if not defeating the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Cooley’s second point is a corollary to the first. Even as competition among the three in Central Asia has intensified in the past decade, it has not become a zero sum game. Given the differing objectives of the parties, the great powers have not seen a need to try to expel one another from the region.

Cooley’s third point is one that international relations scholars long ago spotted in relations between great and small states. With the three powers vying for influence in Central Asia, the local states can pick and choose among them, accepting what meets their needs, rejecting what they do not want. This means increased leverage for the locals.

Politics of the American bases in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan provide good examples of local leverage. President Karimov was delighted to provide the U.S. a base at Karshi Khanabad in 2001 to help conduct its operations in Afghanistan. But tensions in the bilateral relationship over such issues as human rights and internal reform came to a head in 2005, following Washington’s criticism of Uzbekistan’s crackdown in Andijon and the “Colored Revolution” in Kyrgyzstan which overthrew President Akayev. Turning to the Russians at that time, Karimov kicked the United States out of Karshi Khanabad. Yet a few years later, loathe to get too close to the Russians, Karimov was ready to partner with the United States in delivering supplies to Afghanistan through the Northern Distribution Network. Cooley also provides a thorough account of Russian, Kyrgyz and American maneuverings surrounding the 2009 renewal of the agreement for the U.S. to use Manas airbase to supply Afghanistan.

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In brief, Moscow offered then Kyrgyz President Bakiyev various economic incentives to close Manas to American use. Bakiyev used this offer to negotiate more generous terms for using Manas. Considering themselves betrayed, Russia used its media presence in Kyrgyzstan to weaken Bakiyev, who was driven from power in yet another “Colored Revolution” in 2010.

An important theme that emerges from Cooley’s analysis is the rise of China in Central Asia. He points out that by 2008 China had surpassed Russia as Central Asia’s leading economic partner. China may have initially turned to Central Asia in order to help pacify Xinjiang, but its economic dynamism and focus on long-term interests are making it the major outside player in the region. Of particular importance is China’s investment in oil and gas pipelines from Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan to China. In addition to helping China secure hydrocarbons for its growing economy, these investments have been decisive in breaking Russia’s near monopoly control over the marketing of Central Asian energy.

I have one bone to pick with the author or, more likely, the publisher of this excellent book. That is, the title, or more precisely the use of the phrase the “great game.” In point of fact, the original “great game” – the shadow war between Britain and Russia in the 19th century – was not so great. It was a geopolitical backwater, as the major arena of international diplomacy was in Europe and then, with the emergence of Japan in the late 19th century, also the Far East. When Russia and Great Britain faced a major geopolitical challenge – the rise of Germany – they reconciled their “great game” differences with the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907.

Living in an age of public relations, we can understand how the Great Game came by its reputation. It had excellent publicists – British military officers who knew how to write and, of course, Rudyard Kipling. It also had an interesting story to tell and an exotic locale. But the great game of nations was played elsewhere in the 19th century. What was true in the 19th century is no less true today. Central Asia is a fascinating region where major powers have legitimate interests. In pursuit of those interests they interact and even find points of friction. But Central Asia is not the primary place of their interaction. The current debate in Washington is whether it was premature for the Obama Administration to move its strategic focus from the Middle East (and Europe) to East Asia. The issues that dominate the international agenda today are not in Central Asia. This is not to say that Central Asia was never the central arena in international affairs. From the 6th century establishment of the Turkic Khanates, through the establishment by Ghengis Khan of a Pax Mongolica to the emergence of Tamerlane in the 11th century, Central Asia was often the greatest game. PRISM
Fred Kaplan’s *The Insurgents* is a highly successful and compelling intermingling of three stories: the rise and eventual fall of General David Petraeus; the intellectual history of counterinsurgency; and the broadening of the learning culture within the United States Military during the Iraq war. Indeed, the heroes of the book are the “insurgents” within the U.S. Army who all but overthrew the dominant paradigm of kinetic warfare in favor of ideas derived from England and France during the end of the colonial era. Kaplan’s book picks up on the story told by Tom Ricks in *The Gamble* about how this intellectual insurgency transformed the way the U.S. fought the war in Iraq, preferring the counterinsurgency (COIN) approach to protecting civilians from insurgents and lowering their casualty rate, and building alliances in order to reduce the number of insurgents. For Kaplan this is nothing short of a profound alteration of the American way of war, one that caused enormous consternation amongst certain sectors of the military who were wedded to a more conventional approach to war.

To this point Kaplan is telling a story others have told. A perusal of journals such as *Small Wars Journal, Military Review, Army, and Parameters* makes clear that within the military establishment this was a widely debated transformation. It is this debate that Kaplan is so effective in reproducing in this book; indeed, as in his earlier book, *The Wizards of Armageddon*, he is able to weave intellectual history through good old-fashioned anecdotes (if not gossip) to show the institutional ebbs and flows of innovational eclecticism in its confrontation with institutional conservatism. If computational analysis leading to rational decision-making is the central argument for *Wizards*, then COIN is the heart of *Insurgents*. And just as Kaplan finds the comedy and tragedy of the RAND “geek squad” in the 50s and 60s, he is able to locate similar narrative tensions in the Iraq War. If the assessment fetish of RAND types led to some real errors in Vietnam, the Vietnam War was truly in the rear view mirror for the COIN advocates in Iraq.

It is important at this point to consider the context from which counterinsurgency emerged, namely the attempt on the part of the British and French to preserve their empire. From the novel *The Centurions*, through the work of David Galula (a French military officer who fought in Algeria, Indochina, and advised the U.S. in Vietnam), John Nagle, David Kilcullen, and David Petraeus became increasingly a war of the principles espoused in the practice of counterinsurgency. Within the COIN paradigm, war is 80% political, 20% military; protect civilians and do not try and create insurgents through collateral damage. Kaplan is not afraid to invoke the key variable in all this when he speaks of the U.S. having a legitimate government with which to partner. He is quick to point this out with respect to Iraq and Afghanistan, but inadequately notes that past French and British efforts at counterinsurgency failed because they had no legitimate government with which to partner. It is uncanny to me, at this late date, that there are no references in
Nagl or in other authors, that recognize a critical flaw in the French or British strategy: the goal of preserving empire. Kaplan understands that there are two key obstacles that must be talked before COIN can succeed: the legitimacy of the government in office, and the counterinsurgent force not being perceived as an occupying army.

I would argue that counterinsurgency, as a means of defeating rebel nationalist forces, has historically been a near total failure. Many would point to the counterexample of Malaysia—an atypical case since in order to bring non-Chinese Malays into alliance against the Communists, British General, Sir Harold Briggs had to promise them independence from the United Kingdom. Also, the “enemy” was immediately identifiable as they were Chinese, not Malay. Briggs’ own plan to establish secure villages succeeded because the land to which peasants were moved was better than they had previously occupied. In a private conversation with David Kilcullen, he made the point that unlike Vietnamese villagers whose roots in their home hamlets went far back, the Malays’ were not. If you add the pioneering counterinsurgency against Mau Mau in Kenya, the British won the war, lost the peace, and Kenya became independent in spite of the best efforts of the settler population.

One of the key features of COIN is the expectation of cultural and linguistic awareness. Becoming an occupying force is antithetical to this, and Kaplan is well aware that it stands to generate a countervailing nationalist force. Afghan President Hamid Karzai and Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki both objected to being run over by American policies prompting Petraeus and others to threaten them with American fiscal and military withdrawal. “Karzai threw a fit. He told them, ‘I have three main enemies’—[the Taliban, the United States, and the international community]—and ‘if I had to choose today, I’d choose the Taliban!’”

_The Insurgents_ takes off when Kaplan details the gap between what Washington thinks is going on and what is actually transpiring in Tel Afar and Mosul. Improvising on the ground, General Herbert McMaster and Petraeus actually garner success in terms of winning the peace. This is defined as bringing warring factions to the table, negotiating power sharing, and identifying some common enemies (usually Al Qaeda in Iraq). Fighting against the ineffective policies of the former Coalition Provisional Authority Administrator, Paul Bremer and much of President George W. Bush’s Pentagon team, there were some significant advances made by employing some modifications of Galula’s strategy.

This brings us to another key argument of Kaplan’s book about not quite playing by the rules while simultaneously innovating. The concept of “clear and hold” was not new to this war. It was difficult in a manner that is true for many irregular wars. It was adding “build” to the equation that constituted the biggest challenge. Lieutenant General Peter Chiarelli took the lead in this pursuit by developing the notion of SWET (sewage, water, electricity, and trash collection). Chiarelli innovated in the face of the $18.6 billion that was allocated for reconstruction. Securing a mere $100 million, he went into Sadr City (where months earlier his own soldiers were being shot at) and hired locals to build a landfill and “lay PVC pipe to remove ankle high sewage from the streets.” When General George Casey and Ambassador John Negroponte put an end to the project the Mahdi army resumed their attacks.

What for me was one of the strongest moments in Kaplan’s book—perhaps because it was one of the deeper instances of progress in opening up the learning culture within the U.S. Army—was the incorporation of data surveys to pinpoint insurgent activity. Of course, this is a throwback to both the so-called _Wizards of Armageddon_, but also the flawed data collection and misinterpretation conducted by RAND in Vietnam. For Vietnam, one only has to look at the Hamlet Evaluation Surveys as well as the Bombing Survey. In neither case was the data collected understood; indeed, it was too frequently misunderstood to the point of creating “accidental guerrillas.”
In Iraq, some of this task was left to three women on General Ray Odierno’s staff, known locally as “the coven.” By analyzing the data on bomb-making sites and “the supply routes they followed into Baghdad,”9 they were able to map the homes and transportation networks of the various militias, especially where these points intersected with the resulting friction. However, it was the interpretation of this data, which made the difference.

This discovery wasn’t merely interesting; it uncovered a major flaw in the impending plan for President Bush’s troop surge. Putting all five of the extra Army brigades in Baghdad wouldn’t solve the problem, because the bombs were being built—and the militias inside Baghdad were being supplied—by extremist leaders in the belts outside the capital. At least some of the brigades had to attack the belts and interdict the supply routes.10

While not meaning to suggest that data collection and interpretation was new to the surge, I think Kaplan is right on target when demonstrating that the use of this data within the context of COIN presented a more holistic analysis of hostile actors. This geographical mapping allowed a targeted response that, at least in theory, could keep the civilian casualties down.

It is worth noting that the quarterly reports the Military provided Congress for Iraq contain some of the most fascinating data we can imagine for measuring progress in a war. In contrast to the Hamlet Evaluation Survey in Vietnam, this data provided quarterly progress on violent incidents, civilian deaths, and U.S. troops lost, but also information about electricity and running water provided both in Baghdad and nationwide. On the assumption that the United States broke the electric grid and given the nature of Iraqi weather, to not have electricity posed quite a problem for civilian relations. To get electricity up and running was a measure of progress (albeit very slow and frustrating).

By the time Kaplan gets to Afghanistan the flaws in COIN become palpable. Concepts like government legitimacy are frequently mentioned within the text; in its absence the struggle to stabilize and nation build become nearly impossible. In Afghanistan, to this day, the quandary as the U.S. prepares to leave is which insurgent movement, which warlords, which factions of the Taliban can the U.S. work with should the Karzai government fail.
This is Fred Kaplan’s story, but what makes this a most invaluable book is the manner in which this tale is woven into the organizational analysis of a fundamentally conservative institution with a very slow learning curve. John Nagl, in his now classic *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, makes the case that the U.S. Army learns and forgets only to learn and forget again. David Petraeus’ ambition led him to take on the intellectual and institutional restraints the Army had to offer. His victory led to some success in Iraq, but not so much in Afghanistan. Kaplan provides a ready-at-hand explanation as to why Afghanistan has not succeeded on the one hand, and why Petraeus personally succeeded on the other. In just a few pages at the end of the book Kaplan lays out Petraeus’ final downfall. The brevity of this account reflects the tragic ending at the length it deserves.

If one were looking to read one book on COIN or the Iraq War, Fred Kaplan’s *The Insurgents* might well be the one to choose. There are some missing aspects (namely, a discussion of the real intellectual flaws behind a strategy originally designed to save the empire), but one should be careful to avoid reviewing the book one wishes the author had written rather than the one in hand. This is a terrific addition to the literature of the modern American way of war, and while many soldiers might not want to participate in Military Operations Other Than Warfare, the war against extremism indicates that this is in America’s future.

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**Notes**

1. This group would include, *inter alia*, General David Petraeus himself, John Nagl and David Kilcullen (early importers of counterinsurgency theory), Andrew Krepenevich, Herbert McMaster, Conrad Crane, Sarah Sewall, Kaveh Sepp, Peter Chiarelli, Celeste Ward, and Emma Sky. The latter would include, *inter alia*, David Galula, Bernard Fall, and T.E. Lawrence.
7. During the Vietnam war, the Hamlet Evaluation Survey (HEM) counted the number of communists “eliminated” or “rallied” (those who joined the government) and the number of villages under South Vietnamese control. See, Robert K. Brigham, *Iraq, Vietnam, and the Limits of American Power* (Philadelphia: PublicAffairs, Perseus Book Group, 2006) 47.
8. David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One* (Oxford: University Press, 2009). It has only been in the last decade that Stathis Kalyvas and his students at Yale have reanalyzed the data in an effort to determine what we could have been learning had we made a better effort to think the data collection techniques and results through.
13. Another piece to this story, which Kaplan addresses, is the role civilian and semi-civilian advisors played in this educational process. Whether it is in the books by the ubiquitous Emma Sky or Sarah Sewall or the many Kagans, this is its own story.
Carol Cohn’s December 2012 anthology *Women and Wars* uses descriptions of the varied roles of women during conflict to push forward an agenda for full inclusion of their perspective in securing the peace. *Women and Wars* fills the vacuum left by the “women as victims” approach that characterized the early 2000’s, with a diverse array of options for understanding the roles and perspectives that women have during conflict, including: soldiers, civilians, caregivers, sex workers, refugees and internally displaced persons, anti-war activists, and community peace-builders.

Over the last two years the expansion of information on women, peace, and security has been vast both within academia and policy circles. The space once characterized by “awkward silences,” between feminist researchers and security practitioners is closing rapidly—assisted by an improved understanding of why gender matters during conflict and post conflict. During the preparation of the 2011 U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, the U.S. government reached out to a consortium of civil society groups and academics, of which the author was a member. They were looking for “proof” (both empirical and anecdotal) that gender matters in stability operations, and data to show that women’s equality is foundational to stability and security. Cohn’s book is an excellent example of such proof. It is a series of well tested, field based examples of why gender matters during and after war.

As founding director of the Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights, Cohn’s access and professional history have led to a book the strengths of which lie firstly in its diversity of subjects (the roles of women in war), and, secondly, in its’ diversity of effort (the chapter authors). An introductory chapter provides context and concepts, setting the stage for an inclusive understanding of peace and security. Individual chapters within the book are authored by well-known scholars and practitioners, regularly relying on real life examples of impacts and outcomes. Chapters are organized thematically and cover such issues as security sector reform, disarmament, sexual and gender based violence, returnee and refugee issues. As a result, the traditional lens through which women’s participation in conflict has been seen for so long, that of victimhood, erodes with each compelling and well-written chapter.

Research has proven that the inclusion of women earlier in the process of peace building and peacekeeping leads to greater security for the state as a whole. We also know that gender parity plays a strong role in state stability. A 2005 study funded by the Canadian government assessing what factors make fragile states more so, concluded that

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“gender parity may play a strong and measurable role in the stability of the state” even when separated from other known correlations. In other words, it showed that it is not just a matter of more developed societies being more stable, and more developed societies also being societies marked by greater gender equity, but rather that gender equity may well increase stability. Inequitable societies (i.e. societies in which a portion of the population, principally women and/or ethnic minorities, are oppressed) show a much higher propensity to solve their international disputes by initiating violence and war. Countries with a lower level of gender equality are more likely to engage in violence, international crises, and disputes.

Transversely, research shows, as do many failed “nation building experiments,” that leaving women out of rebuilding and renegotiating in the post conflict space has dramatically harmful impacts on the direction of society by reducing stability and prosperity. In other words, inclusivity begets stability. Cohn’s book not only makes this point, but also advances it by providing the blueprints on how to get there. Her chapter-by-chapter approach reveals a methodologically sound formula for addressing the needs of women’s inclusion across sections, specifically within security institutions that have for so long been male dominated: police, militaries, and militias (including non-state actors).

*Women and Wars* provides a strong assessment of foundational aspects of long-term exclusion of women from various stages of the conflict cycle. Cohn recognizes and responds aptly to the fact that, “institutions have gendered presumptions built into the structures, practices and values,” which in turn shape their agendas and priorities overall. She documents the fact that institutions often use ideas about gender to shape and produce policy, which may “in turn have cultural and structural impacts beyond the bounds of the institutions itself.” In other words, the experience of women during war is both shapes and is shaped by the local context. Perhaps nowhere is Cohn’s point more clear than in Afghanistan, where the presuppositions of U.S. institutions have profoundly influenced women’s equality and protection, while at the same time creating national backlash in the form of conservative decrees and an uptick in violence against women and girls.

Cohn’s point is particularly important in a post conflict context where identities may be malleable, and international institutions are strong in both resources and influence. She documents the importance of institutional identities in nation building processes, such as planning national elections, disarmament and demobilisation processes or security sector reform efforts. One finds that the identities of
the institutions and their gendered orientation towards human security have great potential to impact the structured equality of women on the ground. The book’s chapter on women and peace processes is especially impressive in making this point as it moves step by step through the conflict cycle, examining entry points where women are both impacted and impactful of the on-going negotiations and mediation. The chapter relies on examples from Afghanistan, Burundi and Sri Lanka to illustrate the fact that tradition and culture should not be confines of progress. Practitioners still struggle to figure out entry points, and how to use them best, a query that needs additional research the likes of which *Women and Wars* provides.

In the introduction, Cohn points to the fact that women’s perception of wars and conflict know no “temporal nor spatial bounds.” This being said, the only issue one finds with the text is that it does not completely address the “boundless” nature of war for women, but seems instead completely bound by a focus on hard sector security. The book’s focus and strength is on reform of security sector institutions (state and non-state military forces) and security related processes (such as disarmament and demobilisation.) However, what is less obvious for the reader is the impact of conflict on women’s health, economic and social well-being. In other words, where post conflict reconstruction meets development. In the case of health, for example, the chapter that covers Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) only addresses, “other health concerns related to war,” as a chapter footnote to deal with pressing issues around HIV/AIDS and maternal mortality. It seems a number of social, perhaps developmental topics are omitted and as a result, the text is slightly incomplete in its understanding of the impact of war on women.

It is likely that aversion to addressing “soft sector” issues more concretely is borne out of the fact that these sectors have typically dominated discussions around gender and conflict for many years. As a result, “serious” feminist academics have sought to avoid evoking discussions around health and education because of the stereotypes they carried, namely that women are victims. However, to come full circle on the topics of understanding the gendered impact of war, we must take on a robust approach which integrates shifting social parameters alongside, for example, shifting movement of refugees.

In a world dominated by lengthy, smouldering inter-ethnic conflicts that do not end when the peace accord is signed, wars do not end quickly for women. Scholars of women, peace and security must be willing to take on anthropological and sociological vantage points to go more deeply into evolving social norms and behaviors that will actually impact that ability of a nation to recover from violent conflict.

War and its aftermath, Cohn concludes, is neither a discreet event nor a gender neutral one. Nor should be the researching, writing and policy responses to war. Over a year after the adoption of a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security was adopted, the U.S. government is making impressive strides to engender conflict and post conflict policies within USAID, the State Department, and the Department of Defense. New scholarly resources such as the Georgetown University Institute for Women, Peace and Security and the Social Science Research Council’s International Centre for Gender, Peace and Security (IC-GPS) are working to continually improve what we know about women and conflict. Thanks to Cohn and her cohorts, today, we have all the proof we need: women matter during war. PRISM
NOTES


The title of Moises Naim’s newest book is an apt summary of its basic thesis. *The End of Power: From Boardrooms to Battlefields and Churches to States, Why Being in Charge Isn’t What it Used to Be* is about exactly that: how the large institutions and bureaucracies that have controlled territory, ideology and wealth for the last several hundred years have been compelled to cede this control to numerous smaller players.

Although the book reviews a number of definitions of power, its consistent focus is on how institutional power in the modern period came to be defined in terms of size and scope. In modern times, the bigger you are, the more powerful you are. When Naim says that power is decaying - the book’s battle cry - he means that our mainstream definition of power as bigness no longer holds true.

Much of the book is spent detailing how “power got big,” as Naim puts it, and the ways in which power as bigness has been challenged. We readers learn how this challenge has manifested itself in different institutions and spheres of activity. These include not only governments, militaries and private corporations, but also religious institutions, unions, philanthropic organizations and the professional media. While this approach admittedly can get a little tedious, its great virtue is in demonstrating how singularly unified our ideas about power have become. Regardless of the institution, it seems, we think that to be powerful is to be bigger than everyone else. We also learn how comprehensively the power of large institutions - regardless of their function - is being challenged.

This breadth makes Naim’s book an excellent go-to cross-disciplinary resource for current research on political power. In his view, all of these institutions are changing as a result of three interrelated phenomena, which he labels the “more, mobility and mentality revolutions.” The “more revolution” describes the fact that there is “more of everything now ... more people, countries, cities, political parties, armies; more goods and services, and more companies selling them; more weapons and more medicines; more students and more computers; more preachers and more criminals” (54). This may be a bit of a simplification, as there are also fewer of many other items in the world; Naim’s real point is that there are a greater number of healthier people whose basic needs for food, water, and shelter have been fulfilled. They are, as a result, less easy to control and have the ability to overwhelm systems.
By “mobility revolution,” Naim means that people, ideas and capital move around with greater ease than they once did, thanks to a variety of factors. For example, diaspora and immigrant communities alter the balance of power both within their own new communities and in the larger geopolitical balance by spreading ideas and passing remittances to their home countries. Finally, the “mentality revolution” describes the effect of these other two phenomena on how different populations in the world think. As a result of exposure to more places, and people, and ideas, we - general populations the world over - are less likely than in previous eras to accept received wisdom or show obeisance to traditional forms of power. We question our governments, our churches, and the rights of corporate firms with greater force and effect than previously.

Naim’s fundamental point is nuanced and subtle; it is that the environment within which power operates has changed in substantial and irreversible ways. As a result, even though many of the institutions and events that we observe on that landscape may not look so very different than in the recent past, their ability to operate effectively - to exercise their power freely - is not what it once was.

However, this thesis can be difficult to tease out. Rather than making this subtle point, Naim makes outsized claims about the demise of power from which he must repeatedly retreat, caveating at every step. Exxon Mobil, JP Morgan Chase, and The New York Times, each a traditional powerhouse, are not about to simply disappear from the scene: each has “immense resources and hard-to-replicate competitive advantages that ensure their dominance in industry.” Instead, “they face a more dense and limiting set of constraints on their ability to act.” It is not hard to imagine that the exigencies of publishing - and the need to make extravagant claims in order to sell books – were the driving force behind the hyperbolic tendencies in the text. Read carefully, however, and the nuanced point emerges.

What conclusions can we as readers draw from this state of affairs, and in what way should they be used to inform American policy-making? Naim offers a few answers, not least among them that the era of hegemonic power, whether held by nation-states or companies, is decisively over. “Looking for a current or new hegemon or a committee of elite nations to reassert control is a fool’s errand.”

That raft of books, think tank treatises and discussions, whether in popular forums or more rarified policy spaces, over whether the United States or China will control the future; over whether the 21st century will be an American century; or over whether Western democracies will rise again to the fore - are all missing the point. Yes, relative power may reside in American and Chinese hands, but Naim’s comprehensive review of big power demonstrates that the very framework within which we have defined power as intrinsically hegemonic has broken down. We must begin to think in new terms.

Beyond this general instruction, Naim does not offer much specific counsel. The last ten pages of the book are dedicated to solutions, and readers may wish that he had spent more time offering specific ways to approach this changed world. Indeed, in addition to suggesting that we must think in new ways about power, Naim tells us that we should increase our trust in the government and learn to
strengthen political parties. This is an odd instruction, following over two hundred pages of strenuously argued prose about the fact that no one large institution, such as governments or even alliances of like-minded governments, can be restored to power.

I might suggest, alternatively, that if it is the case that we are inevitably living on a changed landscape of more actors, with greater mobility, we must prod our governments to put serious muscle into thinking about how to acknowledge and finally work with the political power that non-traditional, smaller actors wield. Rather than trying to revert to an era of certain trust in centralized government, with expectations of power that no longer obtain, we could support a government that seeks to function effectively in the kind of world Naim describes.

As one step, we should define power in new terms. Naim is persuasive on the point that sheer size - whether of territory, population, financial means, or arsenal - is no longer a defining characteristic of power. In order to make government more effective, we need a better grasp on what kinds of characteristics should be enhanced.

Non-state actors of the type included in Naim’s analysis must be included in this project, so we can move beyond understanding small actors’ power simply as disruptive. Not all smaller actors, or “micropowers,” to use Naim’s terminology, are successful in their endeavors. We must understand the contexts and terms of success of these actors. This is in no small part because effective governance, as Naim and others have made clear, is increasingly a function of collaborative networks working toward a unified goal. If the U.S. government intends to serve in a leadership role addressing complex issues in the future, it will have to become more sophisticated about developing effective networks with specific characteristics aimed at particular problem sets. We will have to move beyond the era of the public-private partnership into one in which multiple actors with particular characteristics suited to different tasks are brought into effective working relationships.

This era begins with Naim’s observations that power isn’t “what it used to be,” but it cannot end there. We must go on to figure out what power is now, in current conditions. Naim has long experience in, and great expertise in the arena of governance. His last book, Illicit, was about illegal trafficking, and provided thoughtful and full ideas about how to address this complex problem. We will need similar thoughtfulness in the future as the world Naim describes continues to unfold. His new book is a useful place to open a mainstream discussion of how big governments, firms, militaries and churches must think about power, if they are to have any at all in the future. PRISM
welcomed with great anticipation my copy of Matthew Levitt’s *Hezbollah: The Global Footprint of Lebanon’s Party of God*. Levitt is also the author of a 2006 book, *Hamas: Politics, Charity, and Terrorism in the Service of Jihad*. My anticipation for *Hezbollah* was driven in part by Levitt’s noteworthy background in the subject of terrorist groups, with his work as a researcher and scholar at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, and as a practitioner at the U.S. Department of State, Department of the Treasury and the FBI. Its timing was stimulating, for the book arrived in the midst of controversy and concern regarding Hezbollah’s deepening role in the Syrian civil war. My anticipation also was fueled by the chance to read Levitt’s work as a detailed refresher to my own late 2008 monograph published by the Combating Terrorism Center at the United States Military Academy titled, Sunni and Shi’a Terrorism: Differences that Matter. As its title implied, that monograph took a comparative, 25 year look at the terrorist activities of groups inspired by radical Sunni Islam and those inspired by radical Shi’a Islam in non-combat zones around the world. Lebanese Hezbollah was a feature Shi’a player in this comparative analysis. Levitt’s work promised a much deeper dive into the world of radical Shi’a terrorist groups.

With very minor exceptions, Levitt’s work lives up to expectations. It is lucidly written with a compelling narrative, strong on detail regarding specific terrorist events and activities attributable to Hezbollah and its affiliate groups, and features a trove of unique and interesting sources – including many non-American sources. Levitt effectively sketches the wide panoply of international activities undertaken by Hezbollah’s terrorist network over the past 30. He also leaves the reader no doubt that Hezbollah’s global terrorist activities link directly to Iran, with especially compelling evidence of the consequences of this in the Levant – in Lebanon, in Syria, and against Israel in particular. While his portrait of Hezbollah’s terrorism threats in the majority of the world, vice its fundraising and money laundering ones there, do not appear yet to meet the standards for declaring it the kind of international threat against non-Israeli targets he seems to suggest, Levitt’s book achieves its self-described aspiration to “kick start” a debate on the full range of Hezbollah’s worldwide terrorist activities.

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From his opening paragraphs, Levitt writes *Hezbollah* with an aim to more fully expose its worldwide clandestine activities. Before getting to a brief recitation of Hezbollah’s founding in Lebanon and its role in providing social services for previously disenfranchised and oppressed Lebanese Shi’a there, he chronicles the foiled 2009 terrorism adventures of two Lebanese nationals in Azerbaijan against Israeli and Western targets noting how these two were sponsored by Iran. He then introduces readers to the greatest coordinator of regional and global Shi’a terrorist activities in history, the late Imad Mugniyah, who guided the Islamic Jihad Organization (IJO) for almost 30 years. Mugniyah died from a targeted explosion in Damascus, Syria in early 2008. While other authors including Augustus Richard Norton of Boston University, Ahmad Nizar Hamzah of American University in Kuwait and Eitan Azani of Israel’s Herzliya Center have written on the complex relationships between Hezbollah’s domestic socio-political role in Lebanon and its martial ones in the Levant and beyond, Levitt’s purpose is more limited and clear. He asks the question, “Is Lebanese Hezbollah a terrorist organization?” He answers strongly in the affirmative.

Levitt provides a comprehensive narrative of successful and failed Hezbollah and IJO terrorist plots spanning three decades. His first three chapters focus on Hezbollah’s violence-led ascendance in Lebanon in the 1980s emphasizing how its activities there targeted westerners in order to advance Lebanese Shi’a and Iranian aims in the Levant and across the Gulf. He then provides an extended and very useful recounting of Hezbollah’s role in carefully choreographed terror activities in Europe – and especially in France. Levitt’s documentation of failed attacks in France, Italy and Germany makes valuable contributions to a record that is otherwise hard to glean from open source terrorism data, for these often don’t capture failed plots. Levitt also does a good job of profiling the logistical and financial activities of Lebanese Hezbollah and IJO operations across Europe in the 1980s-90s demonstrating an organizational reach that is not well understood. The value of Levitt’s work in this area is unquestionable making it a highly useful reference.

Yet one might take issue with a bit of Levitt’s narrative here – a thread which continues later in the book. While clearly peppering his descriptions of Hezbollah and IJO European terrorism operatives as from these groups, Levitt isn’t quite as diligent in clearly labeling the many terrorists and assassins during this dark period of terrorism in Europe, who were directly linked to the Iranian government, its embassies and consulates, and the Iranian intelligence agents who choreographed them. As one example, Levitt chose to use a questionable March 1989 *Times of London* report commenting on two 1987 assassination attempts on Iranian monarchist exiles in London to claim that even though the assassination suspects were London-based Iranian expatriates they were, “…believed to be tied to Hezbollah extremists in south Beirut.” To my knowledge, this claim was speculative then and remains unproven to this day.

My own research for *Sunni and Shi’a Terrorism* clearly established that the assassination campaign against Shah of Iran era expats in Western Europe and North America that ran from 1980-92 was an Iranian operation inspired and staged through Iranian embassies and consulates and rarely involved Lebanese Hezbollah agents in other than limited ways. So too was most of the 1984-88 terror
campaign in France which in large measure aimed to end French support for Saddam Hussein's Iraq in its ongoing war against Iran – an effort which complemented Hezbollah bombings of French assets and kidnappings of French nationals in Lebanon — and succeeded brilliantly.

Levitt's narrative of Hezbollah terror activities in Argentina (February and May 1994), Khobar Towers (June 1996), and Iraq (2003-10) is compelling and most helpful in drawing together the clearly established interconnection of Hezbollah and IJO terrorist activities with Iranian agents worldwide. The Iraq section develops themes regarding Hezbollah training and assistance to Iranian Quds-Force sponsored Iraqi Shi’a militia that provide insight into how much of this and more now must be ongoing between Shi’a elements in Syria’s civil war.

Levitt's recounting of Shi’a terrorist support and plotting activities in Southeast Asia (1990s), North America (1990s-2000s) and East Africa (1990s-2000s) makes interesting reading and illuminates the nature of far-flung financing and logistical support pursued by Hezbollah through Lebanese expatriates and sympathizers. His combination of these activities in a single volume is a most useful contribution. In these pages Levitt draws upon unique official sources from places like the Philippines, New Zealand, Singapore and Canada providing another most helpful record. Yet while this record is important, it strikes me as far short of making the case that Hezbollah is a dramatic much less looming terrorism threat in any of these areas – a conclusion that Levitt seems keen to have us draw. In North America for example, the only clear-cut case of a Shi’a terrorist attack was that planned against the Saudi Arabian Ambassador to the United States and uncovered in the summer of 2011. Levitt himself acknowledges that this produced a legal indictment against the leader of the Iranian paramilitary Quds Force, General Qassem Soliemani, and not against any Hezbollah or IJO operative. In this vein, scrutiny of the detail Levitt offers actually suggests that agents in these locations are mainly in the business of fundraising, money laundering and logistical support for Hezbollah brethren in the Levant.

One can only wonder how much greater a finance and logistical presence was maintained by groups like the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and the Basque Separatists in similar locations without there being a credible threat of operational terrorism in these locations.
I found much to like in Levitt’s final chapter where he helpfully links together the radical Shi’a terrorist strikes of 2010-12 in Burgas, Bulgaria against Israeli tourists and New Delhi, India against the Israeli Embassy with the failed attack planned for Bangkok, Thailand against unspecified Israeli targets. He does well in demonstrating that these far-from-random acts came from a high level decision in Tehran to exact revenge for a supposed Israeli-managed assassination campaign against Iranian nuclear scientists. This assessment tracks well a diverse array of other unclassified intelligence assessments I have seen. Thus Levitt’s conclusions about Iranian sponsorship are spot-on even if poorly understood in the Western World.

Less compelling however is Levitt’s conclusion that a reorganized and rejuvenated IJO served as a critical component in these attacks that had far more to do with Iranian national interests in vengeance than with Hezbollah interests. Levitt’s documentation for this conclusion cites conversations with unnamed Israeli intelligence officials in late 2012. Yet other sources – including regional sources like those I read regularly from India and Thailand and uncited in Hezbollah -- more directly implicate actors with unambiguous ties to Iran and Iranian agencies like the para-military agency (IRGC-Quds Force) or Iranian intelligence (MOIS). While one can understand the perspective that Israeli officials would have regarding the links between IJO and Iranian agents — fearing the worst — it would seem prudent to credit Hezbollah and IJO only with those activities which can be clearly placed at their doorstep.

The questions that arise in those instances of Israeli sole-sourcing notwithstanding, Levitt’s work is commendable for its variety and detail in references. He utilizes a most helpful array of declassified or partially declassified assessments from the CIA, FBI and Department of the Treasury of Shi’a terrorism as practiced by Hezbollah and Iranian agencies. He updates the record of radical Shi’a terrorist groups in a compelling and readable historical narrative, astutely noting the senior partner to junior partner relations between Iran’s security and intelligence services and the leadership of Hezbollah’s military wing. In doing so Levitt generates a narrative of that Iranian state senior partner as one with global reach and a global aim to strike-out using terrorism against Israeli interests and against those that would threaten the Mullah-led regime. And while the junior, non-state Hezbollah partner most surely remains committed to operational terrorism in the Levant in reprisal for Israeli actions globally, apart from a widely networked fundraising and propaganda agent, its direct role in terrorism operations beyond the Levant remains historically anomalous. Is that Hezbollah role now something much more?

Inspired by this commendable book, let the debate begin! PRISM
The year is 2035 and Chinese strategic patience has finally paid off. After decades of standing by, watching the United States parade its naval assets unimpeded through the Pacific and park its aircraft and personnel in its own strategic backyard, the Directorate—an alliance of convenience between China and its very junior partner Russia—strikes a near-fatal blow against America’s technologically advanced, but network dependent, global defense enterprise. In search of natural resources and hungry for the international prestige denied to them for years, revenge has been a long time coming.

This is the setting for P.W. Singer and August Cole’s forthcoming novel, *Ghost Fleet*. Drawing from their work on emerging military technology, new domains of conflict, and future warfare concepts, the authors open with a dystopian display of American military might, where everything that could go wrong does and in which the adversary has near-omnipotent visibility on every operational and tactical action taken.

The United States’ futuristic defense technologies and platforms of today, from the DDG 1000 guided missile destroyers to F-35 fifth generation fighters, are but obsolete relics, having proven less than successful from their first days in action. Promising to do everything, they did very little well.

And what is worse, when called into the fray America’s most advanced weaponry, in addition to supplies of chemical and biological soldier enhancements, are either fully compromised or knocked offline by their own hi-tech nature or exposure to foreign supply chains. In a world where Google Glass equivalents are as ubiquitous as smart phones and cocktails of tailored stimulants have replaced caffeine (although coffee is still downed by the kitsch mugful), greater connectivity and globalization are not the panacea many still cast them as today. Instead, bringing countries like China into the international fold has given it surreptitious access through network-dependent hardware and domestic manufacturing facilities. Just as scary, China has usurped the employment of autonomous, robotic weapons—a field in which America once dominated—utilizing swarm after swarm of quadcopters and autonomous torpedoes where helicopter gunships and submarines once

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reigned supreme. They have also managed to perfect the tracking of nuclear reactors at sea to give its anti-ship missiles pinpoint accuracy, and space-based lasers make anti-satellite operations a breeze.

But even on the edge of defeat, Americans prove resilient and even devious, their exploits playing out in odes to American wars of the past and intelligence tradecraft reminiscent only of James Bond’s dreams. After his and his crew’s escape from China’s surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, Commander Jamie Simmons becomes a cause célèbre among his reeling Navy comrades and a despondent public. A female Marine leads a rag tag Hawaiian insurgency against Directorate occupation, keeping in mind lessons from Iraq and Afghanistan, and even calling themselves mujahedeen. Civilians play their part as well, from a brilliant energy scientist looking to revive the energy zapping rail-gun to a lone assassin, picking off high-profile Chinese citizens and soldiers to sow fear in their ranks.

Other American strengths do not go underestimated. Silicon Valley wiz-kids and genius computer programmers seek to topple the Directorate’s cyber capabilities just for the challenge, and companies like Wal-Mart turn their vaunted logistics operations into weapons of efficiency. Anonymous, the international network of hactivists (perhaps one and the same as those patriotic Silicon Valley nerds), does digital battle with Hainan, although an actual alliance with the United States seems dubious.

Woven into this thriller are attempts to put in better perspective potential wars of the future, their complexity, and our own vulnerabilities. What is made quite plain is that while American technological advantage, business acumen, and scientific expertise are world class, their continued dominance, and more worryingly their excellence, is not inevitable. Enemies are more than capable of hacking American government networks, stealing weapons plans from defense contractors, and exfiltrating sensitive data from private American firms, putting national security at risk.

Singer and Cole open with a terrifying salvo, one in which America’s enemies control nearly every domain—space, air, sea, land, and cyber. This control puts our nation’s aforementioned strengths and trends in a different, less attractive light. What happens when American military networks, systems, and weapons stop functioning? Could our forces really fall back to non-networked communications (think letters and flag signals)? Could our warships navigate effectively without the global positioning system? Failure to adapt is certainly a danger for the military, but so too is any over-reliance on technology.

More fundamental and basic skills, however, are on display when the “Ghost Fleet,” non-nuclear, aging, and outdated ships from the 2010s, is called into action. Sailors, marines, soldiers, and airmen are put to the test, forced to operate without satellite communications, advanced command and control and targeting systems, and guided weaponry. Face-to-face with an enemy operating nearpeer stealth platforms—probably made from stolen American designs—modern naval
vessels, and effective cyber operations, the United States is no longer up against the once-maligned yet effectively persistent insurgents of the Middle East. With its technological overmatch diminished, America is fighting a very different war.

And while some things in this war are different, many others stay the same, albeit with various twists. Predictably, privateers appear ready to aid the American military effort, although this time they are financed by one of the world’s richest men, sporting a diamond covered spaceship. Despite his individual eccentricity, he still finds inspiration in one of the most fearsome, but infamous contractors of wars past—Blackwater. Intelligence gathering goes much the same way, but instead of listening in on phone calls or intercepting cables, the enemy is monitoring social media accounts to track fleet movements. Remember those Apache helicopters destroyed by Iraqi insurgents in 2007 after American soldiers posted geotagged photos to the web?

Of course, the enduring human elements of conflict are not forgotten. The sorrow of watching spouses, siblings, and parents ship off for the unknown is as heartbreaking as ever. But their sorrow is only matched by the elation upon their return, and the true despair when some do not. The family drama is real, but so is the sense of individual and collective duty, sacrifice, and fraternity. What’s different, however, is who makes up this force of the future: gay men and women, female generals and admirals, a large number of Hispanics and Asians. Singer and Cole are right to point out that change in the ranks impacts the health of the force; in the end, it’s not just what equipment or weapons are being fielded, but how they are being operated and by whom.

With nearly 350 footnotes, this work of fiction draws on the forefront of military science, research, and development. But what makes this work special is the authors’ projections 20 years into the future; while it’s true that today’s military tries to think that far ahead, official reports do not always do creative justice to the tools at our service-members disposal. Uninhibited by the budget battles on Capitol Hill, the molasses-slow acquisitions process at the Pentagon, or the general political gridlock that pervades D.C., Singer and Cole bring their knowledge to bear in imaginative and original ways. To quote their own Pushkin-loving Russian colonel, “If there’s one thing I am going to teach you, it’s to stop thinking that things can work only the way you’ve been told they’re supposed to. You can’t win a war that way.”
In their not-so-veiled criticism of today’s military investments, Singer and Cole, both students of trends in military weaponry, kit, and communications, question the required “jointness” of large acquisition projects that water down their technical breakthroughs for the sake of interoperability and an overly broad array of requirements. But they are sure to highlight promising research in other areas with potentially breakthrough effects: wearable electronics, nanotechnology, 3-D printing, advanced textiles, and robotics are only a few among them. To their credit, they are also sure to note larger demographic trends, particularly among the millennial generation, and the impact they will have on the force of the future.

As they repeatedly harken back to previous conflict, Singer and Cole insist that this new fighting force truly internalize some of the most glaring lessons of wars past. In an attempt to keep history from repeating—or even rhyming, for that matter—leaders need to have a keen sense of history and its implications for future conflict. Technology and those who wield it may change, but those who neglect to understand the past are often doomed to repeat it. In the oft-quoted words of Sun Tzu, a strategist whose wisdom permeates the pages of Ghost Fleet, “He will win who, prepared himself, waits to take the enemy unprepared.”

Instead of tackling the revolution in military affairs, third offset, Moore’s law, demographics or other theories of technological revolution and military transformation in isolation, Ghost Fleet provides a glimpse of an adaptive, advanced, and complex force put to the test when its strengths become weaknesses. The authors’ flare for action and adventure, combining the human experience of war with a respect for groundbreaking science and an appreciation for history, makes the story all the more ambitious. Besides, it never hurts that the good guys mount a comeback. PRISM
There are a few books every senior geopolitical leader ought to read. This book adds to that collection. It falls into the outstanding category because it demands thinking while and after reading. It does not require the reader to agree. It does require the reader to consider, contemplate, and evaluate—and especially for a senior geopolitical to determine whether a course of action actually will bring the consequences expected—or, alternatively, will be a blunder of dramatic proportions.

The book is built around the decision to go to war, and it builds on the well-established observation that many successful leaders have nonetheless led their nations into disastrous wars. It utilizes twelve case studies ranging from Napoleon’s 1812 invasion of Russia to the United States’ 2003 invasion of Iraq to describe how that has occurred. It offers an analytic framework to evaluate what went wrong and how better decisions could have been made, and then proposes that the use of the framework could help reduce the prospects of conflict between the United States and China in the 21st century. Not everyone will agree with the descriptions of the case studies; the accuracy and value of the analytic framework demands review; moreover whether it has real world relevance to the U.S.-China relationship is uncertain. But there are no more important issues for a nation than going to war, and by taking on the questions of how and when to do so effectively—and, as importantly, when to choose not to act—the authors, experienced policy-makers (and as a disclosed, friends and colleagues) – have put a key topic in front of decision-makers who will face such life and death decisions in the next decades.

The key thesis of the book is that those “who have blundered could have known better, for information seems to have been available at the time to have . . . supported better decisions. . . .” The important conclusion then is that “It follows that improvements are needed in how leaders and institutions use information....” As the authors say, though, while “simple in theory ... implementing it is anything but.” The theory, nevertheless, is certainly worth considering.

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The book proposes that bad decision-making arises from a series of factors, most often the following eight:

- “information is ignored, filtered, misconstrued, or manipulated to fit predispositions,”
- “excessive reliance is placed on intuition and experience,”
- “arrogance, egotism, or hubris causes unwarranted confidence,”
- “a rigid but wrong strategic concept or vision prevails,”
- “contingencies are not considered,”
- “enemy will or capabilities are underestimated,”
- “operational difficulty or duration is underestimated,” and
- “dissent and debate are stifled.”

In the face of these problems, the authors have a three-fold prescription which they propose both the United States and China adopt:

1) establishing a new institution to provide independent policy advice (i.e. a type of red teaming); 2) better standards of analytic objectivity; and 3) more effective use of technology, particularly computer assisted analysis to evaluate contingencies. In addition to having both the United States and China use such approaches, they additionally recommend greater communications between the two countries, especially between the two presidents, national security institutions including the military, and nongovernmental connectivity especially think tanks, universities and the like (though it is fair to note that a great deal of dialogue, both structured and informal, already occurs).

Most who read the book likely will concur with the assessment that the leaders described in the eight case studies of failure (they offer four instances of good decision-making) badly overstepped—after all, history has proved that. The real question is whether, without the benefit of historical hindsight, those leaders would have made better decisions had they followed the authors’ recommendations.

The problem that all decision-makers face is that they are imperfect human beings operating in imperfect institutions who cannot predict the future. They must go forward based on usually imperfect information, dealing with their own biases and experiences, and trying hard to achieve best results in a complex environment. It is no wonder Napoleon is said to have wanted generals who were lucky.

The fundamental challenge the authors present to policy-makers is: be more rational. Make sure you actually consider available information. Spend some more time thinking about alternatives. That is a good set of recommendations, but will they work to result in better decision-making? I think the answer is “sometimes,” and that is a great virtue, but it is important to note that this is a prescription to avoid blunders, not necessarily to avoid war.

In developing national strategies, whether involving war or otherwise, leaders must consider, whether they realize it or not, the ends, ways, and means of the strategy as well as the risks involved in implementation. Overreaching ends, ineffe-
ctive ways, under-resourced means, and improper risk analysis are pathways to failure. So, a rational view by the leader is critical. As Clausewitz has written, “No one starts a war—or rather, no one in his sense ought to do so—without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it.” And, as he also points out, it is critical to “discover how much of our resources must be mobilized.” The lesson that the authors underscore is that the initiator of a war will not necessarily make these decisions very well.

The authors’ specific recommendations—an alternative source of independent policy advice, high standards of analytic objectivity, and greater use of computer assisted analysis—reflect their own strong backgrounds as outstanding policy analysts. Considering them in reverse order:

- Computer-assisted analysis should be welcomed, but in doing so, it will be very important to remember the dictum that “all models are wrong; some are useful.” There was a great deal of modeling analysis during the Cold War involving nuclear and conventional battle issues, but no senior policy-maker confused the models with real life. Greater modeling relating to the complexities of terrorism, insurgency, hybrid war, cyber-conflict, the implications of climate change, and other newer elements of the security landscape will be all to the good. While a decision-maker must avoid “paralysis by analysis,” recognizing that there can be alternative outcomes as a contingency is contemplated or develops is important. Modeling might be especially useful to help disclose unanticipated inclinations to escalation. However, as a colleague Melanie Teplinsky has pointed out, there is a great deal of judgment up front as to how to build the model—what factors to consider, and what inputs the model will deal with. These judgments are not necessarily made by professional decision-makers and may take place long before any decision-makers see output from the model. For this reason, decision-making based on computer modeling is not necessarily any more objective than ordinary decision-making, although it may seem so. Ultimately, then, while utilizing computers to help think through contingencies can be valuable, human judgment will necessarily be called upon.

- In making such judgments, no one will dispute the value of highly professional objective analysis, the second of the authors recommendations. The real issue will be who will determine whether such objective analysis is being provided. The case of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq likely will remain the exemplar of the difficulties. The intelligence community did not cover itself with glory nor did the policy community. As the authors show, neither appears to have been as objective as one would have wished. Saddam Hussein was a bad man and he ran a despicable regime. But the rationale for the war was an overhyped series of claims regarding weapons of mass destruction. Iraq raises the always critical issue of who guards the guardians?”
The authors’ answer to the guardians question is their third recommendation—to create a new body of independent policy analysis. Of course, there have been times when the President has sought assistance of this sort—generally in the form of Presidential commissions (sometimes with Congressional involvement), and there are existing bodies such as the President’s Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board or the Defense Policy Board. Asking for a second opinion can enlarge the debate—and especially for those who want to slow things down—that can be useful. But after all is said and done, it is precisely the job of the President and his National Security Council (NSC), along with the Congress, to evaluate the circumstances and make the policy decisions. A key reform for better decision-making would be if the President stopped making the National Security Council an implementing body and instead used it precisely to ensure that the departments are thoroughly analyzing and offering considered judgments for critical questions. To do so would require the end of “small group thinking” where it is not “good form” to break with the consensus, and instead recognize that differences of opinion are often useful and not to be beaten down by turf battles and other bureaucratic maneuvers. An NSC with a mandate to ensure considered decision could be significantly smaller and much more valuable by operating to generate precisely the type of analysis the authors seek.

It is worth recognizing, however, that even the most rational and well-intentioned decision-makers can sometimes find themselves in deep difficulty. Consider the U.S., and subsequently NATO/coalition, war in Afghanistan. The original end was clear enough—retaliating against al-Qaeda in response to September 11. The original way was quite effective—war via special operations combined with the forces of the Northern Alliance. The original means were sufficient including supporting airpower and CIA funding. But war has a logic of its own, and as Clausewitz states, the “original political objects can greatly alter during the course of the war.” That certainly happened in Afghanistan, as the original retaliation transmuted into a nation-building exercise, mainly influenced by the lessons after the Soviet defeat in Afghanistan, when the subsequent descent into disorder arguably led to the sanctuary and growth of al-Qaeda. Seeking to avoid such a result was a rational enough end, and as the original Bonn conference showed, there was a great deal of worldwide support for the nation-building approach. As it turned out, despite the understandable end, ways and means have been less than adequate. There was too high a degree of optimism on many levels. The difficulties of building an effective Afghan government are numerous, including issues of Afghan human capital and whether the West actually had the capabilities to help create key institutions, such as effective ministries or police forces; the problems that Pakistan...
would present, including sanctuary and double-dealing; the issues of drugs, crime, and corruption; the interactions of culture and modernity; and the impact of the Iraq conflict, to name only a few. Could some of these issues have been better resolved if a new institution offered its ideas? Perhaps. Would thinking through contingencies have made a difference? Maybe. But it would be hard to say the effort was not rationally considered—it just has not turned out particularly well.

Would the lessons be valuable in the U.S.-China context? After all, that is the reason the authors say they wrote the book. There are grounds to be positive about the value of a highly rational approach. To begin with, American and Chinese interests coincide in certain important ways. Most clearly, each government is focused on enhancing its country’s prosperity. In a global world, that requires interdependence. Moreover, at least some critical challenges facing each country – including energy, environment and climate change, weapons of mass destruction, and terrorism can significantly benefit from a common approach.

But not all interests are in common between the two countries. Even in the economic area, there are serious differences regarding key issues such as intellectual property protection. The most obvious ongoing area of conflict is in the cyber realm, where there appears little likelihood of resolution. At the current level, cyber probably is not a flash point, but it does have escalatory potential. Moreover, the maritime claims that China has aggressively asserted in the East and South China Seas have the potential to pull the United States into a conflict, as does the long-standing issue of Taiwan.

It would be easy to say that it is important not to overly escalate these disputes. But not only do the disputes involve third parties, so they are not entirely under the control of the U.S. or China, but they involve concepts and interests that, not only have rational content, but also have strong emotional aspects. The Chinese seem to have a penchant for periodically raising the levels of tension as, for example, drilling in waters contested with Vietnam. Moreover, especially on the Chinese side, there are additional emotional factors bearing on the relationship that may add to the difficulties of rationally limiting disputes. In particular, China has built as one of the pillars of its educational system the concept of “Never forget national humiliation,” and it more recently has directly rejected what it deems to be “western values,” even barring their teaching and discussion in schools. These emotional factors should not of themselves precipitate conflict, but they could cause it more easily to escalate in the event of a flash point. At that point, rationality would be at once most necessary and most difficult to achieve. The United States has thus far taken a measured and sensible approach to supporting its commitments
KRAMER

without inflaming the overall situation. China, while more aggressive, has periodically backed off certain of its most problematic behavior, although its decision-making process remains opaque—and it is therefore far from clear whether it would consider a process approach along the lines suggested by the authors, and what freedom any group would have to make objective recommendations. Whether in a more dangerous situation, emotion might out-run calculation is, of course, always uncertain. The authors’ fundamental point of the value of rationality certainly would have critical value under such circumstances.

Indeed, this is the fundamental challenge that the authors raise—can rationality overcome emotion? In geopolitics, historically that has not always been the case. The great value of the book is that it is a cautionary tale designed to help generate that rationality. PRISM
A Handful of Bullets: How the Murder of Archduke Franz Ferdinand Still Menaces the Peace

By Harlan K. Ullman
Naval Institute Press, 2014
256 pages

REVIEWED BY HANS BINNENDIJK

There is a small plaque on a street corner in Sarajevo that commemorates the spot where Austro-Hungarian Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his pregnant wife Sophie were assassinated a century ago. It is surprisingly small given the world shaking events sparked there. The villain was Serbian nationalist Gavrilo Princip whose handful of bullets empowered him and fundamentally changed the course of history. Harlan Ullman’s book just touches on the chain of events that led from a wrong turn taken by Franz Ferdinand’s driver to the First World War. Interpretations of that chain of events range from entangling alliances to German war plans driven by railroad timetables to officials in various European capitals miscalculating risk and sleeping walking their way into conflict.

If you want to better understand why the First World War started, read Barbara Tuchman’s The Guns of August or Christopher Clark’s The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914. But if you want to understand these events in a much broader historical and global context, read Ullman’s volume. After digesting Ullman’s book, that street corner plaque seems even smaller than before.

A Handful of Bullets ranges over two centuries and multiple disciplines to lay out keen perspectives on a vast number of past incidents and current issues. One reviewer opined that if presidential candidates for 2016 had but one book to read, “it is this one.” The book’s thought provoking analysis and recommendations are presented by a Fletcher School PhD and Vietnam veteran who has spent a half century serving the nation, accumulating wisdom, and advising a bipartisan list of top American policy-makers such as Colin Powell, John Kerry, John McCain and Chuck Hagel. So his assessments are worth heeding.

Ullman is able to hold together the broad scope of material that he covers by adopting two useful constructs. First, he argues that the assassination a century ago was the key inflection point in two centuries of history. And second, he argues that it triggered a process that has led to
what he calls the Four New Horsemen of the Apocalypse, an updated version of the biblical four horsemen (conquest, warfare, pestilence, and death; each flowing from the former).

The Congress of Vienna reordered the world after Napoleon’s defeat and reinforced the state-based international system established in 1648 by the Peace of Westphalia. It also strengthened the hold of hereditary rulers and stabilized European affairs until Princip struck. Several European wars did take place between 1815 and 1914, but they were not World Wars. During the first half of this century-long period until the Crimean War, stability rested on Britain as a balancer of power. During the second half, it rested on a flexible alliance system established by Bismarck. That system became more rigid and dangerous after Bismarck retired. Ullman argues convincingly that Princip’s handful of bullets destroyed the increasingly fragile stability of the Congress of Vienna system and weakened the state-centric Westphalian system.

The Four New Horsemen according to Ullman are: failed governments, economic disparity and disruption, ideological and religious extremism, and environmental calamity. He argues that these four sets of fundamental problems also build one upon another, and that if left unchecked they will cause massive disruption around the globe. Ullman might have spent more time connecting these Four New Horsemen back to the events of June 1914. But he clearly demonstrates that a degree of globalization existed in 1914 and that the dangers inherent in these four new horsemen have accelerated as globalization has intensified during the past few decades. Those dangers were also exacerbated by the most recent inflection point, the 9/11 attacks and America’s subsequent Global War on Terrorism. He notes that the 9/11 attackers had much in common with Princip. They were armed with box cutters rather than a handful of bullets, but the reaction or overreaction to their evil deeds funda-mentally changed stability in the international system.

Failed or failing government ranks at the top of the list of dangerous horsemen. While Ullman addresses failing government around the globe, he concentrates on the United States and the Middle East. Noting the presence of failed government in the United States before, notably the Civil War, he concludes that the Vietnam War “began the disintegration of American politics and the dissolution of public belief in the credibility and honesty of government.” As this disintegration spread, he argues that right and left wings increasingly came to dominate the two political parties, and middle of the roaders are increasingly vulnerable to being “primary’ed.” He makes several fairly radical but perhaps needed recommendations to deal with failed government in the United States, including mandatory universal voting to assure that the political center votes, abolishing the two-term limit for Presidents, and a four year term for Congressmen. With regard to America’s overseas activity, he concludes that using military force to offset failing government “mandates the toughest scrutiny.”
Ullman’s second horseman is economic despair, disparity, and disruption. He uses the example of the Tunisian fruit vendor whose self-immolation triggered the Arab Spring as a portent of a potential new Malthusian age. In grappling with what he calls economic ticking time bombs, Ullman dissects the buildup and impact the 2007-2008 American financial crisis in a clear and concise manner. Buy the book just to read Chapter 5 on this topic. His most interesting recommendation to deal with this cluster of economic problems is the creation of a national infrastructure bank in the United States, where the report card gives the world’s largest economy a grade of D.

Ideological and religious extremism tends to flow from economic despair. Historically, Ullman recalls the crusades and Nazism as precursors to the Sunni and Shia extremism of today. But in this biting analysis, he does not spare extremism in the United States with its debates over “guns, gays, God, and gestation periods.” Ullman argues that in dealing with religious fanaticism in the Middle East, the United States has mistakenly focused on symp-toms not causes. He urges an offensive communications strategy designed to discredit and impeach religious extremism and hopes for an Islamic Martin Luther to reform that faith.

Rounding out this dangerous quartet, Ullman reviews a staggering list of natural and manmade disasters and demonstrates the devastating impact that they can have on global society. He concentrates on global warming as potentially the most devastating and suggests a series of U.S. bilateral executive agreements with major polluters to deal with environmental issues. The Obama administration seems to already have taken his advice with regard to China.

Interspersed with these four underlying trends, Ullman also assesses regional ticking time bombs, wildcards, the state of America’s military establishment and American grand strategy. In his regional round-up, Ullman views a potential military attack on Iran’s nuclear weapons capacity as potentially “cata-strophic.” He believes that another military coup in Pakistan is “not out of the question.” And he assesses that China has far too many internal problems to solve and is not a state bent on hegemonic ambitions.

Appendix one of the book contains a public letter to the Secretary of Defense that Ashton Carter might want to read. Ullman lists the Defense Department’s three crisis areas as people, strategy and money. He provides advice on all three in turn. He would cut spending on personnel benefits, reinstitute a partial draft, modify the Army’s force structure, reduce the Navy’s dependency on nuclear propulsion and reform the Unified Command Plan. He offers a more analytical approach to grand strategy which he calls a “brains based approach.” And he suggests an array of ways in which America’s European Allies might enhance their defense capabilities and share a greater portion of America’s global defense burden.

A Handful of Bullets is sweeping and allows the author to comment on the major issues of our time. His critique is often withering and his recommendations call for fundamental change that will be difficult to implement. But if Ullman is right about the cumulative impact of his Four New Horsemen of the Apocalypse, such fundamental reforms may be needed.
The Modern Mercenary: Private Armies and What They Mean for World Order

By Sean McFate
Oxford University Press, 2015 272 pps
978-0-19-936010-9

REVIEWED BY DOUG BROOKS

Doug Brooks, a Washington, D.C.-based consultant, founded the International Peace Operations Association (IPOA) – later known as the International Stability Operations Association (ISOA), and served as its president for more than a decade. Special thanks to Naveed Bandali and Elizabeth Lang for their comments and suggestions on this review.

Dr. Sean McFate is an academic, an Associate Professor at the National Defense University, but what makes his book The Modern Mercenary so worthwhile is his combination of military and real-world contracting backgrounds blended with an incisive historical knowledge of the subject matter. The Modern Mercenary seats the evolution of the unique stability operations industry, and especially the subset of international private security companies, into a larger historical context. It is an industry that has featured in the headlines for the past ten years for its operations in Afghanistan, Iraq and many places in Africa, but too often for the wrong reasons. McFate describes the value of the industry, parallels with the past, and then looks at how international contractors, especially the armed ones, can be controlled while providing valuable services to the international community and even the United Nations.

The Modern Mercenary offers an overview and analysis of the contractors who are supporting U.S. efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well in almost every conflict and stability operation that the United States has been involved in for the past quarter century. The majority of McFate’s historical insights come from his comparisons with the Condottieri of medieval Italy, the mercenary troops that dominated warfare there for centuries. He examines the motivations, incentives, and especially the shortcomings that the Italian city states faced when hiring foreign soldiers and entire armies in the days before professional citizen soldiers became the norm.

Extrapolating from the Condottieri model, McFate suggests that we have entered a new era of neomedievalism, “a non-statecentric and multipolar world order characterized by overlapping authorities and allegiances.” This neomedievalism model does provide a compelling description of contemporary international relations. Sovereigns of the Middle Ages shared authority with the Pope, powerful warlords, and others which made for complex politics and intrigues. Compare that reality to today’s circumstances: modern states are hardly the sole authority; numerous other actors are seen as valid authorities or voices as well, including...
NGOs, the UN, international courts, multinational companies, and even international terrorist or criminal networks. In a truly Westphalian state-centric system, sovereigns would not feel so compelled to respond to allegations of human rights violations against their own people by Amnesty International, for instance, or fear the reach of international justice, or have to contend with giant corporations whose resources dwarf the GNP of many small countries. While the Pope’s influence is not what it was a few centuries ago, NGOs, corporations and international organizations (including the Holy See) have stepped in to fill the vacuum and influence human events in ways that most states can only envy.

Is it then back to the Dark Ages for us all? Happily, McFate makes an able defense of medieval times as well, offering a persuasive case that the Dark Ages actually get a bad rap. “The world is not in decline but rather returning to normal, when no single type of political actor dominates the world state, as among different actors as it was in the Middle Ages, and the past four centuries of Westphalian supremacy by states is anomalous.” Neomedievalism as a global system presents some drawbacks which will “persist in a durable disorder that contains rather than solves problems,” although that does not seem so different from the obsolescent Westphalian model we have been enduring the past few centuries.

So what about the “mercenaries” of the title? McFate describes their modern rise as stemming from a growing faith in the free market that eventually paved the road for the international privatization of security. Much of the credit (or blame) falls on the United States which “opened the proverbial Pandora’s box, releasing mercenarism back into international affairs,” primarily because of the enormous security demands in Afghanistan and Iraq. Scores of companies, most newly formed, won security contracts in Iraq and Afghanistan, and thousands of local Afghans and Iraqis, Westerners and “third country nationals” (TCNs) were employed doing armed security in support of the missions.

McFate brings a refreshingly nuanced view of the stability operations industry that is rare among academics. While total contractor numbers sometimes eclipsed U.S. military numbers in Afghanistan and Iraq, he is clear that armed contractors are always a small minority, i.e. somewhere in the neighborhood of 12 percent. The vast majority of contractors are doing more mundane reconstruction and logistical support tasks. He also confirms that the private sector is cheaper than state militaries due to their freedom to innovate, ability to scale up on short notice and independence from the bureaucratic inertia that plagues state (and UN) forces. Nor are private security companies inherently ruthless or evil as many of the industry’s voracious critics will claim; McFate points out that, “there is plenty of evidence that private armies are more disciplined and effective than public forces in Sudan, Somalia …”

Academic literature includes numerous definitions and categorizations of the stability operations industry, and McFate offers his own perspective. He describes
Private Military Companies (PMCs) as those that are in the line of fire or provide their clients lethal training and capabilities. PMCs are further split into the “Mercenary” type, offering offensive operations and force projection, and the “Military Enterpriser” type, which works to raise or improve armies and police forces, provides training, and helps equip their clients. McFate worked for one of these Military Enterpriser companies, DynCorp International – more on that later. The second category includes the Security Support companies providing non-lethal support, translation and propaganda services. The third category, General Services, includes the logistics, maintenance, transportation, construction and other non-lethal services that are not directly related to military operations.

The Modern Mercenary examines two case studies, both in Africa: Liberia and Somalia. McFate uses these examples to highlight what he sees as value that the private sector brings as well as trends that should raise concerns.

McFate was a principal player in the Liberia example where he was part of the DynCorp team that won the contract to build a professional Liberian army from scratch. He has previously written about this experience, but in short the company created a remarkable program vetting, training, and ultimately raising a small, professional army from the ashes of a bitter and divisive civil war. DynCorp had an extraordinary level of success considering the difficult circumstances in Liberia at the time, not to mention client issues, such as late payments, a complicated relationship with a contracting partner, poor government management and oversight, etc. Their success is especially notable when compared to the disastrous UN attempts to form a professional police force that was plagued with vetting issues, multinational disagreements, and poor long-term planning.

The “good, bad, and the ugly” of the Liberia contract offer some frank insights on why things did work, while discussing some of the many problems and conceptual issues involved. For instance, the Liberians themselves had very little input into the creation of their own army. On another specific instance, DynCorp manipulated Liberian politics to gain additional work and to ease their own contractual requirements. Nevertheless, one wonders if many of these problems would have been solved using a traditional military (or militaries) training program. Certainly the Afghan police program that I witnessed in 2006 was a convoluted affair with some dozen countries doing bits of the training, some better funded and managed than others, but with very little coordination or standardization between them.

The Somalia example is also interesting, although it does not have the same depth as the Liberia section. McFate describes “a true free market with ‘lone wolf’ PMCs who fight for the highest bidder and become predatory when it suits them.” The chapter provides some background on companies that have worked in Somalia, especially in terms of security sector reform (SSR) and coastguard operations. Further, it delves into the world of maritime security, a sector that grew
rapidly to address the Horn of Africa and Gulf of Aden piracy issue. Like most previous analysts, he takes the UN line and is dismissive of what turned out to be the most successful private sector initiative (funded by the UAE in this case): the Puntland Maritime Police Force (PMPF). While McFate’s book indicates that the PMPF disbanded, in fact they continue to operate and it is no coincidence that the most dramatic drop in Somali piracy coincided with the commencement of PMPF operations; more recently they have had some success against al-Shabaab. McFate is on firmer ground when he describes the innovations of the armed maritime private security companies that enjoy a perfect record when protecting their clients from Somali pirates. He also surveys some of the companies hired to support U.S. policies in Mogadishu to avoid having American “boots on the ground” in this location of past policy failure.

The Modern Mercenary concludes with a discussion of industry trends and recommendations, starting with industry resilience. McFate is very clear that the industry, in his opinion, is not going away and various attempts to eradicate or drastically curb the industry are doomed to failure. He further notes that the industry is globalized, so while many of the key concepts were pioneered by American and British firms working in Afghanistan and Iraq, many companies around the world have adopted the model, thus complicating efforts at regulation. He highlights the “indigenization” of the industry too, although some may nitpick on that count since many states have always suffered or tolerated indigenous warlords or gangs with ostensible veneers of corporate legitimacy. If they are not international, should they be part of this book? Finally, McFate returns to his case studies and ponders the two potential directions for international private sector services: the Liberian “mediated market” which he advocates, or the Somali “free market,” which realizes much less regulation and more potential for mayhem in the neomedieval world we live in.

McFate presciently argues for market controls as the best way to harness and regulate the industry. He sees international regulation as slow and problematic, but prefers that larger clients (i.e. “super-consumers” – such as the U.S., UK, and UN) use their market power to demand norms and standards of the industry. It is unfortunate that he does not give much credence to the International Code of Conduct for Private Security Providers (ICoC) which is designed to do exactly what he advocates: enlist and coordinate the largest clients to ensure global standards for their private security companies. The ICoC was created through a broad partnership of states, civil society organizations, academics, and industry voices, but if thoughtful scholars such as McFate reject the concept then it does not bode well for the initiative – unless somehow an alternative framework swiftly emerges.

McFate also discusses some of the legal methods that the United States has at its disposal to hold private security personnel accountable, such as the Patriot Act and the Uniform Code of Military Justice (which he rightly believes is entirely inappropriate for civilian contractors). McFate gives short shrift to the Military Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Act (MEJA) as infrequently used an ineffective, a
misperception that is the fault of the Department of Justice (DoJ) which has sought to downplay the law and refuses to provide data on the law and its enforcement. In 2007 a DoJ representative informed an astonished industry conference that there were more than sixty MEJA cases in all states of preparation and conclusion with many contractors jailed as a result. More to the point, while McFate describes the Blackwater contractors who were involved in the September 2007 Nisour Square shooting that left some 17 Iraqis dead, he claims that “they were simply sent home without punishment.” However, as this review heads to publication, four of those involved are awaiting their fate in the hands of a jury.

Criminal accountability of contractors operating in international contingency operations may be difficult and complex, but it can and has been done. Although The Modern Mercenary is thought provoking and groundbreaking, coming from the industry perspective I nevertheless have a number of quibbles, though to be clear they do not diminish McFate’s central arguments, which are compelling. His use of journalistic lingo and phrases at times in otherwise academic prose detracts from his arguments. The very term “private army” is frequently thrown out, but are we really describing “armies” or just security companies? Have any been involved in state-to-state conflict, which really would challenge the Westphalian system, or are they more accurately involved in providing protective security to clients in internal conflicts where a state’s legitimate forces are opposed to what can only be described as “unlawful combatants” under international law? It is not like DynCorp and its peers are private armies that will be bidding on a contract to plug the Fulda Gap should the Russians become uppity again.

And are private security companies “paid to kill” and involved in “for-profit killing” or, like most domestic security companies, are they authorized to use force under specific (inherently defensive) circumstances? Will war be available “to anyone who can afford it” or are there numerous other complex constraints involved as itemized elsewhere in the book?

Finally, as McFate emphasizes himself, the “mercenary” term is not entirely useful either. When I ran the International Stability Operations Association (ISOA), we determined that the real definition of the word “mercenary” as used in the media when discussing our industry was an entirely derogatory term that really meant “foreigners and business people we don’t like.” But as McFate points out, the “mercenary” term certainly helps journalists get their articles published.
And finally, do companies really sell their services to the “highest bidder?” Although a delightful concept to play with from a social science perspective, more often than not we see many companies competing for a small number of contracts. And yes, innumerable constraints can prevent companies from working for certain clients. Of course, some companies might not be Western, and McFate suggests new companies could emerge from Russia or China “with scant regard for human rights or international law” in order to win contracts. Realistically, Western companies, working for the proverbial “anyone” can land their executives and employees in jail for violations of the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) or other laws, and how would it look to future clients if your company had a Robert Mugabe or North Korea as a former client? But assuming a company did win a contract with a Dr. Evil, how many former military professionals are willing to shed their revered veteran status, their family’s respect and even risk their lives and liberties for a despot or international criminal? If international courts are one of the growing powers in a neomedieval world, would that not create greater legal risk for private operators violating international laws? A few rogue companies perhaps, but do not expect any geopolitical-altering mercenary invasion forces any time soon.

Will the industry grow? McFate believes so, describing limitless markets and opportunities in the future. Nevertheless, the larger contingency operations industry has actually waxed and waned over the decades. There were 700,000 U.S. contractors in the Second World War, 60,000 in Vietnam and so on, yet in every case the contractor numbers shrunk dramatically and expectedly after the demand fell. McFate mentions “surge capacity” as one of the industry strengths, but companies can do the surging cheaply because they have far more freedom than governments to hire personnel on only a temporary basis. The large contractors today are substantially smaller than ten years ago during the height of the Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts, and predictably we are currently seeing a great deal of industry consolidation and downsizing. Even maritime security, which is featured in the The Modern Mercenary, has seen an enormous drop in business as Somali piracy has dwindled to almost nothing and other regions, such as the Gulf of Guinea, have not had the expected growth in similar criminal activities.

Ultimately the book is a fascinating analysis comparing the old and new issues related to contracting. It boldly develops a compelling thesis and, my minor complaints notwithstanding, uses the “modern mercenary” concept to develop a convincing case for a neomedieval future. If so, we should expect a very interesting and complex time ahead for diplomacy, international relations and the political science field itself.
Grand strategy is an often controversial term in the vocabulary of United States foreign policy. Competing visions of the U.S. role in global affairs lead to watered-down policy pronouncements which must be evaluated in hindsight for a clear interpretation. In his latest book, *Restraint: A New Foundation for U.S. Grand Strategy*, Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor Barry Posen makes such an assessment. He identifies a relatively consistent pattern of activist behavior which he dubs a grand strategy of “Liberal Hegemony.” This strategy, he argues, has been wasteful and counterproductive in securing U.S. national security interests, and he offers a competing vision for U.S. national security strategy. While most readers will find his arguments against Liberal Hegemony compelling, his grand strategy of “Restraint” will be divisive on a number of levels.

Posen is clear and systematic throughout the book in defining his terms and developing his arguments. He scopes his use of the term grand strategy along national security lines related to the generation of military power, avoiding potential pitfalls of debate over issues such as public health or domestic policy. He defines Liberal Hegemony as a strategy of securing the superpower position of the United States largely through the active promotion of democracy, free markets, and Western values worldwide. Variations of this strategy have been championed on both sides of the political aisle by liberals and neoconservatives. His counterproposal, Restraint, is a realist-based grand strategy which focuses U.S. military power on a narrow set of objectives, relies on “command of the commons” to ensure global access, avoids entanglement in foreign conflicts, and actively encourages allies to look to their own defense. Posen advances a largely maritime-focused strategy to command the world’s commons.

Liberal Hegemony is a strategy based upon a worldview that sees accountable governments as safe and secure partners for perpetuating the American way of life and non-accountable or non-existent governance as a threat that must be managed or ultimately rectified. It encourages a leading role for the United States in establishing and defending this order. It is this role which Posen believes to be ill-conceived and poorly defined, leading needlessly to wars of choice and the open-ended commitment of U.S. forces worldwide. Posen views the current network of U.S. alliances and security guarantees as largely a Cold War relic, allowing countries such as Germany,
Japan, France, the Republic of Korea and even some of the Middle Eastern oil suppliers a free ride on the U.S. taxpayer. He also believes that some of these commitments have encouraged reckless behavior, with Iraq and Israel as particular examples. Posen states that, since the end of the Cold War, policy-makers have consistently exaggerated the threats to U.S. interests in various regions of the world, overstated the benefits of military engagement, and embroiled the U.S. in a morass of identity-based conflicts with little hope for a solution. He argues that most U.S. allies could (and would) manage their own security if forced to do so and that they would naturally balance against threats to regional stability and the emergence of aspiring hegemons. Also, importantly, Posen bases his arguments on the assumption that great powers (current and emerging) will maintain a nuclear deterrence capability and this will largely reduce the like-lihhood of great power wars.

The grand strategy of Liberal Hegemony, in the form described by Posen, would likely have fewer supporters today than any time since the early 1990s. There is no doubt that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, combined with the larger Global War on Terror, have been tremendously costly in terms of both blood and treasure, and that their long-term benefits are dubious. As of this writing, the Iraqi government faces mortal danger from extremist groups. Democracy in Afghanistan is a tenuous prospect at best. Lieutenant General Michael Flynn, the recently departed director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, was quoted in recent statements as saying that even after more than 13 years of war the U.S. is not safer and extremist ideology is “exponentially growing.”

There is little argument that business as usual is no longer an option in U.S. national defense.

While the status quo would seem to require a change, the level of disengagement recommended by Posen could be problematic in ways that his book fails to explore. The network of alliances and security guarantees maintained by the U.S. does more than simply abet stability in far-flung areas of the world. The U.S., as a nation, tends to be rather opinionated as to the conduct of world affairs. While rarely stated explicitly, security assistance in its various forms is one of the levers used by Washington to gain influence over the decision-making processes of other nations. A prominent example is Congress’ linking of security assistance for Pakistan in 2011 to a concrete set of performance objectives. It is also true that countries hosting U.S. bases or deployments usually reap considerable economic benefits from those arrangements as well.

Unfortunately, balancing power is a dangerous game that does not always lead to stability. Posen argues, for instance, that the U.S. should remove ground forces from Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK), believing that the South Koreans are more than a match for the North and that both Japan and the ROK will balance against China once they have to. But what if the Japanese and the Koreans assess the threat differently than the U.S.? What if one nation attempts to “buck pass” its security preparations to another nation and holds out too long? Stalin did this before World War II, expecting France to bear the cost of balancing against Germany. When France fell in six weeks, the stage was set for a Nazi invasion of Russia.
Balancing can also have unintended consequences. Posen states that, “Restraint aims to energize other advanced industrial states into improving their own capabilities to defend themselves…” But the capability to defend generally implies a capability to attack as well. Japan’s balancing against China would almost certainly arouse insecurities on the Korean peninsula, among other places. Nationalist tendencies in either location might also encourage a state to flex its newfound muscle. Reassurance to the other Allied nations attacked by Japan in World War II was one of the reasons the U.S. assumed responsibility for the security of Japan in the first place after the war. Perhaps the U.S. can no longer afford to be the guarantor, but abandoning this role will relinquish a measure of control that the U.S. maintains over its international environment. The U.S. will always maintain some responsibility to assist its allies and could be drawn into regional conflicts whether or not it prefers.

One of the assumptions underpinning Posen’s argument is that countries act in their own rational self-interest. This aligns well with a realist view of nation states as individual actors on a world stage. However, nation states are built of people and groups of people who may possess different and competing views of their own self-interest. Many of the world’s states, even nominal democracies, are controlled in practice by groups of elites. Egypt, for example, is largely run by a number of military officers with a disproportionate hold on the nation’s economic assets. This group has successfully resisted all attempts to implement greatly needed economic reforms, even using its influence to prevent an IMF loan package in 2011. Egypt has instead turned primarily to handouts by members of the Gulf Cooperation Council, whose interests lie in suppressing both the Muslim Brotherhood and the fledgling democratic movement spawned by the Arab Spring, a self-serving marriage of convenience among Middle Eastern power brokers. Even in more representative societies such as the U.S., citizens are loath to suffer short-term pain such as taxation for the benefit of long-term necessities like a healthy environment or robust infrastructure. It is therefore dangerous to assume that governments will arrive at decisions that truly reflect the greater good of their populations. Even if a universal law were to ensure the balance of power in every region of the world, the balance that results may not be favorable for U.S. national security interests.

A further assumption supporting Posen’s work is that states currently enjoying the benefits of U.S.-provided security will ultimately rise to the occasion if the U.S. steps back from the picture. An alternative possibility is that many governments will simply find a new patron. Vali Nasr argues in his book, *Dispensable Nation: American Foreign Policy in Retreat,* that reducing American engagement in the Middle East, for instance, would merely pave the way for increasing Chinese influence in this area of the world. While America’s track record for abiding by its own liberal ideals is decidedly mixed in this region, he believes that the Chinese version would be far more extractive and far less benign. However, as demonstrated throughout the era of colonialism, ruling elites are often quick to settle for a bad deal that benefits them directly. Perhaps this trend would prove self-limiting in the long run, but the short-term cost could be a power shift away from the U.S.
Posen’s vision for “command of the commons” means that the U.S. would dominate the air, sea, and space. His treatment of space is brief and largely sound, but he underestimates the contested nature of this arena. The air forces are treated as essential but could be right-sized to coincide with a reduction of ground forces. The thrust of Posen’s argument is that the U.S. should support its grand strategy of Restraint through a maritime-focused force, significantly reducing the size and priority of ground forces. In his view, the balance of power and nuclear deterrence will reduce the likelihood of great power war, and a reluctance to engage in smaller-scale regional conflicts will eliminate the need for massive counterinsurgency operations and render the current force structure irrelevant. Oddly, Posen even argues for a reduction in naval forces as well, going so far as to assess the number of aircraft carriers in the fleet. The U.S., he believes, has the economic might to reconstitute the reduced forces if necessary, but should save its money in the meantime.

Many prominent strategists would dispute Posen’s argument about the primacy of naval forces in establishing national military power. For brevity, this review will draw upon some key points made by John J. Mearsheimer, author of The Tragedy of Great Power Politics. Mearsheimer quotes British naval strategist Julian Corbett: “Since men live upon the land and not upon the sea, great issues between nations have always been decided – except in the rarest cases, by what your army can do against your enemy’s territory and national life, or else by the fear of what the fleet makes it possible for your army to do.” Only armies can conquer and control land, and they serve as the primary instrument of military power. Navies can project this power through amphibious assault (against a contested shore), amphibious landing (against a minimally contested shore), or through troop transport (using a friendly port). Amphibious operations are a dicey prospect. The best historical examples of success primarily occurred during World War II, and overwhelming air power was the decisive factor in every case. In addition, navies can bombard a coastline or launch missiles but, without boots on the ground, the effect is limited. Lastly, navies can regulate commerce, even to the point of conducting a full blockade of littoral regions. However, blockades have an unimpressive history of providing a decisive advantage, especially during great power conflicts. Blockades, and even maritime interdiction, would be considered very controversial actions in the modern world. Therefore, a grand strategy that is founded upon a means of power projection instead of the source of power itself is fundamentally flawed.

Posen’s argument that the U.S. GDP would allow it to reconstitute its military forces in short order if required might hold some truth for machines, but it seriously discounts the time that it takes to train and develop professional and technically proficient soldiers capable of operating effectively on the modern battlefield. It also ignores the possibility that the U.S. might be required to engage in two or more conflicts at once. Potential adversaries or regional antagonists might see increased opportunities for aggression once the U.S. commits its diminished ground forces to a particular mission.
Regardless of the reader’s views on the grand strategy of Restraint, this book has value. Posen outlines the benefits of having a clearly articulated grand strategy and demonstrates the pitfalls that the U.S. has faced in navigating national security policy without this level of clarity. His case against becoming embroiled in conflicts that require counterinsurgency operations is strong. The grand strategy he proposes is problematic for a variety of reasons, largely for the optimism of its assumptions and its required alignment of forces. However, this work provides a starting point for debate and a structure from which various alternatives might be built and assessed. Posen is right that something needs to be done differently. In the words of Stephen Walt, “Democracy, freedom, and apple pie aren’t a foreign policy.” They are not a grand strategy either. PRISM