

A Book Review

By ROBERT B. OAKLEY

Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda

by Romeo A. Dallaire

Toronto: Random House, Canada, 2003

584 pp., \$30.00

[ISBN 0-7867-14870-5]

Retired Canadian General Romeo A. Dallaire has written an intensely gripping and informative account of his searing experience as the commander of the UN Observer Mission Uganda-Rwanda (UNAMIR) during the horrors of civil war, genocide, and massive refugee exodus in Rwanda from 1993 to 1994. He describes in a very personal style the unimaginable hatred and violence he witnessed, the heroic efforts of his badly understaffed forces to head off and then to alleviate the nightmare, and the obstruction of UN headquarters and the Security Council.

The sudden conclusion of a peace agreement at Arusha in August 1993, which included a call for an international force to help with implementation, sent the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) into high gear planning for a peacekeeping force. Dallaire was charged with planning a classical 2,500-man, no-use-of-force mission, approved by the Security Council on October 4, even before becoming commander of the force. The full force only arrived in late February, but Dallaire began operations in late November with some 400 Belgians plus several hundred Ghanaians and Tunisians. Small-scale clashes and ethnic massacres by Rwandan government forces and militias at that time presaged the horror to follow and the challenges Dallaire's forces would face. On April 6, 1994, the plane carrying the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi was shot down. Hutu hardliners took power in Rwanda, and events quickly moved to a resumption of the civil war that had been ended by the agreement at Arusha, and to the systematic tracking and killing of moderate Hutu leaders and general violence by government and

militia forces against the Tutsi population. Belgian soldiers were killed and mutilated while protecting the moderate Hutu prime minister, evoking memories of the United States venture in Somalia and intimidating the Belgian government and members of the UN Security Council. Dallaire requested an immediate doubling of his force of 2,300. Instead, Belgian forces were withdrawn and the United States took the lead in Security Council action, reducing the overall force to 450.

Dallaire details the spiraling violence on the ground, the delays in arrival of men and materials, the reluctance of most troop-contributing governments to confront the violence, and the refusal of senior UN officials to allow him to act to head off the building war. His decision to seize hard-line Hutu arms caches to stop a planned offensive against the Tutsis was rejected by the Security Council, who feared an incident similar to the killing of Pakistani peacekeepers in Somalia. He recounts his bafflement at the negative response to proposed action he believed to be within his mandate. Only later did he discover that the United States and France were arguing in the Security Council against any more active UNAMIR role. He tells in detail how he used his limited forces and authority to protect pockets of civilians from massacre, at the same time talking ceaselessly but in vain with Hutu and Tutsi leaders to stop the fighting. His accounts of the savagery his force could not prevent, and its shattering emotional impact on himself and his men, are a measure of their humanity and total commitment to save lives, despite the unresponsiveness from UN Headquarters and the Security Council, who were politically immobilized.

By June, the impact of these events and the publicity they received finally caused the Security Council to authorize a UNAMIR II force of 5,500 with a much firmer mandate, as well as the separate French intervention force already authorized to protect Hutus in southern Rwanda (and allow the perpetrators of genocide to escape to the Congo en masse). However, by then the rebel Tutsi *Front Patriotique Rwandais* had virtually won the civil war, and some eight hundred thousand mostly Tutsi civilians had been butchered. Dallaire then describes the failure of the United Nations and United States to act to prevent the exodus of over 1.5 million Hutus to the Congo and Tanzania. Rather than providing supplies to help the displaced

population inside Rwanda, the relief effort was focused entirely on the Congo, pulling the refugees out and allowing those Hutus who had perpetrated the massacres to reestablish control in the refugee camps. (The commander of U.S. forces supporting the relief effort told Dallaire that his forces should be inside Rwanda, but the Clinton administration was so fearful of U.S. casualties after Somalia that the orders were to stay out of the country and harm's way.) Thus the apparent short-term success of the 1994 U.S.-UN relief effort unwittingly created the condition for the 1996 military operations by the Tutsi government of Rwanda against the refugee camps in the Congo, in order to prevent a Tutsi attack from the camps against Rwanda and recuperate as many refugees as possible. This ignited a civil war in the eastern Congo involving Rwanda, Uganda, and other African states in which some two million people died of war-related diseases and malnutrition and which only abated in late 2003.

In the course of recounting the events, Dallaire provides a personal perspective on the systemic problems confronting DPKO, UN headquarters, and the Security Council in coordinating and supporting peacekeeping operations. These issues included unrealistic mandates, under-resourced missions, delays in delivering those resources that were provided, bureaucratic bottlenecks, and the influence exerted both in the Security Council and behind the scenes by key member states (especially the United States). The failure of UNAMIR in the face of the Rwandan genocide and of the UN Protection Force to prevent the massacre at Srebrenica in Bosnia a year later led to brutally honest auto-critiques. They also led to widespread reform of the entire UN peacekeeping function, leading to more realistic alignment of Security Council mandates, mission, and resources with both the realities on the ground and the willingness of member states to provide resources and political commitment. Finally, they led to enhanced capabilities of UN headquarters to support field operations in a timely manner.

JFQ

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A Book Review

By DIK DASO

Airpower in Small Wars: Fighting Insurgents and Terrorists

by James S. Corum and Wray R. Johnson
Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 2003
507 pp., \$24.95
[ISBN 0-7006-1240-8]

With the Cold War now a perilously distant memory, more contemporary examinations are emerging from military historians and political scientists. Among them is *Airpower in Small Wars* by James S. Corum and Wray R. Johnson, a study of *small wars*—struggles against terrorism and insurgency defined as “war waged against a non-state entity and nonregular forces.” To set it apart from other books on the subject, the authors have included a detailed examination of how airpower was used during selected conflicts. Recent military terminology might refer to such clashes as *asymmetric*, *low intensity*, or the once-popular *military operations other than war*.

Despite the authors’ assertion that small wars do not refer to “the scale of the war but rather to its nature,” the terminology surrounding asymmetric conflict is inherently slippery. By the authors’ definition, for example, the war that established the independent United States qualifies as a small war from the British perspective. In fact, in the context of the 18th-century global British Empire, that war was largely a sideshow. For the colonial population, however, it was much closer to a *total war*. It was a struggle between ideologies—*independence versus imperialism*. The perspective from which wars are viewed decides their nature and scale. If the reader can overlook the inherent difficulties with definitions and look to the broader lessons that apply to conflict today, they will be well served by reading *Airpower in Small Wars*.

The attractiveness of this book lies in the global scope of airpower operations scrutinized. American aerial failures during Pershing’s expedition into Mexico (1916), the Greek civil war (particularly 1949), French colonial experiences in Indochina and Algiers (1946–1962), the Soviet venture in Afghanistan (through-

out the 1980s), and airpower use in the Middle East and in other interesting but less compelling cases are also covered. The chapters follow similar structure, adding to a well-designed book that reads like a textbook. Indeed, the work is the product of each writer’s teaching experience at the Air Force School of Advanced Airpower Studies (now the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies). In fact, this book could be combined with Max Boot’s *Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power* if one wished to structure a class toward American involvement in small wars.

Each chapter begins with several



F/A-18C heading for Taliban-held positions in Afghanistan, *Enduring Freedom*, 2001

U.S. Air Force (Erain Gonzalez)

pages of background and contextualizes the rationale for the air campaign. In a few sections, more space is used to set the stage than to discuss airpower contributions, but the background and conclusions are instructive even if the uses of airpower seem mundane. Part of the book’s charm is the history behind several struggles that are usually relegated to footnotes or dissertation topics. The Philippine anti-Huk campaign and several conflicts in South America may fall in this category. If nothing else, it becomes clear that there have been more airpower campaigns around the globe than generally realized.

The authors have listed 11 specific lessons for fighting small wars, all having varying degrees of validity. Perhaps the most crucial is that so-called small wars are usually long and are generally won by the home team—the insurgents and terrorists. This chilling reality suggests that Afghan terrorists and Iraqi insurgents have the house odds more as the conflicts drag on.

Historically, then, military success in small wars does not guarantee victory, particularly since in most of the case studies only one side has air assets (much like the coalitions in Afghanistan

and Iraq). Airpower in smaller conflicts is utilized less for direct combat and more for reconnaissance, supply, and transport missions. Political changes are often the catalyst for ending conflict, be it colonial or civil in nature. American failure in Southeast Asia is the hallmark example of such a national political shift.

The above being the case, a twelfth lesson is implied: to achieve victory against terrorists and insurgents fighting on their own soil, a drastic change in military and political strategy must be made when fighting today’s small wars. Unfortunately, such strategies would most likely need to include traditionally

non-Western means of waging war that are more clearly understood by the male-dominated societies of the Middle and Far East. It is this “clash of civilizations” that Samuel Huntington has described as the battleground of today and the future.

More practically, although some elements of early service rivalry are mentioned, within this book is the implication that airpower—and increasingly in the future, space power—will continue to be used to fight terror and insurgency throughout the world. If this remains true, particularly when the United States fights in places like Afghanistan and Iraq, competition for defense and homeland security dollars is likely to intensify. As has happened before, expanding missions require expanding budgets, as with the “Revolt of the Admirals” over the B-36. Who will get the cash to expand and perfect airpower operations for future small wars? This has yet to be determined, but Pentagon battles to obtain these dollars will likely be more brutal than some of the conflicts examined in this timely book.

JFQ

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A Book Review

By JOHN S. BROWN

An Army at Dawn: The War in North Africa, 1942–1943

by Rick Atkinson

New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2002

681 pp., \$30.00

[ISBN 0-8050-6288-2]

Those coming to grips with what promises to be a long and arduous war on terrorism would be wise to consult the past to inform the future. The endeavor would be well served by Rick Atkinson's superlative *An Army at Dawn: The War in North Africa, 1942–1943*, a thoughtful and insightful book well deserving of the Pulitzer Prize it has already won. In compelling prose Atkinson carries his story from the Operation Torch landings in November 1942 through the Axis collapse in Tunisia 6 months later. Readers will be gripped by the account itself and the way it is told. They may also learn lessons with respect to adaptation, teamwork, coalition warfare, and the human dimension of combat.

It is no secret that American soldiers came to North Africa green, yet the pace and dimensions of their adaptation to combat remain impressive. Atkinson captures their early cockiness, reinforced by their speedy, albeit bloodier than anticipated, victory over the Vichy French. They did not find out how rigorous combat could be until they measured themselves against the veterans of Rommel's Afrika Korps. Badly worsted at Kasserine Pass in February 1943, they rebounded for a creditable win at el Guettar in March and a clear victory with the capture of Bizerte in May. How much difference a few months of combat experience made! They had to adapt not only to the hardships of field living and the general requirements of combat, but also to the specific character and techniques of their formidable adversaries, a lesson that remains valuable.

One of the most salient aspects of the American adaptation in North Africa was the development of teamwork: within units, among units, and across units of the several branches and ser-



U.S. troops landing in North Africa, 1943

U.S. Army

vices. It is no easy matter to coordinate the effects of infantry, artillery, armor, aviation, combat engineers, and others when under fire, and even harder to sustain that effectiveness logistically. By 1942 professional soldiers had a reasonable idea of how such systems were supposed to come together in combat, but translating that cerebral appreciation into performance was a challenge. Atkinson masterfully relates the school of hard knocks in North Africa, where the American fighting style that ultimately triumphed in Europe painfully emerged. He also captures the winnowing process whereby leaders who could master modern combined arms combat rose to the top and others fell away.

As if building teamwork within the American Army were not challenge enough, there was also the need to build an international alliance. Winston Churchill allegedly quipped, "There is only one thing worse than fighting with allies; and that is fighting without them." In colorful detail, *An Army at Dawn* describes the impediments to Allied teamwork: initial and bloody Vichy hostility, pervasive American anglophobia, overweening British arrogance, the bizarre habits of colonial troops, and recurrent international mishaps or failures to perform. There were bright spots as well. Churchill and Roosevelt got on famously, Eisenhower could make a coalition work, and the Allied soldiers strongly believed in the righteousness of their cause. In the end, numbers illustrated the merits of alliance; of some 77,000 allied casualties, 38,000 were British and Commonwealth troops, 19,000 were French, and almost 20,000 American. The blood lost for the hard-fought victory was shared, a point that should not be lost on those who contemplate unilateral actions when the

interests of several friendly nations are at stake.

Above all, Atkinson never loses the human dimensions of combat. He starts his narrative amidst the tombstones of the American Military Cemetery in Carthage, Tunisia. From their information—name, rank, unit, and date of death—he surmises the places and circumstances of their occupants' final moments. This focus on people—whether they are the most senior generals, the most junior privates, or the most colorful allies—continues throughout. Atkinson's instinct for the pithy anecdote, colorful yarn, and personal drama is flawless. He incorporates them with an artistry that vastly enriches the narrative while moving it along.

An Army at Dawn is majestic in its sweep, recalling the Civil War trilogies of Bruce Catton and Shelby Foote. Atkinson's research is exhaustive, as 82 pages of notes and 28 pages of tightly written bibliography attest. He does not use actual footnotes or endnotes. Instead, he documents his text a page or passage at a time. This makes it more difficult to verify specific facts but correspondingly easier to appreciate the overall literature relevant to a subject under discussion. The maps are unsurpassed for a commercial publication and the photographs are well chosen.

This first volume of Atkinson's emerging Liberation Trilogy will soon be iconic if it is not already. I strongly recommend it to students of World War II and to casual readers looking for a thoughtful and gripping campaign account. **JFQ**

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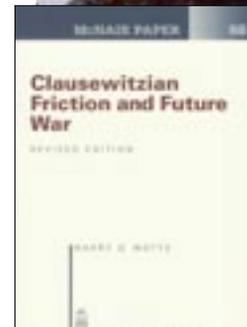
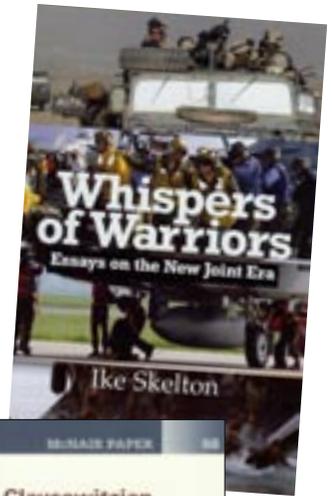
Insurgency: Modern Warfare Evolves into a Fourth Generation (Strategic Forum No. 214, January 2005)

by Thomas X. Hammes

This timely 8-page paper makes the following key points: the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan are a modern form of insurgency known as fourth-generation warfare; insurgents seek to convince enemy political leaders that their strategic goals are unachievable; insurgents believe that superior political will can defeat greater economic and military power; and finally, although modern insurgencies are the only type of warfare that the United States has lost, they can be overcome.

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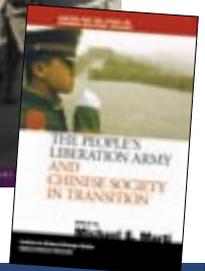
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