

REINVENTING THE ARSENAL OF DEMOCRACY

A Review Essay by

PETER J. DOMBROWSKI

The U.S. Navy and the Origins of the Military-Industrial Complex, 1847–1883

by Kurt Hackemer

Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2001.
208 pp. \$46.95
[ISBN: 1-55750-333-8]

Planning War, Pursuing Peace: The Political Economy of American Warfare, 1920–1939

by Paul A.C. Koistinen

Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1998.
432 pp. \$45.00
[ISBN: 0-7006-0890-7]

In the Shadow of the Garrison State: America's Anti-Statism and Its Cold War Grand Strategy

by Aaron L. Friedberg

Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000.
362 pp. \$22.95
[ISBN: 0-691-04890-8]

In the decade since the end of the Cold War numerous governmental agencies, blue ribbon panels, and study groups have lamented the state of the defense industrial base. Oft-cited problems include the spiraling cost of weapons systems, the lag time between design and production, and the inability to keep the military abreast of technological advances. Commercial firms have reportedly abandoned military sales because they cannot earn profits under existing government regulations. Globalization threatens to erode American leadership in weapons systems by fostering diffusion of technology and expertise across the world. Fast moving and innovative foreign competitors may even surpass the United States by deploying capabilities designed for asymmetric warfare. Some allege that consolidation has progressed to the point where the Nation is hostage to a few defense megafirms; they claim such companies are focused solely on

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their own profitability, shareholders, and management objectives at the expense of national security.

Sound defense industries should provide low cost, high quality, innovative weapons while making profits for shareholders in peace and war. Yet they rarely perform in this fashion, at least in peacetime when industry lobbying, pork barrelling, and bureaucratic infighting tend to dominate the acquisition process. The three books under review here will disabuse anyone of the notion that the post-Cold War era represents anything new under the sun for the defense industrial base. With few exceptions, problems in this sector have antecedents dating back to the Civil War.

The role of the defense industry is sometimes overlooked by defense analysts, and research on the base is usually left to specialists. Yet brilliant military leaders and superior weaponry have failed in the past when pitted against an enemy that effectively mobilizes its resources, including industrial capacity. The Confederacy outgeneraled the Union in the Civil War, at least until Grant entered the picture, yet lost the war as the superior industrial might of New England and the upper Midwest allowed the North to outstrip the South. Germany developed many sophisticated weapons during World War II from V-2 rockets to ME-262 jet fighters but could not build them quickly enough to alter the outcome of the conflict.

The capability to marshal national resources and mold them into military capabilities is important both in war and peace. In war, a defense industrial base

should allow the armed forces to mobilize, replace losses, and at times equip allies. In peacetime, defense industries should enable a country to prepare for war, surge during crises, and gain technological superiority over potential enemies.

Since the advent of the state system in Europe, the survival of a state has depended in large part on its ability to perform extraction—obtaining from its people the means to build the nation, make war, and protect itself. The books under review explore another form of extraction by considering the political economy of warfare—how economic, political, and military institutions are combined to formulate ways to mobilize resources for the national defense.

The term *political economy* suggests a specific facet of the American version of extraction. By most definitions it refers to interaction between states and markets. Efforts by a government to extract resources from society rely largely on market forces: buying from private firms to operate in more or less free markets. Since the start of the industrial age, the United States has used the private sector to produce weapons to win wars. Using free enterprise rather than direct control can result in superior productivity, innovation, and dynamism.

It is hard to envision naval shipbuilding without privately owned yards such as Newport News, Bath Iron Works, and Litton Avondale. But since George Washington decided to construct a fledgling Navy at government yards in 1794 until the 1880s, the Nation relied largely

on naval officers and government owned and operated shipyards to design and produce ships. This practice lingered until twenty years ago, when the last warships constructed at public yards were launched. Contractors built vessels mostly in time of war, and then only because government facilities could not meet the demand. But this historical discussion understates the importance of private shipyards from the middle of the 19th century onward.

The U.S. Navy and the Origins of the Military-Industrial Complex, 1847–1883 examines the reliance of one service on contractors as the precursors of the military-industrial complex. Kurt Hackemer, who teaches history at the University of South Dakota, traces this connection from the late 1840s when the Navy sought to use steam propulsion through launching an all-steel fleet. He shows that technology (the steam engine and steel hull) and wartime pressure forced the service to depend on the private sector to modernize. He finds that the “relationship with private contractors during the 1850s, 1860s, and 1870s and its efforts to integrate them into the shipbuilding process foreshadowed the military industrial complex that began taking shape during the construction of the steel Navy in the 1880s and 1900s.” If that is the case, and the argument made by Hackemer is convincing, the claim by Friedberg that naval shipbuilding was dominated by the Government misses the point: “private enterprises began refining existing military technologies, often developed initially under official auspices, and introducing sophisticated variations that rivaled or surpassed the original versions.”

Indeed, the Cramp shipyard of Philadelphia enhanced its reputation as the premier maker of modern ships in the naval program of 1890 with the construction of the battleships *USS Indiana* and *USS Massachusetts*, armored cruiser *USS New York*, and protected cruiser *USS Columbia*. Cramp-built vessels comprised three of the five capital ships that defeated the Spanish fleet in 1898 at Santiago de Cuba, an event that heralded America’s emergence as a great power.

Descriptions of the halting attempts by the Government to develop and manage an emergent defense industrial base can be found on a grander scale at the beginning of the 21st century. Ills facing the current defense industries were

evident earlier. Implicitly, if not always explicitly, Hackemer points out:

- the evolving contractual relationship between the military—here, the Navy—and private sector suppliers
- the difficulty of adapting commercial technologies to the needs of the Armed Forces and vice versa
- the optimal division of labor between Government and privately owned facilities
- the motivations stimulating technological change (for example, external threat-driven motivations versus internal bureaucratic, organizational, political, or ideological motivations).

Even casual students of defense affairs recognize these issues. Recent efforts to streamline the defense acquisition process, for example, include reforms of contractual relationships between the government customer and private sector suppliers.

Despite the fact that it is foolhardy to generalize across decades, Hackemer reminds us that the Government and contractors engage in a cat-and-mouse game in which each action in the public sector provokes a countermove in the private sector. As the Navy developed model contracts for private shipyards in the mid-19th century, it had to constantly update the terms to account for shirking and new technology. Similarly, experts suggest that acquisition regulations should be reformed to cope with the information age.

Planning War, Pursuing Peace by Paul Koistinen, who is professor of history at California State University, Northridge, considers the interwar years. Like Hackemer, he looks at military interaction with the private sector, although he discusses a range of industries and official actors, including the War Department, congressional committees, and War Resources Board. His account is dominated by maneuvering in the executive branch and complex relations with commercial firms and industrial associations critical to mobilization: steel, aluminum, rubber, petroleum, and various minerals. The second half of the book examines investigations that sought to determine “the role of the War and Navy Departments in economic mobilization.”

Underlying this concept is a sophisticated theoretical apparatus. Koistinen argues that four factors—economic, political, military, and technological—determine how America mobilizes. Put in simple terms, the maturity of the national economy, the size, strength, and scope of government, the nature of civil-military relations, and the relative development of state-of-the-art technology all shape wartime mobilization. By combining and recombining these factors as well as explaining the evolution of society, Koistinen cites three distinct phases of economic mobilization: preindustrial, transitional, and industrial. The preindustrial phase went from the Colonial era through the War of 1812; the transitional phase lasted to the close of the

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Civil War, while the industrial period ran from the mid-18th century presumably until the present.

This book is a tough read for all but the most committed specialist. One might expect some conclusions in return for revisiting the annals of obscure boards. But Koistinen offers generalities, some not supported by the text. He asserts, for example, that the scholar can “no longer look upon the Army’s economic planning as an obscure aspect of administrative history.” And there is little evidence for his claim that “the interwar years provided as much insight into World Wars I and II as those cataclysms reveal about the 1920s and 1930s.” He does not explain how interwar plans improved the American effort during World War II.

The author’s expertise does not rest on *Planning War, Pursuing Peace* alone: it is only the third in a planned five-volume series on the political economy of American warfare since Colonial times. The work at hand focuses on the years prior to World War II. Given his four-factor, three-stage framework, it will be interesting to learn whether his forthcoming volumes maintain that a fourth post-industrial age of economic mobilization is emerging with a new century.

In the Shadow of the Garrison State by Aaron Friedberg is more ambitious than the other two books. The author is professor of politics and international affairs and director of the research program in international security at Princeton University. Instead of limiting his study to military-industrial relations or bureaucratic schemes, he analyzes “the main mechanisms of power creation; those intended to extract money and manpower and those designed to direct national resources toward arms production, military research, and defense supporting industries.”

Friedberg finds that an anti-statist strand in American political life prevented the excesses of militarized society that characterized regimes in the Soviet Union, Japan, and Germany. Faced by a tremendous Soviet threat—a geographically huge, resource blessed, ideologically committed state dedicated in rhetoric, if not always reality, to the destruction of Western society—the United States defended itself and its allies without becoming a modern-day Sparta.

The strong anti-statist strand in America thus allowed the Nation to prevail in the Cold War. When confronted by overwhelming conventional forces and the possibility of nuclear destruction, American leaders refused measures that

would have changed the fundamental character of society. They did not nationalize key industries or mobilize large parts of the population. The lion’s share of basic research and development remained the responsibility of academe and quasi-private labs. In brief, society and the private sector in particular were insulated from the slide into a full-blown war economy, which might have usurped property rights and civil liberties.

The three books reviewed here remind us that the effort in a free market democracy to raise and equip the military causes tensions among defense requirements, the private sector, and liberal political traditions. These tensions animated the construction of a modern naval fleet in the second half of the 18th century, preparations for World War II, and the struggle against the Soviet Union. They underlie much of the current dissatisfaction with the defense sector. However, it is foolhardy to assume with the Nye committee that “the only way to avoid the consequences of modern warfare was to avoid war itself and the offensive preparation for it” because “the war/defense machine had the propensity to go beyond the control of its creators.” As 9/11 demonstrated, war cannot always be avoided, and the military industrial complex, for all its faults and vulnerabilities, provides means to strike back against terrorism. Government officials and policy analysts alike must then prevent the “defense/war machine” from evolving in ways detrimental to national security.

In the Shadow of the Garrison State is especially relevant as the United States embarks on the war on terrorism. Congress passed the U.S. Patriot Act, which may bring the Nation closer to a garrison state, and elected officials and political pundits have proposed further initiatives, from reinstating the draft and imposing censorship to significantly increasing defense spending. From the military, intelligence, and law enforcement perspectives such actions may be reasonable, and citizens may applaud garrison state measures to meet unprecedented threats to homeland security. If history is a guide, however, such actions may not be appropriate in America because they tend to cede power to governments that are less than accountable. JFQ

WINNING ON THE GROUND

A Review Essay by

JOHN S. BROWN

Combined Arms Warfare in the Twentieth Century

by Jonathan M. House
Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2001
364 pp. \$19.95
[ISBN: 0-7006-1081-2]

Clash of Arms: How the Allies Won in Normandy

by Russell A. Hart
Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001
468 pp. \$79.95
[ISBN: 1-5558-7947-0]

Many think that timing is everything. Thus, in an age of the Quadrennial Defense Review, military transformation, and the global war on terrorism it is opportune to find two thoughtful and insightful books, *Combined Arms Warfare in the Twentieth Century* by Jonathan M. House and *Clash of Arms: How the Allies Won in Normandy* by Russell A. Hart. The first volume argues in favor of preserving balance when tempted by simpler, cheaper, or more expedient tactical solutions; and the second is a cautionary tale on believing that one has arrived at the ultimate tactical solution and that no further creativity is required.

Colonel Jonathan House, USA (Ret.), is currently professor of history at Gordon College. After a brief introduction, he divides his account of combined arms into three phases: “The Triumph of Firepower, 1871–1939”; “Total War, 1939–1945”; and “Hot Wars and Cold, 1945–1990.” Each part begins with a vignette introducing themes: the Mexican punitive expedition (1916), the battle of Saint-Vith (1944), and Task Force Smith (1950). Drawing on various experiences (American, German, Israeli, and Russian), the author analyzes the balances between firepower and maneuver, teamwork and synergy, and branches/services and the virtues of generalization/specialization.

Starting with early modern formulas for synchronizing infantry, cavalry, and

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field artillery, *Combined Arms Warfare in the Twentieth Century* covers two eras of change in technology: mass-produced rifled weapons, railroads, and telegraphy (as exhibited in the American Civil War and the Franco-Prussian War) and smokeless powder, repeating rifles, recoiling artillery, machine guns, and the internal combustion engine (which was not fully appreciated in 1914). House begins his study with World War I, teasing tactical lessons from that bloody conflict.

A popular impression of the Great War is that tensions between commanders who sought victory through maneuver and those who preferred overwhelming firepower shifted in favor of the latter—an impasse broken only by the development of tanks and fighter bombers in World War II. House reveals that the situation was more complex, with ample opportunity for restoring maneuver in the Persian Gulf War. Moreover, he suggests that the advocates of decisive maneuver achieved no permanent victories; advanced nations are vulnerable to a siren song that incremental advances in range or precision will win wars without unnecessary violence. Indeed, such a strain was heard recently in the Quadrennial Defense Review.

Successful maneuver in the face of modern firepower has required appreciable teamwork. The suppressive consequences of artillery, fluid infiltration of infantry, tactical mobility of armor, and speed in application of aircraft played a role in enabling maneuver with decisive effect—as did the logistic capability to sustain those assets. But it is not sufficient to have a cerebral appreciation of the way such forces fit together. One must institutionalize these relationships, define respective roles in a coherent doctrine, and train units to execute doctrine in the stress of battle. The strength of this rationale is not only the attention needed to make it happen in concept, but also how to make it happen in practice. House does not ignore past failures. The Pentomic division, for example, is duly addressed and provides a warning against radical organizational changes which are dependent on unrealized technological advances.

Teamwork begs the question of specialization in a complex military. How large must units be to achieve economies of scale? How many specialties and kinds of equipment can one leader manage? On what level is a combination of arms most efficient? On what level do joint operations become practical? The

increasing complexity of warfare has reduced the proportion of combatants to those who support them—the celebrated tooth to tail ratio.

After a long view presented by House, *Clash of Arms: How the Allies Won in Normandy* by Russell Hart offers a case study of the arms and services in Britain, Canada, Germany, and the United States and their performance in a single campaign. The author is assistant professor and specialist in modern military history at Hawaii Pacific University. More than a survey of tactics, Hart assesses the operational effectiveness of four armies throughout the campaign and the origins and causes of their relative successes. He progresses in three phases. First, Hart describes the long-term evolution of these armies before the Normandy invasion during the interwar period, then includes a chapter on each that covers the events of 1939–44. Second, after a campaign overview, he reviews their performance in Normandy from June to August 1944. Finally, he provides a wrap up in a ten-page conclusion that is worth the price of the book.

Regarding the militaries of the interwar years, *Clash of Arms* portrays Germany as focused, innovative, and ultimately sufficient in resources, and Britain as distracted, hostile to change, and gravely understrength. In the United States, the Army was woefully unprepared—while the Army Air Corps and Navy were somewhat less so—but the intellectual vitality and technical innovation of the officer corps nurtured the potential for wartime growth. Canada succumbed to antimilitarism altogether and totally neglected defense readiness.

Hart finds that the interwar-year patterns played out. The Germans were combat effective at the start and got better between 1939 and 1942. By 1944, despite horrid losses in both East and West, they sustained a qualitative edge overall. The British had difficulty shedding their colonial distractions and settling on coherent doctrine. They were also averse to self-criticism. Ironically, they learned more from their success than failure. The Americans entered the war with an adequate doctrinal and technical base and a heartfelt commitment to total mobilization followed by total war, though their practical experience was initially meager. By Normandy they had braved appreciable combat in the Pacific, North Africa, and the Mediterranean and demonstrated an inclination toward self-criticism, adaptation, and appropriate transformation. Canada, not geographically threatened, remained sluggish in its

preparations and had not accrued much combat experience even by D-Day. In fact, only 2 percent of the Canadian troops slated for Overlord had ever been in action.

None of the armies that met at Normandy were truly prepared according to Hart. Germany had never endured as much firepower or airpower, with consequent implications for their defenses and mobility. And while the Allies had thought through the landing and war of maneuver that was to follow, they had not anticipated the struggle to cut through *bocage* to maneuver. German forces adapted in the face of enemy firepower through greater dispersion and hostile airpower by moving at night or in inclement weather. Anglo-Canadian forces tried to break through enemy defenses by unsubtle attritional attacks based on overwhelming firepower.

While this approach was intended to minimize friendly casualties, it limited progress because huge amounts of artillery ammunition had to be stocked prior to advances on the ground. The Americans, on the other hand, were deliberate and innovative, developing company-level tactics to penetrate the thickets, balancing firepower with decisive efforts at maneuver, and steadily integrating branches and services. Ultimately, qualitative differences between Americans and Germans disappeared whereas quantitative differences did not. U.S. forces swept through France in an overwhelming triumph.

Hart notes that ideology degraded German esprit at Normandy by promoting the belief that racially pure Aryans (and near-Aryan Anglo-Saxons) were better fighters than mongrel Americans. Germany underestimated the U.S. military until it was too late. The aftermath of Operation Cobra inflicted a serious wound from which *Westheer* would never really recover.

Combined Arms Warfare and *Clash of Arms* should be read by students of military history. Both are well written and thoughtful. In the face of doctrinal ferment today, House persuasively advocates balanced capabilities and Hart examines never-ending adaptation to cope with an enemy that adapts itself. These perspectives are timely and important. **JFQ**

THE CRAFT OF STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

A Book Review by

SUZANNE NIELSEN

Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime

by Eliot A. Cohen

New York: The Free Press, 2002

288 pp. \$25.00

[ISBN: 0-7432-3049-3]

According to reports in the press, *Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime* made the President's summer reading list for his vacation in Crawford, Texas. This major work on the civil-military relations in wartime should be read by officers of all services, especially senior leadership. Its author, Eliot Cohen, teaches strategic studies in the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at The Johns Hopkins University.

Cohen starts his analysis by considering the *normal theory* of civil-military relations, which he argues dominates thinking on the role of American leaders in military strategy and operations. This theory holds that political leaders should declare war, set objectives, and marshal resources, but otherwise not meddle in military affairs. He looks at four wartime leaders—Abraham Lincoln, Georges Clemenceau, Winston Churchill, and David Ben-Gurion—and concludes that the normal theory is wrong. [For a companion article by Eliot Cohen, see *JFQ*, issue 31 (Summer 02).]

These four statesmen were involved in matters of military technology, campaign planning, and even tactics. Furthermore, they actively managed both the selection and relief of senior officers. And, as Cohen points out, they would engage in energetic and persistent questioning as a means of conducting "a continuous audit of the military's judgment." But their approach did not hamper the war effort. Instead, in his treatment of these national leaders, Cohen makes a convincing case that



AP/Wide World Photo

David Ben-Gurion.

their engagement in military planning and operations was vital to victory.

Clausewitz is credited by Cohen with articulating the reason for the crucial involvement of political leaders in wartime. To achieve strategic coherence, military means must always support political ends, which provides the logic of war. Statesmen, not soldiers, are ultimately responsible for that coherence. In a passage which is not found in *Supreme Command*, Clausewitz argues that policy "will permeate all military operations, and . . . it will have a continuous influence on them." This can apply on all levels of military activity; even tactical questions have political ramifications. There is no clear line beyond which the political leader ought not get involved in military affairs; it is an issue of judgment, not principle.

But Cohen overemphasizes the limits of professional military expertise while highlighting the insight of statesmen. For example, he suggests that the "massive common sense" exhibited by Churchill is what "Clausewitz described as the bedrock of military genius." This seems a stretch, for Clausewitz posited that military genius consisted in "gifts of intellect and temperament" matured through long experience in the field. Certainly one can argue that Churchill was a great statesman and strategist without bestowing the mantle of military genius on him.

The significance that Cohen assigns to the military knowledge of these four wartime leaders almost detracts from his

central argument. It is essential that statesmen maintain firm control over strategy and operations whether or not they are knowledgeable in military affairs. Political leaders must maintain such control because only they have the national perspective, ultimate responsibility for safeguarding interests, and authority to make decisions. One example in *Supreme Command* underscores this point. In 1861, military advisors recommended to Lincoln that Fort Sumter not be resupplied. But the President believed that as a target the fort was too attractive for the South to ignore. Thus he decided against military advice to resupply because he appreciated the importance of having the rebels strike the first blow. Lincoln's political judgment and national perspective were essential, not his military knowledge.

Although Clausewitz argues that "a certain grasp of military affairs is vital for those in charge of general policy," he clarifies that "What is needed in the post [head of state or minister of war] is distinguished intellect and strength of character. He can always get the necessary military information somewhere. . . ." The other qualities that great statesmen shared were probably more important. Cohen lists them as intuition, relating detail to grand themes, identifying what is new, gathering a broad range of views, picking the right subordinates, determination, mastery of the spoken and written word, and a combination of moderation, ruthlessness, and courage.

Recognizing that some may find an examination of only great statesmen awkward, Cohen adds a chapter on "Leadership Without Genius." He finds it equally important for leaders lacking the attributes of Lincoln or Churchill to maintain active control over military strategy and use of force. He finds fault with Presidents in the 1990s who did not maintain this control. This discussion of the U.S. experience raises several interesting issues. First, Cohen distinguishes between policy formulation and implementation, implying that the former is the exclusive province of political leaders. While this perspective has merit, no clear line of separation is possible with military policy. Policy formulation at a minimum requires input as to available military means. One can accept with Clausewitz that "the political aims are the business of the government alone" while still seeing a role for military officers.

A second issue is the relationship between national strategy and national

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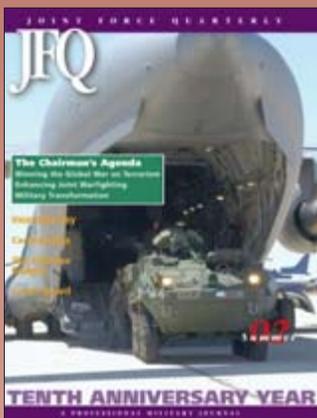
military strategy. In *Supreme Command*, Cohen argues that political leaders are responsible for ensuring that national military strategy supports political ends. But that is only one part of the story. To be an effective strategist, the political leader must use the instruments of national power—diplomatic, economic, and informational as well as military—in support of national interests. His authority to leverage such means is another reason for the statesman to occupy the driver's seat. (A companion work to Cohen's book needs to be written on the role of national leaders in crafting comprehensive strategy that not only has won wars, but also helped win the peace that followed.)

Supreme Command challenges military and political leaders alike. For the military leader, the challenge is understanding the basic subordination of their profession to the political ends it serves. For the political leader who must resort to the use of force, the challenge is remaining engaged to ensure that military means support political ends. A useful starting point for political and military leaders would be respect for each other's roles.

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REORGANIZING DEFENSE

A Book Review by

RUSSELL HOWARD

Victory on the Potomac: The Goldwater-Nichols Act Unifies the Pentagon

by James R. Locher III
College Station, Texas: Texas A&M
University Press, 2002.
507 pp. \$34.95
[ISBN: 1-58544-187-2]

A significant contribution to the literature on defense organization and bureaucratic politics, *Victory on the Potomac* offers a graphic account of the need for reform and the struggle to achieve it against the state of military readiness in the 1970s and 1980s. Writing as an insider, James Locher presents a fast-paced chronicle of the passage of the Goldwater-Nichols DOD Reorganization Act of 1986—the most important defense legislation since the National Security Act of 1947. The book is must reading for decisionmakers, planners, and others responsible for defense policy and military strategy. Academics will also find much of interest in what is probably the best study of bureaucratic politics in the Pentagon since Graham Allison dissected the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Like a war plan, *Victory on the Potomac* describes the prelude to conflict, the battles waged, and the road to victory. In the first part of the book (“The Fog of Defense Organization”), Locher explains the need for reorganization to get the services to work more closely together. According to the author, after World War II the Armed Forces achieved overwhelming influence that was out of proportion to their statutory and formal responsibilities. Service priorities were protecting turf rather than developing multi-service commands to wage modern war. The results were the Bay of Pigs, Desert One, and the terrorist attack on the Marine Barracks in Beirut.

In the next part (“Drawing the Battle Lines”), Locher focuses on the Beirut bombing as the greatest impetus for defense reorganization. In October 1983, a “lone terrorist drove a truck laden with

explosives into the lobby of the Marine barracks, triggering one of the biggest nonnuclear detonations ever. . . . The blast collapsed the four-story building into a smoldering heap of rubble no more than fifteen feet high and burned, crushed, or smothered to death 220 Marines, 18 sailors, 3 soldiers, a French paratrooper, and a Lebanese civilian.” He stresses that interservice rivalry and a “bloated and paralyzed” command structure were just as responsible as the bomber.

As chairman of the Investigations Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee, Congressman Bill Nichols studied the disaster and became convinced of the need for reform. “No member who took part in that investigation will ever forget it; the magnitude of the tragedy . . . seared our consciousness indelibly.” It became his issue, “and he was committed to correcting the organizational defects that had contributed to 241 deaths in Beirut.”

Senator Barry Goldwater was also interested in defense reform, especially after becoming the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee in 1985. A retired major general in the Air Force Reserve, he was greatly disturbed by the debacle in Lebanon: “The fault was in the Pentagon command structure. The cumbersome chain of command imposed on the general [in charge] by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the services precluded effective control.” The outrage that Goldwater voiced over the convoluted chain of command and its contribution to this horrible tragedy would motivate his quest for military reform in the years after the bombing.

But strong personal commitments on the part of Goldwater and Nichols were not sufficient to ensure defense reorganization. As the title of the third part of the book (“Marshalling Forces”) indicates, Congress moved forward only after bitter political wrangling and bureaucratic infighting. Key to passing the Senate version of the bill was the close relationship between Barry Goldwater and Sam Nunn. As the principal staffer working on this legislation, Locher gained unique insights into the character and motives of both men. Although they came from different sides of the aisle, both had strong conservative, pro-defense credentials that helped forge an unusual partnership.

Goldwater was bold, almost reckless. Nunn was cautious, almost too careful. Goldwater made up his mind quickly. Nunn decided slowly. Goldwater relied on instinct and feel. Nunn depended on hard work and superior

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information. Their opposite characteristics complicated the work of opponents. Nunn could outthink you. Goldwater could outshoot you. Nunn could remain cool while Goldwater flashed his temper. Their opponents had to prepare for both Nunn's proficient jabs and Goldwater's knockout punch.

Reorganization was opposed by most members of the Joint Chiefs who served during the Carter and Reagan years (with notable exceptions like General Edward Meyer, USA), the service secretaries, and the Secretary of Defense, Caspar Weinberger. One particularly formidable enemy of reform was the Secretary of the Navy, John Lehman, who upheld the time-honored traditions of service autonomy. In implementing the National Security Act of 1947, James Forrestal, who was the Secretary of the Navy and subsequently the first Secretary of Defense, contested the efforts to reign in the services and achieve unification. Lehman also sought to stymie reorganization and had good reason to be optimistic: "In fourteen years in government, Lehman had never lost a big fight. His genius for bureaucratic politics enabled his extraordinary success." With that record, he took on Nichols in the House and Goldwater and Nunn in the Senate—and to his ultimate surprise lost.

The final part of the book ("Marching to Victory") highlights the value of a campaign plan and importance of sticking to it. Battles over Goldwater-Nichols were fought in hearing rooms, the press, and behind-the-scenes exchanges across Washington. Political figures like Dan Quayle, Gary Hart, Pete Wilson, and John Glenn appear throughout the narrative. John Warner receives praise, though he led the opposition to reform at the outset of the hearings: "Warner was a true gentleman. . . . He worked hard to see the other side's point of view and find common ground for reconciliation." By contrast, many prominent officers, including former chairmen such as General John Vessey, USA (Ret.), and Admiral Thomas Moorer, USN (Ret.), argued that very few if any of the 79 recommendations contained in the Senate version of the bill were acceptable.

The depiction of defense reorganization found in *Victory on the Potomac* resonates strongly in the realities of the post-9/11 world. As the Nation responds to new challenges, it may be time to revisit the National Security Act of 1947 and reconsider defense organization in order to build on the foundation of the Goldwater-Nichols Act. **JFQ**

NATIONAL WILL AND MILITARY READINESS

A Book Review by

ROBERT H. FERRELL

While America Sleeps: Self-Delusion, Military Weakness, and the Threat to Peace Today

by Donald Kagan and Frederick W. Kagan
New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000
483 pp. \$32.50
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The authors of *While America Sleeps: Self-Delusion, Military Weakness, and the Threat to Peace Today* compare the errors in British policy in the 1920s with those of America in the 1990s. But the issue is whether the experience of Great Britain fits the situation of the United States over the last decade and—withstanding the basic analogy—what to do about current military posture. The two authors of this book, Donald Kagan and Frederick W. Kagan, are *pere et fils* and both academic historians: the senior at Yale and the junior at West Point

Britain during the interwar years does not seem to mirror the United States in recent years. British losses in France totalled nearly a million in World War I. Every public square and church in the country had long rolls of the dead. The army of regulars which went to war was sacrificed, only to be followed by a conscript force, the so-called new army, which was lost with almost equal recklessness. Generals who supervised this carnage probably did their best, but they were foolish in throwing their men against machine guns and artillery. The Royal Navy had reversals as well, with Jutland in 1916 hardly constituting a victory because of the loss of battle cruisers, those thin-skinned ships that looked fine in prewar naval reviews but could not stand up to German gunnery. All the while the financial capital accumulated in the century of peace after the defeat of Napoleon in 1815 was slipping away, with the proof appearing during the 1920s when reversion to the gold standard (with the pound established at five dollars) provided an appalling testimony to futility and financial ignorance that

was almost equivalent to the military ignorance which preceded it.

These developments provided the background for almost endless debate within the Foreign Office during the 1920s and for various cabinets to accept that the nation was not what it once was after Passiondale and wartime spending. In these deprived circumstances, these cabinets attempted to defend the homeland and Empire largely through maritime power while letting the army dwindle to virtually nothing. There was endless debate over whether the Royal Navy needed as many ships as the United States. Time was squandered in arid argument over the merits of large versus small cruisers, this because America possessed few light cruisers and wanted to construct as many heavy cruisers as possible. Meanwhile, British governments in the 1920s refused to support France and sought to placate Germany. The Great Depression, which began in 1929, became a nightmare for the working classes, and the Whitehall policies of the 1920s, which had little substance, collapsed. In the ensuing chaos Hitler came to power in Germany, leading to the denouement in 1939.

While America Sleeps describes the deteriorating condition of Britain in considerable detail. The authors have searched the archives to set out military and diplomatic exchanges, aide-memoirs, and cabinet decisions, but they only draw on an abject lesson in bad policy despite including some interesting novelities. There is not much else to discover in view of British weakness.

Although the authors chose the 1920s for analysis, they could have looked at other periods and found decline, when British foreign policy made brave efforts and stentorian pronouncements to cover military weaknesses. For instance, the Empire was the envy of the world the 1880s, but it was a period when Charles Gordon was besieged at Khartoum. The general and his small garrison looked north and could see smoke from steamers with troops coming to their relief, but the vessels could not relieve the siege by the dervishes of the Mahdi. Thus Gordon stood on the staircase of the governor's palace in full uniform as a dervish ran him through. It was impossible for Britain to avenge Gordon until 1898 when Horatio Kitchener took an army to the Sudan and brought it under imperial control. He was grand in defending the Empire, instructing his soldiers on how to rebuild the ruins of Khartoum. As for the street plan, "Lay it out like the Union

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Jack," Kitchener ordered, an arrangement that had the advantage of commanding the city with artillery. And yet grandness at the height of the Empire was not enough, as years of fierce rule by the Mahdi demonstrated.

Another example is construction of the new navy following the launching of the all-big-gun *Dreadnought* at the turn of the last century. The new battle cruisers were badly built, and British industry was being surpassed by Germany. Like the 1880s and 1890s, the ensuing period up to 1914 witnessed foolish assertion in foreign policy and increasing ineptitude in military affairs.

Against the errors of the 1920s, the American experience in the 1990s does not appear to be analogous. During the

Clinton administration, military planners were bewildered by the reality that the Nation was the only superpower, unsure of what to do in places like the Balkans and uncertain of how to deal with NATO after the Soviet Union. This situation is not similar to the experience of Britain in the 1920s. Whatever the errors in America during the 1990s, they were not preceded by an enormous bloodletting—Vietnam was a sideshow compared to British losses in 1914–18. Nor was the American economy depressed like the 1920s; indeed it had never been stronger.

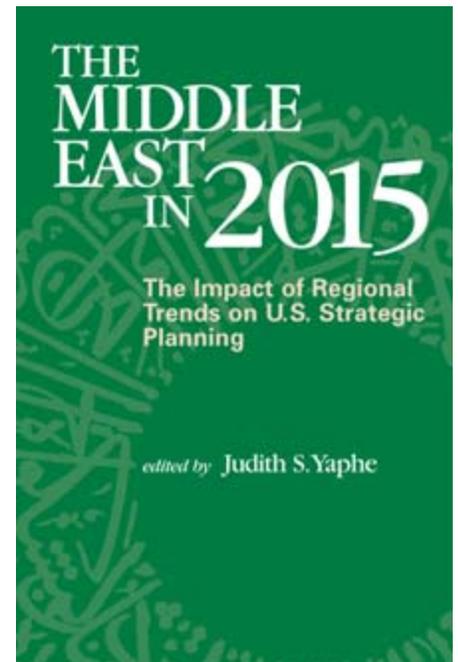
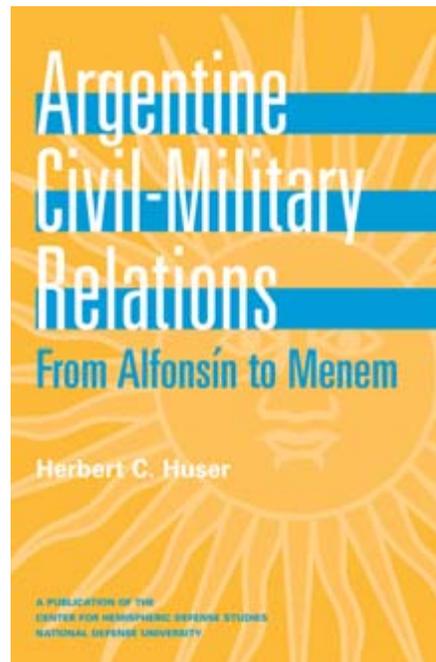
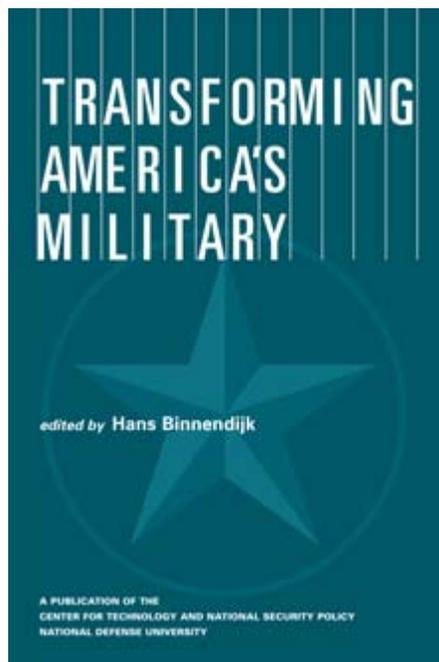
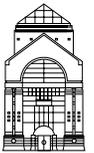
Aside from that analogy, the Kagans are outspoken in disparaging U.S. military posture in the 1990s, yet stop short of specific recommendations. *While America Sleeps* sets out the apparent failures such

as Somalia, Haiti, and Kosovo. Yet other issues are more specific: attracting quality people to the Armed Forces without public support for a draft; the need for equipment to train the force in realistic exercises; using the hardware on hand instead of opting for new aircraft or another \$5 billion carrier; closing small bases; and dramatically reducing the number of flag officers since the services are virtually as officer-heavy as they were during World War II.

Much analysis of the United States today is no doubt affected by the events of 9/11, with overwhelming public support for defensive measures necessary to win the global war on terrorism. Nothing like this groundswell took place in Britain in the 1920s.

JFQ

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