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MOGADISHU DUET [PART ONE]

A Book Review by

ROBERT B. OAKLEY

Losing Mogadishu: Testing U.S. Policy in Somalia

by Jonathan Stevenson

Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1995.
217 pp. \$19.95
[ISBN 1-55750-788-0]

In the introduction to *Losing Mogadishu*, Jonathan Stevenson spells out his aim: to “extract lessons” about American involvement and explain “the psychology of American decisionmaking.” He views our experience in Somalia as analogous to that in Vietnam and as “a veritable laboratory of American military policy, U.S. foreign policy in the Third World, and Washington’s proper relationship with the United Nations.” He puts his

well as the numerous anecdotes and citations found in the book make it easy to read, fast-paced, and colorful.

Losing Mogadishu is divided into eleven chapters which bear titles as lively as the author’s style and reflect a penchant for drawing general conclusions: “Dissemblance as Ethos,” “Building the Perfect Beast,” “High-Concept Foreign Policy,” and “Moral Compulsion in Foreign Policy.” One chapter, which explicitly enumerates seven lessons, poses a most pertinent question about the basic efficacy of outside intervention in situations such as Somalia or Rwanda. The final chapter discusses the proper relationship between the United States and the United Nations. These are issues which remain alive and well today in political debates within the administration and Congress over U.S. policy on Haiti, Bosnia, and the United Nations.

Unfortunately, Stevenson’s overriding interest in conclusions (for instance, about Somalis or President Bush’s motive for intervening) lead him to fluctuate between a chronological, factual account of events and numerous generalizations

Clinton administrations, nor in command on the ground. UNOSOM, UNITAF, and UNOSOM II were totally different in concept, mandate, and implementation—not a continuum, despite the fact that they occurred in succession.

This author’s approach, however, gives him greater flexibility in drawing conclusions from the “living laboratory” and pursuing the Vietnam analogy, making it easier to generalize about the series of events. Unfortunately, in so doing, some details are overlooked or omitted, which would raise doubts about the validity of the conclusions. One is the fact that U.N. Special Representative Jonathan Howe at no time had control over or gave orders to Task Force Delta which mounted the ill-fated Ranger assault in October 1994. The thesis that the Clinton administration turned over our policy and forces to the United Nations is inaccurate, though they were very much in parallel.

But Stevenson is careful to present views which do not always accord with his own to the point where he sometimes appears to reach alternative conclusions



Americans in Mogadishu
boarding C-5 for home.

U.S. Air Force (James Mossman)

finger squarely on what has emerged during the Clinton administration as a critical and hotly debated aspect of foreign policy: where to intervene and when. He also focuses on important questions that arose during the period of active U.S. and U.N. involvement in 1992–95 and draws several conclusions from them, including parallels with Vietnam. The narrative as

that he derives from them. Each chapter tends to cover the entire period from the authoritarian rule of Siad Barre during the Cold War to the chaotic early 1990s as the United States intervened through Operation Restore Hope (UNITAF), resulting in a repetition of events. On occasion he juxtaposes in one paragraph events which took place at different times, under dissimilar circumstances, pursuant to assorted administration policies and various mandates from the Security Council. This gives the impression of continuity that did not exist in the thinking, objectives, and actions to implement the policies under the Bush and

on the same events in different places. Since any number of conclusions can be drawn about Somalia, this approach is valid and makes the book more lively even if the end result is a bit confusing.

One example is the claim that George Bush thought that Somalia exemplified “the concept of the world order” and a prototype for dealing with Third World problems. There is no evidence to support such a sweeping conclusion, and the author is careful in other places to point out that Bush was intent (albeit

Ambassador Robert B. Oakley served as special envoy to Somalia under Presidents Bush and Clinton.

unrealistically) on completing a relief-only mission by January 1993. The President and his national security team saw Restore Hope as limited in scope and duration, a one-time affair. Moreover, in a press conference on December 4, 1992, then Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney explicitly rejected the idea that it could be completed by January 20.

The President, Secretaries Cheney and Eagleberger, and General Powell were very clear on the limited mission of UNITAF in public statements, orders to U.S. military and civilian leadership in the field, and discussions with troop contributing nations and the Secretary General. Such long-term projects as disarmament and other elements of what, as a result of Somalia, have come to be termed *mission creep* and *nationbuilding* were to be avoided. Larger policy and operational issues would be properly left to the incoming Clinton administration, the newly-elected Congress, and the Security Council when it decided on the mandate for a new peacekeeping operation to succeed the U.S.-led operation.

While Stevenson recounts the constraints put on Restore Hope, he implies that they were due to a failure of vision by the Bush administration. He seems to not recognize that the limitations were due in part to lessons already learned during the Reagan-Bush years (sometimes the hard way as in Lebanon, Grenada, and Panama) and in part to the President's lame-duck status. Most of the lessons found in chapter 7 of *Losing Mogadishu* were applied during Restore Hope. This included using military intervention as the last resort. It took place only after the sequence of other events accurately reported by Stevenson, including the sacking of the effective U.N. negotiator Mohamed Sahnoun, led to more than 300,000 Somalis dead and many others facing death without immediate help. Only a relatively massive, well-organized military-humanitarian operation could remedy this situation. And it did. Moreover, famine has not returned to Somalia three years after UNITAF. Other lessons which the author cites, such as "know your enemy" and "let soldiers be soldiers," were applied. U.S. forces did not underestimate Aideed or guerilla fighters during Restore Hope. They displayed a capability to hit back hard if necessary and avoided being taken by surprise and, at the same time, exercised restraint in using force and maintained a constant dialogue with Aideed, other warlords, and a broad cross-section of Somali society. This minimized conflict and

resulted in a surprisingly low number of casualties.

The net effect of the Restore Hope approach was to largely avoid conflict with the warlords while removing most of their fighters and weapons from the streets; to maintain excellent cohesion, command, and control over the 25-country military coalition; and to establish effective coordination between the coalition and over eighty international and nongovernmental organizations. This put a temporary end to three years of intensive civil war as well as mass death from famine and disease within six weeks even if it did not end all political violence. It also enabled the United Nations to facilitate a broad set of political agreements that were signed by all 15 Somali factions at the March 1993 conference in Addis Ababa, even if subsequent events precluded their implementation.

A series of decisions made by newly-elected President Clinton and his advisers was indeed of the general, long-term visionary nature described by Stevenson (though erroneously attributed to the Bush team). So were the views of the Secretary General and the resolutions by the Security Council establishing the mandate of UNOSOM II. Their ideas on what should and could be done, and the resources needed to achieve those sweeping objectives, failed to recognize Somali realities. The result, as the author indicates, was a disaster for the United States and the United Nations, and for prospects of political reunification and peace in Somalia. Like Vietnam these events indeed had a major impact on the administration and Congress, raising grave doubts about peace operations elsewhere, the utility of the United Nations, and the will of the Nation to run any risks abroad.

But the Clinton administration seems to have subsequently relearned many lessons found in chapter 9 of *Losing Mogadishu* and applied in Somalia under the Bush administration. In deciding to intervene in Haiti, we undertook a major U.S.-led, Security Council-approved peace operation analogous to Restore Hope. It was followed, as in Somalia, by a full-fledged, U.N.-commanded operation in which the United States was the major troop contributor. The initial action in Haiti was notable for the restrained application of overwhelming force by the Army and Marine Corps. The analysis of local conditions, choice of objectives, and

assessment of resources needed for both the U.S.- and U.N.-led operations was much more realistic than in Somalia, and the transition to U.N. peacekeeping far better coordinated. There was close cooperation between U.S. civilian and military leadership, and with the U.N. representative once he took over. Even though the Clinton administration and other players may be disappointed that their plans for democracy and economic revitalization in Haiti have not been fully realized or are running behind schedule, there has been a willingness to adapt to the local realities and settle for less—rather than insisting on the forceful imposition of values and political institutions conceived by outsiders on recalcitrant and potentially hostile local power groups, as occurred in Somalia.

The Haiti episode has taken place within the context of a more limited, pragmatic view of the United Nations and the concept of peacekeeping by the Clinton administration and Congress. On the other hand, in December 1995 the administration undertook a peace operation in Bosnia under a coalition that is much larger and more complex than those in Somalia or Haiti, albeit under NATO rather than U.N. command. It has the potential for making wrong turns, which Stevenson evoked in examining Somalia, though the Bosnian operation has been marked by careful planning, cautious implementation, overwhelming force used with restraint, and constant dialogue with all parties.

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MOGADISHU DUET [PART TWO]

A Book Review by

JONATHAN STEVENSON

Somalia and Operation Restore Hope: Reflections on Peacemaking and Peacekeeping

by John L. Hirsch and Robert B. Oakley
Washington:

U.S. Institute of Peace Press, 1995.

208 pp. \$26.95

[ISBN 1-878379-41-0]

Somalia and Operation Restore Hope is an informative and basically sincere contribution to the slow, incremental debate over the proper criteria and execution of "humanitarian intervention." While the book contains little that can be labeled controversial or provocative, it has an assiduously clinical and nonspeculative approach that reveals a great deal about the idiom of American foreign policy and how it is found wanting.

Even though U.S. special envoy Robert Oakley was the key player during the early stages of U.S. involvement in Somalia, and John Hirsch was his adviser, the book is not a whitewash of the American role. President Bush's authorization of the intervention, they suggest, was premised on a combination of expedience in public relations: "a definable mission had emerged" and "the goodwill to be gained from helping out in Somalia might help offset criticism that the United States was dilatory in responding to aggression in Bosnia." The authors admit that the United Nations and Washington erred in demonizing General Mohamed Farah Aideed while remaining obdurately blind to his charismatic power. They intimate that these mistakes led ultimately to the October 3, 1994 firefight in which 18 Americans were killed, 78 were wounded, and the U.S. Government was humiliated. And they gently implicate Admiral Jonathan Howe, the U.N. special envoy from March 1993 until February 1994, and later U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, as the purveyors of the "peremptory, intrusive attitude" toward Somalis that lamentably

replaced Oakley's more mediative and nonpartisan approach.

On the other hand, Hirsch and Oakley's analysis of Operation Restore Hope itself—that is, the initial U.S. intervention on December 9, 1992, and the ensuing four and a half months—does contain a trace of defensiveness. During this period, the United States, through the Unified Task Force (UNITAF), enjoyed command of all forces in Somalia. Through early March 1993, Oakley was the highest-ranking U.S. civilian on the ground. According to the authors, UNITAF's tenure was marked by a firm if limited approach to disarmament. In fact, there was a degree of vacillation in UNITAF's weapons policy which gave Somali gunmen a window of opportunity. Similarly, the authors point out that merely establishing "points of security" was insufficient during the U.S. airlifts that preceded Restore Hope but do not mention that UNITAF's "areas of positive control" were limited in size. UNITAF did not really pacify Somalia. Overt clan problems in Kismayu, the southern port, were ongoing from February 1993 forward.

The authors confer perhaps inordinate promise on what few rudiments of civil government did develop in Somalia under UNITAF. A police force and court system (which the disarmament policy was meant to inspire) did begin to operate but lost vitality when the U.N. took over and the lawless among the Somalis took advantage. The "transitional national council" plan, conjured by Somali factions at the U.N.-sponsored conference in Addis Ababa in March 1993, was far less genuine—and thus less salutary—than Hirsch and Oakley suggest in their uninflected account of events. The notion was in fact cobbled together by the groups to salvage Somalia's global image after Aideed's threat to abort the meeting because of an attack in Kismayu by Siad Barre loyalists. It was toothless almost by design. Consequently, the author's conclusion that the Somalis "were given every opportunity" to rebuild their country may be overstated. They probably needed some overarching development plan that was not forthcoming from UNOSOM II. But the larger point, that ultimately the responsibility for Somalia's welfare rests with Somalis, is surely correct.

Some of Hirsch and Oakley's most incisive and important points are cast as afterthoughts. The authors acknowledge that Americans often failed to grasp Somali culture—with operational consequences—but do not elaborate. The lack

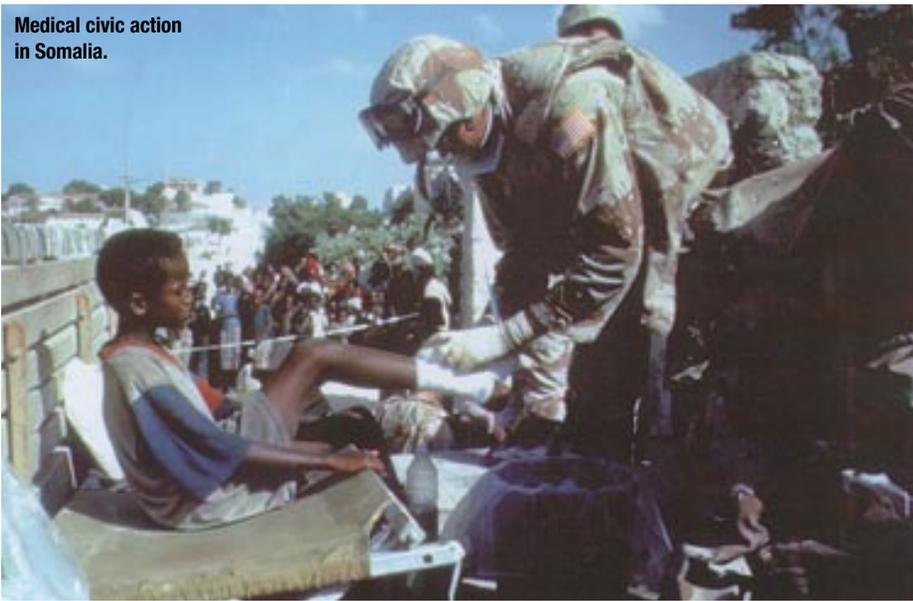
of cohesion in command and control of UNOSOM II is confined largely to a trenchant footnote. Elsewhere in a footnote they uncritically recount an unpublished report by an adviser to Howe which concluded that Aideed should be prosecuted by an international or local court. This transparently dubious option appears to have been seriously contemplated. Obviously it never panned out, but it would have been interesting to hear the authors' opinion on how feasible it was *ab initio*, and whether any legalistic approach to peace enforcement in failed states has a prayer of bearing fruit.

The tic of *Somalia and Operation Restore Hope* is that it parades UNITAF achievements and minimizes its shortcomings. Despite an expressed wish not to assign blame, the authors skew their presentation to ascribe the ultimate inadequacy of the Somalia intervention (which they do not directly deny) to the United Nations—or at least to friction between it and the United States. This is simplistic for a number of reasons. First, no other single power can match America's military capability, and it is unrealistic at this point to ask any piecemeal U.N. force to do so. Second, to the Third World, American involvement portends largesse and vicarious power. When a society is *ex hypothesi* divided, as in Somalia, U.S. partisanship inevitably becomes a bone of contention no matter how hard diplomats like Oakley try to stay impartial. Finally, Washington exercises plenary control in the Security Council and should generally be estopped to deny it when a U.N. operation spearheaded from the start by the United States goes bad.

None of these points is rejected by Hirsch and Oakley, but neither are they highlighted or developed. With what appears to be false modesty, they downplay the intrinsically disruptive impact of any U.S. presence. "The mandate [of political arbiter]," they write, "in fact belonged to the United Nations, and both the Bush and Clinton administrations were careful not to take it on." Yet they concede that Aideed, in particular, was immovably hostile to U.N. efforts and responded only to American cajoling. In other words, by virtue of U.S. preeminence, its diplomats on the ground could not help but to assume the mantle of political arbiter. At the same time, Hirsch and Oakley do assert that whoever is at the helm, the military, political, and humanitarian aspects of a peacekeeping mission must be coordinated and centralized—a salient

Jonathan Stevenson is a journalist who has covered Somalia for *Newsweek* and *The Economist*.

Medical civic action
in Somalia.



U.S. Navy (Terry Mitchell)

and nicely observed lesson of the Somalia experience.

In general, what deprives the book of diagnostic and prescriptive power is a disinclination by the authors to extend their analyses beyond what actually happened to the hypothetical—that is, what could have happened, or what might happen in future scenarios. They extol the Weinberger-Powell doctrine of overwhelming force and show that its application nonplused the Somalis into docility for a time and helped stamp out the famine. This result, they say, was a “good start.” But they do not offer a systematic assessment of the suitability of overwhelming force in peacekeeping, instead merely noting that administrative difficulties in the U.S.-to-U.N. handover never allowed for the case to be proven one way or the other. Suppose these problems can be overcome, whether by a standing U.N. army or some more modest device such as “subcontracting,” both of which Hirsch and Oakley say should be considered. Is humanitarian military intervention of the variety pioneered by Restore Hope the preferred option? If so, what criteria should govern its application?

These are issues that American policymakers must address with greater determination and focus, so as to avoid the ad hoc mistakes which the authors demonstrate were made in Somalia and proclaim to be “inexcusable.” They agree that the military peculiarities of peace operations require far more study and

that the bold isolationism which emerged in some quarters of the United States after the October 3, 1994 debacle is an inadequate response to the challenge posed by political and humanitarian problems abroad. Although they are in a uniquely informed position, the authors do not try to provide any comprehensive answers. What they have done is to provide a lucid insiders’ account of an unprecedented use of force, the difficulties which the players encountered along the way, and some programmatic suggestions for improvement. For understanding the sequence of considerations that drove American involvement in Somalia, this book is a valuable tool. **JFQ**

OF ARMS AND MEN

A Book Review by

SHAWN C. WHETSTONE

Firepower in Limited War

by Robert H. Scales

Novato, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1995.

336 pp. \$24.95.

[ISBN 0-89141-533-5]

The American way of war places a premium on taking objectives with a minimum loss of life. In enduring the horrors of war while allowing planners to move arrows on their map boards, our infantrymen suffered the most casualties in the wars of this century. *Firepower in Limited War* focuses on these soldiers and how firepower, particularly an overwhelming amount of it, can be substituted for lives if judiciously applied.

This book is a good example of using case studies to draw out lessons for future actions. It reviews the evolution of firepower doctrine and experiences in five limited wars to offer insights on tradeoffs between firepower and lives. The author, Robert H. Scales, Jr., is an Army general officer who has commanded a field artillery battalion and been an assistant division commander. In addition, he is principal author of *Certain Victory: The U.S. Army in the Gulf War* (reviewed in *JFQ*, Summer 1995).

Limited wars range from acts of terrorism to conflicts that fall below the threshold of full-scale war. They are typically characterized by no front lines and harsh environs, and occur in less developed areas of the world and often pit a modern force against insurgents who are not as well armed. In the preface, Scales defines two types of limited war—attrition and intervention—which unnecessarily confuses the subject. This distinction is subtle, but it luckily does not significantly affect the ensuing analysis.

The case studies are clear accounts that use battlefield vignettes to illustrate problems faced by tactical commanders, their solutions, and their lessons for current leaders. The stories describe the situation on both the sending and receiving ends of firepower from artillery, naval gunfire, and close air support by fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters. The cases include the first Indochina War, second Indochina War, Soviet invasion of

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Afghanistan, Falklands/Malvinas War, and Persian Gulf War.

A recurring theme is the difficulty that the side with the advantage of firepower encounters in finding an enemy with accuracy and speed to effectively employ fires. The problem of locating an elusive enemy, often insurgents, in densely covered terrain is a common feature of limited wars. Scales reviews the approaches to solving this dilemma which include forward observers, infantry patrols, and sensors. Coordinating firepower to support a relatively small area of close battle while avoiding fratricide is also covered. The methods used to coordinate artillery, armed helicopter, and tactical air reveal the problems of a combined arms commander. Although the author offers no one solution to these problems, he assesses the effectiveness of historical arrangements.

Scales vividly establishes that the primary effect of firepower is frequently psychological. For example, it can aid friendly troops in difficult situations such as the siege at Khe Sanh. There an experimental use of close support heavy bombing brought cheers from the beleaguered marines. The psychological impact of firepower on enemy forces often far outweighs its destructive effects.

The increased role of helicopters as a significant component in supplying firepower is also chronicled in the case studies. During the Afghanistan conflict, Soviet armor and artillery were not greatly feared because they could not attack the Mujahideen where they were vulnerable. But Hind helicopters combined firepower with mobility and responsiveness that enabled the Soviets to take the battle to rugged mountain sanctuaries used by Mujahideen fighters. Helicopters not only have their own firepower but increase the mobility of other capabilities such as light artillery. During the Falklands War, the British attack on Port Stanley was accompanied by moments of crisis because of inadequate helicopter transport for troops, artillery, and ammunition.

Scales addresses the argument on the balance of firepower and maneuver by looking at the different approaches of U.S. forces in combating an elusive enemy in Vietnam. He asserts that the tactical situation in limited war should determine whether combat becomes maneuver or firepower intensive. A commander must assess character, weapons, and dispositions of friendly and enemy forces to determine which side will prevail.

The case study on the Persian Gulf War is new to this edition of *Firepower in Limited War* (an earlier edition, published

by NDU Press in 1990, is out of print). Media coverage of Desert Storm and the spectacular coverage of coalition aircraft in action could easily tempt one to become enamored of aerial firepower. But by examining firepower in support of tactical ground actions, Scales provides insights not normally contained in popular accounts of the war. For example, the account of the attack by VII Corps on Iraq's Republican Guard demonstrates the integration of indirect—artillery—and direct—tank—firepower in a combined arms battle.

The precision of coalition weaponry exacted an overwhelming physical and psychological toll on Iraqi forces, and the precision of the weapons dramatically reduced the amount of ordnance required to achieve the desired effect. One Iraqi lieutenant underscored the accuracy and quickness of U.S. counter-battery fire that illustrates the lethality of these weapons systems. Within minutes of its first and only volley, his battery was destroyed by American rocket artillery.

But firepower is not presented as a guarantee for achieving bloodless victories. Although it paves the way, ground forces still must occupy the battlefield to secure victory. The key features of Desert Storm, namely, an open battlefield and a static enemy, played to the strengths of the U.S. arsenal. Such features should not be anticipated in future conflicts and must color the lessons that one draws from this conflict.

Firepower in Limited War closes by iterating the major observations from the case studies. One predominant theme is that the effects of firepower in limited war should not be overestimated. Civilian as well as military leaders must understand what firepower can and cannot do. Its primary effect is psychological rather than physical destruction. Thus, firepower should be employed in a manner that induces maximum psychological damage to attain victory at minimum cost. However, as in all aspects of war, effective use of firepower requires an extensive knowledge of friendly and enemy capabilities. It cannot compensate for an inadequate strategy.

Scales successfully utilizes historical case studies to offer a wealth of insights on the evolution and application of firepower. Moreover, the inclusion of lessons from the Gulf War in this edition, make the book a worthwhile addition to the professional military library. **JFQ**

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

A Book Review by

JAMES J. TRITTEN

Revolt of the Admirals: The Fight for Naval Aviation, 1945–1950

by Jeffrey G. Barlow

Washington: Department of the Navy, Naval Historical Center, 1994.

420 pp. \$30.00.

[ISBN 0-945274-24-6]

The preface to *Revolt of the Admirals* makes a sobering assumption: "... as long as there are differing strategic perspectives and doctrines, there will be service competition over roles and missions." In that vein, the book recounts events in 1948–51 when interservice rivalry over roles and missions led to the dismissal of the Chief of Naval Operations. A familiar tale, it is told from the perspective of newly declassified material as well as interviews by Jeffrey Barlow, a member of the Naval Historical Center, with participants who have remained silent for almost fifty years.

The so-called revolt of the admirals occurred in the wake of the approval of a new strategic bomber (B-36) during World War II and an aircraft carrier (*USS United States*) in 1949, and the fallout from hearings held by the House Armed Services Committee on the FY51 defense budget. The book begins by comparing the doctrine and experience of the Army Air Corps in World War II with that of the Navy. It also contrasts the actual record of strategic bombardment and its promise of victory. With this opening salvo Barlow exposes himself to a charge of bias which could have been avoided. It would have sufficed to review the preference of airpower enthusiasts for strategic bombardment and note that the B-36 had the capability for such a mission.

On the other hand, the attitude of the Navy toward strategic bombing campaigns in Europe and the Pacific is central to the revolt of the admirals. Strategic bombardment as the sole means of attaining victory in warfare was a theory that, according to the Navy, could not be

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Admiral
Louis E. Denfeld.

Naval Historical Center

that naval campaigns should require carrier-based aircraft capable of conducting limited offensive strikes against land targets. Thus the *USS United States* reflected a new design that fully accorded with doctrine and combat experience.

With the advent of nuclear weapons, the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans were no longer seen as a defensive bulwark for the continental United States. War planning centered around strategic air campaigns against Soviet urban-industrial sites as well as naval blockades and strikes from the sea against maritime forces. The Army Air Force viewed nuclear weapons as an additional tool for use in strategic bombardment. The Navy perceived a near-term need for nuclear strikes by either short-range high speed bombers operating from outlying bases close to the territory of a potential enemy or supersonic missiles. Neither the Air Force nor the Navy could take advantage of the technology afforded by nuclear weaponry. Both services required delivery systems which led to a competition for scarce resources with the resulting revolt by the Navy's leadership.

The heart of the interservice debate was the design of a flush-deck aircraft carrier that could launch long-range attack aircraft. The Air Force regarded the Navy's efforts to develop long-range nuclear-capable aircraft as an unwarranted

substantiated by actual combat. Rather than question this theory, the Air Force blamed "inadequate resources and the high proportion of its effort foolishly diverted to assist land and naval campaigns," according to Barlow. Experience by the Navy in World War II suggested

infringement on its responsibilities. Barlow argues that the Navy shunned a carrier-based strategic offensive capability on moral grounds because it did not think bombing civilian populations was a bonus for attacks on urban-industrial targets. Moreover, the Navy doubted the ability of these bombers, specifically the B-36, to penetrate air defenses.

The Navy was frustrated by the insistence of the Air Force that naval and military targets be assigned a lower priority. Destruction of some targets would aid Air Force bombers in penetrating air defenses. Hence, the Navy planned to destroy them from the sea. This joint approach was not appreciated by the Air Force, who looked upon the carrier nuclear strike mission as a major threat.

While much of the anecdotal evidence on the aircraft being designed for the carrier-based bomber focused on the 45,000 lb. gross weight AJ-1 Savage, which had a combat radius of 1,000 nautical miles, internal memoranda revealed that another aircraft was envisaged by the Navy. This was the ADR-42, a 100,000 lb. gross weight plane which had a 2,000 nautical mile combat radius and needed a launch platform with a flush deck, the CVB-X. Both carrier aircraft being considered for nuclear strike missions would be capable of bomb loads between 8,000 and 12,000 lbs. The largest bomb regularly carried by carrier-based aircraft during World War II was 2,000 lbs. and the normal maximum combat radius was 400 nautical miles. Unfortunately, *Revolt of the Admirals* does not fully explain how increases in bomb load and combat radius were necessitated by new technologies and doctrine and why the Navy felt that it required such capabilities for missions that would not overlap those of the Air Force.

The CVB-X was a single-mission carrier intended solely to conduct nuclear strikes with the ADR-42. Fighter aircraft would have been carried on board multipurpose carriers as escorts to the CVB-X. Follow-on schemes replaced the CVB-X and ADR-42 with a mix of long- and shorter-range strike aircraft with options for self-defense fighters. At the Key West conference in 1948 the Joint Chiefs agreed that a flush-deck carrier might not be justified based on naval warfare alone and used this fact to illustrate the concept of strategic air warfare as a collateral mission. Compounded by a decision by Secretary of the Navy John Sullivan to not pre-brief other defense officials on the flush-deck carrier, it is obvious why

Don't Forget . . .

THE SECOND ANNUAL Joint Force Quarterly ESSAY CONTEST ON THE

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the Air Force concluded that the Navy was trying to usurp its mission of strategic bombardment. The Navy had demonstrated this capability by launching land-based P2V-2 patrol planes from carrier decks in 1948, which did little to allay that conclusion.

The argument is made by Barlow that the capabilities of the B-36 were vastly oversold by the Air Force, that Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson was biased against a flush-deck carrier, and that the Navy had suffered unjustly from budget cuts. The author also recounts the creation of the Organizational Research and Policy Division (OP-23) under Captain Arleigh Burke and the events which led to the cancellation of *USS United*

States, the resignation in protest of Secretary Sullivan, and the firing of the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Louis Denfeld. Regardless of the actual sequence of events and capabilities of programmed forces, the inadequacy of the Navy to deal with the issues becomes obvious.

One important underlying theme in *Revolt of the Admirals* is that the Navy lacked suitable preparation to stave off bureaucratic assaults on its roles and missions. The bias of naval officers to stay at sea and away from shore assignments did not serve it well in the immediate post-war era. Barlow contrasts Navy expertise in the policy arena with the success of the Army Air Force, and later the Air Force, in making its case to the public that airpower was the Nation's dominant

force and new first line of defense. A similar tale is told about the response of the Navy to unification. Senior naval officers objected, but some only as they retired. At stake was an attempt to make the Navy into an escort and transportation service. The Navy comes off as fighting defensive battles against well-armed foes and encumbered by a bureaucratic doctrine that espouses harmony while the Air Force is portrayed as a well-oiled public relations firm that was able to get its message out.

Another interesting aspect is the virtual lack of input from unified commands. The role of CINCs would change,

... new from

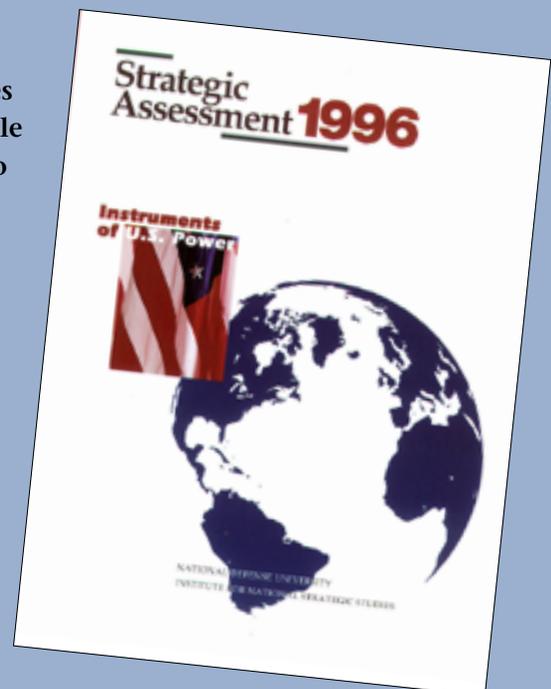
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Strategic Assessment 1996: Instruments of U.S. Power

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but not until the passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Act in 1986. The major players at the time were the Chairman and service chiefs who were said to always act in concert, although this was not always true. Moreover, the House Armed Services Committee failed to live up to its promise to protect everyone who gave free and frank testimony.

The book's 69 pages of notes are valuable because they reveal different interpretations by scholars of the same evidence and the removal of source materials from the special interest files belonging to the Secretary of the Air Force before they were transferred to the National Archives. One must review this information to learn who did what to whom—such as the admission by the Secretary of Defense that he had decided to cancel *USS United States* even before receiving memos on the subject from the chiefs. Barlow also reconciled conflicting testimony from key participants who apparently played greater roles in these events than they disclosed in the past. Thus the notes provide ample evidence that existing secondary sources on the revolt of the admirals are incomplete and biased due to inaccuracies in earlier works.

The traditional view of the congressional hearings is that they were a defeat for the Navy. While that was true in an immediate sense, Barlow argues that the tactical defeat was accompanied by the strategic recognition on the part of Congress about the value of the carrier. The subsequent revitalization of carrier programs would not have occurred without the revolt. Congress had come to realize that the Strategic Air Command was not the totality of the Nation's offensive airpower.

Whether *Revolt of the Admirals* indeed presents a "more balanced perspective" or merely a pro-Navy view of these events is a point that must be resolved by the reader. But there appear to be some missing pieces that have not been addressed. As Barlow himself admonishes us, "after the passage of more than forty years, it is certainly time to correct the record."

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