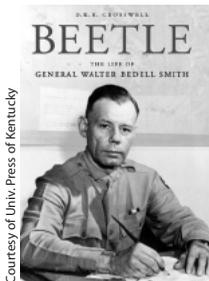


Despite this book's strengths, as an overview, it has occasional problems with nuance such as when the author speaks of the 1973 Arab-Israeli War as a defeat that conservative Muslims attributed to divine disfavor. Actually, many Arabs and especially the Egyptians view the 1973 War as a victory. October 6 is still a national holiday in Egypt, and the crossing of the Suez Canal is viewed as a monumental achievement. The second half of the war, when Israel turned the tables, is often distorted and minimized. The real soul searching that led more people to favor a radical Islamist approach to Arab problems actually came following the June 1967 War when two secular socialist regimes (Egypt and Syria) as well as the Jordanian monarchy were undeniably trounced in a military confrontation with Israel. In addition to issues of nuance, there are also some small problems with the book that suggest it might have been more carefully reviewed before it went to press. Sayid Qutb was executed in August 1966 and not 1967 as the author maintains. In describing the nature of historical theories, the author mentions William Wallace as a collaborator with Darwin when it was actually Alfred Russell Wallace. Bruce Riedel and Lawrence Wright are mentioned in some parts of the book by their correct names and also referred to with various incorrect first names. These problems are nevertheless minor and should not be allowed to become too large a distraction from the overall quality of the book which remains a valuable work serving a useful purpose.



Courtesy of Univ. Press of Kentucky
Lexington, KY: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 2010

1,070 pages

\$39.95

Beetle: The Life of General Walter Bedell Smith

by D. K. R. Crosswell

Reviewed by Dr. Conrad Crane, Director of the US Army Military History Institute

While assisting Merle Miller with research for a biography about Dwight Eisenhower in the early 1980s, D.K.R. Crosswell discovered General Walter Bedell "Beetle" Smith, Ike's wartime Chief of Staff. In 1991, Crosswell published *The Chief of Staff: The Military Career of General Walter Bedell Smith* with Greenwood Press. For two decades that volume has remained the best

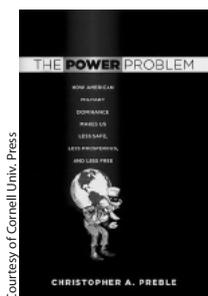
work on Smith. When Roger Cirillo, director of the Association of the United States Army book program, approached Crosswell about republishing it, the author suggested writing a new biography instead.

The resulting revision is more than twice as long as the original. As is clear from the titles, the current volume provides a more expansive discussion of Smith's career after World War II, when he served as ambassador to the Soviet Union, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, Undersecretary of State, and representative of the United States at the Geneva Talks on Indochina. Crosswell turned the 12-page epilogue of his first work into a 106-page prologue, a strange sequencing that opens the new book in 1945. The most interesting

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

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

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



Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 2009

232 pages

\$25.00

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

by Christopher Preble

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

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