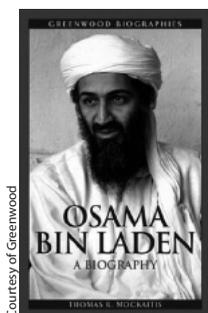


Williams' analysis of civil-military relations, and William Martel's critique of the administration's efforts to define its policy in Iraq.

Military transformation, sometime referred to as revolution in military affairs, is another theme repeatedly addressed. Paul Davis's essay on military transformation is an excellent overview of the modern history of transformation theory, how that theory was applied by the Bush administration, and where does transformation seem to be going. It is worth reading as a stand-alone article for any officer interested in the evolution and direction of transformation. But the administration's view of transformation was directly related to its policy hubris. Secretary Rumsfeld and a number of other Bush appointees were so convinced in their vision of transformation that they ignored any advice to the contrary. This was most apparent in the post-military operational phase in Iraq, but it also had a detrimental impact on the administration's arms control efforts.

While there are other general themes one could identify, the limits of space prevent further discussion. As in the case of all collections of essays, different readers will find some articles of greater value than others, but taken as a whole, most readers interested in the defense policies of the Bush administration will find some if not many of these articles of great value. Obviously, as documents become more available, a more complete examination of the totality of the Bush defense program will be written, but in the interim, Professor Cimbala and his cadre of authors have certainly offered us an excellent first edition.



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152 pages

\$35.00

Osama Bin Laden: A Biography

by Thomas R. Mockaitis

Reviewed by Dr. W. Andrew Terrill,
Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College

The personality and mental processes of Osama bin Laden were never easy for Westerners to understand. Too often he was dismissed as a villain who acts out of blind fanaticism without the capacity to develop a well-defined strategy or clear operational plan for reaching his goals. This sort of approach was a mistake. While bin Laden's ruthlessness was undeniable, he was nevertheless a thinking, planning enemy who needed to be treated as

such. Bin Laden and al Qaeda have often shown that they have clear strategies and coherent goals based on their own (admittedly warped) values systems. The development of effective counterstrategies for dealing with al Qaeda and then destroying it therefore depend upon understanding the background and mindset of this man in reasonably sophisticated terms. Moreover, since at least some aspects of how to deal with bin Laden are matters of public, media, and congressional discussion, a more sophisticated understanding of this individual among nonexperts may be of considerable value.

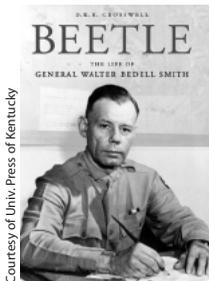
Thomas Mockaitis in his short and straightforward book, *Osama Bin Laden: A Biography*, clearly understands the difficulty of making bin Laden

comprehensible as more than a one dimensional figure. His book is specifically written for the nonspecialist reader and can easily be read in one evening. It therefore may serve as a useful starting point for thinking about bin Laden in a sophisticated way as well as a helpful analysis for clearing up important misperceptions about bin Laden's life. The author approaches this task by stressing the political rather than personal aspects of bin Laden's life, although the work does contain personal details that may help to illuminate his path to becoming the world's most well-known terrorist. The book is well-organized, packed with facts, and contains a number of useful documents as appendixes as well as an annotated bibliography which may help guide nonspecialist readers seeking additional sources to continue learning about bin Laden and his movement. Consequently, this study clearly meets the accessibility goal that Mockaitis has set for himself.

In approaching his subject, Mockaitis acknowledges problems in establishing the key events and influences of bin Laden's early life due to a lack of sources. He does note bin Laden's relatively limited education in Saudi Arabia and his lack of exposure to overseas study unlike many of his brothers. Mockaitis also pays suitable attention to the intellectual currents influencing bin Laden throughout his life such as the psychological aftermath of the massive Arab defeat by Israel in 1967. A constant thread in this book is that bin Laden was able to gain attention and respect (far beyond what his intellect should have commanded) because of his personal wealth and his ability to attract more gifted followers seeking the benefit of his largesse. The most prominent examples of this trend are his early mentor, the now-deceased Palestinian radical Abdullah Azzam, and Ayman al-Zawahiri, the leader of the Egyptian organization, Islamic Jihad, which merged with al Qaeda in 2001, allowing Zawahiri to become the organization's deputy leader. Bin Laden, in turn, was able to make good use of the services and ideas of both men.

The author also usefully attempts to correct some fairly widespread misperceptions and disinformation about bin Laden's background such as the myth that the foreign fighters he funded were decisive to the outcome of the anti-Soviet Afghan war. While Mockaitis is not the first person to note this falsehood, bin Laden and his supporters have been so successful in embellishing their role in defeating the Soviets in Afghanistan that any effort to correct the record is a public service as well as a useful statement on al Qaeda's strong capabilities for the dissemination of propaganda. Foreign mujahideen were too few and usually too incompetent to play much of a role in Afghanistan. Often the only reason that these people were tolerated by the Afghan fighters was the funding and other resources that they provided to those who were much more involved in the fighting. He notes that foreign fighters in that war never numbered more than a few thousand at any one time and often included wealthy Arabs on school vacations, essentially playing at being guerrillas. The role of radical Arab fighters in resisting American troops in Somalia was similarly exaggerated as Mockaitis correctly points out.

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.



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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