

# Book Reviews

## DATA WARS

### **Small Wars, Big Data: The Information Revolution in Modern Conflict**

By Eli Berman, Joseph H. Felter, and Jacob N. Shapiro with Vestal McIntyre

Reviewed by Dr. Emile Simpson, research fellow, Harvard, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs

The authors of *Small Wars, Big Data* combine a social science approach to the study of asymmetric conflict with the use of large bodies of empirical data—big data—to provide a series of practical operational-level recommendations for would-be counterinsurgents.

On the back cover, Anne-Marie Slaughter tells us this approach “heralds a revolution in conflict studies, one that finally brings development, defense, and diplomacy together at the operational level.” Unless one takes the term revolution in its literal rather than colloquial sense, this assertion is ahistorical, oblivious to the fact that a data-driven social science approach to conflict, which evaluated not only military but civilian activity in a series of metrics, was used extensively by Robert S. McNamara’s Pentagon during the Vietnam War.

While the authors acknowledge Vietnam was an “obvious failure, one that has often been used to discredit the idea of quantitative metrics for conflict,” their argument is that this approach has value in asymmetric wars today (324). Do they succeed in making this case? To my mind, on their own terms, they do; but it is important to understand what those terms are.

Their argument runs like this. In symmetrical war, the struggle is primarily over territory, whereas in asymmetric war, the struggle is over people. Insofar as these conflicts are fundamentally about governing territory, not just holding it, asymmetric conflicts are information-centric insofar as the goal of the government and the rebel party is to gain the support of the civilian population, which in turn requires information from and about the civilian population.

From this premise, the book runs through a series of aspects of counterinsurgency operations, which are analyzed from a social science point of view, by testing propositions against large data sets. The key findings are

- making it safer for civilians to share information—for example by extending cell phone coverage—leads to less violence;
- projects to gain the support of the civilian population should be modest in size, secure, and conditional on behavioral change from both the population and government;
- security and small-scale aid projects complement one another in terms of reducing violence, in conjunction with efforts to reduce civilian casualties; and



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408 pages

\$29.95

- increasing economic activity in such warzones can just as well stoke predatory violence as alleviate deprivation by increasing incomes.

A reader may retort that some of these findings are intuitive, which negates the need to prove them scientifically. But that attitude would miss the point that if some of these findings are common sense (for example, if you cause civilian casualties, you create new insurgents), they took a long time to become common practice. In both Afghanistan and Iraq, had such lessons been heeded from the outset, large insurgencies might have been avoided. In this respect, the authors have performed a valuable service in providing masses of objective, empirical data that supports the validity of some of the doctrinal innovations in recent US counterinsurgency doctrine.

Of course, one must equally note the authors' arguments are limited to their own terms, which is essentially operational-level counterinsurgency doctrine. That is to say, the authors frequently emphasize their project is to identify "what works," which naturally discounts the particularities of individual conflicts and may vary substantially at the strategic and policy level. Thus, one may successfully reduce violence, as the 2007–08 surge did in Iraq, but nonetheless leave the country at the mercy of Shia militia, and increase the power of Iran in Iraq. Does this mean that counterinsurgency in Iraq worked? It's a question of perspective.

Ultimately, the need to account for the fact that there is a hierarchy of perspectives through which to analyze asymmetric conflict addresses the points of difference in the well-known and well-trodden debate over counterinsurgency doctrine in the past decade. The critics of counterinsurgency doctrine claim it does not solve the problem, and that may well be true at the strategic level. Conversely, any situation in which counterinsurgency doctrine is needed in the first place is likely to be one in which there has been a very fundamental political breakdown in the society in question, which has produced the insurgency. In this context, counterinsurgency is best understood as a combat dressing to stop catastrophic bleeding, not a form of plastic surgery that, through "nation building," produces a new society in the West's image.

This seems to me to be where the authors are coming from. They all have extensive experience in the field as practitioners, are offering hard-earned lessons to other practitioners who face insurgencies, and are likely fully aware that counterinsurgency as an operational approach may deal only with some branches of the problem of an insurgency. For the roots of all insurgencies are political, and countering them requires a political strategy into which operational doctrine can fit.

Without such a political strategy, you have Vietnam: the focus on operational success without a theory of victory.

## LIKE WAR

**Hybrid Conflicts and Information Warfare:  
New Labels, Old Politics**

Edited by Ofer Fridman, Vitaly Kabernik, and James C. Pearce

Reviewed by Dr. Alma Keshavarz, associate, Small Wars Journal—El Centro

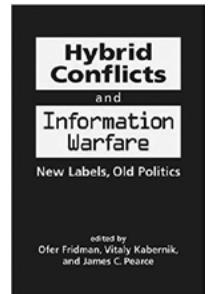
This book is a compilation of essays written by Western and Russian scholars on the nature of hybrid war and information warfare. The dynamic makes for an interesting read as the authors provide analysis through the prism of either a Western or a Russian scholar. The book is strategically organized into three sections with two chapters by Western authors, two by Russian authors, and a chapter by James C. Pearce.

The chapters focus on the changing nature of warfare, particularly information warfare and hybrid war. Russia and the Islamic State are used essentially as case studies to demonstrate the importance of hybridity and information warfare in today's conflicts. A number of authors in the book, beginning with David Betz, build from Frank Hoffman's definition of hybrid war as a mixture of conventional, irregular, terrorism, and criminality. Therefore, hybridity is the convergence of various modes of warfare.

For Russian scholar Georgy Filimonov, hybrid warfare “describes a situation where an external controlling power brings the protest-potential masses . . . and different types of destructive opposition forces . . . to the forefront of the fight against adversary political regimes” (25). He applies his theory to academic, professional, and military perceptions of the Color revolutions, and argues Russia perceives hybrid warfare differently. Western nations view hybrid warfare as part of “intelligence” in warfighting that incorporates irregular tactics, special operations forces, cyber, political, and economic spheres as well as popular protests (28). For Filimonov, hybrid warfare “blurs the line between war and peace by intentionally destabilizing not only individual states, but also entire regions, without a clear declaration of war” (32).

Another Russian scholar, Vitaly Kabernik, distinguishes between war and warfare by Russian military thinking and uses three cases to show the stages of hybridity, and the lessons learned by the Russian military: the partisan movement during the Great Patriotic War, the Soviet engagement in Afghanistan, and the Chechen conflicts.

The second part of the book addresses the role of social media in information warfare and hybrid war. The authors analyze how new technologies allow groups to take advantage of large-scale information dissemination. Matthew Armstrong resurrects the idea of the US Information Agency. He explains the organization was a “tool of information warfare while the Russians waged political warfare across nonmilitary fronts” that can be valuable today (114). Russian scholar Radomir Bolgov examines legal and doctrinal framework of information warfare policy and various other Russian-state policies.



Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2019

271 pages

\$78.50

The final part of the book strictly discusses information warfare by the Islamic State. Charlie Winter opens the section with an analysis of official Islamic State propaganda published between October 16, 2016, and January 24, 2017. He specifically examines the opening and the completion of the campaign to recapture east Mosul. The brief address of various social network outlets used by the Islamic State also offers details into the types of propaganda that was spread across international borders.

The Islamic State's military capability and tactics are also addressed throughout this final section to establish how the group utilized information warfare to conduct hybrid war and to pursue individuals in the North Caucasus. By 2015, the group declared the area a province and conducted four terrorist attacks in Dagestan by early 2016.

The Islamic State's media enterprise is important to this section, and to the whole book, as the authors develop a case study showing the growing importance of the information space. Interestingly, Russian language ranks third, behind Arabic and English, in Islamic State propaganda efforts. Craig Whiteside includes the history of the Islamic State from the forming of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's group, to the aftermath of his death, and the Caliphate's expansion between 2011 and 2014. Whiteside discusses major media organizations, such as the Amaq News Agency, al-Naba, and the Al-Hayat Media Center, and provides valuable data on the group's media output.

The book concludes as James C. Pearce revisits the preceding chapters and provides further analysis on the significance of hybrid wars. Ultimately, the definitions of hybridity are "multidimensional and integrate many different aspects of fighting into a single domain" that perpetuate confusion and inhibit states from combating this form of warfare (250). As Pearce notes, "Labels matter, but the contents of conflicts and warfare have been overlooked as a result" (254). Overall, this book is a great read for those interested in information warfare. But as the concept of hybrid warfare continues to emerge across military, academic, and professional settings in the West and Russia, this book importantly distinguishes the various perspectives.



New York: HarperCollins,  
2018  
304 pages  
\$28.00

## **Messing with the Enemy: Surviving in a Social Media World of Hackers, Terrorists, Russians, and Fake News**

By Clint Watts

Reviewed by Dr. Robert J. Bunker, adjunct research professor, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College

*Messing with the Enemy* details the growing power of social media as an informational medium that can be manipulated by both state and nonstate groups for illicit purposes, as a form of conflict, and even in order to engage in indirect warfare. This book should be considered more of a practitioner work than an academic or theoretically focused one. The author, Clint Watts, has an applied background as a former Army officer, an FBI special agent, and an independent consultant—with later affiliations including the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point

as well as the FBI's Counterterrorism Division and National Security Branch. He is presently associated with the Foreign Policy Research Institute and George Washington University.

The work is greatly influenced by his operational experience and contrary nature—one marked by a red-teamer's creativity, an inability at times to play nice institutionally, and a disdain for bureaucratic protocols as it relates to threat group social media manipulation, resulting in a kind of mind-hacking (that is, twenty-first century social media based psychological operations) (16). As a result, the book benefits from the discussions and injects related to his unique career experiences. Nevertheless, a tension exists between the insights gained from his real-world counterviolent extremism and counter-Russian propaganda activities and his personal (and family) experiences, that seem out of place at times (243–46).

The work is divided into ten chapters. No index, acronyms, or terms section are provided. The first seven chapters focus on examples and case studies related to the book's topical focus. Chapter one provides vignettes of the author's social media capers as an al-Shabaab operative and West Pointer cadet, chapters two and three focus on Islamic State and al-Shabaab social media use, and chapter four looks at the troll phenomenon, with an emphasis on the rise of Russian trolls. Chapter five provides short accounts of WikiLeaks, the Harmony database (a counterterrorism informational depository program), and cartel tracking blogs in Mexico as they relate to information leakages, fusion, and informal online news sources.

The sixth and seventh chapters look at Russian meddling in the 2016 US presidential elections and then provide an after-action analysis of this incident which portrays how social media has become more important as a new source for the American public than mainstream media respectively (155).

The eighth chapter looks at the America's lackluster counternarrative and counterinfluence attempts and how our twentieth century bureaucratic approach is ill-suited to the more networked challenges facing us with a few exceptions such as West Point's Combating Terrorism Center's *Militant Ideology Atlas*. The ninth chapter is the most important—providing a theoretical framework building upon constructs related to long-tailed, preference bubbles, social inception, and other socio-psychological and business elements—but comes late in the text.

The tenth chapter provides some general guidance concerning how democracies, corporations, and citizens can survive in a world dominated by social media's dark underside of fake news, troll farms, botnets, and propaganda campaigns (both foreign and domestic in origin). Components of the work that stand out are its recognition that social media

- allows our citizens—spurred on by Russian active measures—to align themselves within virtual and physical “preference bubbles” to create deep divisions in our society;

- empowers authoritarian states, corporations, and aspiring despots to social engineer populaces into believing their hidden policies are in actuality their own preferences; and
- turns machine learning/artificial intelligence into the nuclear weapons of information (such as social media) warfare (214, 230–31, 232–33).

In summation, *Messing with the Enemy* gets high marks for its readability, its insider perspective on the nefarious side of social media, and for helping us to better understand our opponents' use of it against us but lower ones for its strategic treatment of this subject matter. The author's discussion of both his own and others use of tradecraft—such as rationalize, projection, minimize and ideological subversion—is also fascinating (67, 227). The book is also well priced. It would benefit, however, from both the inclusion of an index and a combined glossary and acronym listing. At the War College and National Defense University level, this work would not be considered appropriate as a primary course text given its more operational and at times subjective approach, but it should be used as a support to one such as *LikeWar* (Singer and Brooking, 2018) or an equivalent work. I could, however, readily see its use at the Command and Staff College and Academy level and for individual professional military reading.



Boston: Houghton Mifflin  
Harcourt, 2018  
416 pages  
\$28.00

## Like War: The Weaponization of Social Media

By P. W. Singer and Emerson T. Brooking

Reviewed by Dr. Robert J. Bunker, adjunct research professor, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College

*Like War*—written by P. W. Singer, a senior fellow at the New America foundation and author of *Wired for War* (2009) and *Ghost Fleet* (2015), and Emerson T. Brooking, an expert on conflict and social media—is an intellectual tour de force focusing, as its subtitle states, on the weaponization of social media. The book, which addresses the blurring of war, technology, and politics, advocates the perspective that conflict in the real world and the virtual world are increasingly overlapping and influencing one another. In essence, “Just as the internet has reshaped war, war is now radically reshaping the internet” (19). A basic thesis of the work is grounded in David Ronfeldt and John Arquilla’s early work *Networks and Netwars* (RAND Corporation, 2001, 182–83):

These new wars are not won by missiles and bombs, but by those able to shape the story lines that frame our understanding, to provoke the responses that impel us to action, to connect with us to at the most personal level, to build a sense of fellowship, and to organize to do it all on a global scale, again and again (Singer and Brooking, 21).

This work builds upon these core principles:

- First, the internet has left adolescence.
- Second, the internet has become a battlefield.
- Third, this battlefield changes how conflicts are fought.

- Fourth, this battle changes what “war” means.
- Fifth, and finally, we’re all part of this war. (21–22)

The book is divided into nine chapters. The thematic foci are (1) introductory remarks concerning *Like War*; (2) internet context as a disruptive technology; (3) social media and information proliferation as a double-edged sword (truth transparency and fake truths); (4) authoritarian regime use of censorship and disinformation, (5) fake truths and the botnets to spread them; (6) *Like War* combatants (ISIS and Hollywood entrepreneurs) and attributes (emotion, authenticity, community, and digital flooding); (7) *Like War* components and description; (8) digital freedom, censorship, social media companies, neural networks, and artificial intelligence (AI); and (9) a conclusion with *Like War* rules and liberal democratic response suggestions. The work’s notes are extensive (107 pages), though sentence fragment linked rather than numeric based, and the index (20 pages) is well developed.

Some of the book’s components include short discussions about the #Pizzagate conspiracy meme in which enslaved children were said to be held in a sex dungeon under a pizza restaurant tied to a presidential campaign, the infamous Pepe the Frog meme used in a political campaign and by racists, and the initial concept of “digital serfs”—that is, early AOL dial-up modem volunteers who received cut-rate or even no-charge internet access for providing the company free labor.

Given the importance of the *Like War* construct, the rules isolated by the authors are listed below:

- First, for all the sense of flux, the modern information environment is becoming stable.
- Second, the internet is a battlefield.
- Third, this battlefield changes how we must think about information itself.
- Fourth, war and politics have never been so intertwined.
- Fifth, we’re all part of the battle. (261–62)

Likewise, the more important points that need to be addressed are as follows:

- For governments, the first and most important step is to take this new battleground seriously.
- Today, a significant part of American political culture is willfully denying the new threats to its cohesion. In some cases, it’s colluding with them.
- Accordingly, information literacy is no longer merely an education issue but a national security imperative. When someone engages in the spread of lies, hate, and other societal poisons, they should be stigmatized accordingly.
- Those who deliberately facilitate enemy efforts, whether it be providing a megaphone for terrorist groups or consciously spreading disinformation, especially that from foreign government offensives, have to be seen for what they are. (261–66)

From a social media analytical perspective, the work focuses primarily on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Myspace is rightfully treated in its legacy capacity with Instagram, Reddit, WeChat (Chinese), and WhatsApp also getting varying levels of coverage. The media outlet Breitbart is also addressed quite well in the work along with the activities of the innovative open-source intelligence using the Bellingcat investigative team. Even more importantly, however, the social media brilliance of the Trump presidential campaign is described—with its Steve Bannon and Cambridge Analytica link—reportedly allowing it big data mining on 220 million Americans for precision vote targeting purposes.

Two items the book could benefit from would be a detailed glossary of social media specific terms—such as “sockpuppets” (fake online identities) and “astroturfing” (creating the appearance of grassroots support)—and more material on the actual and projected impact of AI and deep learning systems on social media manipulation (111, 142). While the book has done an excellent job presenting the recent history related to the weaponization of social media and the contemporary environment, more analysis of neural network-trained chatbots and other machine-driven communication tools (MADCOMs) would have been most valuable—especially if such a deeper treatment might have yielded additional governmental policy suggestions to combat authoritarian and radical Islamist uses of *Like War* directed against the West.

Still, even with these slight demerits, I highly recommend this book as a must-read for American strategic thinkers interested in this topical area. The work is fair, balanced, well-researched, and well-written, and helps to illuminate a new facet of twenty-first century warfare. This new facet is one that, as foreign interference in the 2016 US presidential election and subsequent disinformation campaigns directed at our NATO allies attest, is only expected to become increasingly more common. From this reviewer’s assessment, *Like War* is a more mature expression of *Netwar* as, decades later, many more data points support the contention that the internet will be, or now has been, weaponized.

## CONTEMPORARY CONFLICTS

## Why Terrorists Quit: The Disengagement of Indonesian Jihadists

By Julie Chernov Hwang

Reviewed by Dr. Audrey Kurth Cronin, School of International Service,  
American University

Julie Chernov Hwang's monograph seeks to understand why some Indonesian jihadists have stopped engaging in violence, and to tease out broader lessons that apply to terrorist disengagement in other contexts. It is based on extensive field studies, including more than 100 interviews with 55 jihadists who were members of seven groups operating in eight cities. Concise, well-written, and the outcome of years of on-the-ground research, this is not your typical dry, theoretical academic tome. It has sharp thinking, frank expression, and excellent editing. The author has done the hard work, and the reader benefits.

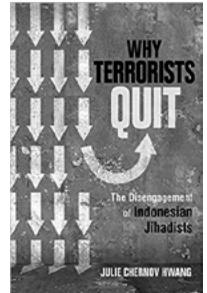
Chernov Hwang identifies four factors important to the disengagement process. I would summarize them as group dynamics, context, social ties, and personal development—not a particularly new theoretical framework. But what is fresh, rich, and invaluable is the evidence, colorful interviews, and wealth of details to explain and support each factor. I know of no other book on Indonesian disengagement that offers such robust research.

After a literature review, the first section fleshes out the reasons some Indonesian jihadists have turned away. The first is disillusionment with the group's tactics and leaders. Chernov Hwang describes individual jihadists repulsed by the targeting of civilians, for example, or gradually finding their leaders misguided, weak, or astrategic.

The second is a perceived change in the threat, or in the likelihood of achieving a group's aims—for example, one man responded to a reduction in incidents of Christian militias attacking Muslims. The threat had dissipated, so his services were less needed. Another left because the popular backlash made bombings counterproductive. Chernov Hwang's evidence seems to indicate, in Indonesia at least, good local governance can change jihadists' perspectives and behaviors. Jihadists' unwavering commitment to ideology is nowhere to be found in this book.

Building non-jihadist human connections is the third factor. The most important tie the author finds is new friendships, including with former antagonists (57). She relates a poignant story of an imprisoned jihadist who befriended Daniel, the only Christian in the prison, began to realize he was not evil, and turned away from his group leaders' teachings.

Lastly, Chernov Hwang finds former Indonesian jihadists often seek a more normal life, wanting to marry, get a job, and start a family. As soldiers do, jihadists bond with one another. Sometimes that brotherhood is what keeps them fighting. The author finds a key element in successful disengagement is building even stronger bonds with friends, business associates, and family, to displace former comrades.



Cornell University Press,  
2018

230 pages

\$39.95

It is refreshing to read a terrorism book describing an optimistic pathway out of violence. The meat of it—the middle four of the eight chapters—traces individual stories of specific operatives. Here many interesting tidbits are offered. A jihadist named Anas, for example, shared: “I became addicted to it. We have to be aware that jihad is addictive. Some people say that violence is like opium” (82). Case studies of “B.R.” (who served time for killing a prosecutor, was released, and rejoined his old guitar band), Ali Imron (who is still in prison), and Ali Fauzi (who was influenced by a workshop bringing terrorists and their victims together) follow next.

Illustrating that some jihadists are irreconcilable, the final story is about “Yuda,” who is still committed to violence. Twenty-two members of Yuda’s family were killed in the Walisongo school massacre of 2000, where Christian militia members slaughtered at least 165 Muslim civilians. Between 2004 and 2006, Yuda bombed churches, mutilated schoolgirls, and personally executed a priest. The police killed his brothers, and unlike the others, Yuda’s family did not pressure him to quit. After his capture, Yuda said the police had tortured him. Yuda is driven by his desire for vengeance, particularly against the Indonesian police and security forces.

The book concludes with an analysis of the actions of the Indonesian government, civil society groups, and already disengaged individuals, and this is where the pay dirt for policymakers is. Chernov Hwang points to a lack of funding and data collection on the part of government programs, which have had limited success as a result. She contends the highly publicized activities of Densus 88 (the Indonesian police counterterrorism team founded in 2003), initiated in the aftermath of the 2002 Bali bombing, were better at gathering intelligence than reintegrating jihadists into society (145). Local government efforts to provide job training and funds for business start-ups were too small-scale, she argues. In July 2010, the government established the Indonesian National Counter-Terrorism Bureau; but again, the author argues, disengagement and aftercare were underfunded.

Chernov Hwang is more complimentary of the efforts of disengaged jihadists to help fellow jihadists leave and the work by private groups, such as Search for Common Ground and the Institute for International Peace Building, that supports a small number of former jihadists but follows them very closely over many years. Elements of success for all of the civil society programs, the author argues, include in-depth research on the participants, long-term trust building, individual needs assessments, a focus on professional development, and hands-on learning instead of top-down lecturing. Above all, she advises staying away from “ideological hot-button topics,” which is exactly what the Saudi deradicalization program emphasizes.

No book is perfect, and this one could have dug deeper in its analysis. An assessment of the level of resources required for these recommendations would have added heft. Robust aftercare is a wonderful idea but expensive and labor-intensive. It seems unfair to speculate about what a great government program would look like based on small, highly tailored civil society initiatives that might be hard to scale up. I do not know: I wonder what Chernov Hwang thinks. I would have welcomed a recognition that state resources are constrained, plus

an awareness of the broad choices and trade-offs government officials, unlike nongovernmental organizations, must always make.

This book makes an excellent contribution to the study of counterterrorism by providing an in-depth case study of how Indonesian terrorists give up violence. Senior members of the defense community will find it well worth their time.

## **Our Latest, Longest War: Losing Hearts and Minds in Afghanistan**

Edited by Aaron B. O'Connell

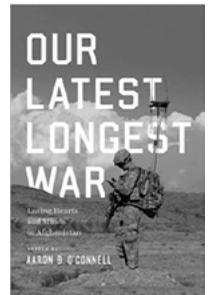
Reviewed by COL James W. Bogart, board member, Army Review Boards Agency

This cautionary tale illuminates the contributing factors of both disregarding culture and eschewing the idea of nation building that have led to failure during 13 years of combat operations in Afghanistan. As the US defense strategy prepares to shift from cultural engagements to preparations for large-scale combat against competitors such as Russia and China, lessons from Afghanistan necessitate consideration for cultural planning before, during, and after large-scale combat. Aaron B. O'Connell's anthology, *Our Latest, Longest War: Losing Hearts and Minds in Afghanistan*, presents a reference for leaders at all levels to consider for current and future operations through the use of nine case studies that seize upon different aspects of the Afghan War, and the history of warfare in Afghanistan in general.

Chapter one focuses on the political arenas in both the United States and Afghanistan. Ronald E. Neumann provides his experience as the ambassador to Afghanistan from 2005–7, an infantry officer in Vietnam, and as a career foreign service officer the political dysfunction of Washington that impacted outcomes in Afghanistan. Colin Jackson, associate professor of strategy and policy at the US Naval War College and a Reserve lieutenant colonel with deployment experience as executive officer to International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) deputy chief of staff of operations in 2011 supports the overarching thesis in chapter two. Jackson utilizes a five-act structure in explaining the highs and lows of the Afghan War history from 2001 to 2014 and the cessation of combat operations.

In chapter three, Martin Loicana, chief of the historical office at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, and Craig C. Felker, a retired US Navy captain and former chair of the US Naval Academy's history department, focus on the reasons for failures in training the Afghan National Security Forces throughout Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. Continuing with failures of training Afghan forces in chapter four, former Captain Pashtoon Atif of Afghanistan National Police in Kandahar, Afghanistan discusses the history of training Afghan police and cultural misunderstanding of policing by Afghans and international policing organizations.

Authors for chapter five and six, provide insight into reconstruction and development and rule of law and governance in Afghanistan.



Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017

400 pages

\$30.00

Lieutenant Commander Jamie Lynn De Coster, PhD candidate at Tufts University, explains the failures of reconstruction and development due to internal competition between organizations responsible for supporting the Afghan government in chapter five. In chapter six, two army officers with PhDs in international affairs and relations, argue that there were three persistent problems that impacted rule of law and governance. Colonel Abigail T. Linnington, who served as advisor to the commander of the Rule of Law Field Force in Afghanistan, Combined Joint Interagency Task Force 435, and Lieutenant Colonel Rebecca D. Patterson, who served as strategic advisor to the ISAF commander from 2011 to 2012, offer their deployed and academic experience regarding rule of law and governance.

Marine Corps Captain Aaron MacLean, managing editor for the *Washington Free Beacon*, argues “certain characteristics of liberalism bear a critical share of the blame for the most recent disaster in Afghanistan” in chapter seven (213). Chapter eight’s author, Lieutenant Commander Daniel R. Green, offers a success story with Special Operations Forces building security at the local village level. Benjamin F. Jones, a retired lieutenant colonel and dean of the College of Arts and Science at Dakota State University, focuses on the transition of security responsibilities from ISAF to the Afghan government and the Afghan security forces in chapter nine. Jones’s experience as a member of the Strategic Transition and Assessment Group from 2011 to 2012 enables the reader to follow the difficulties in the transition process.

This book illustrates the need for senior members of the defense community to internalize the multiple lessons about cultural biases and misunderstanding that guide how they think and act, versus those of allies. Acknowledging the US military will engage in future operations as part of a coalition, leaders must know with whom they are working (at all levels of operations) by asking how allies think and conduct themselves. This is a lesson in cultural understanding captured at the small unit level that requires permeating through multiple levels of command, both military and civilian. O’Connell and the other authors provide lessons from Afghanistan that argue for continued cultural understanding in order to avoid cultural failures now and in the future.

## CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

**Four Guardians: A Principled Agent View of American Civil-Military Relations**

By Jeffrey W. Donnithorne

Reviewed by Dr. Lionel Beehner, research director, US Military Academy's Modern War Institute

The study of civil-military relations can have a hamster wheel-like quality to it. Everyone dusts off their dog-eared copies of Huntington whenever a civil-military crisis occurs. America does not suffer coups, so all is hunky-dory, goes one interpretation. Yet, civil-military crises, like trolley cars, appear with enough regularity to make scholars take notice.

Civil-military relations can be motivated by a gap between those who serve and those who do not, by interagency turf wars, or by maintaining the military as a professional and apolitical institution.

Regardless, there is sometimes a feeling that the debate has barely budged since 1957, when Huntington introduced his normative theory of how military professionalism ought to work. Discussion followed in the decades to come, as Morris Janowitz countered that military professionalism was inadequate; soldiers going back as far as the Revolutionary War era were integral to the fabric of society and should not be garrisoned from the masses. Peter Feaver, one of Huntington's pupils, also challenged his mentor by noting that neither military isolation nor civilian objective control guarantees sound strategy or professionalism given civil-military relations, at its heart, is a principal-agent conundrum motivated by rationalist material interests. What is required of principals (civilians), economists tell us, is greater monitoring of the agent (military), a narrower gap in preferences, rewards for compliance, or punishment for shirking.

Nevertheless, this interpretation is also found wanting, writes Jeffrey W. Donnithorne. In his new book, he challenges both Feaver and Huntington. Regarding the former, he suggests the decision by agents to comply or shirk is not a simple binary. This theory appears to assume that the military only executes, and not advises—although this insight is not especially original, as Feaver and Dubik point out. Yet, often military leaders are involved heavily in the advising stages of a policy decision, a recipe for both friction within the armed services and between the military and its civilian overseers. In this way, military leaders are motivated by a shadow of the future and seek to lock in favorable policies advantageous to their service.

This introduces new insights: if a policy is seen as lax or unenforceable, opposition may be tepid. Or sometimes policies proposed by the principal lack coherence, make implementation by the agent, even with the best intentions, unfeasible. The question for military leaders is not whether to comply, but how. This goes in spades in an environment teeming with ambiguity. An observable implication of this theory is that, in an operating environment against Nazis or Soviets, we should

Baltimore, Maryland,  
John Hopkins University  
Press, 2019

288 pages

\$49.95

expect less civil-military friction. Yet in one teeming with peripheral or peacekeeping operations, where the military is outsourced as a constabulary force to defend against caravans of migrants, American Indians, or Mexican banditos, we might expect civil-military relations to be more contentious—this is not a new theory. But a variant of one proposed by Michael Desch.

Third, and here is Donnithorne’s major contribution: there is a yawning gap within the services when it comes to institutional biases, norms, and desired ends, which affect compliance. The drum of each service beats to its own idiosyncratic rhythm, and syncopating their parochial interests can be daunting under the best of circumstances. Political science, in its efforts to be ever parsimonious, does scholarship a disservice by neatly assuming the military as a monolith, when in fact there are “four guardians” with vastly different perspectives, cultures, and institutional biases.

Donnithorne’s book is a methodological tour de force. To test his hypotheses, he divides his model between stages on the X-axis (advising versus executing) and policy coherence on the Y-axis (high versus low) and draws on two cases: the execution of *Presidential Directive 18* to create the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (1977–83) and the passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986.

The book, however, is not without flaws both of commission and of omission. First, at the heart this theory is that culture matters and each of the four guardians has ingrained culture through which it filters its civil-military relations decisions. Yet, this definition of culture feels incomplete. The author assumes culture is fixed, yet culture is likely endogenous to civil-military relations crises or other key events—such as war. One wishes he had engaged with more of the literature on military culture by Theo Farrell and Elizabeth Kier, among others. The Pentagon may never look like Google, but we should not assume its culture is immutable.

Second, largely absent from his analysis is politics and partisanship. Donnithorne’s first case, the creation of what would become Central Command, was spearheaded by young staffers in Carter’s National Security Council unversed in military science, which may explain why its early phase was incoherent and the process dragged on for six years. Yet one cannot divorce this from politics. Democratic administrations are often perceived to be less interested in the deployment of decisive conventional force and appear to prefer to intervene for more ambiguous ends, whether for peacekeeping (Somalia), humanitarianism (Bosnia), or preventing a migration crisis (Haiti). Republicans, by contrast, are motivated more by hard power and realpolitik, which lend to a black-and-white worldview and more decisive action. The military top brass generally prefers the latter viewpoint.

Methodologically, I wish Donnithorne had selected cases that might vary the structure of the international system. One imagines the international system’s distribution of power influences the coherence of policy. Maybe under conditions of, say, multipolarity, civil-military relations is just really challenging because any policy will be seen as lacking specificity or too challenging to execute or enforce. Both of Donnithorne’s cases come at the waning years of the Cold War, so

maybe his theory only holds explanatory purchase under conditions of bipolarity? Also, if his theory applies to wartime conditions, another case, perhaps Feaver's treatment of the "surge" might be included.

What about alternative hypotheses? Maybe poor civil-military relations has nothing to do with service culture at all. But rather the unique attributes and oddities of the civilian and military leadership at that moment, a point he only mentions in passing on page 213?

Finally, I struggled with the book's title. Beyond the cheeky double entendre and nod to Feaver, it felt like Donnithorne was essentially implying that the services are principled, when in fact we know they are like any other rent-seeking outfit in Washington—motivated by turf, profits, and preserving their autonomy. How is that principled?

These are minor quibbles. Donnithorne's chapters on the four services should be required reading for any young cadet or midshipman, as they nicely encapsulate their quirks. Is it not strange, Donnithorne wonders, why West Point's grounds are speckled with statuary to its greatest generals—though Sylvanus Thayer, the "Father of the Military Academy," was a colonel, not a general—whereas the US Air Force Academy is littered with aircraft.

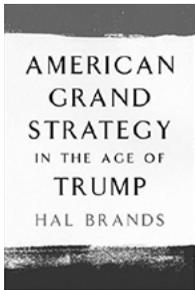
Donnithorne's book is a welcome addition to the crowded field of civil-military relations. With more contributions like his, we may yet get off the civil-military relations hamster wheel.

## GRAND STRATEGY

**American Grand Strategy in the Age of Trump**

By Hal Brands

Reviewed by Dr. J. Thomas Moriarty a professorial lecturer within the School of International Service at American University



Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2018

256 pages

\$25.99

The demand for change, real, substantive change, is not in itself an uncommon and or even unreasonable desire—especially when it comes to American grand strategy. If we were to engage in an open and honest evaluation of United States foreign affairs since the end of World War II, one could easily testify to the many triumphs of United States diplomacy while, at the same time, acknowledging the United States diplomatic record during this time is hardly flawless. Moreover, here lies the problem: regardless of whether you are a critic or a proponent of United States international engagement, you will not have a hard time massing a considerable amount of evidence to reinforce your worldview.

President Trump has made clear his desire for a new direction in US foreign policy. His critics are no less determined to maintain our current course. So where do we go from here? Over the years, there has been no shortage of academics, strategists, and former government officials who have sought to answer this question. Yet Hal Brands’s book, *American Grand Strategy in the Age of Trump*, stands out among the pack.

Brands, one of the leading authorities on American grand strategy, is the author of several noteworthy books on the subject, including the outstanding *What Good Is Grand Strategy? Power and Purpose in American Statecraft from Harry S. Truman to George W. Bush*. His latest book is actually a compendium of essays he has published over the last few years that seeks to provide a thorough and historically grounded appraisal of the Trump administration’s vision of American foreign policy. It is important to note this book’s targeted audience is advanced, well-read scholars, and practitioners of American grand strategy; although those who are new to this field will also find this book enjoyable and educational, the learning curve will be high. In order to fully appreciate the nuances of grand strategy that underlie this book, I would recommend that this not be the first book on the subject you read.

Brands begins with a spirited defense of the globally engaged, post-1945 American grand strategy and critiques a popular alternative grand strategy known as offshore balancing. He then proceeds to examine and unpack President Trump’s “America First” campaign rhetoric, which Brands argues closely follows a Fortress America grand strategy that would see the United States fundamentally reverse its commitment to maintain the international order, pursue economic nationalism, and forgo multilateralism in favor of unilateral engagements. Brands provides a careful, fair, and thorough admonishment of this type of thinking. Yet it is not Brands’ critique of the Fortress America grand strategy that makes this book of great value; rather, it is his proposal for a new, or more accurately, a revised grand strategy called “better

nationalism,” which seeks to improve upon, not abandon, a globally engaged United States grand strategy.

Brands is complimentary of the post-1945 global order the United States helped to create. At the same time, he is not blind to the growing populist tendencies developing within the United States and Europe. He does not accept all of the Trump administration’s concerns, nor does he completely reject all of them. He accepts a globally engaged American strategy but is unafraid to pinpoint that need to be improved. Whether Brands’s more nationalistic internationalism (partially practiced by the Nixon and Reagan administrations), is the best strategy for the US is debatable. What is not debatable is that the author’s approach to critical thinking and strategy development is the clear and central accomplishment of this book.

Brands identifies some challenges in implementing a better nationalistic grand strategy, including upsetting allies and partial disruption of the international order, and executing such an approach would require extreme skill and sophistication by the United States. Brands is no doubt correct about the challenges in attempting to execute such a grand strategy, but he spends little time in explaining how to overcome these challenges. If the United States failed in its attempts to implement a better nationalistic strategy or undertook a scaled-down version of it, the results could be even worse than any alternative grand strategy. In short, there are consequences for failure; as such, a more deliberate examination of the obstacles to successful implementation of “better nationalism” represents both the main drawback of this book and a wasted opportunity for Brands.

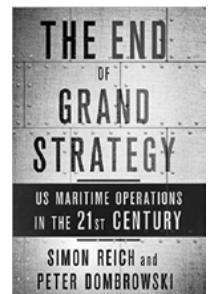
Nonetheless, the thoughtfulness, relevance, and contributions of this book to the field of American grand strategy more than outweigh any of its shortcomings. Brands’s commitment to sustained and sophisticated scholarship is very much appreciated and welcomed. I highly recommend this book.

## **The End of Grand Strategy: US Maritime Operations in the 21st Century**

By Simon Reich and Peter Dombrowski

Reviewed by Dr. Sarandis Papadopoulos, Secretariat Historian, Naval History and Heritage Command

In the past, the United States “did” grand strategy well. Whether George Washington’s harmonizing of military operations and coalition relations to gain Colonial independence, Abraham Lincoln and Ulysses Grant’s complementary efforts to defeat the Confederacy’s will and ability to resist, or the triumvirate of Franklin Roosevelt, George Marshall and Ernest King administering a global war, Americans have long known how to match ways, means, and ends. Due to the complexity of today’s challenges, however, and the ever-present desire to control world events, according to Simon Reich and Peter Dombrowski’s *The End of Grand Strategy: US Maritime Operations in the 21st Century* that ability is now gone.



Washington, DC: Brooks Institution Press, 2018  
252 pages  
\$30.00

Their evidence to make that diagnosis is how current-day American naval power satisfies US government interests.

This monograph is built upon a solid cross-section of recent literature and government reports, leavened with interviews. Unsurprisingly, the American navalist Alfred T. Mahan appears in the text several times, although the Briton Julian Corbett does not. The work seeks to explain the inability, even impossibility, of crafting an American grand strategy.

The argument in *The End of Grand Strategy* showcases a tyranny: US naval operations reflect unconstrained national wishes. Reich and Dombrowski explain these ambitions using six case studies: maintaining Arabian Gulf access; conducting exercises to meet an unfolding Indo-Pacific challenge; managing alliances or coalitions to fend off terrorists and pirates; preventing nuclear, chemical and biological proliferation; confronting an indeterminate Arctic end state; and stemming illicit flows of drugs and people across the oceans and Caribbean (chapters 3–8). The tyranny is that the military is all the US government has to address these challenges, in part reflecting then-General James Mattis's 2013 comment to Congress, "If you don't fund the State Department fully, then I need to buy more ammunition ultimately." To the authors, the current environment is so complex, and so demanding, every post-Cold War administration will commit the US Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard, without reference to any single ways-means-ends calculus(32).

Setting strategic priorities is impossible in such a climate, given the challenges' multiplicity and the operational loads they impose. Instead, all six case studies match one of three durable American strategic approaches: a primacist slant the authors call "hegemony," a multilateralist role they call "sponsorship," or a noninterventionist "retrenchment." Within each strategic attitude, two variants are outlined here, yielding six strategies which have coexisted across all twenty-first century presidencies. As the object of this book, the US sea services consequently work in a world of plural strategies not a singular one. Even in our state of relative peace, the services work hard and can never win, all to declining effect and straining readiness (7). In such a light, conceiving a grand, unified approach, World War II's "Germany first" or Cold War containment, is out of reach, making an effort to create one so unworkable the authors call it "presumptuous" (161).

Such a conclusion is destined to challenge Reich and Dombrowski's colleagues, political economists and international relations theorists, whom they characterize as creating strategy deductively, that is from the top down. Instead, *The End of Grand Strategy* assembles its arguments inductively, looking at operational case studies and generalizing divergent strategies from them. Such a method has a strong appeal to this reviewer.

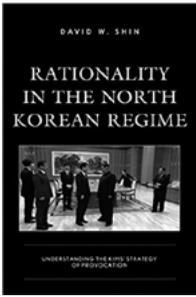
The approach here is provocative, but not prescriptive; there is no solution offered in the book to the current American strategic ways-means mismatch (41–42). Its case studies read well, with chapter 6, "Navigating the Proliferation Security Initiative and Informal Sponsorship" teaching much. That segment discusses the American-initiated regime for controlling weapons of mass destruction using naval power and, more importantly, the level of operational brokering each mission requires. To the last point, the appended list of Partnership

Security Initiative exercises is particularly welcome. An example of ad hoc sponsorship, the Partnership Security Initiative commands international acceptance, while oceanic geography demands much effort by the sea services to fulfill its needs.

But there are concerns about the book's portrait of our strategic moment. Today's environment is complex, but not unique in American naval experience. Governments have always used navies to influence events ashore. In fact, today's strategists could compare how the 1930's US Navy eked out the resources to prepare for high-end challenges during peacetime.

Similarly, *The End of Grand Strategy's* conclusion prompts discomfort, suggesting that, if properly resourced, a hegemonic primacy "should" become America's grand strategy (emphasis in original, 177). In response, the strongest question this reviewer can pose is whether a grand strategy has a defensive end or an offensive one. Reich and Dombrowski do not discuss whether a defensive role is the stronger strategic stance. Using military force solely to defend America's economy and social well-being, as part of international good behavior, is primarily defensive. If American seapower was cast as its "ways," such a sponsorship tack would broaden mission legitimacy and could lower the demand for US naval resources. Given that deterring conflict is a central US goal, the more combat credible friends the nation has, the more secure it will be.

To sum up, in its diagnosis *The End of Grand Strategy* offers much; scholars and the policy community need to take its argument into account when debating strategy. Setting priorities is absolutely needed, and current arguments are stilted. While flawed, this book starts us on fixing that discussion.



Lanham, Maryland:  
Lexington Books, 2018  
354 Pages  
\$110.00

## Rationality in the North Korean Regime: Understanding the Kims' Strategy of Provocation

By David W. Shin

Reviewed by Dr. Andrew Scobell, senior political scientist, RAND Corporation

The regime in Pyongyang is not crazy, and Kim Jong-Un is not a lunatic. While these assertions are articles of faith for most scholars and analysts who study North Korea, for web surfers seeing photographs of the chubby cartoonish leader of Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and casual cable news viewers watching footage of parading Korean People's Army soldiers goose-stepping in formation, Kim appears a crackpot and North Korea seems a bizarre place.

Which set of perceptions is accurate? Author David Shin puts this question to the test. The result is a scholarly volume of more than 300 pages that examines ten case studies of Pyongyang's "provocations" between 1950 and 2015. For each case, Shin looks to assess whether DPRK actions were rational based upon his determination that an action was premeditated and driven by a clear strategy. The author spends more than a dozen pages at the outset exploring the meaning of "rationality." This is not wasted effort since the variable tends to be seen in strictly dichotomous terms: someone is either rational or irrational. But as Shin notes, rather than perpetually clear-eyed and calculating, emotions are part and parcel of the logic of rational decision making. Moreover, the calculus of rationality varies by decisionmaker and context.

The author asserts—quoting Keith Stanovich—"rational beliefs and actions are supported by strategies" (2). Thus, for each case examined, "The preponderance of the evidence must demonstrate that at least one of the Kims and/or the core North Korean elites . . . deliberately planned and executed the provocation" (17). In other words, a provocation is part of a coherent strategy. But discerning intent is no simple matter in a country without a free press, where it is not possible to interview senior officials or conduct archival research. Shin does well to comb the range of available evidence, most of which are secondary sources.

Shin concludes that North Korea is rational—or at least mostly rational—in 9 out of the 10 cases he examines: 6 in the Kim Il-Sung era (1950–94), 2 in the Kim Jong-Il era (1994–2011) and 2 Kim Jong-Un era (2012–present). In only one case does the author detect significant irrationality: the 1987 bombing of Korean Air Flight 858. The nine core chapters that examine the 10 case studies are extremely dense and detailed making it quite challenging for a reader to discern the degree of rationality driving each provocation. Fortunately, in the concluding chapter the author includes a helpful table that allows the reader to review the key elements of each provocation and see where Shin comes out.

For this reviewer, one major disappointment is that the author is not as explicit as he could be in defining who exactly constitutes the "North Korean regime" and how best to characterize it. Shin comes closest 17 pages into his book where he explains—almost in passing—that in each case study he assumes that the key decision-makers are Kim Il-Sung, Kim Jong-Il, Kim Jong-Un, or "core North Korean elites" (17).

Nevertheless, the reader is never completely clear about who made every decision to execute a provocation and what kind of regime the decision-makers are a part of. Shin does observe on the very last page of text that North Korea is undergoing a “post-totalitarian transition,” but he does not specify when this transition began (292).

Shin considers some key implications of his findings and several of these are worth noting. The good news is that since the North Korean regime is rational, war is avoidable, Pyongyang is deterrable, and “Washington can pursue diplomacy with realistic goals” (290). The bad news, as Shin observes, is that the denuclearization of North Korea may not be achievable at least in the short term. After all, why would a rational Kim Jong-Un be eager to negotiate away his greatest asset?

## RUSSIA

**Russia's Military Revival**

By Bettina Renz

Reviewed by Dr. Andrew Monaghan, Oxford Changing Character of War Centre,  
Pembroke College, Oxford

Cambridge: Polity, 2018

249 pages

\$64.95

Bettina Renz, an associate professor of politics and international relations in Britain, has performed an important service with *Russia's Military Revival*. In a concise but thorough and wide-ranging monograph, she offers both a succinct critique of the more alarmist Western assessments of Russian military capability, its uses in Moscow's foreign policy, and a well-structured, coherent overview of Russia's defense capabilities. The book's five chapters, which are supplemented by a useful biography, present an argument built on a wide range of academic and primary sources.

Chapter 1 sketches historical background, examining the nexus between military power and foreign policy and four persistent factors that shape Russian foreign policy: great-power status, sovereignty, imperial legacy, and multilateralism. Renz underscores the point that a strong military is an essential feature of Russia's great-power status and self-perception. Equally, she emphasizes the significance to Moscow of sovereignty: the collapse of the USSR presented the Russian leadership with a crisis of statehood. Consequently, the importance of maintaining sovereignty has emerged as a key principle and top priority in Russian foreign policy. She quotes President Putin: "True sovereignty for Russia is an absolute necessity for survival" and recognizes Moscow's need for armed forces able to fight simultaneously in "global, regional and—if necessary—in several local conflicts to guarantee Russian security and territorial integrity no matter what the scenario" (31–32).

Chapter 2 also establishes a longer-term context, but it looks at Russian military reform in more depth. Renz colorfully quotes Pavel Grachev, then defense minister, who noted Russia inherited "nothing more than ruins and debris" from the USSR, and elaborates the twenty-year struggle to transform the former Soviet military into a force fit for the twenty-first century (53). It was a struggle beset by political neglect throughout the 1990s, and one that, for all the progress since 2008, remains incomplete, particularly in terms of manpower and the defense industry's ability to deliver.

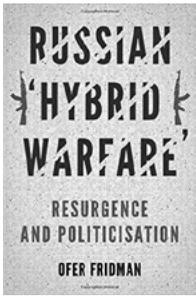
The third chapter offers a descriptive review of Russia's other force structures, describing the Ministry of the Interior, the Federal Security Service, the Ministry for Emergency Situations, and the recently formed National Guard. This is an important part of the book—too few Western analyses attempt to think of the relationship between Russia's armed forces and those that deal with internal order and new security challenges for which the military is ill-equipped to deal. As Renz notes, the link between Russia's internal and external security is poorly understood in the Euro-Atlantic community, not least because some of these forces and capabilities do not fit readily into existing analytical frameworks.

The fourth chapter looks at the annexation of Crimea and Russia's intervention in Syria in the longer-term context of Moscow's use of military power since the 1990s. Indeed, the author observes Russian authorities have regularly used military power in pursuit of a variety of policy objectives since the early 1990s, and the deployment of the Russian military beyond Russia's borders is therefore nothing new. Moscow has used military power both to cooperate with others and to strengthen its position in multilateral institutions.

Chapter five explores Russian military thinking. Offering a critique of what has become known as "Russian hybrid warfare" or the mythical "Gerasimov Doctrine," Renz is clear: these terms are not useful, since they have been stretched to cover all kinds of Russian behavior. Instead, she points out that Russian military thinking often differs from that in the West, citing, for instance, the lack of a consensus in Russia to mirror the prevalent Western post-Cold War view that conventional wars were a thing of the past. Russian strategic priorities differ and military thought builds on a rich homegrown theoretical history: Soviet military theorists produced influential and innovative work that was often well-ahead of that being done in the West. Renz also sketches out various groups of thought to illustrate the divergent views within the Russian military establishment about the changing character of war, the debates over the relationship between manpower and technology, and the kind of conflicts likely to erupt in future.

Despite the various debates, reforms, and visible improvements, Renz emphasises the strong sense of long-term evolutionary continuity in Russia's military revival, especially with regard to the importance of large-scale conventional warfare. There is no evidence, she argues, of a fundamental turnaround or paradigm shift in Russian views of the utility of force this decade. Better capabilities may offer more opportunities to use force, but do not necessarily generate a willingness to use it in aggressive, expansionist war-making. Russia's military revival, she suggests, owes as much to internal insecurity and stability as about fighting wars. Moreover, while there are clear improvements in terms of capabilities, Renz makes it clear that Russia's capabilities are not yet in a position really to challenge Western and especially US military capabilities substantially.

Historians may protest at Renz's use of phrases such as "throughout history" and "as lessons of the past reveal," and others may suggest Renz does not sufficiently explore how the Russian leadership has sought to address the manpower and defense industry problems to which she points. Moreover, there are noteworthy gaps in the analysis—NATO's Libya campaign is hardly mentioned, and the war in eastern Ukraine, the question of developing the armed forces as part of deterrence, and the establishment of the National Defense Control Center are all only very lightly touched upon. The latter is a particularly significant feature not only of Russian defense but of contemporary state strategy-making. Reference to more of the significant personalities in the Russian defense and security sector would also have added color. Nevertheless, this book offers both a useful critique and solid platform for further developing thinking about Russia's military revival—it is recommended reading for those coming to terms with Moscow's role on the international stage.



New York: Oxford  
University Press, 2018  
288 pages  
\$40.00

## Russian “Hybrid Warfare”: Resurgence and Politicisation

By Ofer Fridman

Reviewed by Dr. Christopher Spearin, professor, Department of Defence Studies of the Royal Military College of Canada located at the Canadian Forces College

In his monograph, Ofer Fridman tackles a pressing question given the current rocky state of the West’s relationship with Russia: even though the West and Russia employ the term “hybrid warfare,” why do they still talk past one another? To handle this question, Fridman first offers the intellectual genealogy of the term for each party before turning to why the hybrid warfare concept has been weaponized and politicized by each. This approach speaks both to the growing prominence of the term among Western and Russian analysts, media outlets, and practitioners and to why understanding is often a function of comparing apples and oranges.

To expand, the first part considers the trajectory of the intellectual experience in the West. This approach’s benefit is allowing the reader to step back and see the forest for the trees. The book initially highlights Frank Hoffman’s work in the early 2000s, a stance that was largely military oriented and focused upon the operational level with no particular adversary in mind. The book explores why this initial ideational delimitation came about and how, over time, the Western understanding blossomed to become more multifaceted and to be seen as ideally descriptive of Russian activities.

The detraction of this approach is that anchoring the text on Hoffman’s work, however important, does not capture the entire intellectual experience. True, Fridman recognizes some of Hoffman’s contemporaries in the second chapter. But this exploration is incomplete given the light referencing to authors in the second and third chapters that Hoffman himself identified as important. In short, the reader helpfully sees the forest, but it may in fact be denser than what is presented.

The second part presents the commensurate Russian experience. On the one hand, what the reader will find useful here, coming after the Western presentation, is the resulting appreciation of the wider nature of *gibridnaya voyna* (hybrid war) with its emphasis on multiple actors and avenues for state power and the downplaying of the military tool. Additionally, the distinction here is worthwhile given the bundling and overlap of terms—such as new generation warfare, Gerasimov doctrine, and gray-zone conflict—that Westerners often use to frame the Russian approach. Put differently, the book contributes to a much-needed discernment.

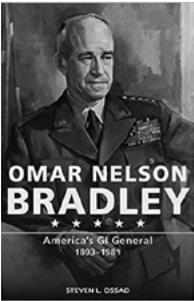
On the other hand, the reader will have to look elsewhere to consider how past Soviet practices play into contemporary Russian thought. Certainly, Fridman states that he wants to investigate how concepts impact political events and policy-making rather than the opposite. He contends the current Russian endeavor does not engage the legacy of Cold War era “active measures.” Moreover, he asserts the reader should do likewise: “Remember that while some Russian actions can be conceptually described as an adaptation of active measures to twenty-first-century realities, the differences between them are similar to the

differences between the means and methods of the First and the Second World Wars” (4). Fair enough, but whereas Fridman’s examination of the Western conceptual approach dates mostly to developments since the end of the Cold War, he offers in the Russian context many pages examining the impact of Evgeny Messner, a thinker born in the nineteenth century. Perhaps a caveat about applicability is in order here too.

The book’s third part—its most beneficial—reveals how the term hybrid warfare moved into each camp from the ideational to the political realms, thus allowing the concept to gain momentum and the differences between the two approaches to become acute in very public ways. In Fridman’s framing of the Western case, NATO’s embrace of the concept and the subsequent framing of Russia through this lens have a threefold rationale. One is to spur on the organization’s revitalization by confronting more than just so-called traditional military challenges. Another is to underscore that NATO is a key defender of Western values. The third rests largely with the initiative of NATO’s newer Eastern European members to ensure the organization’s other members appreciate and respond to the historical fears and the contemporary challenges they confront. As for the Russian example, though the concept may be much more expansive in regards to nonmilitary activities, Fridman argues the Russian military nevertheless advances *gibridnaya voyna* because it assists in attracting additional resources to the armed forces overall. What is more, applying *gibridnaya voyna* in order to best capture Western activities vis-à-vis Ukraine and elsewhere helps solidify Russian public opinion and provide support to Russian political institutions and policies.

Altogether, though one might quibble with how the author has engaged the intellectual history of hybrid war, the book nevertheless provides a useful illustration of how the Western and Russian camps diverge in both their thinking toward a guiding concept and in their application of it.

## BIOGRAPHY



Columbia, MO: University  
of Missouri Press, 2018  
492 pages  
\$36.95

## Omar Nelson Bradley: America's GI General, 1893–1981

By Steven L. Ossad

Reviewed by Dr. Conrad Crane, chief of historical services of the US Army Heritage and Education Center, US Army War College.

No important figure in American military history needs a good biography more than General of the Army Omar Bradley. He carefully controlled his narrative while alive, authoring or coauthoring any books about him, and his second wife, Kitty, carefully guarded his image after his death. Historians like Martin Blumenson and Rick Atkinson chipped away some parts of the Bradley façade. But until now, no one has attempted a comprehensive, objective treatment of the longest-serving five star general. Steven Ossad is a retired Wall Street technology analyst who has also written a well-received biography of Major General Maurice Rose, and this most recent effort won the Society for Military History's 2018 award for the best military biography. Ossad's fresh perspective on Bradley's early life and military career after World War II has hopefully launched more contemporary analyses of the general's impact on the United States and its Army, but this book will hardly be the last word on Omar Bradley.

Ossad relies heavily on interviews and accounts by Bradley and his closest confidants, with particular focus on Thomas Bigland, Bernard Montgomery's liaison officer, torn by conflicting loyalties to both Army Group commanders but very frank in his observations. So it is not surprising the book is mostly sympathetic to its subject, though Ossad admits Bradley was vain, took slights very personally, and held grudges for decades.

The book does very well covering Bradley's early life and his West Point career. A skating accident while a youth ruined his teeth, and for the rest of his life he was concerned about his appearance and reluctant to smile. At West Point he excelled in sports and his first impressions of many key subordinates in World War II were established on playing fields there. He was mentored in his early military career first by Edwin Forrest Harding and later by George Marshall. Bradley taught mathematics at West Point and tactics at the Infantry School, building relationships and his reputation. He proved particularly adept at creating and solidifying organizations, ranging from the 28th Infantry Division as the war was beginning, to the II Corps in Tunisia, the 12th Army Group in Northwest Europe, and the Veteran's Administration after the war ended.

Ossad argues Bradley was one of the best American corps commanders of the war, excelling in Tunisia and Sicily, and Dwight Eisenhower's best Army Group commander in northwest Europe, though that comparison is always with Montgomery, ignoring Jacob Devers. The author also takes every opportunity to deflate the image of George Patton. Ossad thinks Bradley deserved his moniker of "the soldier's general," though the best evidence offered is just that too many people believed it for it not to be true.

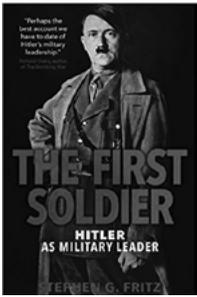
While the author admits Bradley was quick to relieve subordinates that trait is explained away as mimicking George Marshall. Ossad does not address Daniel Bolger's accusation of a zero-defects mentality in Bradley's commands. The author agrees with critics that Bradley should have fired First Army commander Courtney Hodges, however. Ossad also eviscerates Bradley for poor leadership during the Battle of the Bulge, and assigns him great responsibility for the bombing shortfalls at the beginning of Operation Cobra. On the other hand, the book quickly exonerates its subject from any blame for failing to close the Falaise Gap.

The section on the planning for Cobra is well done, showing Bradley almost as Montgomery, meticulously planning a complicated operation. The 12th Army Group was the largest field command in American history, and Bradley deserves much credit for organizing and running it. Though, as anyone who has read David Eisenhower's book on his grandfather at war realizes, by 1945 Ike's biggest prima donna was not Patton or Montgomery, it was Bradley.

The most valuable contribution of the book is its coverage of Bradleys' tenure as a postwar chief of the Veteran's Administration, perhaps his greatest service to the nation. President Harry Truman tapped the reluctant general to take over the troubled and understaffed organization facing the return of millions of veterans and mastering the intricacies of the revolutionary legislation passed to help them, in what was described as a "frightful bureaucratic challenge." Truman received great political dividends from the appointment, while Bradley and Dr. Paul Hawley, former chief surgeon of the European Theater, created the "most advanced, accessible, equitable, and sustained health care system ever established for veterans by any nation or empire" (355). They also reformed administrative procedures for all Veteran Affairs programs, as Bradley brought in many of his 12th Army Group staff to help. He expanded the organization from 65,000 employees to over 200,000. Some of his impact is still evident, especially in decentralization. But over time, many of the problems he faced have returned.

Truman then appointed Bradley as first chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Ossad tries to argue for the general's impact on that office. It appears, however, the author was running out of steam, or facing pressure from his publisher to cut words, because he only really discusses two events, Bradley's hostile reaction to the "revolt of the admirals" and the relief of Douglas MacArthur in Korea. And the coverage of Bradley's career after leaving that position from 1953–81 is handled in three pages.

There is still much to be covered from that period, most very unflattering to the general. Before his first wife died in 1965, he had an affair with Kitty—Ossad mentions that, and they were a very contentious pair who shared a passion for horse racing. They destroyed archival documents deemed damaging to his image, torpedoed a project to build a Bradley Center in Carlisle that would have rivaled the MacArthur Memorial in a dispute over tax write offs for donations, and padded those donations by buying cheap silver plate that they inscribed with a "B" and then claimed it was family silver. Hopefully, other authors will now follow Ossad's lead and delve even deeper into the career and impact of this complex and important figure.



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480 pages  
\$30.00

## The First Soldier: Hitler as Military Leader

By Stephen G. Fritz

Reviewed by Dr. Richard L. DiNardo, USMC Command and Staff College

Undoubtedly, one of the most written about figures of the twentieth century is Adolf Hitler. The work under consideration here ranks as an excellent addition to that corpus of literature. The focus of Stephen Fritz, one of the more astute observers of the military history of the Third Reich, is on Hitler's career as a military leader.

Fritz begins with Hitler's understanding of military theory and history. Hitler was thoroughly conversant with the concepts of Carl von Clausewitz, and was also familiar, though how much remains debatable, with the geopolitical ideas of Karl Haushofer. A true autodidact, Hitler also read a fair amount of military history, economics, and the racist tracts of Volkisch writers. Some of this reading served Hitler well later as a military leader in that, as Fritz suggests, he generally had a better understanding of economics than his generals.

Perhaps the most written about aspect of Hitler's activity in World War II by military historians concerns his relationship with his generals. Fritz delves into this area with his considerable acuity, and emerges with some very nuanced arguments. Ideologically, Hitler had little opposition to brook. The majority of German generals shared much of Hitler's ideological outlook, as well as his expansionist and exterminationist aims.

On operational matters, Hitler more often than not, as Fritz points out, was willing to defer to his generals, even during the latter half of the war. While Hitler did not necessarily serve his subordinates well, Fritz argues Hitler was not well served by his subordinates either. The most notable person who comes in for rough treatment in this regard is Franz Halder. Chief of the General Staff from September 1938 until his dismissal in September 1942, Halder was in many ways the antithesis of Hitler militarily.

A professional soldier, Halder had spent his career in a long line of staff positions. The quintessential Frontkämpfer, Hitler was never averse to throwing his frontline service in Halder's face, suggesting he knew more about war than many of his generals. As a staff officer and operational thinker, Fritz's picture of Halder is unflattering, to say the least. Stolid and unimaginative, Halder was often unscrupulous enough to withhold information from Hitler, which he might have found useful in making decisions.

Operationally, Fritz notes Hitler, as even such postwar critics as Erich von Manstein agreed, was capable of the occasional shrewd insight. Hitler could read a map as well as many professional officers, and could offer well considered analysis of situations. What he often lacked was the kind of professional knowledge when it came to the management of large scale movements and what was possible to accomplish.

Oddly, Hitler and his generals shared two principal faults as military leaders. The first was a lack of understanding of strategy. While Hitler had a clear, if horrifying vision of what the post war world should look

like, he had no clear notion of how to get there. Hitler's blindness in this area was shared by his military advisors. Although many were graduates of the vaunted *Kriegs Akademie*, the school's curriculum—the only professional military education an officer received in his career—remained focused at the operational and tactical levels. Thus, after Operation Barbarossa faltered and the United States entered the war, neither Hitler nor his military advisors had the foggiest notion of how to proceed. Commanders themselves, most notably Manstein, at times confused strategy with operations. This was especially true during his time as commander of Army Group South, especially after the defeat at Kursk.

Another problematic area was logistics. While Hitler understood macroeconomics much better than his generals, he did not understand logistics, and the impact that logistics could have on operations. In this, however, Hitler was not alone. The planning and conduct of German military operations in both world wars was marked by the bad habit of often waving away potential logistical problems, seemingly believing such issues would solve themselves. This approach, often based on faulty assumptions, eventually bore more risk than the Germans could deal with, especially when operations had to be conducted in areas with poor or underdeveloped infrastructure.

While coalition warfare was more the province of Hitler the Führer as opposed to Hitler the Feldherr, the subject gets very little play in the book. This is unfortunate, given the critical role Axis forces were earmarked to play in the 1942 campaign in Russia.

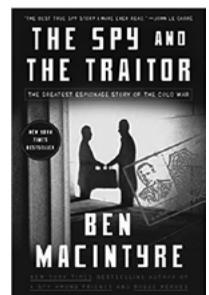
Ultimately, the picture of Hitler that emerges from Fritz's work is a very nuanced one. Although Hitler remained the committed ideologue to the end, even late in the war he could still come up with gifted insight. Too often, however, this was followed by raving self-delusion, which served to undermine whatever advantage may have been gained from the previous insight. This work, marked by the kind of meticulous research and well-supported argument that we have come to expect from Fritz, is a most welcome addition to the pantheon of World War II scholarship. Students of command and leadership at the highest levels, both in and out of uniform, will profit from this outstanding work.

## The Spy and the Traitor, The Greatest Espionage Story of the Cold War

By Ben Macintyre

Reviewed by Dr. W. Andrew Terrill, Professor Emeritus, US Army War College.

Colonel Oleg Gordievsky of the Soviet intelligence service, KGB, was one of the most important Western spies in Cold War history. He was of incomparable value to the British intelligence service, MI6, and thru them to the CIA. Both President Ronald Reagan and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher were provided with his secrets and found them to be important for the shaping of their foreign policies. Gordievsky's personal story is also compelling, and is told brilliantly in



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358 pages

\$28.00

this volume, which legendary author John Le Carre' describes on the book's dustjacket as "the best true spy story I have ever read."

As a KGB junior officer, there was no indication that Gordievsky would eventually turn against the Soviet system and become a British spy. Rather, the organization viewed him as politically reliable and noted that his father and older brother served as career members of Soviet intelligence. Nevertheless, over time, Gordievsky's convictions about protecting the Soviet system were shaken by that country's ruthless actions. During his initial service as an overseas operative, he witnessed the construction of the Berlin Wall, and was shocked at the brutality used to prevent East Germans from escaping to the West. He was later equally concerned over the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, which appeared to underscore Soviet hostility to any loosening of ideological rigidity within the Soviet Union and the other Warsaw Pact states.

Yet, perhaps the most significant event in Gordievsky's questioning of the Soviet system was his three-year overseas assignment to Copenhagen. There he thrived in an atmosphere of personal freedom, societal cheerfulness, and cultural openness, where he could indulge his passion for classical music, much of which was forbidden in the Soviet Union. As Soviet dogma became more threadbare to him, Gordievsky became disillusioned. His return to Moscow after his initial tour of Denmark only reinforced his contempt for the values of Soviet ideology. Later, on a second tour as an intelligence agent in Copenhagen, he made a series of oblique and subtle moves signaling that he was willing to work with MI6. When contacted by the British, Gordievsky indicated that he would serve as an ideological spy and initially refused to take money from them.

After service as a useful intelligence asset in Denmark, Gordievsky returned to Moscow, and his intelligence activities on behalf of MI6 essentially went dormant. British security officials believed that any intelligence collection activities in the Soviet Union would probably be doomed to failure as a result of the massive Soviet counterintelligence system within their own country. Unfortunately, Gordievsky's prospects for a new overseas assignment also seemed dim. His decision to divorce his ideologically committed wife and marry a younger woman seriously hurt his career and seemed to have condemned him to a career of intelligence drudgery with little prospect of promotion.

To dig himself out of these difficulties, he began to learn English. Eventually, after some bureaucratic maneuvering, Gordievsky was able to get himself assigned to the Soviet Embassy in London, where he was to serve as a Soviet intelligence agent under diplomatic cover. Unfortunately for the KGB, he quickly reestablished his relationship with MI6 in London, and began secretly meeting with his handlers. One of the more amusing aspects of this book is how British intelligence struggled to come up with ways to advance Gordievsky's career once he had been assigned to London, including finding pretexts to deport troublesome superiors and rivals. MI6 also supplied Gordievsky with some intelligence tidbits of limited value, which they called "chickenfeed," to pass along to his Moscow superiors and thereby prove his value at developing a network of secret agents. In return, MI6 was able to gain material of tremendous value from Gordievsky including intelligence

on Soviet operations throughout the United Kingdom and Scandinavia including Soviet attempts to meddle in British elections.

Macintyre maintains that some of the most valuable information Gordievsky provided to the West came during the build up to 1983 NATO exercise Operation Able Archer in Europe. This exercise simulated an escalating conflict between NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organization that culminated with the wargame's mock use of nuclear weapons. The wargame came at a time when the Soviet Union was led by the deeply paranoid former KGB chief, Yuri Andropov, who was fearful of a US first strike by President Reagan. MI6 told the CIA that the KGB, which was anxious to please Andropov, assessed that the exercise was a prelude to the outbreak of war and that it was being used as a cover for the build-up to war. An internal CIA summary of Able Archer conducted years later assessed that these fears could have caused the situation to escalate, and "Gordievsky's timely warning to Washington via MI6 kept things from going too far" (182).

The traitor referenced in the title of this book is not Gordievsky, whom Macintyre considers a hero. Rather, it is rogue CIA officer Aldrich Ames who chose to address his ongoing financial difficulties by selling CIA secrets to the Soviet Union. These secrets included the identities of Soviet officials working for the CIA or MI6. While MI6 had never provided Gordievsky's name to the CIA, the organization's analysts were able to deduce it through a number of clues based on the intelligence passed on from the British. Gordievsky's identity was included as one of a number of agents betrayed to the Soviets and caused his immediate recall from London to Moscow.

As a KGB colonel, Gordievsky could not be imprisoned or tortured without strong evidence, but he was placed under intense surveillance and interrogated with drugs in an apparently unsuccessful effort to break him. Under these circumstances, Gordievsky chose to implement a longshot plan previously agreed upon with MI6. This plan involved an effort to escape from the Soviet Union via Finland. MI6 had never before exfiltrated a Soviet agent from their own country, and it seemed nearly impossible for them to do so this time. Consequently, the final portion of the book makes exceptionally exciting reading as it describes Gordievsky's desperate effort to escape.

Macintyre has written a number of previous books about espionage including three focused on World War II as well as an excellent biography of MI6 traitor Kim Philby. Consequently, the author knows a great deal about intelligence tradecraft and is effective and colorful at describing the mechanics of Gordievsky's actions as a KGB/ MI6 operative and the nature of the plan for him to escape from the Soviet Union (which the Soviets became aware of after the fact). In sum, this book is a pleasure to read as well as an important scholarly achievement that adds vital perspective on a number of aspects of the Cold War.

## MILITARY HISTORY

**1777: Tipping Point at Saratoga**

By Dean Snow

Reviewed by Dr. Gregory J. W. Urwin, professor of history, Temple University



New York: Oxford  
University Press, 2016  
456 Pages  
\$34.95

The Saratoga Campaign of 1777, which culminated in the surrender of 5,856 British, German, and Loyalist troops under Lieutenant General John Burgoyne, is generally hailed as the turning point in the American War of Independence—the victory that persuaded France, the mightiest power in Europe, to enter the conflict on the side of the infant United States. In this fast-paced history, Dean Snow focuses on 33 crucial days that fell between September 15 and October 17, 1777. That period witnessed the jarring general engagements at Freeman’s Farm (September 19) and Bemis Heights (October 7) in which Major General Horatio Gates’ mixed army of Continental regulars and militia from New England and New York bested its opponents and then subjected them to a siege that robbed Burgoyne of all hope.

Dean Snow is a professor emeritus of anthropology at Penn State University and an archaeologist by training. His interest in Saratoga dates to 1971, when he was a young assistant professor at the University of Albany. The National Park Service asked him to participate in the first of a series of archaeological projects at the Saratoga battlefield in preparation for the bicentennial festivities that would be held there six years later. For the next 45 years, Snow would survey the ground over which Burgoyne and Gates’ troops fought, examine the artifacts yielded by various archaeological digs, and immerse himself in the letters, diaries, reports, and memoirs left by the Saratoga campaign’s participants. Snow’s *1777* is both a labor of love and the result of intensive research.

Surprisingly, Snow did not produce the kind of exacting statistics-ridden, jargon-laden report that has become the hallmark of battlefield archaeology. He aims his book at a mass audience by crafting it as a narrative that conveys how the crucial phase of the Saratoga campaign was experienced by a few dozen participants. Snow characterizes his treatment as a microhistory, but it bridges the gap between microhistory and macrohistory. His cast of characters includes humble enlisted men and junior officers, along with battalion, brigade, wing, and army commanders. Snow tells his story through the eyes of these selected participants. His book is a tapestry of interwoven vignettes, each based on the accounts of one or more eyewitnesses. Snow keeps his material under tight control, permitting the reader to hop from one perspective to another without confusion, which is no small feat.

Authors of narrative history rely on observers who leave vivid testimony. Unfortunately, some of the most compelling anecdotes are spun by untrustworthy parties, and a historian needs to resist being seduced by suspect sources simply because they read so well. Snow makes this mistake with his heavy reliance on the memoirs left by Lieutenant Colonel James Wilkinson, Gates’s 20-year-old adjutant general. Snow acknowledges Wilkinson was an unprincipled opportunist who would

later betray his country to the Spanish after he attained high command in the US Army. Nevertheless, the author still takes a lot of what that untrustworthy rogue said at face value. The fact that Wilkinson's position enabled him to observe some of the most crucial events at Saratoga makes this inevitable, but one does not always know when the young staff officer spoke the truth or not.

For the most part, however, Snow handles his sources judiciously. He also treats the opposing forces at Saratoga with admirable objectivity. Snow believes any authentic history of the Revolutionary War must emphasize human endurance, and he empathizes with the soldiers on both sides as they faced a multiplicity of challenges and dangers. He also avoids the temptation of placing any of the senior commanders on pedestals. John Burgoyne comes across as a man driven by unflagging optimism until he finally realizes it is too late to save his beleaguered army.

Snow paints a complex portrait of Horatio Gates. Gates owed his rise in the Continental chain of command to the fact that he had served previously in the British army, and to his penchant for intrigue and political manipulation. His conduct throughout the campaign tended to be cautious, but that was sometimes dictated by valid logistical considerations. Major General Benedict Arnold receives the credit he richly deserved for the frenzied leadership and tactical acumen that broke Burgoyne's army at Freeman's Farm, but Snow resists the temptation to over romanticize the future traitor. He deftly highlights the overriding ambition, tactless zeal, prickly sense of honor, and quarrelsomeness that made Arnold a difficult subordinate.

Snow's description of battles and troop movements are supplemented by numerous maps, which makes it easy for readers to follow the action. On the other hand, however, he offers little analysis of the events he reconstructs with such panache. He seems content to tell his story and let his readers draw their own conclusions. Those who prefer their history in the form of entertainment will find *1777: Tipping Point at Saratoga* to their liking. Those with an interest in material culture will be disappointed by the many mistakes Snow makes in his depiction of Burgoyne's Redcoats.

Snow also misses an opportunity to make an important point regarding the development of the Continental Army. According to a long-cherished myth, the American regulars who bore the brunt of combat during the war's major battles did not acquire the skill and confidence to meet their British foes on equal terms until they underwent the ingenious training regimen orchestrated by Major General Friedrich, Baron von Steuben, at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, during the winter of 1777–78. The problem with that interpretation is the Valley Forge encampment occurred after the British surrender at Saratoga. While Snow realizes Gates's Continentals proved more than a match for Burgoyne's Redcoats, Germans, and Loyalists at Saratoga, he neglects to explain why. That will have to wait for a future retelling of this decisive campaign.

