

can no longer pass on self-development. Nor can their organizations, since self-development programs achieve their best results when organizations are actively involved. Leaders, in fact, have an obligation to make their own development and the development of their subordinates a priority. By doing so, they augment the developmental efforts made in the institutional and operational domains to benefit the individual and the organization.

A leadership battlebook can be a useful tool for leaders serious about self-development. Again, a three-ring binder and a few dividers are all one needs to get started. If some sections aren't currently needed, then populate them later; if additional ones are needed, just add them. Whatever form it ultimately takes, the battlebook can be an effective means by which leaders and organizations discharge their

responsibility for a vitally important but often ignored program. **MR**

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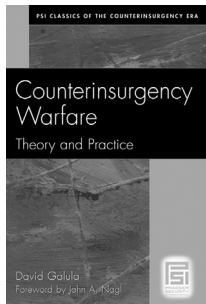
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MR Classics Revisited



Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice, David Galula, reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Terence J. Daly, U.S. Army Reserve, Retired

When reading *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* for the first time, most

people have what could be called the Galula Moment: "That's it! He gets it!" French Army Lieutenant Colonel David Galula's book, first published in 1964, is quite simply the definitive work, the primer, of classic counterinsurgency doctrine.¹ It is the one book on counterinsurgency that everyone, from policymakers to fire-team leaders, should read and understand.

Galula's globe-trotting military career gave him numerous opportunities to study war, conventional and unconventional, close up. During World War II he fought in campaigns in North Africa, Italy, and Germany, became a military attaché, and then, in the immediate post-war period, served as an observer. He would later work as an assistant

military attaché in China during that country's civil war and as a UN observer in Greece during the Greek civil war. Posted to Hong Kong on attaché duty, he developed and maintained contact with officers fighting insurgencies in Indochina, Malaya, and the Philippines. In 1956, Galula was assigned to the 45th Colonial Infantry Battalion, with which he spent the next two years fighting Algerian rebels, first as a company commander and then as an assistant battalion commander.

With all this experience under his belt, Galula was sent to Harvard's Center for International Affairs in 1962. While participating in a RAND Corporation symposium on counterinsurgency, he made such an impression that he was asked to write a treatise about his experiences in Algeria. The ensuing work was published in 1963 as *Pacification in Algeria, 1956-58*.² The following year, Galula produced his seminal *Counterinsurgency Warfare*. He died in 1967.

We know that Galula's main claim—you defeat an insurgency by controlling the target population—works. It worked for Galula

when he commanded an under-strength French infantry company in the harsh terrain of the Kabylia in Algeria, and it worked for the U.S. 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR) in Tal Afar in Iraq.³

The 3d ACR was required to read *Counterinsurgency Warfare* before it deployed. The book's lessons were suitably modified for the conditions the regiment was about to face, and then used to inform the planning and execution of their successful campaign to subdue the insurgency in Tal Afar. Currently, Galula's ideas pervade the new counterinsurgency manuals that are being developed for the U.S. Army and Marine Corps.

The Basics

Galula's basic insight into insurgency (which he terms "revolutionary war") is that "Revolutionary war is political war." The objective of the counterinsurgent must therefore be to win the population's support. According to Galula, French and American traditions stipulating that "military" activities should be handled only by Soldiers and Marines and "civilian" activities should be handled only by politicians and bureaucrats is

fallacious. “Every military action,” he asserts, “has to be weighed with regard to its political effects and vice versa.” This means that every sweep, every search-and-destroy mission, every convoy operation has to be planned with uppermost consideration for the effects it will have on the population’s support; conversely, every new sewage system or classroom has to be examined for its military impact.⁴

According to Galula, the greatest advantage insurgents have over Western democracies, especially the United States, is that “an insurgency is a protracted struggle conducted...to attain specific intermediate objectives leading finally to the overthrow of the existing order.” For the counterinsurgent, “the operations needed to relieve the population from the insurgent’s threat and to convince it that the counterinsurgent will ultimately win are necessarily of an intensive nature and of long duration.” Galula emphasizes that to fight a successful counterinsurgency, it is important to have a national consensus and a resolute political leadership.⁵ In *Pacification in Algeria* he stresses that when the French Government was strong, insurgent recruiting dropped off because it looked like the counterinsurgents would win; however, when the French Government was weak and it looked like the French would leave Algeria, insurgent recruiting increased.⁶

As promulgated in the 1960s by Galula and Britain’s Sir Robert Thompson (author of *Defeating Communist Insurgency: The Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam*), classic counterinsurgency theory is often criticized.⁷ Detractors argue that fighting rural Marxist-Leninist insurgents is much different than fighting today’s urban-based Muslim extremists. With the caveat that his concepts may be dangerous if applied rigidly to a specific case, Galula notes that it is difficult to deny the logic on which his concepts are based because they can be recognized easily in everyday political life.⁸ He addresses a universal human condition when he lays out the essence of defeating an insurgency: “In any situation, whatever the cause, there will be an active minority for the cause, a neutral majority, and an active minority against the cause.” In any insurgency, then, urban or rural, communist or confessional (religion-based),

each side must weaken or eliminate the opposition, strengthen its own backers among the populace, and win over the uncommitted.

The struggle will be waged ruthlessly, and it will be deadly. Galula makes no distinction between city or village dweller, ideologue, or religious fanatic when he states: “All wars are cruel, the revolutionary war perhaps most of all because every citizen, whatever his wish, is or will be directly and actively involved in it by the insurgent who needs him and cannot afford to let him remain neutral. The cruelty of the revolutionary war is not a mass, anonymous cruelty but a highly personalized, individual one.”⁹

The struggle for influence is therefore dominated by another condition universal to all human beings in all insurgencies regardless of the environment: fear. Galula writes: “The population’s attitude . . . is dictated not so much by the relative popularity and merits of the opponents as by the more primitive concern for safety. Which side gives the best protection, which side threatens the most, which one is likely to win; these are the criteria governing the population’s stand.” Meanwhile, “political, social, economic, and other reforms, however much they ought to be wanted and popular, are inoperative when offered while the insurgent still controls the population.”

For Galula, control over the population is the key to success. Only by gaining and keeping control of the population can the counterinsurgent establish the secure environment in which those who support the counterinsurgent and his cause can come forward to organize for their own governance and eventual self-protection.

Galula describes, in detail, the steps by which the counterinsurgent can gain control of the population. Designed specifically for political effect, these steps comprise a coordinated, multifaceted process that provides the populace security in order to gain and keep its support. The counterinsurgent must use all his assets: “His administrative capabilities, his economic resources, his information and propaganda media, his military superiority due to heavy weapons and large units.” Military, police, and judicial and political operations blend: “The expected result—final defeat of the insurgents—is not an addition but a

multiplication of these various operations; they all are essential and if one is nil, the product will be zero.”¹⁰

The Need for Unity of Command

Galula is adamant about the necessity of heeding the military principle of unity of command: “A single boss must direct the operations from beginning to end.” Further, the “boss” must be a representative of the political side: “That the political power is the undisputed boss is a matter of both principle and practicality. What is at stake is the country’s political regime and to defend it is a political affair. Even if this requires military action, the action is directed toward a political goal.”¹¹ If we read Galula correctly, then one major deficiency in the U.S. Government’s current counterinsurgent effort is that no government department or agency is capable of exercising this authority.

The Strategy

According to Galula, in devising a countrywide strategic plan, it is best to begin by pacifying the quieter areas and then progressing to the more difficult ones. First, doing so gives the counterinsurgent “a clear-cut, even if geographically limited, success as soon as possible,” which demonstrates that he has the will, the means, and the ability to win. Second, “the counterinsurgent, who usually has no practical experience in the nonmilitary operations required in counterinsurgency warfare, must acquire it fast,” and that is much easier to do in a relatively calm area. Of course, this strategy is risky: by concentrating on the easy areas, the counterinsurgent leaves the insurgent alone to progress into other areas.¹² The counterinsurgent must, however, accept that risk.

The Phased Approach

In Galula’s multi-phased approach to prosecuting this strategy, phase one, *concentrating enough armed forces to destroy or expel the main body of armed insurgents*, is undertaken to prepare the area for the rest of the counterinsurgency process. It is complete only when the forces that will garrison the area can safely deploy to the extent necessary. Military forces must prevent armed insurgents who have been scattered from regrouping; if the armed insurgents

have been expelled from the area, they must be prevented from returning. In this phase, the counterinsurgent must be prepared to fight conventional battles to dominate the area completely. Aggressive, carefully planned, and flexible information operations directed at the insurgents, the counterinsurgent's own forces, and the population must be thoroughly integrated into this and each succeeding phase of the operation.¹³

In phase two, *the counterinsurgent switches targets from the armed insurgents to the population*. He maintains strong military forces in the area, though, because the "support of the population is conditional." The people know they are being watched by the insurgency's supporters and are still threatened with punishment by armed guerrillas. Counterinsurgent forces are assigned to sectors, subsectors, and other divisions with the principal mission of protecting the population and civic action teams. The troops are deployed to locations where the people are, not to locations deemed to possess military value.¹⁴

Phase three, *maintain contact with and control of the population*, is the most critical phase because it involves transitioning from military to political operations. Galula's objectives include reestablishing the counterinsurgent's authority over the population, physically isolating the population from the guerrillas, and gathering intelligence that will lead to the next step: the elimination of insurgent cells.

Control of the population begins with a census and issuance of identity documents. A curfew is an integral part of phase three, as are other movement controls. Intelligence gathering is enhanced by increasing contact between the population and counterinsurgent personnel, each of whom must be imbued with the idea that he is an intelligence collector. Galula notes that because insurgents are human, they have differing degrees of commitment to the insurgent cause. The counterinsurgent therefore must attempt to divide the insurgents by creating dissension between the lower ranks and their leaders, which he then exploits by luring away the disaffected.¹⁵

Phase four, *eradicating insurgent secret political organizations*, is a sensitive area for the counterinsurgent. Secret insurgents are often

prominent local people with local connections and family ties. Secret organizations must be eradicated to remove the threat they pose to counterinsurgent supporters and to keep the insurgency from reestablishing itself. Galula suggests an indirect approach, in which cell members are arrested based on their disclosures.¹⁶

Meanwhile, the counterinsurgent is deeply involved in recruiting, training, and vetting local supporters for the remaining parts of his program. These parts are built on the elections of provisional local officials, and they include testing the new officials, formation of self defense units, grouping new leaders into a national movement, and final eradication of insurgent remnants.¹⁷

The Myth of Sisyphus

For Galula, victory can be declared only when the local people cut off contact with the insurgents and keep them cut off of their own will, using their own resources. However, the myth of Sisyphus is a recurring nightmare for the counterinsurgent, as he must try to build in irreversibility at every step. The turning point will occur only after leaders emerge from the population, commit themselves to the side of the counterinsurgent, and form an organization that can protect them and the population. The leaders must prove their loyalty with deeds, not words, and they must have everything to lose if the insurgents return. Still, as Galula observes, even when the responsibility for the area is turned over to the local people, leaders, and security forces, the main counterinsurgent force must be able to return quickly to protect what it has left behind.

The Possible Drawback

Galula seems to provide a clear, comprehensive blueprint that democracies such as the United States can use to defeat an insurgency. His work has one major gap, however, as far as the United States is concerned: he attaches too little weight to the importance of the counterinsurgent's cause. Galula continually stresses that a cause is vital for the insurgent, but pays little attention to the counterinsurgent's motivation. Either the counterinsurgent simply wants to retain power, or he has a competing cause that Galula dismisses because it will lead to civil war. Even when

he notes that the British promised independence to Malaya during the Emergency, a move that cemented the loyalty of the majority ethnic Malay population, Galula seems to draw no particular conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the counterinsurgent's appropriating the insurgents' cause. For Galula, reforms are to be carefully titrated for tactical advantage.

Unlike Galula's France, the United States in the 21st century is not a colonial power, and our counterinsurgencies during the past 40 years have been well intentioned and prosecuted with a clear political aim—what Sir Robert Thompson calls "To establish and maintain a free, independent and united country which is politically and economically stable and viable."¹⁸ The United States possesses one of the most powerful political slogans ever devised: "the legitimacy of a government derives from the consent of the governed." On a less exalted level, we are the leading exporter of modern mass consumer culture, the "Universal Solvent"—the magical fluid ancient alchemists sought that made old substances disappear and new ones form. It behooves us to understand how our cause, or causes, are viewed by the people whose hearts and minds Galula tells us we should fight for.

In the Long War we are now facing, we have to consider whether our difficulties stem from the strategic problem that Robert B. Asprey defines in his magisterial *War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History*.¹⁸ Asprey theorizes that French counterinsurgency doctrine in the Algerian rebellion "failed from the beginning, because, it ignored Mao's first lesson: 'If the political objectives that one seeks to attain are not the secret and profound aspirations of the masses, all is lost from the beginning.'"

As described by Galula and Thompson and tailored to fit each situation, classical counterinsurgency can be a sound guide to successful counterinsurgency if we are confronting a population whose "secret and profound aspirations" are to live in a state where "the legitimacy of the government derives from the consent of the governed." The unanswered question, however, is, Do we need a guide for doing so if the population's "secret and profound aspirations" are to live in the 7th century? **MR**

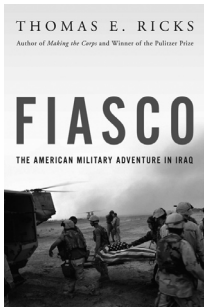
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MR Book Reviews



Featured Review

Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq, Thomas E. Ricks, Penguin Press, New York, 2006, 496 pages, \$27.95.

Thomas E. Ricks, the prominent *Washington Post* military affairs reporter, has contributed his own assessment of the evolving U.S. entanglement in Iraq in his new

book, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq*. This work follows just several months after Michael R. Gordon and retired General Bernard E. Trainor released *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq* (Pantheon, Westminster, MD, 2006), and will undoubtedly elicit strong reactions from those in uniform. Ricks broadens the aperture of debate, sharply needling the Bush administration and senior military leaders for their slapdash approach to the postwar effort. He is especially caustic about U.S. leaders' failure to understand that we had wandered into the pernicious thicket of an insurgency; about our misdirected and sluggish response once we did recognize that we were facing an insurgency; and about the abysmal conditions that led to the Abu Ghraib scandal.

While Ricks conducts a trenchant post-mortem of the convoluted lead-up and embarkation to war, *Fiasco* primarily focuses on the time between the occupation of Baghdad in April 2003 and the second battle for Fallujah in late 2004. There are no unprecedented revelations here. Ricks does not reveal the hideaway locations for weapons of mass destruction, nor does he uncover evidence to substantiate pre-war claims

about clandestine Baathist-Al Qaeda linkages. Instead, what he brings is a numbing degree of clarity, both anecdotal and evidentiary, to support three essential claims.

The first claim involves the argument for going to war. Ricks contends that it would have been insufficient to muster support had it not been made in the shadow of 9/11. With sad repetitiveness, he demonstrates how Congress seemed to sleep through the administration's drumbeat, unwilling to challenge even the wobbliest assertions that had been flagged within the intelligence community. He also indicts the media for its own docility at the time, singling out Judith Miller for her series in *The New York Times* that seemed to validate the administration's claims about weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Unfortunately, *Fiasco* went to press just a bit too soon to take note of a late July 2006 poll revealing that more than 60 percent of the American public *still* believe that Iraq had a WMD program. This, despite scores of post-invasion investigative reports that have consistently asserted the opposite—that there is scant evidence of anything resembling the notion that Saddam aspired to reinvigorating such efforts. It makes one wonder where the American public gets its news.

Ricks's second focus for critique is the lack of post-war planning. One senses the reporter's increasingly visceral response to what sometimes seems like a deliberate avoidance of preparation for the aftermath. He cites an Army War College convocation led by historian Conrad Crane in December 2002 that presciently warned: "The possibility of the

United States winning the war and losing the peace is real and serious. . . . Thinking about the war now and the occupation later is not an acceptable solution." Ricks condemns the planning done by Joint Task Force IV, under the direction of then-Brigadier General Steve Hawkins, citing one officer's assessment of JTF IV as "fifty-five yahoos with shareware who were clueless."

But even here, Ricks is not so much turning over new rocks as reinforcing what has already reified into conventional wisdom. After all, in the days immediately following the fall of Baghdad, the whole world watched spellbound as Iraqi citizens ransacked their own edifices of culture while American soldiers stood by, seemingly mystified by the erupting chaos around them.

Ricks is most ruthlessly effective when he disrobes the emperor by dissecting the administration's unwaveringly sunshiny outlook. Insistent denials that events had conspired against the U.S., after a series of convoluted attempts to define exactly who or what the American forces in Iraq were experiencing increased attacks from, further eroded the credibility that was so desperately needed to restore public confidence, both American and Iraqi. Ricks relentlessly exposes the failure of U.S. politicians and senior military leaders to understand the nature of the war they were facing, from the explosion of violence in Fallujah against Marines, to the concatenation of improvised explosive device attacks on the roads, to the growing turbulence of militias like those commanded by Moqtada al-Sadr.

Eventually, U.S. leaders would realize that they were in a full-blown

counterinsurgency, but the application of technique to counter the threat was unevenly applied in the absence of a coherent, Iraq-wide strategy. Ricks especially zeroes in on what he contends was the wrong approach, as exhibited by the heavy-handed kinetic operations waged by the 4th Infantry Division under then-Major General Ray Odierno. (Ricks is, however, somewhat ambivalent about the division, since he is obviously respectful of the battlefield leadership exhibited by Lieutenant Colonel Nate Sassman, the 1-8 Infantry battalion commander whose career foundered following an investigation. Ricks also expresses cautiously positive regard for Lieutenant Colonel Steve Russell, whose battalion achieved an arguable degree of traction in the face of mounting hostility.)

The third particular object of Rick's ire is those who were responsible for the infamous Abu Ghraib scandal. According to the writer, any combat successes the coalition enjoyed till then paled beside the damage done by a couple of lowly soldiers armed with digital cameras on a night shift in a prison that had achieved notoriety under Saddam. For the most part, Ricks seems to side with the prison's former commander, Brigadier General (now colonel) Janis Karpinski, who claims that her repeated warnings about the understaffed, overstuffed prison were ignored by intransigent senior commanders. The author is clearly angry about the "buck stopped there" mentality exhibited by Karpinski's military and political superiors, who exonerated themselves by punishing her and her errant Soldiers.

The aggregate effect of Ricks's three-pronged anatomy of the American effort is a debilitating pessimism. Ricks offers little opportunity for hope, and his epilogue paints a correspondingly bleak series of vignettes as he projects possible outcomes to the U.S. "adventure" in Iraq.

There are a few bright spots here and there. For example, Ricks holds up Colonel H.R. McMasters' masterful pacification of the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment's sector as one example of how counterinsurgency operations can be successfully prosecuted.

But Ricks more or less ignores the genuine successes of the coalition occupation: the two major elections constituted the emergence of fledgling democracy in Iraq. In large part, this oversight is a result of the writer's concentration on the second half of 2003 and most of 2004, prior to the conduct of the elections. Predictably, such oversight will expose Ricks's broader outline of the evolution of a quagmire to serious criticism itself. Ricks is biased, critics will say, and simply doesn't want to lend credit even where it is due. A military that has already assumed the defensive in terms of its reputation, its battlefield skill, and its strategic efficacy will turn a deaf ear to such perceived lambasting.

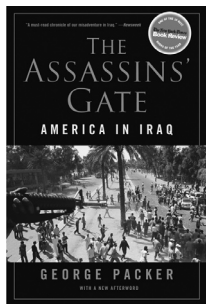
The timing of publication also did not allow Ricks the chance to acknowledge the cathartic killing of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, no bit player in the unending mayhem across the country, who televised beheadings of his captured victims.

Unfortunately, however, two other series of events now unfolding would seem to reinforce the

validity of Ricks's pessimism. In his epilogue, he declares that Iraq could collapse into civil war. That forecast gathered considerable steam in July, when Generals John Abizaid and George W. Casey both acknowledged that dramatic steps were needed to quell an explosion of sectarian violence in Baghdad. To add to the woe, as the book went to press, it became clear that the long-anticipated troop reduction would not occur; in fact, there would be yet another increase, with the 172d Stryker Brigade being extended to add boots to the effort to subdue Baghdad. And finally, events in Israel and Lebanon seemed to lend some credence to Ricks's assertion that the Iraq war could precipitate wider regional turmoil. Of course, every book must find its ending and draw a line in the sand. But this hair-pin turn in regional instability will almost certainly have dramatic consequences for the future of Iraq.

In *Fiasco*, Ricks brings substantial authority, overwhelming corroboration of his claims, and cumulatively distressing conviction to what he clearly sees as a tragic misadventure. If it hasn't already, time will perhaps add to the injuries he has chronicled. But as all of us who have been to Iraq have realized with bittersweet clarity, when it comes to what will ultimately become of the Land between the Two Rivers, only time will tell.

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THE ASSASSIN'S GATE: America in Iraq, George Packer, Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2005, 467 pages, \$26.00

The nominating committee for the inaugural Michael Kelly Award (a \$25,000 award given in memory of Michael Kelly, the first American

reporter killed while on assignment in Iraq) predicted that 20 years down the line, scholars searching for a definitive account of the troubled aftermath of the U.S. invasion of Iraq would no doubt turn to George Packer. That

was in 2004, and the nomination was for Packer's "War After the War," which appeared in the 24 November 2003 issue of *The New Yorker* magazine. Packer, however, was only a runner-up for the Kelly prize.

Today *The Assassins' Gate*, Packer's super chronicle of the continuing bureaucratic and military struggle in Iraq—which includes much of his reporting for the *New Yorker* but goes far, far beyond that—is already being cited as the most comprehensive if not "the" definitive examination of what turned into chaos for both victor and vanquished following the fall of Saddam Hussein.

Journalism being instant history, Parker does a mind-boggling job at what he does best: on-the-spot reportage, trenchant interviews assembled from all ranks of military and civilian society, compellingly drawn personalities, a look at the complicated psychology of Iraqis themselves (a surface never scratched in invasion planning), valuable background information and some lifting of rocks to shine daylight on the murky history of neo-cons.

Yet in the final analysis, the author leaves a major gap for future historians to fill. The unanswered questions persist: Why did the self-serving

word of certain exiles weigh so heavily with the U.S. administration?

Why a rush to judgment that excluded, for example, opinions such as those of Army Chief of Staff General Eric K. Shinseki? Were weapons of mass destruction a red herring from the very start? Why was such a far-reaching foreign policy initiative undertaken with planning that excluded all unwelcome opinion? Why did the administration not admit to initial mistakes, and recalibrate?

The Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA), created in early 2003 by President George W. Bush, may have been relegated early to the dustbin of history (its conclusions were not even sent to Washington), but its unheeded analysis offered an eerie look into the future: “History will judge the war against Iraq not by the brilliance of its military execution, but by the effectiveness of the post-hostilities activities.”

Shinseki’s testimony on the military requirements he perceived necessary to secure Iraq and rebuild the country was mocked by his civilian boss, the deputy defense secretary and ranking neo-con, Paul D. Wolfowitz. Packer writes that “it was Wolfowitz who ended the one serious public discussion of the fundamentals of the war plan before it had even begun . . . His message to Shinseki was a message to everyone in and out of uniform at the Pentagon: The cost of dissent was humiliation and professional suicide.”

Poignantly, Packer points out that “Wolfowitz, like nearly every other architect of the Iraq war, avoided military service in Vietnam, in his case through student deferments.” Vice President Dick Cheney, who received five deferments, later explained: “I had other priorities in the ‘60s than military service.” John Bolton, who like Bush joined the National Guard, was more straightforward: “I confess I had no desire to die in a Southeast Asian rice paddy.” (It should be noted that the dust jacket of this book and several published biographies do not list any military service for the author. He did, however, serve in the Peace Corps.)

Indeed, Iraq’s odyssey in the 21st century has been compared to that of Vietnam of the 20th century (in public statements at least, it has become an oft-repeated military

article of faith that there is no comparison). Iraq also has been held up for analysis against Malaysia, Algeria, the Central American wars and even the fall of France in 1940.

One reviewer wrote that he read *The Assassins’ Gate* with pen in hand and watched forests of exclamation points grow in the margins. As a confirmed book lover, I would suggest that you eschew such notation within the pages of the book, and instead keep a yellow legal pad handy to record every name along with its identity. Packer fills his narrative with the jetsam of failed programs who received their 15 seconds of fame, or infame as the case may be. Like the proverbial sporting event, you can’t tell the players without a program.

Thomas E. White? He was secretary of the Army, but not for long; now, he’s just another sacked footnote. Mohamed Makiya. Kanan’s father. Who?

This book has no tidy ending, as befits a war careening from quick victory toward unmanageability. The book itself also seems to unravel after the sharply focused early stages, dissolving into on-the-other-hands and maybes.

Packer readily admits to once being a liberal hawk on Iraq in the neo-con mold. He digs to find gems of hope amid a sea of gloom. In mid-book he writes that “in the absence of guidance . . . commanders in the provinces, such as the 101st Airborne’s Major General David Petraeus in Mosul, moved ahead with forming councils, finding business partners for reconstruction, training security forces, even setting local economic and border policy.” Meanwhile, however, Bernard Kerik (another name to write on your yellow pad), the colorful New York cop sent by Bush to rebuild security forces, “spent his time in Baghdad going on raids with South African mercenaries. . . . He went home after three months.”

Optimism heavily overlaid with caution reappeared in Packer’s “The Lesson of Tal Afar,” in the 10 April 2006 issue of *The New Yorker* soon after *The Assassins’ Gate* was published. Revisiting Iraq, he assessed yet another “success” sound bite from Washington: “The effort came after numerous failures, and very late in the war—perhaps too late. And the operation succeeded despite

an absence of guidance from senior civilian and military leaders in Washington. The Soldiers who worked to secure Tal Afar were, in a sense, rebels against an incoherent strategy that has brought the American project in Iraq to the brink of defeat.”

George W. Ridge Jr., J.D., Tucson, Arizona is a freelance writer who is widely published.



**THE WAR TAPES:
The First War Movie
Filmed by Soldiers
Themselves, (DVD),
Stewart Films, 2006.**

Rather than sending a film crew to Iraq to create another documentary on the war, director Deborah Scranton just sent cameras. She equipped three New Hampshire National Guardsmen with digital cameras and gave them a bit of training in their use. The resulting film, *The War Tapes*, creates an image of the war that is simultaneously intimate, sweeping, troubling, and inspiring.

For those few of us who have yet to deploy to Iraq, the film’s unmediated view of the war is a refreshing change from coverage all too often so far removed from the Soldiers’ view that it seems like, well, news coverage. The three main characters in the film—Sergeant Zach Bazzi, Specialist Michael Moriarti, and Sergeant Steve Pink—are caught on camera in moments of fatigue, fear, laughter, and cynicism, expressing their views with a candor few could capture through conventional documentary techniques.

Scranton edited over 900 hours of footage in Iraq and over 200 hours of footage back home—some of it filmed in the Soldiers’ absence and some capturing their return and reintegration—into a 94-minute film that won the Tribeca Film Festival’s Best International Documentary competition.

The War Tapes is a testament to the American Soldier who, despite danger, disappointment, and political discontent, does his job well and remains surprisingly sensitive under the layer of bravado he dons at times.

The film’s main characters are an interesting batch: Moriarti, a patriot so upset by 9/11 that he cannot wait to get to Iraq; Pink, a quietly funny man with a penchant for vivid metaphors, who regrets enlisting

even before the unit deploys; and Bazzi, a Lebanese-American fluent in Arabic, who reads *The Nation* and was apparently one of just several in the company who did not vote for the president in the elections that occurred during their deployment.

We follow the men and their comrades through train-up, their arrival at Camp Anaconda, and their many missions escorting convoys through the Sunni heartland. The film captures their “mad minute” response to an improvised explosive device attack early in their deployment. It captures their fear after a mortar strike near their tents. It captures their moments of toughness—calculated responses to the deaths of insurgents in Fallujah. It also captures their rash statements about the value of their lives versus those of Iraqi civilians—but balances these with the outrage the Soldiers express at a policy forbidding treatment of wounded Iraqis on their base and the anguish that grips the Soldiers after their vehicle hits an Iraqi pedestrian. Their grief is clearly deeper and more genuine than even their most convincing tough-guy routines.

The film’s predominantly amateurish camera work immerses us in the action as no professional following the squad with a Steadicam could. During intense engagements the camera, completely forgotten but still filming, pans and tilts wildly, so wildly that the only semblance of a coherent narrative the viewer receives is aural: the shouts of confused men and the bark of weapons close at hand. Somehow the genuineness of this footage achieves the gut-wrenching immediacy that the most meticulous action-film editing strives for but falls somewhat short of.

Upon the Soldiers’ return, we see them struggle to resume their former lives, not knowing how to speak to friends and loved ones about the war, not knowing how much treatment they should seek, and making decisions about their futures. Most interestingly, Bazzi—the Soldier most strongly opposed to the administration’s policies—becomes a citizen shortly after redeployment, and is the only one to reenlist.

Unlike some documentaries, this one takes no sides. It uses scenes of laughter, heartbreak, discouragement, and danger only to show us the war as it is for those we ask to fight it, reminding us of their

foibles, but, in the end, highlighting their strengths as they negotiate the murky terrain of nation-building and counterinsurgency.

Major William Rice, Fort Bragg, North Carolina

THE AXIS OF EVIL: Hezbollah and the Palestinian Terror, Shaul Shay, Transaction Publishers, Brunswick, NJ, 2004, 262 pages, \$44.95.

Shaul Shay is a research fellow at the International Policy Institute for Counter Terrorism at the Interdisciplinary Centre and head of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) department of history. His previous books include *Terror at the Command of the Imam*, *The Endless Jihad*, and *The Shahids*. Shay’s ostensible subjectivity towards Iranian-sponsored terror in the Levant notwithstanding, this book is of value to military readers for two reasons: it explains the genesis and evolution of Hezbollah from the 1979 Iranian revolution and the rise of Ayatollah Khomeini, and it explains how Hezbollah adapted its techniques—particularly with innovations in suicide bombings—to improve its effectiveness in striking Israeli and other targets in the Levant and around the globe. Any elucidation of Hezbollah is salient because, after 1996, the organization’s bomb experts established a degree of cooperation with Al-Qaeda. This book is germane for one other compelling reason: insurgents in Iraq have been emulating and adopting tactics and techniques that the terrorists of Hezbollah perfected in Lebanon and elsewhere in the latter part of the 20th century.

Shay explores the religious underpinnings of the Iranian Revolution and the export of that revolution through the radical Shi’ite fundamentalist sponsorship of terrorist organizations in Lebanon and elsewhere. He describes the Shi’ite terror networks that operated and continue to operate around the world, and explains Hezbollah’s *modus operandi*. The book contains a chronology of Iranian-sponsored terrorist attacks carried out in the 1980s and 1990s (sorted by type), a catalogue of Iranian-sponsored terrorist groups and their attacks against the IDF and other Israeli targets, and a comprehensive account of Iranian-sponsored attacks against a host of Western and Middle Eastern citizens.

Shay provides insight into Iranian-funded Shi’ite terrorist activity in the post-Khomeini era. More salient to this readership, Shay explains Iranian support of terrorist operations in the post-9/11 period in the context of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), particularly the employment of Shi’ite terrorists in Iraq since the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He also explores Iranian foreign policy objectives in view of the GWOT and, more significantly, in consideration of the reality that U.S. forces and their partners occupy two countries that straddle Iran’s western and eastern borders. Finally, Shay discusses the current U.S. policy toward Iran and Syria and the implications that stem from that policy.

This book has some shortcomings. For example, Shay inclines towards descriptive lists and chronologies that can at times be cumbersome. Overall, however, this work merits reading because it provides lucid insights into Hezbollah and other Iranian-sponsored terrorist groups, some of which also may have subsequently influenced Al-Qaeda and its associated terrorist organizations.

LTC Robert M. Cassidy, USA, Kuwait

THE CHINESE ARMY TODAY: Tradition and Transformation for the 21st Century, Dennis J. Blasko, Routledge, London and New York, 2006, 228 pages, \$34.95.

In *The Chinese Army Today*, Dennis Blasko set out to write the kind of book he wished he’d had available when he was assigned as a military attaché to China. The book’s purpose is to provide a concise but thorough picture of Chinese ground forces as they face the challenges of the 21st century.

By way of orientation, Blasko provides a short history of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) from its origins as a guerrilla organization fighting for social transformation to its incarnation as a conventional army in the late 20th century. But his focus is on the current transformation of the PLA as it prepares to meet the challenges that are sure to emerge as the People’s Republic flexes its economic and political muscle in Asia.

The current push for transformation in the Chinese military

originated with the desire of Mao's successor, Deng Xiaoping, to bring China into the 20th century with his four modernization programs for agriculture, industry, science and technology, and national defense. Wisely, in light of the low national-security threat to their country in the last two decades of the 20th century, the Chinese communist leadership decided to subordinate military modernization to economic development, a more basic national need.

Taiwan's rapid modernization and economic prowess, and the increasingly defiant statements issued by the leaders of what is perceived by China as a "break-away province," led to a renewed emphasis on the modernization of the Chinese armed forces. This is especially evident in the increased importance of amphibious operations and exercises since the late 1990s.

Modernization of the PLA goes beyond the obvious development and purchase of better arms and equipment. It also includes a thorough revision of doctrine, training, organization, tactics, and leadership. As other armies have realized, a smaller and better led, trained, and equipped force is much more effective than the kind of mass armies created during the industrial age.

Blasko also highlights the PLA's place in Chinese society and its close relationship to the communist party. While the PLA did use egregious military force to crush the student pro-democracy movement in Beijing's Tianamen Square, it is also actively engaged in public works, public health, and civil assistance programs. It is both loved by and "loves the people."

Blasko's book is an authoritative primer on the PLA for national security professionals. His background as an Army intelligence officer and China foreign area officer, and his intimate knowledge of primary sources enable him to provide thoughtful analysis. His book should be on every PACOM officer's "must read" list.

**MAJ (P) Prisco R. Hernández,
USA, Ph.D., Fort Leavenworth,
Kansas**

AFTER FIDEL: The Inside Story of Castro's Regime and Cuba's Next Leader, Brian Latell, Palgrave MacMillan, New York, 2005, 248 pages, \$24.95.

As the United States remains engaged in the complexities of Iraq's reconstruction and Iran's drive to acquire nuclear weapons, it cannot neglect adversaries in its own hemisphere. The U.S. is facing illegal immigration that allows terrorists to enter the country, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez continues his campaign of anti-American rhetoric, and finally there is Fidel Castro, the main subject of Brian Latell's new book, *After Fidel: The Inside Story of Castro's Regime and Cuba's Next Leader*.

Latell, a national intelligence officer for Latin America from 1990 to 1994, takes readers into the minds of Fidel Castro and his brother Raúl, the longest serving defense minister and Fidel's designated successor. The brothers were the illegitimate sons of a Spanish peasant named Angel Castro and grew up in a rough rural area in Brian, Cuba. Fidel's future, in particular, was shaped by his upbringing. Doted on by his sisters and mother and, because he was the first-born son, allotted an allowance by his father until he was 24, Fidel became a spoiled narcissist. In 1945, he entered the University of Havana Law School, not to become a great litigator or judge, but to seek control of the campus's political life.

Studying Fidel's university years helps the reader understand how the future dictator organized groups into mafias that agitated and protested the government. It also looks into the books that influenced the Cuban dictator. Fidel was obsessed with the poetry and essays of Jose Marti, who wrote primarily about Cuba's war for independence from Spain. Marti also saw a need to check the United States from eroding the unity of the Spanish-speaking Americas.

Fidel's 21st year was an eventful one. He took charge of university groups agitating for the liberation of Puerto Rico. Also, he and several other Cuban students traveled to Bogota, Columbia, to disrupt the pan-American conference that was about to establish the Organization of American States. Amid the urban violence in Bogota, Fidel emerged as a revolutionary. He read communist tracts not for the historical ideas of Karl Marx, but for the revolutionary tactics of Lenin.

In 1953, Fidel and Raúl grew closer as they planned and executed a failed raid on a fort at Moncada. This is the first glimpse we get of Raúl as

a realist and Fidel as a dreamer. After imprisonment for the failed raid, the brothers fled to Mexico, where Raúl introduced his brother to communist movements in the country and where they recruited Ché Guevara. Although Raúl became a committed communist in Mexico, Fidel did not fully convert until after he had seized power in Cuba in 1959. To the older brother, communism was a means to garner the power needed to topple the ruling regime in Cuba; later, it became an important source of ideological and actual support.

Latell discusses Fidel's many attempts to use his troops and insurgents as active warriors against the United States. We also get a picture of the global rejectionist conference that Fidel sponsored in 1979, which included such nefarious characters as Saddam Hussein, Palestinian militants, and the late Syrian strongman Hafiz al-Asad.

When Fidel finally passes from the scene, Raúl, supported by his generals, will ascend to the leadership. Ever the realist, Raúl wants to engage the Pentagon in discussions about immigration, counternarcotics, and security along the Florida strait even though U.S. policy limits talks between Cuban and U.S. military officials to fence-line discussions at Guantanamo Bay. Raúl has already made a policy decision to return Al-Qaeda detainees to Guantanamo if they escape the detention center, and he has embraced counterterrorism—something his brother has yet to come to terms with.

But Raúl is in his 70's, and there is no succession plan should he die before his brother. This is important to the United States because a widespread breakdown of law and order in Cuba could result in a massive seaborne exodus of Cubans to Florida. U.S. policymakers should pay attention to this book for two reasons—the prospect of a more practical, less dogmatic leader coming to power in Cuba, and the potential for a huge wave of illegal immigration.

**LCDR Youssef Aboul-Enein, USN,
Gaithersburg, Maryland**

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES OF THE OPERATIONAL ART, Michael D. Krause and R. Cody Phillips, Center of Military History Washington, DC, 2005, 487 pages, price unavailable.

Historical Perspectives of the Operational Art is a unique collection of essays by a distinguished group of professional officers and military historians. Bruce Menning's opening essay discusses the origins of operational art by addressing the changing nature of the military art, by looking at the professional vocabulary, and by reviewing the development of operational art in U.S. doctrine. The balance of the book is divided into four parts, each tracing developments in the operational art of a particular country during a particular period: Napoleonic France from the Jena campaign to the beginning of World War II; Germany from Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke's rise to blitzkrieg operations in World War II; Russia from Imperial Russian Army practices in 1878 to the end of the cold war; and the United States from the Gettysburg campaign to Operation Desert Storm.

The well-researched essays in this book provide a succinct history of the origins and development of operational art in theory and practice. Editors Michael D. Krause and R. Cody Phillips review the problems associated with devising a terminology to distinguish operational art from tactics and strategy and place various national practices in historical context. In their view, each nation developed either theory or practice based on historical experience, the impact of technological change, or the prevailing intellectual atmosphere. The French, for example, concentrated on the practical rather than the theoretical aspects of operational art. They took specific lessons from the Franco-Prussian War and used them to determine their practice at the start of World War I; similarly, lessons learned from World War I influenced French practice at the start of World War II. Krause traces Moltke's influence on German operational art to the Franco-Prussian War. German Army Brigadier General Guenther R. Roth discusses General Alfred Graf von Schlieffen's influence and the dangers inherent in a dogmatic approach. Roth also looks at Field Marshal Erich von Manstein's contributions to theory and prac-

tice as evidenced in the Sickle Cut Operation (France, May 1940) and the Rochade Operation (the counterstroke on the Donetz, February-March 1943).

The individual essayists discuss a variety of important doctrinal issues such as the importance of simultaneity and sequencing in campaign planning, the commitment of the operational reserve, how operational miscalculations can be overcome by tactical flexibility, Karl von Clausewitz's concept of the culminating point, and the utility of German Auftrags-taktik. In reviewing Germany's operational innovations during World War II, Roth shows how operational deception helped fix the Allied focus on the North German border, thereby enabling the spectacular surprise airborne assault on the Belgian fortress of Eben-Emael. In a lengthy article on operational logistics, Graham H. Turbiville explains the Soviet approach to the integration of operational planning and logistics from 1939-1990, a topic not often given the attention it deserves. Other articles analyze problems with intelligence support to operational planning (Gettysburg), with integrating an important tactical operation into a larger campaign plan (Normandy), and with command and control (the separation of X Corps from Eighth Army command after the Inchon landing).

Several aspects of this book intrigued me. The research and historical analyses are outstanding, and I found it interesting to trace the different national approaches to operational theory and practice. I noted that it took a certain kind of intellectual environment to set the incubating conditions for doctrinal development, but at the same time, no matter how intellectually rigorous the ensuing development was, the doctrine could fail in practice, where it counted—as the Soviets learned in Afghanistan. Any book that stimulates a reader to think has value. Krause and Cody have provided a fine work for both the theorist and the practitioner.

LTC Christopher E. Bailey, U.S. Army, Charlottesville, Virginia

FANATICISM AND CONFLICT IN THE MODERN AGE, Matthew Hughes and Gaynor Johnson, eds., Frank Cass, Abington, Oxon, United Kingdom, 2005, 171 pages, \$135.00.

Fanaticism and Conflict in the Modern Age offers revealing insights into the frequently misinterpreted realities of fanaticism. Drawing on the usual historical and contemporary examples, but including less obvious ones like the Sudanese Dervishes of the 1890s and the loyalist Orange Order parades of Northern Ireland, the authors assembled here skillfully bring to light the complex nature of this recurring phenomenon.

Adroitly researched, the book highlights the philosophical underpinnings of fanaticism and probes the ideological links between politics and religion. It illuminates the many expressions of fanaticism in the modern era. In "Religious and Nationalist Fanaticism: the Case of Hamas," Meir Litvak explores the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement and concludes that fanatical movements need not be devoid of rational thinking; they can, on occasion, give precedence to tactical needs or recognize constraints in order to serve strategic goals. Barrie Paskins makes one of the more profound claims about fanaticism in "Fanaticism in the Modern Era" when he declares that "the concept [of fanaticism] is complex and shrouded in prejudice and stereotype." This perceptive observation points to one of the book's central themes: where you stand—your own environment, your cultural values, the standards you adhere to—determines how you will perceive a particular act. For the military planner, this has important connotations. Instead of merely demonizing a rival whose actions fall outside the bounds of Western norms, military professionals should endeavor to understand and rationalize the motives behind those actions. If this is done, the fanatic becomes less primeval; we can figure out his motivations and use them to make him susceptible to influence. The case studies presented in this book prove that fanatics, while fanatical, are far from irrational. Understanding their motivation is essential if we are to succeed in the Global War on Terror.

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