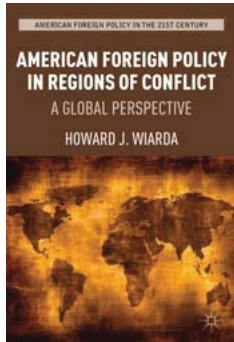

AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY IN REGIONS OF CONFLICT: A Global Perspective

Howard J. Wiarda, Palgrave MacMillan
New York, 2012, 194 pages, \$16.50

FEATURED REVIEW



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS PROFESSOR Howard J. Wiarda argues that academia has become so scientific in its approach to the study of international relations that mathematical models with presumed universal applicability are usurping the humanistic and environ-

mental models of U.S. engagement. Wiarda views this development as the proximate cause of a broken link between the study of international relations and the practice of U.S. foreign policy. He illustrates and addresses this problem through a succinct historical examination of U.S. foreign policy across all regions of the world. He argues that a re-infusion of comparative politics and international relations into the thought processes of foreign policymakers will make all the difference in their effectiveness. However, the strength of his argument waxes and wanes in the context of some of his regional analyses.

Starting in western Europe, Wiarda reaches some contradictory and naïve conclusions. He claims that our “cultural, language, family origins, and political institutions that were derived from and tie us to our European allies are weakening in the face of our increasingly multicultural American demographics.” Yet, on the same page, he asserts that our economic and cultural ties to western Europe will remain strong. He also claims that the demise of the Soviet Union made the NATO alliance obsolete. Yet, if one considers all that NATO has done in the Balkans, Afghanistan (establishment of the International Security Assistance Force), and most recently in Libya, Wiarda’s argument falters. Wiarda also underestimates the influence of a

resurgent Russia, whose national interests are largely at odds with those of NATO.

Most dismaying is Wiarda’s lack of objectivity in assessing the military as an instrument of foreign policy. He highlights U.S. conquest of the Philippines in 1898, the use of atomic weapons against Japan in World War II, and the failure of United Nations forces to reunify the Korean peninsula as being detrimental to America’s relationship with Asian nations. Moreover, he ignores other facts such as Japan’s treacherous attack on Pearl Harbor, the risk of a nuclear exchange with the Soviet Union, and the risk of a third world war because of the Korean issue. Wiarda incorrectly cites the Korean War’s duration from 1950-1952, when, in fact, the armistice was signed on 27 July 1953. He also erroneously cites the “defeat of U.S. forces in Vietnam” as they attempted to aid and prop up the South Vietnamese government. In fact, U.S. political will succumbed to North Vietnamese strategy rather than U.S. troops succumbing to defeat. Clearly, Wiarda fails to comprehend the use of the military as an instrument of foreign policy.

Wiarda is at his best in advocating greater cultural, historical, geographical, and demographic empathy while understanding that democratic nation building takes generations, not decades. He recommends increased immersion of students and diplomats in troubled regions to gain and apply greater expertise in the study and practice of foreign policymaking. This recommendation is of limited utility while the military must stabilize contentious regions and compensate for the dearth of qualified diplomats. After all, when U.S. lives are at stake, U.S. political will to build other nations is a steadily emptying hourglass.

Lt. Col. Peter G. Knight, Ph.D., U.S. Army
Princeton, New Jersey

THE BOXER REBELLION AND THE GREAT GAME IN CHINA

David L. Silbey, Hill and Wang, New York
2012, 273 pages, \$26.95

THE BOXER REBELLION was simultaneously a display of colonial power politics and early 20th

century multinational operations. Numerous nations converged on China in the late 19th century as the sole remaining frontier for colonial growth, dividing primarily coastal areas—captured land—for trading posts and naval resupply stations. At the same time, the long-standing governance structures based around a Chinese emperor were quickly disintegrating.

The environment of weakening local power and increasing incursion of Western cultural, religious, and military might created a backlash among disillusioned Chinese. As in the past, conservative locals rallied around groups that adhered to the religious and cultural principles they felt were slipping away; in 1900, this took the form of the Boxers. On the other side, descriptions of how colonial nations attempted, and ultimately failed, to join forces to put down the rebellion were of particular interest.

David L. Silbey comprehensively covers the events of the Boxer Rebellion, from the dynamics creating the conflagration to the Western response and the ultimate results. He obviously knows the subject well and uses a plethora of primary and contemporary sources, as well as other analyses of the events of 1900. However, as is the case with many histories written by Western authors, the sources are predominantly those of the English-speaking nations, missing the other side of the narrative.

Overall, *The Boxer Rebellion and the Great Game in China* is a great linear description of the events of 1900. However, it leaves much to be desired as a compelling story that could educate the uninitiated. I do not recommend the book for those seeking an engaging story of the Boxer Rebellion, but I do recommend it for those who are attempting to develop a comprehensive understanding of why and how this event occurred.

**Capt. Nathan K. Finney, U.S. Army,
Cambridge, Massachusetts**

**THE UNITED STATES
MILITARY IN LIMITED WAR:
Case Studies in Success and Failure, 1945-1999**
Kevin Dougherty, McFarland & Co.
Jefferson, NC, 2012, 227 pages, \$40.00

far more low-intensity conflicts than conventional wars. Recognizing this, the 1993 edition of U.S. Army Field Manual 100-5, *Operations*, recognized a separate category known as *operations other than war*. Although this term has fallen out of favor, retired colonel Kevin Dougherty argues for the continued validity of the principles it represents: perseverance, objectivity, security, unity of effort (for coalition operations), legitimacy, and restraint.

To explore this topic, the author considers eight dissimilar military actions of the post-war era. Four generally were successful—U.S. assistance during the Greek Civil War, the 1958 intervention in Lebanon, the 1965 Dominican Republic intervention, and the 1980s confrontation with Marxist Nicaragua. Four operations failed: the pacification aspects of Vietnam, and ill-defined interventions in Beirut (1982-1983), Somalia, and Haiti. Dougherty's conclusions sometimes seem self-evident, but they are useful. The keys to success, he argues, are perseverance, objective, and sufficient security to protect the troops while helping convince the population the operation is legitimate. As in any military operation, failure to specify and focus on an achievable objective often led to disaster. In the second Beirut operation, for example, he says there was no clear mission because no political agreement existed on the ground. However, U.S. forces had to operate under restrictive rules of engagement as if they were engaged in peacekeeping.

There are a few flaws with the study. The author accepts the traditional interpretation that the Greek Civil War was a deliberate communist attempt to seize power, whereas revisionists have argued persuasively that the right wing leaders of the royal government and army were so determined to repress all leftists that they forced the leftists to revolt in self-defense. Many of the events in the book are now so unfamiliar that readers would benefit from maps for general orientation.

Such minor questions do not detract from the real value of the study. In an era when internal defense, stability, and contingency deployments remain common missions for U.S. troops, this selection of case studies correctly emphasizes the enduring issues that should guide military planning and analysis. As such, Dougherty's book is worthwhile reading for professional soldiers and the general public.

**Col. Jonathan M. House, U.S. Army, Retired,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

THROUGHOUT ITS HISTORY, and especially since 1945, the U.S. military has engaged in

**ASIA'S CAULDRON:
The South China Sea and
the End to a Stable Pacific**

Robert D. Kaplan, Random House, New York 2014,
189 pages, \$29.00

GEOGRAPHY MATTERS. IN *Asia's Cauldron: The South China Sea and the End to a Stable Pacific*, Robert D. Kaplan uses a realist's lens and a historian's nuance to remind the reader that while globalization is a concept, geography is a fact. Kaplan believes geography is essential to analyzing the present and predicting the near future of the South China Sea. This region cannot be ignored because an astonishing amount of shipping passes through it. It is the "demographic cockpit of the globe," and there is no balance of power. China is a giant among significantly weaker nations.

Kaplan convincingly argues that geography informs world views. Specifically, a nation's relationship to three archipelagos (the Pratas, Parcels, and Spratlys) profoundly affects its foreign policy paradigm. Claimed by nearly everyone, these islands present a challenge that the United States and Asian nations will face. It is not simply about who wins territorial claims, but it is about world order and international norms versus military might (the Melian dialogue comes up frequently).

The bulk of Kaplan's work focuses on how other nations will deal with China and its "nine-dotted line"—the line that illustrates China's audacious claim to most of the South China Sea. Kaplan tours the nations who contest China's claim to see if they will be able to back up their contentions with more than rhetoric. Kaplan is at his weakest in this section, where he tends toward overgeneralizations and assessments made largely from observing luxury shopping malls and official functions. Still, the historical and cultural bits are interesting. They build to Kaplan's assessment that no other Southeast Asian nation is capable of contesting China.

Enter the United States, which at present stands to defend the status quo. Yet, if China's growth continues, China eventually will be able to replace the United States and determine the regional order.

Kaplan offers two possibilities for how this transfer of power could play out. First, if U.S. power quickly and significantly declined in the region, the region would "Finlandize." By this, Kaplan means that China's military might and the region's economic dependency on China would cause other South East Asian nations to "quietly be captured by China without the latter needing to invade."

Kaplan hopes for a second possibility. In this version, the United States would use its military dominance to encourage adherence to international norms. The United States would pressure China into playing by the rules (such as submitting its territorial disputes to international arbitration) while simultaneously encouraging other Southeast Asian nations to create diplomatic agreements until their collective strength could balance against China's. However, Kaplan has a realist's skepticism of legal frameworks, and he seems prepared to bow to the inevitable arc of history: China will dominate the region. While the vast South China Sea may be "a barrier to aggression," it offers no promise of effective U.S. influence.

This book is refreshingly clear. While the reader may disagree with the thesis that geography constrains policy, Kaplan's analysis is so strong that it is at least worthy of a good rebuttal from another perspective. Moreover, if the international relations aspect is not enough to interest the military-minded reader, Kaplan's perspective on the relevance of land forces will certainly drum up equal parts interest and inter-service rivalry. "Europe is a landscape; East Asia is a seascape." Because of this incontrovertible fact, Kaplan believes the difficulty of occupying land means that rational nations will opt for cheaper forms of power projection, namely sea denial. And Kaplan believes Asian nations are nothing if not rational.

**Capt. Roxanne E. Bras, U.S. Army,
Southern Pines, North Carolina**

**COUNTERINSURGENCY:
Exposing the Myths of the New Way of War**
Douglas Porch, Cambridge University Press Cam-
bridge, 2013, 434 pages, \$27.99

WHAT DOES IT look like when a good historian gets mad? This book offers at least one answer. The author, Douglas Porch, is an experienced and

respected military historian and author of well-regarded books on conventional warfare (such as *March to the Marne* and *The Path to Victory*) and colonial warfare (such as *The Conquest of the Sahara* and *The French Foreign Legion*). However, he opens his newest book by recalling a promising former student at the Naval Postgraduate School who was killed in a “green-on-blue” incident in Afghanistan, a war Porch describes as a “murderous errand equipped with a counterfeit doctrine that became the rage in 2007 following the publication of FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*.” Clearly, Porch is not a fan of counterinsurgency doctrine and its modern evangelists. Nor does he make his case in the nuanced, cautious tone of most academic scholarship.

The narrative presents a series of case studies going back to the 18th century. The focus is on the experiences of the British, French, and U.S. militaries, starting with France’s ruthless suppression of the royalist revolt in the Vendée in 1793, and extending up to the current war in Afghanistan. From these cases, he argues that the whole concept of “small wars” and counterinsurgency is based on a mythology produced “by shoddy research and flawed, selective analysis of cases.” From the false claims of French colonial officers who conquered Algeria in the 19th century, to the “triumphalism” of those who, like Tom Ricks, celebrated the “surge” in Iraq in 2007, the historical record has been pillaged and perverted to use counterinsurgency as a toolbox of surefire techniques to spread the benefits of Western culture, wealth, and political values. In Porch’s view, such history is either foolish self-delusion or outright deceit.

Not surprisingly, Porch gives special attention to well-known 20th century insurgencies such as the unhappy French experience in Algeria, the uncertain British approach to Northern Ireland, and the U.S. failure in Vietnam. In these cases and many others, Porch discovers a familiar pattern—apparent success at the tactical level tended to disguise strategic failures. Moreover, all too frequently, a “hearts and minds” approach served as a smokescreen for extralegal brutality. Even the British and their reputation for skill in “aid to civil authority” proved, in Porch’s view, incapable of real institutional learning, with their muddled efforts in southern Iraq providing the most recent evidence. The narrative makes for grim reading, salted with occasional flashes of humor. T. E. Lawrence, for example, is mocked as “Dances with Camels.”

The deeper one gets into the book, the more Porch’s style descends from historical analysis to a sort of rant. By the time he turns his attention to the war in Iraq, his attacks extend beyond past proponents of counterinsurgency to denunciations of hero-worshipping journalists, religious fundamentalists, neo-imperialists, stupid Army generals, and even fellow faculty members at the Naval Postgraduate School. At one point, he even resorts to using “The Daily Show” as a footnote. Very odd. Nevertheless, the book has made its way onto the Chief of Staff of the Army’s new professional reading list. Its inclusion there suggests either (1) a bold willingness to endure Porch’s scathing criticism of Army leadership and doctrine, or (2) that no one on Gen. Odierno’s staff has read it. To be clear, for all its angry and sometimes repetitive tone, the author provides an impressive review of the newest scholarship on “small wars.” If approached with some reservations, the book serves as an important and entertaining counterweight to overzealous advocates of modern counterinsurgency. I cautiously recommend this book for those curious about the future of the counterinsurgency debate.

Scott Stephenson, Ph.D.,

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

THE GREAT WAR:

A Combat History of the First World War

Peter Hart, Oxford University Press, New York 2013,

522 pages, \$34.95

WE ARE APPROACHING the centennial of the beginning of World War I. This may be a time when a war that has faded from broad consideration rebounds into consciousness. *The Great War: A Combat History of the First World War* is a good place for the military professional to become familiar with World War I military operations. Peter Hart set about to create an operational history that would cover the globe for the duration of the war, from 1914 to 1918. Despite the immense challenge of the task, he has succeeded.

Hart is an oral historian at the Imperial War Museum in London. His previous book, *The Somme: The Darkest Hour on the Western Front*, began a reassessment of operations in a way that challenged prevailing opinion. In *The Great War: A Combat History of the*

First World War, Hart establishes a framework of leadership, equipment, tactics, and operational context as he traces the battlefield results. By analyzing the interplay of new weapons, evolving tactics, and command decisions, he traces the contours of a titanic struggle. Military leaders strove valiantly to adapt and to escape the confines of total war in an environment that challenged their ability to keep up.

Hart selects quotations from key players, from general to private, throughout *The Great War*, based on his knowledge of first-hand sources. These quotations adeptly illustrate his points of emphasis and add verve to the narrative. By capitalizing on his position as oral historian, Hart plumbs the thinking of military leaders and challenges many prevailing opinions about the adaptability of command and tactics during the war. He revisits many failed decisions, to illuminate their causes, but also provides context that reveals how the reactions of military leaders were reasonable even when they failed. Hart at least makes the challenges of adaptation and failures in command more understandable.

Hart includes the peripheral theaters of war, such as Salonika, Mesopotamia, the Sinai, and Palestine, but not in detail. Despite this, *The Great War* serves as a primer for those who have never read much about the periphery of this worldwide conflict. He provides thorough treatments of the western and eastern fronts and the war at sea. He is most successful in levels of detail and nuance in explaining the western front, as we might expect from his background and previous writing.

The book progresses by theater over time. It includes representative photographs and a map of each theater at the front of the book. This reviewer found the absence of operational maps to parallel the discussion in each chapter to be at least a distraction, though it appears to be a conscious editorial decision. The narrative would be improved by adding sketch maps to illustrate the operational movements being so carefully described.

The Great War may not satisfy the widely read World War I historian in search of new, substantial arguments with compelling proofs, but it will well serve the military professional who desires to understand World War I in a tactical, operational, and human sense, on the eve of the centennial of the conflict.

**Col. Dean A. Nowowiejski, Ph.D., U.S. Army, Retired,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

**AMERICAN SNIPER,
Memorial Edition**

Chris Kyle with Jim DeFelice and Scott McEwen
Harper Collins, New York, 2013
466 pages, \$29.99

A *AMERICAN SNIPER* was originally published in 2012. This memorial edition follows author Chris Kyle's murder by a disturbed ex-marine he was trying to help and includes tributes from friends, family, and fellow warriors. Each poignant entry reveals much about Kyle and the effect he had on others. Because Kyle worked in the special operations community, his challenge was to write an informative and relevant book without saying too much. Though this story will likely satisfy readers wanting a broad description of life as a Navy SEAL (sea-air-land team) sniper, it may disappoint others wanting a vividly told, detailed story.

Chris Kyle was a sniper assigned to SEAL Team 3, stationed in Coronado, Calif. He faced a significant hurdle in writing *American Sniper*. Special operations forces are often called the silent professionals, and they expect their members to avoid the spotlight and say little to nothing about their activities. Kyle cannot speak specifically of his fellow SEALs. Though he does provide group photos, the pictures of all living members are blacked out. Names are almost never mentioned. This is clearly the right approach, yet the requirement for secrecy makes the book, at times, read like a redacted report. Because of the need for security, the Department of Defense and the Navy review books such as this to ensure they avoid presenting details of classified military operations. Readers of *American Sniper* must keep this limitation in mind.

With 160 confirmed kills, Kyle was the most lethal sniper in U.S. military history, but he was quite humble about his reputation and ability. By his own admission, he was not the best marksman, though a confirmed kill at 2,100 yards suggests he must have been enormously skilled. Further, he suggests that his role, providing overwatch for a number of different units from different services, allowed him far more opportunities to engage the enemy than many of his legendary predecessors experienced. He is matter-

of-fact in describing his job—he killed the enemy to protect his fellow sailors, soldiers, and marines.

The book has shortcomings, though they are minor and understandable. The author speaks little about sniper tactics, techniques, and procedures for obvious reasons, yet discussion of these intricacies would greatly interest most readers. Most descriptions are generic. The unit made contact, an insurgent appeared, and Kyle delivered the killing shot. There is little in the way of psychology except for a short discussion on the challenge of the first kill and how some snipers experience slumps. Many readers might wonder why a person would wish to be a sniper or what makes a sniper different from other close combat warriors. As for tactics, how does a sniper gain the edge when dueling with an enemy sniper? Discussion of tactics is minimal.

Kyle's opinions on how recent wars have been fought make the book interesting and relevant. Though he does not belabor these points, he offers insight into the mind of the warrior in direct contact with the enemy. For example, he wholly disagreed with "putting an Iraqi face on the war," claiming that the idea was "garbage." He believed that training the Iraqi force while trying to win was preposterous, that the United States should first win the war and then worry about training the host-nation forces. Presumably, he is not alone in that viewpoint.

Further, Kyle seemed to think little of winning hearts and minds; he maintained that cooperation occurred in Ramadi only after U.S. forces had killed massive numbers of combatants. Once it was clear U.S. forces "meant business," the tribal leaders threw out the insurgents and cooperated. Kyle suggests that the United States could have killed its way to victory. This is an interesting point and worthy of consideration. Many strategic leaders repeat the claim that such an approach cannot succeed. Yet, if the soldiers on the ground disagree, we have at a minimum a failure to create shared understanding—a requirement for successful mission command.

Despite the book's limitations, Kyle tells an interesting and important story. He is honest and self-effacing, candidly discussing marital challenges, the stress of his divided loyalty between family and SEAL team, and his daughter's health scare. His point of view, one seen through a high-power scope mounted on a .300 Winchester Magnum rifle, comes across clearly. To use Chris Kyle's famous motto,

"Despite what your mamma told you, violence does solve problems."

**Lt. Col. Jim Varner, U.S. Army, Retired,
Platte City, Missouri**

**BROTHERS AT WAR:
The Unending Conflict in Korea**
Sheila Miyoshi Jager, W.W. Norton and Company
New York, 2013, 605 pages

FUTURE HISTORIANS MAY one day recall the Korean War as the world's longest, strangest conflict. In *Brothers at War*, Sheila Miyoshi Jager recounts seven decades of bloodshed on the Korean Peninsula. She begins with the brutal civil war that followed World War II and continues through the North Korean invasion of 1950 and the three subsequent years of open warfare. She concludes with the current standoff between the brutal and unpredictable regime in Pyongyang and its uneasy neighbors, most notably the prosperous Republic of Korea.

The author, a professor of East Asian studies at Oberlin College, focuses the first half of her study on the devastating conflict between United Nations and communist forces. Jager's version briefly summarizes the war's key military actions. She incorporates keen observations on the political and cultural aspects of the war, particularly its waning U.S. support, the lengthy and frustrating cease-fire negotiations, and the difficult relationship between Korean premier Syngman Rhee and his United Nations allies.

These are familiar topics to Western scholars and history buffs. However, Jager also examines many of the war's less publicized issues, such as the plight of South Korean civilians hastily drafted and thrown into combat with U.S. units, the alleged war crimes by both sides, the mistreatment of prisoners of war, and the increasing role of South Korean military forces during the course of the war.

Delegates finally agreed to a cease-fire in July 1953, formally ending hostilities between communist and United Nations forces on the Korean peninsula. As Jager illustrates, the 60-year-old cease-fire has proven anything but peaceful. Subsequent decades have been marked by a seemingly endless series of bellicose and occasionally bloody incursions by the North Korean

regime, most recently its March 2013 renunciation of the cease-fire agreement itself. The author presents these events within the context of the North Korean regime's continuing struggle for legitimacy, internally and in the international community.

Meanwhile, the war's legacy has influenced political and economic development significantly on both sides of the demilitarized zone. Additionally, it has shaped events far beyond the Korean Peninsula. These include the collapse of Sino-Soviet relations, the rapprochement between Japan and South Korea, and the U.S. intervention in Vietnam—which included a significant contingent of South Korean combat troops.

There are, unavoidably, some gaps in Jager's account, most notably the decline and fall of the Rhee regime in the years after the cease-fire. Still, the author successfully presents seven decades of history within a single volume, and she paints a particularly sharp portrait of the personal and political conflicts within the communist bloc.

Jager narrates these developments in clear and elegant prose, supported by an impressive array of primary and secondary sources from Western and Eastern archives. Several dozen photographs and maps illustrate the narrative, while 91 pages of informative end notes provide additional details worthy of attention from scholars and popular audiences alike.

Sixty years after a cease-fire nominally ended the Korean War, military and political analysts still consider the Korean demilitarized zone to be the most dangerous place on earth. In *Brothers at War*, Sheila Myoshi Jager provides readers with a work of remarkable scholarship that vividly illustrates why.

**Lt. Col. William C. Latham Jr., U.S. Army, Retired,
Colonial Heights, Virginia**

**HANOI'S WAR:
An International History of the
War for Peace in Vietnam**
Llien-Hang T. Nguyen,
The University of North Carolina Press
Chapel Hill, 2012, 464 pages, \$34.95

THIS IS ONE of the most important books on the Vietnam War to come along in some time. Llien-Hang T. Nguyen is a Vietnamese American

who was born in Saigon in 1974. She and her family fled to the United States in 1975 as their country fell to the communists. Now an associate professor at the University of Kentucky, Nguyen, who has “kin who served on both sides,” seeks to come to grips with a war that to her was “both distant and proximate.” She focused her research efforts on determining “how certain leaders made specific decisions . . . that led to the deaths of approximately 58,000 Americans and an estimated 2-6 million Vietnamese.”

Using unprecedented access to the Foreign Ministry Archives in Hanoi and extensive interviews with many of the principals in Vietnam, Nguyen has produced a remarkable piece of scholarship that serves to correct many of the commonly held ideas about how the war was conducted on the other side. In most historiography on the war, the key players in North Vietnam are Ho Chi Minh and Vo Nguyen Giap. Nguyen demonstrates convincingly that the real power in Hanoi was held by the “comrades Le”—Party Secretary Le Duan and his closest ally, Le Duc Tho, who together controlled Vietnam for over half a century. Nguyen charts the rise of Le Duan from his early days in the struggle against the French in the First Indochina War to his ascendancy as First Party Secretary in 1959. Once in office, Le Duan used the police and intelligence services to eliminate rivals and consolidate his control of both the party and the state. Fully in charge, Le Duan prosecuted a total war against South Vietnam and the United States, always focused on the desired end state, which was a reunified Vietnam under communist control. In order to sustain the war effort, Le Duan skillfully walked a tight rope between the Soviet Union and China, determined to maintain “equilibrium in the Sino-Soviet split” so that he could ensure his partners provided Hanoi with the materiel and support needed to fight the war.

Le Duan was single-minded; his intense focus on the end state sometimes blinded him, particularly when he held fast to the idea of a general offensive followed by a general uprising. This approach, particularly with regard to the 1968 Tet Offensive and the 1972 Spring-Summer Offensive, often led to “staggering losses” for the North Vietnamese side. Yet, Le Duan never wavered. Failing to win the war outright on the battlefield, the “comrades Le” prosecuted the strategy of *dam va danh* (“talking while fighting”), an approach that eventually resulted in the signing of the Paris Peace Accords and the subsequent withdrawal

of U.S. troops from Vietnam. From that point on, it was just a matter of time until Hanoi achieved ultimate victory.

This groundbreaking book provides a unique and compelling perspective on the war. It clears up many misconceptions about how Vietnam fought the war. Extremely well written and meticulously researched, the book would be helpful for anyone trying to understand the complexities of this contentious conflict that continues to influence the United States and its armed forces.

**Lt. Col. James H. Willbanks, Ph.D., U.S. Army,
Retired, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

**A MILITARY HISTORY
OF THE COLD WAR: 1944-1962**

Jonathan M. House, University of Oklahoma Press
Norman, 2012, 546 pages, \$40.50

ALTHOUGH DR. JONATHAN House's *A Military History of the Cold War: 1944-1962* focuses on the operational level of war, there may be no clearer, more comprehensive evidence for Clausewitz's contention that "war is but the continuation of politics by other means" than this book provides. In conflict after conflict, the reader sees that if one side did not achieve its desired end state, the reason was that it failed to address the political components of the conflict sufficiently.

House shows that no military action has value in and of itself. What matters instead are political questions such as these: Does a military action create more enemies than it eliminates from the battlefield? Does it gain support from allies? Does it drive a wedge between the enemy and its base of popular support? Does it help address legitimate political grievances? Does it increase the likelihood of broader war, or worse, nuclear holocaust? These things really matter in war, especially in the nuclear and information age.

House shows that the Cold War provides especially fertile ground for the study of counterinsurgency. This stands to reason, since the United States and the Soviet Union—the two great nuclear superpowers of the conflict—avoided direct confrontation, relying largely instead on proxies

to fight each other. House discusses 13 insurgencies in detail. After reading these case studies, the counterinsurgent comes away with a better understanding of which military actions could be successfully employed again and which, due to local peculiarities or changes in global conditions, only could have worked when and where they did.

Additionally, the book enhances the military student's understanding of the current security environment. For example, the British Army's counterinsurgency experience in the 1960s in what was then called Aden illuminates the outlook and motivations of warring parties in Yemen today.

Another great strength of the book is its in-depth treatment of the Soviet Union. House is a retired military intelligence colonel who spent more than a decade of his service during the Cold War. He has co-written four books on the largest German and Soviet battles of World War II. His knowledge of the Soviet Union is deep. This, coupled with the fact that many primary Soviet sources from this period only recently became accessible to Western historians, ensures that the U.S. and Soviet perspectives are balanced and the sections discussing the Soviet Union are fresh and interesting.

The reader needs to be prepared, however, for some distressing discoveries. The reader may be shocked to learn, for instance, that the Department of Defense deliberately exposed 250,000 service members to varying levels of radiation over two decades to ascertain radiation's effects. They also may be surprised to learn just how close our country came to initiating nuclear war. The world's close call with nuclear war during the Cuban Missile Crisis is well known. Less well known are narrow escapes such as the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommending nuclear strikes against China five times during the 1958 Taiwan Straits crisis.

In short, the Cold War deserves to be the subject of more study at senior service schools, military academies, and Reserve Officer Training Corps programs, and this book deserves to be a textbook for any course on the conflict. In this book, instructors and students can find measured, verifiable, and insightful conclusions regarding the Cold War, along with lessons still applicable to conflict today.

**Lt. Col. Douglas A. Pryer, U.S. Army
Fort Huachuca, Arizona**

PERSUASION AND POWER:

The Art of Strategic Communication

James P. Farewell, Georgetown University Press
Washington, DC, 2012, 270 pages, \$29.95

AMERICANS' ABILITY TO market everything from McDonald's to the latest worldwide fad is unparalleled in history. Yet, the United States is challenged when it comes to marketing itself. James Farewell, an internationally recognized expert in strategic communication and cyberwarfare, has written an insightful work on what strategic communication is and why we as a nation are failing at it.

Farewell explores the U.S. government's vain quest to engage foreign audiences throughout the world. The United States often finds itself in "the react mode" in response to more effective and efficient efforts of state and nonstate actors. The nation's inability to communicate strategically reflects a lack of emphasis by our senior leaders, parochial turf wars between agencies, and the absence of a single comprehensive approach. Farewell describes the view held by many in the U.S. government, especially in the Department of Defense, that strategic communication is a process rather than an art. Farewell counters that communication it is partly a process but we need to think of it more as an art. The Department, moreover, exacerbates its strategic communication problems by conceiving of strategic communication in terms of inform and influence. The author counters that smart public affairs is about influence. He states that "smart public affairs always seeks to influence, if for nothing else than to bolster credibility."

Farewell proposes viable solutions to maximize the effectiveness of U.S. strategic communication efforts. These include centralizing control of strategic communication for the U.S. government within the White House, revising current definitions (which are inconsistent and undercut our credibility), improving military training in information operations, improving State Department efficiency, measuring effectiveness better, holding people accountable, and realizing that strategic communication equals military strategy.

The strength of *Persuasion and Power* is its exhaustive research, demonstrated by vignettes that

illustrate successful strategic communication efforts and their benefits, as well as failures and their consequences. Scholars and strategic communicators alike will be impressed with Farewell's extensive research and proposed solutions to enhance strategic communication. *Persuasion and Power* is a must read for those with an interest in strategic communication or marketing.

Jesse McIntyre III,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

THE SECOND NUCLEAR AGE:

Strategy, Danger, and the New Power Politics

Paul Bracken, Times Books, New York, 2012

306 pages, \$29.00

THE ARMY STOPPED thinking about nuclear weapons soon after the weapons were removed from its inventory in the early 1990s. Few in the ranks regretted this parting. A decade of humanitarian interventions, followed by another of counterinsurgency, has further distanced the military and the nation's civilian leadership from the world of nuclear weapons, operationally and intellectually. This trend alarms Yale professor and long-time security commentator Paul Bracken. He reminds us that in spite of appeals to the "better angels of our nature" and well-intentioned nonproliferation policies, nuclear weapons have not "gone gently into that good night."

This well-structured book flows conversationally as Bracken describes the implications of the bomb's comeback and what it portends for the United States—the only nuclear power that has not modernized its arsenal. Bracken draws on history and personal experience to derive lessons related to U.S. nuclear policy and the role of the bomb during the Cold War. Several "enduring truths" remain applicable, but policymakers have failed to appreciate the meaning behind the emergence of a new nuclear paradigm.

The distinguishing feature of the second nuclear age is multipolarity. Unlike the global contest that dominated the latter half of the 20th century, the present drama plays out on a number of regional stages among diverse, independent actors—some of

whom may be inclined one day to use nuclear weapons deliberately. The fact that many have sought more “usable” weapons through advanced designs would strengthen the author’s case in this respect. However, Bracken eschews technical explanations, preferring to dwell on the complex dynamics of politics and strategy. He details the challenges of the second nuclear age in the Middle East, South Asia, and East Asia.

In pressing for “thinking about the unthinkable,” Bracken seems aware of his delicate position. Warren Kozak writes in *LeMay: The Life and Wars of General Curtis LeMay* that when Gen. Curtis LeMay joined the ticket as the vice presidential candidate in 1968, he embarrassed the Wallace campaign when he remarked on the American people’s “phobia” about the use of nuclear weapons. Even if Bracken found this phobia as unfortunate as LeMay did, he knew better than to take this tone. While no Dr. Strangelove, the author is indeed a voice crying in the wilderness. The possibility of mutual assured destruction may be remote, but the chances of regional war have grown uncomfortably higher. Possessing fewer escalation options than potential adversaries such as Russia or China, the United States stands to find itself at a disadvantage in future crises.

The country’s nuclear forces and institutions have atrophied alongside its critical thinking about nuclear-related matters. What the United States needs, asserts Bracken, is a “Nuclear Strategy 101” course to rouse the security community out of its dangerous slumber and acquaint it with managing the complexity and increased risk of a new era. As a primer to spur this reawakening, *The Second Nuclear Age* serves remarkably well.

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MOMENT OF BATTLE:

The Twenty Clashes That Changed the World

James Lacey and Williamson Murray,
Bantam Books, New York
2013, 479 pages, \$30.00

IN *MOMENT OF Battle*, authors James Lacey and Williamson Murray tackle an interesting

endeavor—to pick the 20 battles that most affected the world. The authors undertake this task to address their concern about a trend among some U.S. academic circles—namely, the belief that “wars and military and strategic history are irrelevant to the study of the past” and that great figures of history have actually played minor roles.

The authors contend “that wars and battles have had a direct and massive impact on the course of history, one that is essential to understanding the world in which we live.” However, they agree that studying battles in isolation can be misleading. Readers must understand the cultural context in which a battle occurred.

In deciding which battles to include in the book, the authors have followed Edward Creasy’s direction in *Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World*. Lacey and Murray selected battles for their “long-term impact on the course of history,” and not for their importance to military art. Still, Lacey and Murray concede that using their criteria forced them into the “precarious game of counterfactual history,” where they had to imagine how a different outcome of a battle might have fundamentally changed the course of history. Given the number of battles throughout history, even with these criteria there is bound to be controversy in the authors’ choices. However, readers will be impressed by the authors’ logic and rationale.

For each of the 20 battles, the authors explain the cultural context at the time of the battle and the events leading up to it. They describe what was transpiring on the ground and what was going on at the critical moment in each battle. Yet, within their descriptions, the authors never lose sight of the fact that death, destruction, and sacrifice were occurring. When describing the decisive moment at the Battle of Gaugamela, the authors write that what the Persians “needed to do was find some way to maneuver. What they did do however was stand toe-to-toe against an invincible juggernaut. Darius stood in mute horrified witness as the best of Persia’s’ infantry was pulverized.”

An interesting aspect of the book is the authors’ ideas on what would have happened had the battle turned out differently. Here, the authors show true skill in leading the reader through the possible outcomes. The authors are not afraid to challenge other theories with their conclusions. For example, while

discussing the barbarian invasion, some academics claim the barbarians inflicted little damage as they moved through the Roman Empire. The authors say that “only academics who have spent their entire lives sequestered in school and with scant knowledge of the real world could gin up such nonsense.”

The book is enjoyable, well researched, and easy to read. The authors achieve their objective, and their conclusions are worthy of consideration. I highly recommend it to those interested in military history.
**Lt. Col. Robert J. Rielly, U.S. Army, Retired,
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ADMIRAL NIMITZ:

The Commander of the Pacific Ocean Theater

Brayton Harris, Palgrave Macmillan, New York 2012,
 238 pages, \$26.00

ADMIRAL NIMITZ: *THE Commander of the Pacific Ocean Theater* is a welcome addition to the few studies that analyze the career of fleet admiral Chester W. Nimitz. Brayton Harris uses U.S. Naval Institute oral histories from the 1960s and 1970s and other secondary sources to compose his biography of Nimitz. He examines Nimitz’s life and naval career, particularly his service in World War II.

Harris sets the stage by summarizing Nimitz’s early years in Texas and as a student at the U.S. Naval Academy. He recounts Nimitz’s naval service from his naval academy graduation in 1905 through his assignment as the chief, Bureau of Navigation, which began in 1939. Harris tells of Nimitz’s numerous *afloat* commands, particularly those associated with submarines.

The author rightfully focuses much of the book on Nimitz’s World War II record. President Franklin D. Roosevelt personally selected Nimitz to take command of the battered Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor and, subsequently, the Pacific Ocean areas. As Commander in Chief, Pacific Command, and Commander in Chief, Pacific Ocean Area, Nimitz led extensive maritime efforts across the south and central Pacific through the war’s end. Harris devotes nearly half of the biography to Nimitz’s involvement in the planning and execution of operations in Guadalcanal, Tarawa, the Marianas, Philippines, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa.

In the final chapters, Harris looks at Nimitz’s role as Chief of Naval Operations, when Nimitz grappled with complex demobilization issues, unification of the services, and naval transformation in the atomic era.

Harris is at his best exploring Nimitz’s often-complex professional relationships with Admiral Ernest King, General Douglas MacArthur, Secretary James Forrestal, and President Harry S. Truman. In addition to the Naval Institute oral histories and other resources used, Harris taps E.B. Potter’s definitive biography, *Nimitz*, to convey his analysis. Harris ends his book with a bibliography that identifies key sources used throughout the study and an extensive list of the oral histories consulted for the biography.

For those looking to become acquainted with the life and career of this flag officer, *Admiral Nimitz: The Commander of the Pacific Ocean Theater* is an excellent place to start. The book is a quick, enjoyable read that carefully chronicles the leadership of this U.S. senior commander.

**Stephen D. Coats, Ph.D.,
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MR WE RECOMMEND



THE GREAT WAR SEEN FROM THE AIR: In Flanders Fields, 1914–1918

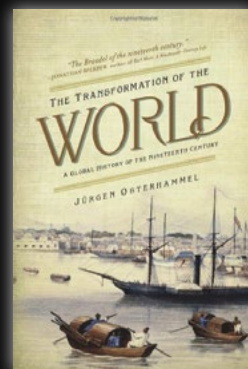
Birger Stichelbaut, Mercatorfonds, Brussels, Belgium, 2014, 352 pages, \$74.81

AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY WAS a relatively new technology at the onset of World War I and was embraced as an indispensable tool of wartime intelligence by all nations involved in the conflict. This illuminating volume, the results of a collaboration between the In Flanders Fields Museum, Ypres, the Imperial War Museum, London, and the Royal Army Museum, Brussels, features hundreds of photographic case studies, illustrating in unprecedented detail the physical extent of World War I and the shocking environmental damage it left in its wake. Supplementing aerial images with maps, documents, and photos taken from the ground, this one-of-a-kind visual record stands as an important contribution to World War I history, revealing the wartime landscape of Flanders Fields as rarely seen before. *From the publisher.*

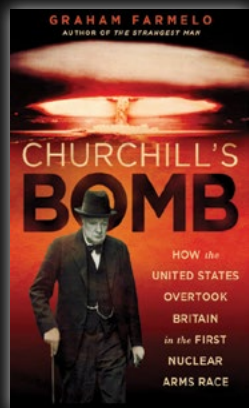
THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE WORLD A Global History of the Nineteenth Century

Jurgen Osterhammel, trans. by Patrick Camiller, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 2014, 1,192 pages, \$29.67

A MONUMENTAL HISTORY OF the nineteenth century, *The Transformation of the World* offers a panoramic and multifaceted portrait of a world in transition. Jürgen Osterhammel, an eminent scholar who has been called the Braudel of the nineteenth century, moves beyond conventional Eurocentric and chronological accounts of the era, presenting instead a truly global history of breathtaking scope and towering erudition. He examines the powerful and complex forces that drove global change during the “long nineteenth century,” taking readers from New York to New Delhi, from the Latin American revolutions to the Taiping Rebellion, from the perils and promise of Europe’s transatlantic labor markets to the hardships endured by nomadic, tribal peoples across the planet. Osterhammel describes a world increasingly networked by the telegraph, the steamship, and the railways. He explores the changing relationship between human beings and nature, looks at the importance of cities, explains the role slavery and its abolition played in the emergence of new nations, challenges the widely held belief that the nineteenth century witnessed the triumph of the nation-state, and much more. *From the publisher.*



CHURCHILL'S BOMB: How the United States Overtook Britain in the First Nuclear Arms Race *Graham Farmelo, Basic Books, New York, 2013, 576 pages, \$21.76*



PERHAPS NO SCIENTIFIC development has shaped the course of modern history as much as the harnessing of nuclear energy. Yet the 20th century might have turned out differently had greater influence over this technology been exercised by Great Britain, whose scientists were at the forefront of research into nuclear weapons at the beginning of World War II.

As award-winning biographer and science writer Graham Farmelo describes in *Churchill's Bomb*, how the British set out to investigate the possibility of building nuclear weapons before their American colleagues. Prime Minister Winston Churchill did not make the most of his country’s lead and was slow to realize the Bomb’s strategic implications. He also failed to capitalize on Franklin Roosevelt’s generous offer to work jointly on the Bomb, and ultimately ceded Britain’s initiative to the Americans.

Development and deployment of the Bomb placed the United States in a position of supreme power at the dawn of the nuclear age. Contrasting Churchill’s often inattentive leadership with Franklin Roosevelt’s decisiveness, *Churchill's Bomb* reveals the secret history of the weapon that transformed modern geopolitics. *From the publisher.*