ARE WE REALLY READY FOR AN RMA?

A Book Review by
BRIAN R. SULLIVAN

Military Innovation in the Interwar Period
by Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett
New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
428 pp. $64.95
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As the debate over whether a revolution in military affairs is emerging in the United States continues, a relevant book has appeared. *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period* presents seven case studies on how new forms of warfare developed between the two World Wars. It also offers three chapters on the problems of radically changing the ways in which armed forces fight. Each case examines how three different militaries advanced warmaking developments that greatly determined the course and outcome of World War II: armored warfare, amphibious operations, strategic bombing, close air support, carrier aviation, improved submarine warfare, and radar. The book's editors, Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett, each wrote several case studies and either authored or co-authored three interpretive essays. They were joined in creating *Military Innovations* by historians Richard B. Muller, Geoffrey Till, Holger H. Herwig, Alan Beyerchen, and Barry Watts. Each of their contributions is superb. Together, editors and authors have created a volume that is highly informative, filled with significant insights for our time, and written in a very literate and accessible style. Most importantly, it raises major questions about whether an American revolution in military affairs is really underway.

Military Innovation is the third collaborative effort by Murray and Millett which examines aspects of war in the period 1914–45. This series has been intellectually and financially supported by the Office of Net Assessment within the Office of the Secretary of Defense under the leadership of Andrew Marshall. Each includes case studies and analytical chapters by prominent historians that illuminate events and institutions of the past to inform warriors today. The first work, the three-volume *Military Effectiveness* (1988), considers myriad political, strategic, operational, and tactical strengths and weaknesses of great powers in both World Wars and the two decades between them. It was followed by *Calculations* (1992), more narrowly focused on how major powers conducted net assessment—for better or worse—in the years leading to World War II. *Military Effectiveness* received considerable attention and has come to be regarded as a classic. *Calculations*, appearing in the recession of the early 1990s, has been largely overlooked. But military professionals should read both collections. Moreover, these earlier works create the foundation for *Military Innovation*, the concept that while military technology and operational techniques change, basic political and strategic approaches to war endure, which is also the message of *Military Innovation*. While the latter details the creation and adaptation of certain military technologies, it concentrates much more on the processes than on hardware. That makes it very much a book for the present rather than just a historical study that many might consider irrelevant. In particular, it examines the role, as well as limitations, of new technology in changing the basic patterns of warfare.

Technology plays an enormous role in America, including the Armed Forces. In fact, for many Americans—inside and outside the military—technology appears to be *the* determining factor in war. *Military Innovations* argues otherwise. While the book discusses the development and manufacture of weaponry and equipment in detail, the case studies point out the

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USS Langley.

Brian R. Sullivan is a research professor in the Institute for National Strategic Studies at the National Defense University.

crucial cultural, psychological, strategic, bureaucratic, and political processes that led to the success or failure of a particular technology on the battlefield. After all, as Murray points out in the opening chapter, the British invented tank warfare and together with the French and Germans pushed the development of armored warfare technology in the interwar period. Furthermore, when *Blitzkrieg* erupted into France in May 1940, French tanks were generally superior to those of the *Wehrmacht*. But it was the way the British, French, and Germans employed armor that largely decided the outcome. Although Murray advances no single explanation for the defeat of British and French armor in the spring of 1940, he stresses the great influence of General Hans von Seeckt, head of the German army from 1919 to 1926. Seeckt improved an already excellent professional military education system. He directed a penetrating and objective study of the lessons of World War I and created an officer corps open to innovative thinking, lively debate, and unconventional problem solving. Within this environment, the army not only adopted tanks after Hitler threw off the restrictions of the Versailles Treaty but developed ways to use them as part of a highly effective combined arms approach to warfighting. These factors, not armored technology *per se*, brought victory in the Battle of France. The lack of such leadership, thought, training, and application—not the quality of combat vehicles—largely explains the Allied defeat. Technology was hardly irrelevant to the German success in 1940. But the intellectual approach to armored technology and the institutions that adapted it in the German army proved far more decisive.

Allan Millett describes a different story in his account of the development of amphibious warfare by the Japanese, British, and American militaries. He points out that both geography and strategy prompted all three countries to create the means to land large forces on hostile shores. Yet their forces also had other pressing military needs. In all three cases, amphibious warfare received less than the resources necessary for full realization of its potential in the interwar period. Both Japanese and British amphibious warfare theorists surpassed their American counterparts in terms of inventiveness. Nonetheless, by 1945 the United States had vastly superior amphibious capabilities. Millett indicates that in its Marine Corps the American military had a service dedicated wholeheartedly to amphibious warfare in the 1920s and 1930s. Moreover, after 1933 the United States and the Armed Forces had in Franklin Roosevelt a leader who considered himself an honorary marine. That proved an enormous advantage to the Corps when it competed with other services for scarce resources. Finally, the gigantic industrial capacity and wealth of the Nation allowed the Marines to tap resources after December 1941 which neither the British nor Japanese amphibious forces could duplicate. While the Marine Corps and their Army peers may have lagged behind the Japanese and British in amphibious warfare techniques and equipment at the time of Pearl Harbor, they could push developments at an ever-increasing pace until V–J Day. Normandy, Leyte Gulf, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa were bloody operations. But the ultimate American victories there hardly would have been possible with the amphibious vehicles and doctrine of three or four years earlier. These advances came about through human, not technological, factors. Political support in high quarters, fiscal and industrial largesse, and the single-minded devotion of a dedicated service that made the United States the leader in amphibious operations by war's end.

Space does not permit similar descriptions here of the five other historical case studies in *Military Innovation*. Each does provide an outstanding investigation of its topic. Nonetheless, this reviewer was disappointed that American, British, and German examples so dominated the studies, with Japanese and French efforts mentioned only once. Surely examples of innovation by other countries could have been chosen in order to base the book's conclusions on far broader ground. For example, an examination of Italian development of underwater assault could have been joined to studies of the American and British experiences. Soviet armored warfare and close air support case studies also might have been included. Even failures at innovation, such as the massive Japanese and Italian submarine programs, could have yielded useful lessons.

Much more significant, however, are the book's strengths, especially the final interpretive chapters. In "Innovation Past and Present" (a version of which appears in this issue of *JFQ*), Murray declares that brilliant individuals count far less than flexible organizations in pursuing innovation to a successful conclusion. He is concerned whether our Armed Forces allow for such advances and concludes that "without extensive cultural changes . . . and the moral parameters within which they view the world" they will not be able to carry out such sweeping changes. These insights raise significant questions about the so-called "American RMA."

In his general examination of in novation from 1919 to 1941, Millett stresses the complexity of the process wherever it took place. No single explanation suffices. However, he concludes by emphasizing the importance of nonmaterial influences:

The patronage of politicians and senior military leaders is essential. . . . Political intervention is especially crucial in innovations that cross or merge service specialties. Sheer technical innovation, as the Germans proved, does not win wars. Instead, the interaction of technical change and organizational adaptation within a realistic strategic assessment determines whether good ideas turn into real military capabilities.

In the final chapter, Barry Watts, a retired fighter pilot who is an analyst at Northrop Grumman, joins Murray in considering the essential issue of our time in a chapter entitled "Military Innovation in Peacetime." They pay deserved tribute to Andrew Marshall for his great assistance to the cause of successful military innovation in the United States over the past quarter-century. But they return to the theme that gifted individuals cannot carry their organizations into the future on their backs. Institutional support and an atmosphere conducive to free inquiry, iconoclasm, and daring imagination are far more important. In the concluding chapter Watts and Murray note that innovation is necessarily an untidy business that cannot be controlled or managed through a rigidly centralized system. In fact, efforts to eliminate such messiness are likely to stifle innovation. What senior civilian and military leaders can do is choose an imaginative and relevant vision of warfare in a period of change, thus indicating a general course for innovation to follow. However, while such long-term goals may be envisioned and set within the next few years, their realization may require far longer. During that time, leaders must create and preserve an intellectual as well as an institutional atmosphere to allow the innovatory process to succeed. It remains to be seen if the Armed Forces will enjoy such enlightened leadership over the coming generation. **JFQ**

CAMPAIGNING UNDER THE U.N. BANNER

A Book Review by
JEFF S. KOJAC

The Evolution of U.N. Peacekeeping
edited by William J. Durch
New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993.
509 pp. $19.75
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The current administration's decision to deploy forces to Bosnia as peacekeepers illustrates not only the continued U.S. role as a security guarantor but the necessity for the Armed Forces to understand peace operations. Joint Publication 3–07.3, *Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Peacekeeping Operations*; U.S. Army FM 100–23, *Peace Operations*; and the *Joint Task Force Commander's Handbook for Peace Operations* published by the Joint Warfighting Center address doctrinal considerations and supporting functions inherent to peace operations. Clearly, though, such missions should not be undertaken without historical perspective. Bridging the gap between theory and experience is *The Evolution of U.N. Peacekeeping*, a superb study of the operational level of U.N. peacekeeping operations edited by William Durch, a former foreign service officer.

The book recounts details of twenty U.N. missions in a case study format. The mandate, funding, planning, composition, and logistics of each operation are surveyed, and the actual field operations are lucidly described. The incisive assessment of what these operations accomplished and their benefits to local, regional, and global communities is compelling. The strategic context is discussed though not stressed. Tactical aspects are portrayed but only from the level of the force commanders and their staffs. Accompanying each case study are excellent maps of troop positions and charts displaying supporting data.

Besides providing a rich operational history, *The Evolution of U.N. Peacekeeping* offers lessons learned. Individual peacekeepers and observers must be able to negotiate as ombudsmen. Commanders need leadership skills to control subordinate multilateral forces of differing strengths. Political and military mission heads who run operations must function as a team in arbitrating with nongovernmental organizations as well as with local civilians and military forces. Moreover, the U.N. bureaucracy must support peace operations without hindering them, often a seemingly impossible task.

Despite its strengths, the book is limited in scope. There are only summary comments on U.N. missions in El Salvador, Cambodia, the former Yugoslavia, and Somalia since these operations were still in progress when the work appeared. In addition, the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) group in the Sinai and the Multinational Force (MNF) for Lebanon are noted but not evaluated since the coverage is limited exclusively to operations conducted under the U.N. banner.

Overall, the contributions succeed in describing the complexities of peace operations. And while the case studies are sobering, they certainly are not grim. Collectively, the cases argue that such operations are imperatives since they allow protagonists to make peace without surrendering. Moreover, as various authors note, if the United Nations is to continue as a forum to defuse grievances in the interest of international stability, it must be able to succeed in the field and not turn into another ineffectual League of Nations.

After the Korean War, Moscow barred Washington from directly participating in peace operations. With the end of the Cold War, the Armed Forces have been repeatedly called upon to support missions undertaken by the United Nations. Undoubtedly, the United States will continue to be drawn into such missions. With that in mind, *The Evolution of U.N. Peacekeeping* is recommended as a reference that educates and provides perspective for warfighters charged with keeping peace. JFQ

Captain Jeff S. Kojac, USMC, is assistant operations officer, Marine Air Control Squadron 7.

Macedonian patrol.

U.S. Air Force (Charlie Parshley)

Notable and Quotable

The necessity for jointness is recognized today in American and British military cultures as never before. Nonetheless, the trail toward a truly unified vision of defense preparation and war has been long, sometimes interrupted by substantial roadblocks and diversions, and remains incomplete. The Goldwater-Nichols DOD Reorganization Act of 1986 was an important milestone on the jointness trail, as was the British decision in 1994 at long last to create a permanent joint headquarters for the armed forces. An important motive for this British innovation would appear to have been financial, but that apparent fact should not detract from appreciation of the strategic merit in the move. By way of the laying down of a professional marker of no small symbolic significance, in 1993 the National Defense University in Washington, D.C., launched a new journal, unambiguously titled *Joint Force Quarterly*.

— Colin S. Gray, *Explorations in Strategy*
(Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1996)

THE PACIFIC CENTURY AND FUTURE CAUSES OF WAR

A Review Essay by
PATRICK M. CRONIN

Pacific Defense: Arms, Energy, and America's Future in Asia
by Kent E. Calder
New York: William Morrow and Company, 1996.
253 pp. $25.00
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Wars, at least those involving great powers, occur when the international system and major actors on the world stage fail to integrate ascendant nations. This was exactly the wisdom imparted in hindsight by Thucydides in his account of the Peloponnesian War.

Without appealing to an oracle, political economist and Japan watcher Kent Calder cautions us in *Pacific Defense: Arms, Energy, and America's Future in Asia* to brace for a power shift in the next century. In almost Churchillian terms, he foretells the coming of a "new danger zone" and of a "great arc of crisis stretching from southwest to northeast of Tokyo." Such prognostications are not new: some 35 years ago Claude Buss published *The Arc of Crisis*, which identified Southeast Asia rather than Northeast Asia as the locus of conflict. Nonetheless, Calder presents a compelling case that new centers of power in Asia will transform, dislocate, and perhaps overturn the existing international order.

At the crux of his analysis is the tremendous growth of Asia and the potential cost of that growth, regionally and increasingly internationally. Calder does not simply assert Asian growth but documents it with measurable indices that place it in a global context. For instance, he notes:

> [Asia's] *economy already makes up a third of the global market and 41 percent of the global bank reserves, up from 17 percent in 1980. But with half of all the people on earth, high savings, ever more sophisticated technology, and explosive, often double-digit growth rates across much of its periphery, the region seems destined for an ever greater share of global product. Japan and Greater China alone hold two-thirds of the foreign exchange reserves on earth.*

Focusing on the impact of such growth, Calder argues that there is a "deadly quadrangle" of expansion, the energy required to fuel it, geostrategic insecurity among the major powers, and military modernization.

In essence, he relies on basic principles of supply and demand to get at the root problem of exponentially expanding consumption. Avoiding the neo-Malthusianism of Lester Brown, Calder fixes on energy consumption more than other resources such as arable land or the ozone layer. In addition, he is most attuned to China's consumption rather than India's or Indonesia's. Even so, by reducing the problem to rising use of energy resources in China over the next few decades, he captures and animates salient security challenges:

> *The problem for Asian stability, growing with each barrel of Chinese oil imports, is now clear. It is the danger that China's attempts to safeguard its oil supply lanes and defend its historical "sovereignty" in adjacent seas poses for other nations of Asia, especially for Japan.*

While Thucydides was not concerned about consumption in ancient Greece, one can find in *Pacific Defense* a shadow of the classical historian: "What made war inevitable was the growth of Athenian power and the fear this caused in Sparta." The author, who directs a program in U.S.-Japan relations at the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton, begins by looking at just how little average citizens of China consume today. Then he turns to the sobering implications of growing energy demand in China if, for instance, its people consumed as much as South Koreans: oil needs would be double those of the United States.

This trend is well underway. The Asia-Pacific region overtook Western Europe in 1990 as the second largest oil-consuming area after the United States. Meanwhile, a booming auto market in East Asia alone will lead to further consumption.

Such an Asian "Achilles heel of energy" might become manifest in two ways, each with implications for the United States and the region. First, an expanding appetite for energy means that by 2000 some 87 percent of oil imported by East Asia will flow from the Middle East. This dependency is worrisome not only because of friction over control of sea lines of communication, but because of the subtle ways in which a dynamic and modernizing China could aid aggressive regimes in the Middle East. Thus energy, opines Calder, might be the catalyst for an "Islamic-Confucian embrace" by raising the specter of a "clash of civilizations" (a term coined by Samuel Huntington).

The second likely manifestation of growing Asian energy consumption would be equally distressing for U.S. or Asian security planners, nuclear proliferation. Unlike the United States and most of Europe, Asia is relying more on nuclear power. The Department of Energy forecasts that Asia may account for half of the entire increase in nuclear capacity between 1992 and 2010. Most of it would come in Northeast Asia, particularly Japan and Korea.

There is a disturbing link between the expansion of nuclear power plants and the potential to build and sell nuclear weapons. As Calder writes, "when a country develops a civilian nuclear capability, it also proceeds much of the way toward possessing a nuclear device." Enrichment and reprocessing procedures are potentially destabilizing, especially in a region marked by geostrategic insecurity. Thus, many Asians worry that Japan may amass 100 tons of plutonium by 2010—both through imports from Britain and France and from its own three breeder reactors expected to be in operation by then. That stockpile of fissile material would surpass the amount currently contained in all the nuclear warheads of both the United States and the former Soviet Union.

Given the lack of regional multilateral mechanisms for monitoring this increased reliance on nuclear power in Northeast Asia, Calder's idea of a sector-specific, subregional body—similar to what some call Pacific Atom (PACATOM)—seems to be a judicious multilateral response to help constrain nuclear proliferation in the 21st century.

But consumption is not without moderating influences. Indeed, it is inextricably related to classical liberal economic notions that increased commerce makes nations more pacific in outlook as they concentrate on producing wealth and become economically interdependent. This reassuring element is brought out in Calder's examination of the domestic political attitudes within Asia's two great powers, Japan and China.

Calder depicts Japan as an economic great power with latent great-power military potential. The question of whether it will develop defense-industrial strength

Patrick M. Cronin is a research professor in the Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University.

and become a "normal" power is timely given the evolving debate over whether the Japanese constitution permits putting military forces in harm's way for anything other than pure self-defense (namely, for the right of collective self-defense). Impending political realignment within Japan could produce a more forceful policy line with regard to Tokyo's regional security responsibilities.

Japan's neighbors, especially the two Koreas and China, are set against any enlargement in its defense capabilities or missions. U.S. opinion on this point remains divided or ambivalent. Meanwhile, as Calder argues, Japan is defined by hawks (realists and Gaullists) and doves (traders and progressives). Ultimately, however, only a signal event, a serious regional crisis, would seem able to alter the present Japanese trajectory toward a very gradual assumption of responsibility for regional security: "Absent a potent external shock to set a new course for national policy, Japan seems unlikely in the balance of this century to radically realign itself in international affairs."

Likewise, an ascendant and ever-more-consuming China seems to be tempered by domestic political trends, according to Calder. For one thing, it has "never had a Hitler or a Napoleon." For another, it faces a number of significant challenges, including rising regionalism and a devolution of central authority, generational change, rapid urbanization, stresses on domestic infrastructure, uneven economic growth, reintegration of Hong Kong, and the thorny issue of Taiwan. Despite these, China is not likely to dissolve in chaos like the former Soviet Union: "Deng Xiaoping has not been China's Gorbachev, and none of his successors is likely to be either."

Nationalism will probably be the central force that enables China to cohere in the decades ahead, but it will not necessarily be a virulent form of nationalism. Calder's bottom line—at least for the next twenty years—is more reassuring: "Despite rising capabilities that could lead to more militant, nationalistic power projection, China most likely will be constrained in its militancy by deep—and still rising—economic interdependence with the world, especially the major advanced industrial nations."

Calder's survey of domestic trends in Japan and China at first appears somewhat at odds with his initial thesis of an "arc of crisis." However, one is then forced to contemplate the potential dynamic interaction within the evolving balance of power, globally and in the region. In Calder's world of a new seven powers (namely, the United States, Russia, China, Japan, India, a unified Korea, and Vietnam), the rhythm of world politics will be driven far more by the character and prerogatives of Asia than by the United States and the West (such as the current group of seven).

Not all players in this balance of power game are equal. First, China "is a clear case of a nation with strong incentives to play balance of power politics. It has the leverage of a large, rising power and the detachment of one without established allies." Moreover, at the "crux of the emerging power game" are Sino-Japanese relations. These two great Asian states have the capacity to polarize the region, initiate a new great power arms race, and contest influence on the Korean peninsula. Calder concludes:

Ultimately Asia's dangerous new power game, with the specter of a heavily armed and unified China and Korea on its doorstep that it presents in worst-case scenarios, threatens to destabilize Japan's traditional low-posture military orientation. It also threatens to provoke over the long run a serious arms race, centering on Japan and China, that could have global implications.

Given the enormity of Asia's growing power, can a relatively diminished United States expect to sustain its role as a regional balancer with its present level of commitment to the Asia-Pacific region? Clearly if Washington pursues a course advocated by isolationists who seek "the twilight of globalism," the answer is a resounding no. But even if it simply holds to a steady course in terms of its military, political, and economic presence in Asia, Calder implies the answer may also be no. While U.S. investment in the region rose some 40 percent to nearly $80 billion from 1989 to 1992, it was outstripped by Japanese investment. Similarly, how can the Nation expect to keep a lid on mounting Asian capabilities and competition with 100,000 troops deployed in the entire area? As Calder writes, referring to the debate over U.S. presence on Okinawa and in Japan more generally:

Whether Okinawa . . . in the globalism that it still symbolized, can assure a pacific future for Asia beneath the Eagle's wings, as the shadows of regionalism and intraregional rivalry continue to deepen, remains to be seen. Therein lie major consequences for both the strategy and tactics of an effective Pacific defense.

A central challenge to the United States is whether it will be as important in the next century as today. Calder underscores the yawning policy gap stemming from "American neglect of Asia" and dangers borne of disillusioned trade policy and populist calls for retrenchment. Most members of the bureaucracy remain Eurocentric, senior officials appear more eager to fly to the Middle East than Asia, economic and security issues are treated independently rather than comprehensively, and policymakers are hamstrung by legal micromanagement that hinders opportunities and leadership. Worse, the private sector is only slightly better than the public sector at formulating a creative, serious, and sustained U.S. approach to Asia.

Calder offers us a series of 10 policy prescriptions. Having devoted the lion's share of the book to a compelling description of the challenges facing the United States, however, his solutions seem somewhat unsatisfactory. As such, he starts the book writing like Zbigniew Brzezinski and concludes it more like Cyrus Vance. But among his prescriptions are four useful thoughts:

- The United States needs a more comprehensive and integrated approach to policy that simultaneously takes into account Asia's rising power and the interconnection among security, economics, and energy.
- The U.S.-Japan relationship is at the core of our long-term influence in the region. If it is curtailed, then all assumptions about future stability and security must be reexamined.
- The Korean peninsula will be increasingly important as the crossroads of great powers and as a major force in its own right.
- Washington must treat China "evenhandedly" like the great power it is. If America is to help integrate China, then it must hue to a more consistent and coherent policy. (While not saying so explicitly, the book suggests a felt need for a strategic framework for China. Failure of such a broad understanding has led to sharp fluctuations in U.S. policy toward China in recent years and could bring about a polarized Asian-Pacific region. As Henry Kissinger recently observed:

In the absence of overarching political or strategic objectives, stress on social issues as the principal objective of foreign policy is perceived as pressure and produces confrontations that undermine other interests, including geopolitical ones, or doom America to irrelevance.

In short, Calder offers a motherlode of insights for strategists to consider as they mull the next century—and none too soon. It was the rise of Athens that caused fears among Spartans and led to the Peloponnesian War. Similarly, rivalry between two ascendant Asian powers, China and Japan, could make the Pacific century much bloodier than the American century. JFQ