

THE ART OF WAR— PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

A Review Essay by

DAVID J. ANDRE

Maneuver Warfare: An Anthology

edited by Richard D. Hooker, Jr.

Navato, California: Presidio Press, 1993.

409 pp. \$35.00

[ISBN 0-89141-499-1]

On Artillery

by Bruce I. Gudmundsson

Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1993.

176 pp. \$55.00

[ISBN 0-275-94047-0]

Fighting by Minutes: Time and the Art of War

by Robert R. Leonhard

Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1994.

186 pp. \$55.00

[ISBN 0-275-94736-X]

If the past, current, and prospective future nature of the art of war is likened to a tapestry, its texture will be largely the result of how theoreticians and practitioners alike have sought to deal with key issues: maneuver, fires, and the element of time. If one believes that large-scale theater warfare is passé and that military operations other than war will be dominant in the future, then the three books under review may only be of historical or general interest. However, if one thinks it is important for the world's remaining superpower, in a period of constrained defense budgets and force drawdowns, to ensure the quality and effectiveness of its forces and prepare for the possible rise of dangerous regional, niche, or peer military competitors, then the works offer something of practical, substantive value.

Richard Hooker has gathered a range of ideas by former senior military practitioners, well schooled and thoughtful younger field grade officers, and seasoned, non-uniformed theoreticians. Contributors include Robert Leonhard and Bruce

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Gudmundsson, whose books are also reviewed here. *Maneuver Warfare: An Anthology* groups 21 pieces in three parts that Hooker recommends should be read as “a collection of essays, perhaps only tangentially linked, each making its own independent contribution to an evolving body of thought.” It is good advice.

The first part of the volume sets the stage with a theoretical discussion of maneuver warfare as a concept and a system of ideas. Some mature professionals may view this approach as largely a compendium of timeworn, even obscure ideas. But the many defining arguments presented by Daniel Bolger in “Maneuver Warfare Reconsidered” and Robert Leonhard in “Maneuver Warfare and the United States,” along with Richard Hooker in “Ten Myths about Maneuver Warfare” and James McDonough in “The Operational Art: Quo Vadis?” are worth the price of the book, despite one’s previous exposure to the subject.

The verdict in this part of the book on maneuver warfare theory is perhaps best captured in a quip by Tallulah Bankhead which is cited at the beginning of Bolger’s piece, “There is less here than meets the eye.” Or, as Bolger himself concludes after disparaging the social science approach to the study of war, “Maneuver warfare is bunk. No competent soldier, let alone the entire U.S. military establishment, should embrace it.”

The other side of the coin is well represented by the venerable William Lind. Regardless of whether one agrees with his interpretation of military history, especially as it involves his analysis of cause and effect (viz., maneuverists usually win and attritionists usually lose), the fact remains that it was largely Lind’s early ruminations on maneuver warfare—many succinctly captured in the lead essay—that originally got so many people thinking seriously about it.

Part two addresses institutional implications of maneuver warfare. It is widely appreciated that innovation is commonly resisted in large organizations. In the military, to the extent that this results in advancing what Stephen Peter Rosen terms a “new theory of victory” in *Winning the Next War: Innovation and the Modern Military*, such resistance can be especially dogged, even virulent. So if you believe in maneuver warfare, the real challenge lies in figuring out how to sell it to skeptics, not to say to supporters of the familiar, comfortable status quo—and making it stick. This part of the book thus reaffirms the timeless wisdom that, when trying to bring



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about change in a large organization, implementing strategies often are as important as ideas themselves.

Stylistically and substantively this is the weakest part of the volume, which is unfortunate in light of the rich theoretical and case-study history of organizational behavior and the process of innovation. It does, however, offer a useful examination of Franz Uhle-Wettler—German army veteran of World War II and former tanker, general staff officer, and lieutenant general—on the much misunderstood and even more abused concept of *auftragstaktik*, and Michael Duncan Wyly’s experience on how to teach maneuver warfare. Aside from rehearsing the campaigns that should be part of any lecturer’s stock information on maneuver warfare and recommending further readings, Wyly’s piece is valuable because he comes out four-square against teaching maneuver concepts solely through the use of historical examples. In his view, the best way to get a student’s mind to grasp decisionmaking is to employ a mixture of historical and hypothetical cases.

The final part of *Maneuver Warfare* presents eight historical studies that portray successful applications of maneuver concepts or contrast them with other styles of warfare, mainly attrition. Hooker sets the stage in an introductory essay which notes that the maneuver and attrition schools of thought are not so much polar cases as reflections of cultural and organizational predispositions

that dominate doctrine and operations of armies, a distinction often lost on hard core maneuverers.

Gudmundsson leads off this part of the anthology with a well-researched discourse on the German tradition in maneuver warfare, followed by pieces on the French during World War I, the "Rommel model," Wavell and the first Libyan offensive of 1940–41, the *Wehrmacht* approaches to command and control as well as deception, the German conquest of Yugoslavia, and early German operations against Scandinavia. Apropos of the other two books under review, Robert Doughty's essay on the French in World War I nicely prepares the reader for what Gudmundsson explicates in greater detail in *Artillery*, including the tension in the French army between artillery (fires) and infantry (what passed for maneuver in those sanguine days) and how the reality of the battlefield led the French to modify their operational doctrine and cede the major role to artillery. John Antal in "The *Wehrmacht* Approach to Maneuver Warfare Command and Control" aptly complements the contribution by Uhle-Wettler in explaining the overall command and control process, including the German approach, to the estimate of the situation and operations order, as well as the "brief-back" technique, all of which are easily recognizable today in both Army and joint doctrine.

The publication by the Army in 1976 of FM 100–5, *Operations*, effectively launched the military on a two-decade running duel on the relative merits of maneuver versus attrition warfare. It has resulted in a lot of either/or, is/is not. James McDonough, in a particularly thoughtful piece in Hooker's anthology, separates himself from both sides of this argument by noting that a concept like maneuver warfare does not stand alone. As the Germans and Russians demonstrated time and again during World War II, commanders can shift from one to another and, indeed, conduct both simultaneously. In many cases it is simply a matter of scale. On the tactical and operational levels, maneuver by one part of a force might require more linear, positional operations by other elements. The Gulf War seemed to bear this out. In McDonough's view, real doctrine must be a complete fighting doctrine—a balance of maneuver, fires, protection, leadership, sustainment, command and control, and the like, all attuned to the situation at hand. It cannot be just maneuver.

In spite of its unevenness, *Maneuver Warfare* has much to offer the reader, especially the pre-staff college Army or Marine Corps officer. But it is in the context of the ongoing U.S. force drawdown, and such issues as how best to organize to fight future wars, that the book might most usefully be studied by experienced professionals. The Germans, for example, able innovators and executors of maneuver warfare, lost World War II in part because they were outnumbered. But the Israelis, who also always lacked the resources of their adversaries, nonetheless deliberately turned to maneuver-based doctrine and leadership in the hope of solving unforgiving strategic problems. This underlying and apparently competing logic may be a way to better inform the debate over how shrinking forces might best execute their growing menu of traditional and nontraditional missions in the new world (dis)order.

Maneuver is rarely possible without fire support, including indirect fire artillery. This arm exerted a profound influence on World War I. During the interwar period, the British, French, and Americans responded to artillery-dominated positional, attrition warfare with more artillery (that is, hardware). The Germans, meanwhile, sought an operational answer (that is, brainware) by opting for relational maneuver, combined arms *panzer* divisions supported by tactical airpower, and by adapting operational and organizational concepts for employing artillery accordingly.

Gudmundsson explains this and more in *On Artillery*, a well researched and documented book. He begins by acknowledging the many works currently available or soon to be published on American, British, and Russian artillery, along with surveys of artillery developments from the Middle Ages to the present. He then chronologically examines field artillery in conventional war by contrasting French and German approaches during the period bounded by the Franco-Prussian War and World War II, with reference to later experience by Israel and the United States. In so doing, he admits that scant attention is paid to artillery in amphibious, airborne, guerrilla, urban, mountain, or nuclear warfare and also that the employment of coastal, siege, or antiaircraft artillery is largely ignored.

Gudmundsson points out that the difference between the artillery doctrines of France and Germany lay in the way their respective officers viewed troops. This led to contrasting approaches to command and control. Accordingly, he

revisits the perennial question of a preferred relationship between artillery and ground maneuver forces: whether artillery should be a supporting arm that helps ground troops gain fire superiority over enemy maneuver units (the traditional French view); whether a more cooperative or "artistic" arrangement is preferable (the German theory); or whether fires might generally be capable of playing the leading role in future war, including substituting for ground combat troops (a view widely heard today but, one suspects, difficult to realize in practice). To close the circle, each perspective has different implications for command and control of artillery units. But as the book makes clear, how one decides these issues is often less an analytic matter than a function of how one systematically views the whole, as between contrasting perspectives on war (Jomini, Clausewitz, and Douhet) and positional versus mobile warfare. *On Artillery* is full of such dialectical conundrums.

Other enduring issues raised by Gudmundsson are the willingness to innovate; maneuver versus attrition warfare; the balance between a long-range artillery duel and close-in forward fight; infantry versus other artillery as the primary target; locating enemy batteries; the frequent impotence of counter-battery fire; locating artillery forward versus the rear; fighting as batteries versus massed (and, if massed, concentrating or dividing fires of massed batteries); field guns versus howitzers; the number of tubes per battery; division versus corps as the optimal echelon of command; how best to task organize artillery, including centralization (the operations research solution which takes artillery commanders out of the loop and separates fire planning from maneuver in infantry units) versus decentralization; timing fires against certain kinds of targets; the notion of "maneuver of fire"; and the problem of fratricide.

On Artillery highlights the fact that, just as there was extensive experimentation and much debate among German planners before and during World War II over the approach for employing artillery with *panzer* and other units, there is now a lack of consensus on the implications of the lessons from World Wars I and II for the use of artillery, and fires more generally, in future wars. Gudmundsson cautions that a constrained fiscal environment may exert a pernicious influence on national security decisionmaking; witness the French reluctance, in spite of strong evidence to the contrary,

to change artillery because it had just been purchased.

Throughout history, the author notes, technology has made it possible to separate indirect field artillery from the close combat of infantry (the “great divorce”), thus dividing the combined arms battle into two struggles. Almost as soon as this happens, however, a new class of weapon is found in a role abandoned by the artillery. Developments in fire support promise to exacerbate the great divorce. But whether, as Gudmundsson seems to believe, the “revolutionary” fiber optic guided missile (FOG-M), with its “unique guidance system,” is the gap filler that can end the great divorce remains to be seen. Mercifully, he treats highly technical issues in a nontechnical language and greatly enhances the value of his technical insights by relating them to the higher levels of war. Numerous footnotes and a bibliography that includes important French and German sources add still more to this study of artillery.

On Artillery is mainly of value to those interested in the modern history of indirect field artillery. Regrettably, the chapter titles and the index do not reveal the riches to be found between its covers. A broad assortment of timeless issues, already summarized, is addressed, but careful reading is required to isolate, identify, and distill them into a larger synthesis. The discussion of the future of artillery is limited to a final two-page chapter and should have been ignored altogether. At the same time, one of the book’s strengths is an issue-based historical perspective on which the professional military can draw in thinking about the future, including innovation. For example, much thought on the implications of the revolution in military affairs (RMA) for fire support tends to revolve around where (geography and echelon) and how (timing and C^2) to employ fires, and the need to rapidly neutralize an enemy’s increasingly long-range, accurate, and lethal fire-delivery means. The desirability of developing and exploiting technological and operational asymmetries in the employment of fires, particularly on the operational level of war, tends to fall early victim to the belief that virtually all modern armies in the future will be able to see and shoot about as far and as effectively as everyone else. This view, of course, both ignores and—for all but a single-minded technologist—highlights the importance of doctrinal concepts for organizing and using fire support systems, a singularly important idea to which Gudmundsson frequently returns.

On Artillery makes an excellent contribution to the history of the military art, to one of the defining components of modern warfare, and to the ongoing assessment of future possibilities for organizing and operating artillery and other means for delivering fires. Military historians and staff college-level officers will find it of particular value.

William Lind reminds us in *Maneuver Warfare* that great captains have instinctively grasped the importance of time and speed in warfare. But he attributes the anchoring of maneuver theory in time competitiveness to the work of John Boyd, who held that conflict can be understood as time-competitive cycles of observing, orienting, deciding, and acting, and the side that can go through this cycle (the “OODA” loop) faster than the other develops a decisive edge. In another new title, *Fighting by Minutes: Time and the Art of War*, Robert Leonhard carries this thinking still further. As the author of an earlier volume on maneuver warfare, he is particularly well grounded for this. Beginning with the judgment that time is increasingly becoming the critical dimension in warfare, his thesis, simply stated, is that the most effective way to perceive, interpret, and plan operations is in terms of time rather than space. True to his conviction, he considers this work to be not just a professional infantryman’s theoretical discussion of the changing nature of war, but as offering a major paradigm shift—from spatial to temporal. He characterizes his product as nothing less than a theory of temporal warfare, and arrives at it by examining how time interacts with weaponry, units, logistics, doctrine, morale, decisionmaking, and the spatial dimensions of war.

Apparently sharing Lind’s perspective on the great captains, Leonhard is not willing to go as far as some contemporary futurists in declaring that time is a new dimension in warfare—the last, latest, or fourth dimension. Here he merely avers what most well schooled and experienced military professionals already know: that time is “the first and primary dimension that commanders and leaders have had to struggle with from the dawn of history. Length, width, and height do not exist if they have no reality in time.”

Leonhard identifies four temporal characteristics of war—duration, frequency, sequence, and opportunity—and devotes a chapter to each of them. Proceeding from the fact that time can be observed, measured, and then manipulated, he concludes that a commander in

war should strive to control these characteristics. Of particular interest to those trying to better understand and advance thinking on RMA, he observes that the most revolutionary developments throughout history have been those that challenge or change military time calculations. From there, it is conceptually but a short step to information warfare, a subject receiving increasing attention within the Office of the Secretary of Defense and among the services.

Correctly or not, maneuver warfare is often viewed as residing mainly on the operational level of war. But in Leonhard’s view time plays a critical role on all levels. For example, he sees the contest for time as the most important strategic problem facing the United States. Given ample time, America—the only remaining superpower—can meet any threat. But having shifted from a deterrence-oriented, forward-deployed military establishment to a rapid response strategy involving forces based primarily at home, time is more than just critical: it is often the enemy.

In theory, the United States can act militarily in days, hours, minutes, even seconds (there is talk today of “simultaneous” or “real-time” theater-wide operations.) In terms of tangible events, however, Leonhard warns us that “time is nature’s way of making sure that everything doesn’t happen at once.” Friction aside, the complexities of war operate to ensure that everything cannot happen at once. “Friction does not just make actions in war more difficult, it also makes them take longer.” (Are these the words of two insufferable empiricists, Clausewitz and Guderian, speaking to us from beyond the grave?) Leonhard would have us understand that it might be more accurate to describe the implementation of American warfighting strategy temporally in terms of weeks, or months—not just now but for years to come. This is often suggested by wargames and confirmed by contingencies. Forward presence is our hedge; but though necessary it is seldom sufficient.

Fighting by Minutes takes up the temporal characteristics of warfare: duration, frequency, sequence, and opportunity. *Duration* has a beginning and end, but Leonhard might have said more about “onset.” Recent wargames and other analyses suggest that real leverage may be gained by applying pre-hostility hostilities, for example, in sophisticated approaches to information warfare. The author asserts that the relationship between technological disparity and duration is spurious. Large imbalances in strength

and technical advancement do not perforce mean that a war will be shorter. Similarly, he views as specious the argument that length of a war is a function of the relationship between attack and defense (if the former is qualitatively superior to tactical defense because of weapons technology, a war will be shorter, and vice versa). It may apply to battles, but not wars—a distinction that often gets blurred. The major determinant of war duration, he says, is an attacker's objectives. (One suspects that a defender's objectives and cultural predispositions might also be relevant.) Other determinants include relative incompetence (the commander who makes fewest mistakes wins) and number of participants (more means longer). Also, short wars tend to produce fewer changes. Winners claim that their doctrine works and maintain the status quo, while losers consider that theirs did not and make changes.

Frequency in war involves how fast things happen: tempo. "Frequency lies at the heart of how we perceive warfare. . . . Of all the temporal characteristics in warfare, frequency is the one that lies at the foundation of doctrine, tactics, and strategy. When revolutionary changes occur in warfare, most of the time it is because there has been a change in frequency at some level—a change in how fast things happen." In general, and as borne out by history and logic, the greater the frequency in war, the shorter the war. Leonhard thinks that change in frequency on the tactical level—especially major change—is the greatest cause of revolution in military art and science. He reasons that doctrine can be accommodated to frequencies which are near the norm. But if changed significantly in either direction (*blitzkrieg* versus trench warfare thinking), doctrine begins to falter to the extent that, at the extremes, war may not even be perceived. (Recall the earlier comment on "pre-hostility hostilities.") At either extreme old doctrines usually succumb.

Those who believe the next major war will be resolved in one powerful blow can skip the sometimes vague chapter on *sequence*. But those who perceive that warfare typically is resolved in multiple, discrete—if increasingly high-frequency—events, or those who remain uncertain, should take heed. Seeing virtue in necessity, Leonhard believes there is power in sequence. Each event in war has a value that depends upon events that precede and follow it. Outcomes favor commanders who contrive to control not just the order of their or

an enemy's actions but, more importantly, the order of the two combined.

In many ways the chapter on *opportunity*, the fourth and last temporal dimension of war, is the best. To Leonhard, opportunity is not simply a decision point but a time-sensitive point, "and that changes all the rules." A good and timely decision, while critically necessary, is not sufficient. There must be effective action, which requires an executing unit to have the requisite capabilities to act. Here the author delves into a major issue that often surfaces among those who ponder future-oriented operational and organizational concepts. Logically, in pursuing fleeting opportunities, one headquarters should be responsible. "Unfortunately, real experience in war often indicates that the one who decides and the one who acts usually are at two different levels: the headquarters decides and instructs a subordinate headquarters to act." So while eliminating echelons may be a good idea in theory, it almost certainly is not in practice—that is, unless the remaining echelons are provided with the requisite combined arms. And it is virtually impossible to determine in advance any one organizational allocation of resources and authority that will cover even the major possibilities.

Current notions of commanders on virtually all levels participating interactively in the same net and operating largely autonomously on the basis of a commander's intent or by negation may eventually solve this dilemma. But while these ideas undeniably have a certain theoretical appeal, they have yet to be demonstrated, much less convincingly, outside of the relatively narrow realm of a few large naval platforms engaging a relatively small number of enemy platforms—the classic example of "few-on-few." And this has never been done in modern warfare. At the least, these futuristic concepts tend to ignore the kinds of complexities that quickly arise in cases of "many-on-many," as well as the difference between being able to communicate with someone and being able to control them—especially when the span of control becomes very large.

Leonhard begins an extended treatment of mission tactics with the following observation: "The U.S. Army has finally adopted mission tactics—just in time for it to become irrelevant to modern warfare." He then continues, "the theory of mission tactics does not play out in practice, because *higher headquarters retains control of the resources*." It is all downhill from there. His take on the relative advantages of directive/decentral-

ized control versus centralized/detailed control, and two competing theories of war (the Gumbo and Nodal theories), may justify the hefty price of the book. Depending on the flow of information, either of the basic types of command and control may be effective, but "there is no intrinsic, universal merit in mission tactics alone." Indeed, he argues that detailed control has gained strength as a viable command technique in recent years owing to the essential shift in information flow as a result of the growth in reliable sensor and communications technology. As for Gumbo versus Nodes, the unceasing search for greater range may carry little-understood (by nonoperators) penalties and missed opportunities.

The author concludes that there are tough choices ahead, such as deciding the level of command that will be decisive in a conflict, and how to provide it with sufficiently robust organic combined arms capability and real authority. Further, there is the danger of giving a commander long-range weapons that do not mix well with other assets, that overburden intelligence capabilities, and that even threaten the most critical principle of war, unity of command. Lastly, fighting doctrine must be balanced to allow for an effective mix of directive and control. This is indeed a daunting agenda for analytic action, and we should press on with it.

Two chapters on surprise are more abstract. The author's sense of the "real issue" involves whether to get to the objective area first or with the most—to preempt or concentrate. He says that it really is situational but that the Army trains only for the latter. Still, a synthesis may be possible, as he explains using the concept of a "preemption-concentration cycle."

Leonhard concludes with a chapter on *coup d'oeil*, or a commander's inner vision, and how time is the independent variable and space must be made to conform. The commander's art thus involves structuring a campaign designed to force an enemy into contradictory dispositions at each point in time. This begins with viewing the campaign not in terms of time *required* but rather time *available*. Seemingly intending to motivate readers to initiate heated arguments with those of the opposite persuasion, *Fighting by Minutes* ends with the observation that, while opportunities will prompt commanders to delegate, the demands of unity of effort will prompt them to centralize. He resolves the dilemma in his own mind by concluding that commanders should organize in such a way as to empower the higher echelons. (Let the debate begin.)

Ambitious in scope, and thus somewhat uneven in its presentation, *Fighting by Minutes* is an important book: logical and systematic in its development, sophisticated, analytic, often subtle, frequently irreverent, and consistently mind expanding. Serious students of all levels of war past, present, or prospective future—and especially future—will learn much from it. Although it may be a bit daunting for all but the best read and analytically minded younger professionals, it should be studied at staff colleges and higher levels and by anyone pondering the likely nature of future war, including RMA. Many of Leonhard's conclusions and hypotheses would make good raw material for future-oriented wargames and simulations, for as he says, "With an insight into the nature of fourth-dimensional fighting, the road is open to new doctrines, new tactics, and new strategies."

Grasping the concepts of maneuver, fires, and time remains critical to understanding the art of war—past, present, and future. All three books reviewed above contribute to an appreciation of these vantage points. The past is history and the present is largely ephemeral; the future, however, including the possible nature of war, is yet to be. How it unfolds can be of profound significance, not just for the military art but for the well-being of nations, indeed of entire civilizations. Perhaps most importantly, the future is something on which military professionals can start to work now, to influence, shape, define, and even bring about.

With this in mind, Gudmundsson posits that there are essentially two approaches to conceptualizing war. One, practiced by J.F.C. Fuller, involves arriving at opinions and designs by a process of deduction from first principles. The other, as practiced by Guderian, is empirical. It begins from the premise that war has been, is, and always will be a practical business whose particulars are sufficiently complex to defy brilliant theories and devalue the strongly held beliefs of those who lack operational experience or a fundamental appreciation of it as practiced by others.

It is curious that many people today who are trying to put their stamp on the future tend to favor Hart's (and Douhet's) essentially theoretical deductive approach, and generally shrug off if not disdain the experience-honed views of some of history's most innovative military thinkers and lionized field commanders. It will be interesting to see how this plays out in the future. **JFQ**

MORE THAN DEEDS OF DERRING-DO

A Book Review by

JOHN M. COLLINS

Spec Ops, Case Studies in Special Operations Warfare: Theory and Practice

by William H. McRaven
Novato, California: Presidio, 1995
402 pp. \$27.95
[ISBN 0-89141-544-0]

The best ideas are expressed briefly. Law libraries, for example, are loaded with volumes that interpret the Constitution, but the document itself, including all 26 amendments, takes up only a few pages. The SOP of the erstwhile Strategic Research Group, activated at the National War College in 1971 "to develop innovative studies . . . for consideration by decisionmakers at the highest levels of the U.S. Government and Armed Forces," confined its reports to fifty or fewer double-spaced pages.

William McRaven, current commander of SEAL Team Three, is well within

victory." The balance of the work consists of diverse case studies—six from World War II—that support his conclusions: the German attack on Eben Emael, Belgium (1940); the Italian manned torpedo strike at Alexandria, Egypt (1941); the British raid against Saint-Nazaire, France (1942); Otto Skorzeny's rescue of Benito Mussolini from Gran Sasso, Italy (1943); the British midget sub attack on the *Tirpitz* (1943); the Ranger rescue mission at Cabanatuan, a Japanese PW camp in the Philippines (1945); the unsuccessful American operation at Son Tay prison camp in North Vietnam (1970); and the Israeli counterterrorist operation at Entebbe, Uganda (1976).

The cases selected span the conflict spectrum from peacetime engagement to global war. All emphasize direct action combat missions against extremely tough targets, but the author seems confident that his theory applies to every form of special operations. Moreover, he contends that conventional forces rather than Rangers, SEALs, air commandos, or other special operations units may be the principal participants (Jimmy Doolittle, who led a flight of 16 B-25 bombers from the aircraft carrier *USS Hornet* to attack Tokyo in 1942, most certainly substantiated this view).



the limitations imposed on the Strategic Research Group when in the first 25 pages of *Spec Ops* he offers a theory to help decisionmakers "determine, prior to [a special] operation, the best way to achieve relative superiority, then . . . tailor special operations planning and preparation to improve our chances of

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Spec Ops expounds six principles of special operations derived from eight case studies: simplicity, security, repetition, surprise, speed, and purpose. They "dominated every successful mission," McRaven finds, and if "one of [them] was overlooked, disregarded, or bypassed, there was invariably a failure of some magnitude." Five principles correspond closely with objective, surprise, simplicity, and security, longstanding principles of war. Speed is one facet of maneuver. Only repetition is distinctively different.

Large conventional forces, however, cannot apply these principles to gain relative superiority, the author states, because it is difficult for them "to develop a simple plan, keep their movements concealed, conduct detailed full-dress rehearsals (down to the individual soldier's level), gain tactical surprise and speed on target, and motivate all the soldiers in the unit to a single goal. At some point the span of command and control becomes too great. . . . Large forces . . . are more susceptible to the frictions of war."

McRaven further finds that "relative superiority is a concept crucial to the theory of special operations." That precondition of success "is achieved at the pivotal moment in an engagement" that may be before or during combat, as the cases confirm. "Once relative superiority is achieved, it must be sustained in order to guarantee victories," and if lost is difficult or impossible to regain. "An inherent weakness in special forces is their lack of firepower relative to a large conventional force . . . they lose the initiative, and the stronger form of warfare generally prevails."

Most books about special ops simply describe daring exploits. This one is far more useful because the theory which it presents invites us to *think*, to adopt what applies, or to either elaborate or replace it if we know better ways to sustain capabilities that small, specialized forces can employ to defeat larger, well-armed opponents. In sum, *Spec Ops* will benefit strategists or tacticians who hope to beat apparently insurmountable odds by conducting special ops. It should be on the desk of every official who must decide when and where to commit special operations forces. JFQ



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FROM STRATEGISTS TO STRATEGY

A Book Review by

AUDREY KURTH CRONIN

The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States, and War

edited by Williamson Murray, Macgregor Knox, and Alvin Bernstein
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

680 pp. \$34.95
[ISBN 0-521-45389-5]

Strategy-making is an ancient yet elusive art. Inextricable from history, it has employed historical examples in exploring war-making since at least the time of Thucydides. More recently, the transition from the age of the professional soldier to that of mass armies and unlimited warfare has forced leaders of industrialized states to focus even more attention, time, and resources on the imperative to learn from the triumphs and debacles of the past. The book reviewed here follows in that tradition. It is an imposing collection of essays on strategy beginning with the Peloponnesian War in the fifth century B.C. and ending with American strategy during the Cold War.

The Making of Strategy is intended to describe procedures by which "political and military leaders evolve and articulate strategies in response to external challenges" and expand on the extant literature, especially the 1941 classic, *Makers of Modern Strategy*, edited by Edward Mead Earle, as well as a more recently updated version of that work edited by Peter Paret. Arguing that the earlier volumes focused on the influence of individual thinkers, the editors of this new collection purport to stress the process by which strategy is made. In an age of industrialized warfare, mass armies, complex bureaucracies, and democratic decisionmaking, this mandate seems more realistic. No one person really "makes" strategy in the modern age or arguably even decisively influences it, except during war. But understanding the consistent variables that have affected its formation throughout history might lend insight into the contemporary process wherein major states plan for or avoid conflict. That is the goal of this volume.

Audrey Kurth Cronin teaches at the University of Maryland and is the author of *Great Power Politics and the Struggle over Austria, 1945-1955*.

The predominant emphasis is on hegemonic war, fought between great powers and over vital interests. The essays are masterful accounts, showing impressive scholarly achievement and depth. The earliest is Donald Kagan's stimulating chapter on Athenian strategy in the Peloponnesian War. It is a good start, for an analysis of Pericles' failed strategy is fascinating, inviting thought on the danger of not matching means to ends, and the pitfall of assuming rationality (or at least predictable thought) in an enemy. Alvin Bernstein's piece on Rome (264-201 B.C.) also draws readers into another category—that of the alien milieu of a warrior culture, where violence is raised to the level of virtue. (Such thinking may not be that foreign today—especially in the inner city.) Bernstein's admonition that we must avoid believing that others view strategy and the use of force in the same terms that we do is always good advice.

Other excellent chapters include Arthur Waldron's on Chinese national security strategy in the 14th to 17th centuries. The conflict between nomadic "barbarians" and the "morally superior" Ming dynasty invites reflection on the influence of culture on strategic thinking. Mobile warfare as conducted by nomadic steppe people made much Chinese military theory obsolete. Eliot Cohen's examination of the United States between the world wars debunks the traditional argument that the Nation withdrew at that time into military paralysis, arguing instead that it developed institutions, weapons, and a mobilization base that were essential in wartime. "The experience and memories of those years help account for the otherwise inexplicable willingness of the American people to tolerate . . . vast peacetime military establishments; the premium on readiness and avoidance of surprise attack; the willingness to conceive of national security in global rather than local terms; and the American military's persistent preference for excessively neat patterns of civilian-military relations." These are thought-provoking pieces with much to interest today's strategist.

There are numerous other fine efforts: Geoffrey Parker on Habsburg Spain, John Lynn on France under Louis XIV, Peter Maslowski on America before the Civil War, Brian Sullivan on Italy in World War I, and Wilhelm Deist on Germany before and during World War II. Each is a classic and will become a standard reference for decades to come. But the issue for the reviewer is whether this collection transcends the high quality of the individual essays to achieve harmony and cohesion on a higher level. Is the whole greater than the sum of its parts? Here one is less sure.

Some of the finest military historians are represented in *The Making of Strategy*; there is not a poor essay in the book. Murray et al. are to be commended for a pervasive standard of excellence. But editing such an anthology also involves explaining why one period is chosen and another omitted and how balance and strategic vision (using the phrase advisedly) are injected into an entire collection. Are we presented with a volume that reflects the expertise of the contributors rather than a purposeful approach to the study of strategy?

Eight of the nineteen essays deal with strategy before and during World War I or II. This is understandable: these are periods about which the most is known, on which scholars can most effectively plumb the depths of archives. It is also logical to focus on war, since strategy is theory, and its strengths or weaknesses are determined in warfare. But are systemic wars the best source of insight for today and the future? The editors of *The Making of Strategy* state that they are not trying to be encyclopedic; comprehensiveness on such a theme is unrealistic. But some discussion of why certain areas are heavily explored while others are not would be enlightening.

Save for the interwar years and World War II, for example, virtually the entire focus is on Europe. What of Japan? The coverage of the post-1945 years is also

extremely scant, with only one article covering U.S. strategy from 1945 to 1991. And there is nothing on post-1945 Soviet strategy. Why is the prime focus of strategic minds in this century not explored? Michael Handel writes on Israel, but that is hardly far afield from European/American strategic thinking. Perhaps an essay on the Arab or Gulf states would have provided another dimension. There is nothing on China, Korea, India, or any other contemporary Asian power. Is the next enemy likely to come from Europe?

One conclusion from these case studies seems to be that having a rigid intellectual frame of reference is dangerous in strategy. The Ming Chinese, for example, approached the Mongols from a narrow cultural perspective and thus largely failed to develop an effective national security policy. Both the British and French considered war too horrible to contemplate in the interwar years and were almost obliterated by a highly radical German ideology with revolutionary goals. In the Peloponnesian War the Athenians assumed "rational calculation" by the Spartans, and their strategy was defeated in part because the enemy's psychology confounded their expectations. In selecting cases from the modern era, the editors display a strong American and European bias. The later chapters, at least, may fall into the very trap that the editors seem to advise against.

There is also a problem of terminology. Military professionals and defense specialists have spent much time defining strategy. No doubt this has been overdone. Doctrinal debates over the wording of a definition and its implications can be wasted efforts. The complexity of the subject is reflected in the difficulty of defining it precisely. But in a single work it is wise to be consistent, and this collection is not.

The authors argue that definitions of strategy are pointless, because "strategy is a process, a constant adaptation to shifting conditions and circumstances in a world where chance, uncertainty, and ambiguity dominate." Clausewitz is apparent throughout this collection, and the folly of a rigid system of definition and rule-making is well understood. Furthermore, defining strategy broadly is well suited to contributors whose purpose is to show how discreet factors—namely, geography, history, culture, economics, and governmental systems—have affected the strategic process.

But reading this book one is inclined to ask what is *not* strategy? War-making on a grand scale has become a national enterprise, drawing on all resources of the modern state. And is there a difference here between grand strategy, military strategy, and policy? The articles contradict each other. Admittedly, strategy and the making of strategy are very elusive concepts. The advantage of studying the makers of strategy is that by concentrating on individuals one has a clear focus and thus avoids the problem of trying to convince 19 strong-minded contributors to agree. Some of them comment on the five general factors, but many do not. The lack of a sense that the authors share a common view of what strategy is—or at least a general sense of what the strategic process is—undermines the focus of the volume.

The book is dedicated to those who died in Vietnam, "because their leaders had no patience with history or with the imponderables that are the stuff of history." Yet, little attention is given to the type of warfare that seems to be predominant today—limited regional conflict. What about the making of strategy in such cases? Is it really strategy? Or is strategy only made when all national resources are involved? Again, a clearer notion of what is meant by "making strategy" would be helpful.

Finally, the treatment of the period since 1945 is particularly unsatisfying as U.S. defense planners today try to project strategy into an uncertain future. There is no doubt that the Western world is in transition, and at such a time it is natural to look to the recent past.

1996 SYMPOSIA

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Colin Gray's sweeping generalizations about the United States during the Cold War are not always fulfilling. The thrust of his argument is that America is ignorant of strategy-making but has muddled through the Cold War surprisingly well. There are brilliant and provocative statements; however, the lack of historical documentation to back generalizations and the already dated nature of some assertions undermine the argument on many points.

Much of the discussion centers on nuclear strategy during the Cold War. Gray criticizes the American tendency to focus on apolitical solutions to nuclear problems, relying on the artificial catechism of deterrence to the detriment of understanding the political nature of strategy-making. Moreover the United States does not look beyond the near-term: "[T]he lack of foresight ingrained in culture and institutions can render even the idea of long-range planning mildly humorous." In the realm of the nuclear, he is to some degree correct; Americans are fascinated by technology and will approach the world with a problem-solving bias. It is, as he points out, part of our culture.

But there seems to be little understanding of the role of economic and domestic political factors. The problem-solving approach may be ahistorical and apolitical in some senses, but it is the only politically viable stance from a domestic viewpoint. This is not Great Britain. Gray's overarching argument—that U.S. civilian and military planners have no real understanding of strategy-making, yet that American grand strategy in the Cold War years was a resounding success—appears to be contradictory and ungenerous. And it is unhelpful to those of us who, by studying recent history, hope to glean new insights for fathoming the future.

This book has much to offer students of military history, comparative defense planning, and the evolution of strategy. The quality of the writing and scholarship is high, and it goes beyond the Earle and Paret volumes to cover new ground in a pioneering way. The volume easily makes the case that the process of making strategy is at least as important as those who make it. It therefore fulfills its purpose and is a valuable contribution to the field. There are inconsistencies, and the book provokes more questions than it answers, yet intelligent readers will find it engaging. The essays can be sampled like vintage port—individually savored even if not always complementary. There may be no easy answers; but there is much here to stimulate thought about past approaches and their relationships to current strategic dilemmas.

JFQ

A PRINCE OF A TALE

A Book Review by

PATRICK L. CLAWSON

Desert Warrior: A Personal View of the Gulf War by the Joint Forces Commander

by Khaled bin Sultan, with Patrick Seale
London: HarperCollins, 1995.

492 pp. \$35.00
[ISBN 0-06-017298-3]

The Saudi royal family is discreet to a fault. That makes the autobiography of Prince Khaled bin Sultan, senior Saudi commander during Operation Desert Storm, son of Saudi defense minister Prince Sultan, and nephew of King Fahd, all the more remarkable. He does little to mask his motive, which is to take issue with the account of the Persian Gulf War found in *It Doesn't Take a Hero* by Norman Schwarzkopf. When that book was published, Khaled challenged what he termed "slanted remarks" and "concocted" stories "distorted . . . to give [Schwarzkopf] all the credit for the victory over Iraq while running down just about everyone else."

To be blunt, in comparing these two "I like me" books, the Prince comes across as more of a gentleman (or should I say more of a prince?) than Schwarzkopf. Khaled did well to engage the services of Patrick Seale, a British journalist-cum-author with a deep knowledge of the Middle East and experience in doing difficult biographies (his work on Syria's President Hafez al-Asad is a classic). The criticism in *Desert Warrior* is in the archetypal British style, offered more in sorrow than anger. Instead of resentment of Schwarzkopf's condescension toward the poor performance of Saudi land forces and command structure, there are detailed accounts of points on which Khaled comes across better than his American counterpart.

Those points include one of the most important of the war: in retrospect,

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Khaled seems to have understood the nature of the Iraqi opposition force better than did the Americans. He did not have reams of intelligence or years of training, but he grasped certain fundamentals. In particular, as he stated at the time, the battle of al-Khafji on January 30–31 was a signal event. As Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor saw it in *The Generals' War: The Inside Story of the Conflict in the Gulf* (reviewed in *JFQ*, Summer 1995), the battle revealed just how impotent Iraq was against the coalition forces. It provided evidence that the Iraqis were utterly incapable of fighting a modern war and were dispirited to the point of ineffectiveness. Thereafter, Khaled correctly predicted that the land war would be a cake walk.

If criticism of Schwarzkopf for overestimating the threat is one theme of



HRH General
Khaled bin Sultan.

DOD

Desert Warrior, another is the cavalier approach used to end the war. Khaled's account of the March 3 meeting at Safwan with Iraqi Lieutenant General Sultan Hashim Ahmad has the ring of truth to it. According to Khaled, not much thought was given to the political impact of the meeting, and so major errors were made: Saddam Hussein and his top officials were able to avoid being seen conceding to the allies, no statement of surrender was required, not much was done for Kuwaiti POWs (whom Iraq might well have handed over if pressed), and the Iraqi side was able to preserve various privileges (such as helicopter flights) which were invaluable in maintaining Saddam's rule despite uprisings in March and April 1991. Khaled is wise not to claim that he spoke out against these mistakes. He portrays himself as troubled by the events but prepared to defer to the United States for the sake of allied unity and out of respect for its expertise. Perhaps. But it is also possi-

ble that Saudi leaders were just as unprepared as the Americans for an end to the war. Desert Storm was a spectacular achievement on many fronts, but it was not a shining example of how to carry out war termination.

Although the implicit criticisms of Schwarzkopf in the last third of *Desert Warrior* are well worth reading, the first two-thirds are thinner fare. Anyone looking for insight into how Saudi decision-making works will not find it here. And some sensitive issues are discussed in terms that do not jibe with what seasoned regional analysts would expect or what some journalists reported at the time. Specifically, Khaled would have us believe that his involvement in procurement from Saudi sources was motivated purely by the desire to ensure that deals were done at low cost to the Saudi exchequer, while other accounts attribute to him an interest in the distribution of the profits. According to *Financial Times* reporter Simon Henderson, Khaled "made far too much money from the war. Estimates vary from several hundred million dollars to up to \$7 billion, according to senior Western officials."

Despite its subtitle "A Personal View of the Gulf War," the first third of *Desert Warrior* is about the Prince's upbringing and life prior to Desert Storm. It is slow going. While involved in some fascinating events, he is not about to spill family or national secrets. In particular, he tells us little of what we would like to know about the deal for Chinese long-range missiles for which he was responsible (How was the United States kept in the dark? What kind of political discussions took place inside Saudi Arabia about pursuing this deal? What dialogue was there with the Chinese about the geostrategic implications of the deal?).

It is not surprising to find that a Saudi prince is guarded. Khaled comes from a culture in which knowledge is power and knowledge shared is power lost. The pleasure is to find how open he is about Desert Storm. And it is satisfying to find an Arab leader who offers a rather sobering analysis, without hyperbole, with only the normal level of bragging found in such accounts, and with scattered comments about shortcomings on his side. That Khaled and Schwarzkopf did not see eye to eye on every issue was expectable. Indeed, what is most striking about their respective accounts is how well the U.S. and Saudi sides worked together despite cultural differences. **JFQ**

THE MILITARY IN ISRAELI SOCIETY

A Book Review by

JOSEPH E. GOLDBERG

Civil-Military Relations in Israel

by Yehuda Ben Meir

New York: Columbia University Press, 1995.

235 pp. \$29.95

[ISBN 0-231-09684-4]

The Military in the Service of Society and Democracy: The Challenge of the Dual-Role Military

edited by Daniella Ashkenazy

Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1994.

229 pp. \$55.00

[ISBN 0-313-29004-0]

Democratic governments, ever fearful of losing their freedoms, have held to the principle of civilian supremacy over the military. *The Federalist Papers* articulated the Founders' suspicion of standing armies and defended the Constitution against the accusation that it provided insufficient safeguards against the military's encroachment into civilian affairs.

Two recent publications on Israeli civil-military relations help us to better understand this relationship in democracies in general and Israel specifically. *Civil-Military Relations in Israel* by Yehuda Ben Meir and *The Military in the Service of Society and Democracy*, an anthology edited by Daniella Ashkenazy, each make a valuable contribution to the growing body of literature on the Israel Defense Forces (IDF).

Since independence Israel has found itself in a constant state of hostilities. Not counting the Scud missile attacks during the Persian Gulf War, Israel has been at war five times since 1948. It has also been constantly threatened by terrorist acts. The contribution of the military to Israel's survival is therefore greatly appreciated and, as Avraham Carmeli's chapter in *The Military in the Service of Society and Democracy* points out, inductees into the Israeli army hold the IDF in high esteem and see military service as contributing to their personal growth as well as national security. Ashkenazy's book

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arose from a seminar on the "Army in the Service of Society and Democracy" sponsored by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Israel. Over half of the book examines the role of the IDF in Israeli society, including an excellent chapter on civilian control by Moshe Lissak. Because the military has played a significant part in integrating a heterogeneous Jewish population into Israeli society through its educational function, the IDF has contributed to the growth of the state beyond its obvious security accomplishments. In addition, the book devotes chapters to civil-military relations in the United States, Singapore, France, Britain, Yugoslavia, and Germany.

The volume by Yehuda Ben Meir begins with two fine chapters on civil-military relations. He emphasizes that a complete separation of these two sectors of society would be as unwise as it would be impractical to achieve. The civil sector must grasp the realities of the assets, both human and material, that are available to pursue their strategic objectives while the military must be aware of political objectives. The danger, he believes, stems less from a military takeover than from civil authorities simply deferring to the military in formulating ends as well as means. Military solutions are not always the best course of action. This danger becomes acute, of course, in times of crisis.

Ben Meir offers a model of civil-military relations that divides policy concerns into political affairs, domestic matters, national security, and the armed forces. Whereas civilian involvement is justified in all these areas, military activity in the political and electoral processes is prohibited. His discussion of policy and the existing literature is illuminating and is a contribution in its own right.

Civil-Military Relations in Israel frankly discusses past IDF involvement in critical issues. But despite this involvement, the Israeli state has ensured that military participation is depoliticized. In part, Ben Meir traces this tradition to a heritage which has nurtured belief in liberty and warned Israelis of the dangers of militarism. But he also acknowledges the unique contribution to civilian control by the country's first prime minister and defense minister, David Ben Gurion.

Clausewitz's dictum that strategy exists to fulfill political ends is quoted so frequently that we forget that not only do military ends serve as a means to accomplish political objectives, but that political objectives also must take strategic capabilities into account. Both books reviewed open us to a number of dimensions of civil-military relations on which we should all reflect. **JFQ**