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BOOK REVIEWS

WHAT DOES CHINA WANT?

Heath, Timothy. *China's New Governing Party Paradigm: Political Renewal and the Pursuit of National Rejuvenation*. Farnham, Surrey, U.K.: Ashgate, 2014. 256pp. \$109.95

In 2012, Tim Heath, then an analyst at U.S. Pacific Command, published a scholarly article that considered whether in fact China had a national strategy (“What Does China Want? Discerning the PRC’s National Strategy,” *Asian Security* 8, no. 1 [2012], pp. 54–72). Drawing extensively from Chinese sources, Heath argued that China did not have a formal national strategy document but did outline the essential elements of a national strategy in the authoritative writings of the Chinese Communist Party. Among professionals working Pacific security issues, the article was widely discussed and well regarded.

In *China's New Governing Party Paradigm*, Tim Heath expands and broadens this theme, examining the central narrative that both provides internal justification for exclusive Chinese Communist Party rule and shapes the policies the party imposes on China. Along the way, he offers a detailed description of the mechanisms the party employs to study, develop, and communicate the essential decisions that literally form the “party line.”

Up until the 1980s, academic studies of the People’s Republic of China often focused on ideology, revolution, and the impact of the Communist Party and party struggles. In the years since Deng Xiaoping announced the “reform and opening up” that freed China’s economic potential, analysts have focused on the impact of this economic change and the social forces it unleashed. In many cases, these studies portray the party as having abandoned ideology, offering the Chinese people national prestige and economic prosperity in its place.

Heath suggests that party ideology was not abandoned but transformed to ensure the party’s continued relevance and claim to authority. The key change came in 2002 when an authoritative official report referred to the Communist Party as the “governing party.” Though largely unremarked on at the time, this pronouncement represented a formal abandonment of the “revolutionary party” ideology that had justified party rule since the foundation of the People’s Republic in 1949.

While governments universally claim that they can govern competently, Heath underscores the exclusivity of the party's claim: not merely that it can rule well, but that it is uniquely equipped through rigorous study and discovery of natural laws to rule well. In Heath's words, the party asserts that "no other political group possesses an intellectual grasp of the historic natural laws underpinning China's development." The exclusivity of this claim means that ideology, far from being dead, is of central importance in justifying the party's rule. The party's grasp is expressed in correct theory that, promulgated by the party, becomes the basis for central directives that then are expressed in laws and policy.

Party theory is broad and elastic, setting a central direction and allowing increasingly professional bureaucracies to develop more-detailed guidance that aligns with the party line. The shift to a "governing party paradigm" has caused the party to focus on formalizing, regularizing, and bounding this process of policy interpretation. This interpretation process allows ministries and lower levels of government some genuine latitude in decision making within the overall guidance. This is, however, "rule of law" in the Chinese rather than Western sense. The absolute demand that law conform to party guidance renders any move toward independent authority, either bureaucratic or democratic, a threat to party rule, and transgressions of party guidance are quickly suppressed via an enforcement process that, to Western eyes, appears extralegal.

Much of the book describes the bureaucratic structure that develops, reviews, and issues party guidance. Heath emphasizes the key role of the Central Party School in this process.

The two most recent general secretaries of the Communist Party, Hu Jintao and Xi Jinping, previously served as Central Party School presidents. They have relied on the school, its staff, and its students as both a think tank and a key means of promulgating their guidance.

For readers interested in national security, Heath's analysis raises a number of essential issues. The party's claim to unique competency means that its legitimacy is in large part performance based. While the concept of "performance legitimacy" in the Chinese system is not new, Heath underscores how critical it is that the party be able to present itself as successful, or at least competent, in every key policy area. In this context, it is clear why Xi Jinping views endemic corruption as a key threat to party rule.

Further, Heath's analysis has important implications for the future of the Chinese military. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) has a unique relationship with the party. It is, of course, the party's army, first and last accountable to the party leadership. It too, however, has been impacted by the tendency to delegate execution-level detail to professional bureaucracies. Heath's model suggests that PLA leaders, as technical experts in their field, will expect to enjoy increasing influence and autonomy within their area of expertise. The party, however, is especially sensitive to its control of the military, and the tension in this relationship that Heath identifies will likely continue in coming years.

This is a dense, specialized book, and the generalist would do well to start with a work such as Richard McGregor's excellent *The Party: The Secret World of China's Communist Rulers* (2012) as an introduction to the topic.

However, the work is approachable to the motivated reader and for the Navy's growing cadre of Asia-Pacific hands represents essential reading.

DALE C. RIELAGE



Serrat, Austin, Lawrence Douglas, and Martha Merrill Umphrey, eds. *Law and War*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Univ. Press, 2014. 248pp. \$75

Law and War is a collection of five essays on the role of law in war offered as part of the Amherst Series in Law, Jurisprudence, and Social Thought. What ties the essays together is their shared interest in “interrogating the assumption . . . that the insertion of law into war is necessarily a salutary achievement.” But this connection is often loose, and, while several of the essays have a great deal of individual merit, it is perhaps a weakness of the book that it lacks the degree of overall coherence that one might expect.

Sarah Sewell leads off with the essay most relevant to military legal practitioners and warfighters. In “Limits of Law: Promoting Humanity in Armed Conflict,” Sewell makes a compelling argument that modern norms about what is acceptable in war often outstrip the limits imposed by the actual law; that is, norms often make “unacceptable” conduct that the law inarguably still permits. She views this as a negative development, fearing that as gaps develop between the norms and the law, it will increasingly erode respect for the latter. By way of example, Sewell highlights the growing normative expectation that powerful states will eliminate civilian casualties in war, while the law of armed conflict has always recognized an uneasy

balance between humanitarian protection and military necessity—a balance that “the norm of minimizing civilian casualties” does not need to maintain.

Gabriella Blum follows Sewell, and in “The Individualization of War” she explains how such norms have taken hold through a process she describes as a shift from “collectivism” to “cosmopolitanism,” by which she means a shift from a “state-centered set of obligations” to one focusing on the rights of individuals to be protected from the evils of war. Like Sewell, Blum asserts that this development is not necessarily good, leading to an increasing conflation between the norms of policing and those of warfighting (with negative consequences to both).

The third essay represents a substantive, if not thematic, departure, as Laura Donohue writes on “Pandemic Disease, Biological Weapons, and War.” Donohue offers a historical treatment of U.S. federal authority for responding to such threats, and argues that post-9/11 fears have led to a paradigm shift in thinking about them—from public health menace to national security threat. This essay is probably most relevant to military practitioners dealing with domestic support to civil authorities.

Samuel Moyn’s essay “From Antiwar Politics to Antitorture Politics” offers a fascinating comparison between the legal arguments offered against the Vietnam War and those often presented regarding America’s conduct of its post-9/11 wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Through a careful examination of the role of law in the antiwar movement of the 1960s and 1970s, Moyn highlights the extent to which the debate centered on the legality of America’s entry into

the conflict, as opposed to focusing on *how* America fought. Moyn then traces a shift toward the end of the war, particularly Telford Taylor's trenchant criticism of American warfighting practices, which Taylor came to view as unlawful. By contrast, Moyn argues that criticism of our modern conflicts is directed at the conduct of hostilities—torture, rules of engagement, and war crimes. He ascribes this to the end of conscription and the relative inoculation of much of the American public from the effects of our wars abroad, but also to a larger shift in the broad discourse about the law of war in the modern era, in which the means and methods of warfare are much more tightly regulated.

The final essay builds to some extent on Moyn's work, though Larry May's "War Crimes Trials during and after War" is less cogent and ultimately less valuable. May sets out to examine whether war crimes trials are best prosecuted while hostilities are still under way or after hostilities are concluded. Controversially, May argues that war crimes trials during hostilities ought to address *jus ad bellum* matters: once a tribunal finds that unlawful "aggressive war" is being waged, soldiers of that side are on notice that they may be participants in the war crime of aggression. This strikes the reviewer as highly implausible, and for that reason this essay is perhaps the weakest of the five.

Ultimately, *Law and War* is a collection of essays that are largely conceptual and highly normative in their arguments. As such it is undoubtedly a thought-provoking and challenging book, but also one that is not likely to be of immediate use to military lawyers per se. On the other hand, for non-lawyers who ponder the role of law in

war, in policy making, and in shaping and reflecting societal norms, the book offers many valuable insights.

JOHN MERRIAM



Daddis, Gregory. *Westmoreland's War: Reassessing American Strategy in Vietnam*. Oxford, U.K.: Oxford Univ. Press, 2015. 320pp. \$36.95

General William Westmoreland, the American commander of Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) from 1964 through 1968, remains one of the most contentious personalities of the Vietnam War, still the subject of intense debate among veterans and historians of the war. Prevalent still is the view that "Westy" could not see the forest for the trees, or vice versa, and disastrously lacked strategic vision and operational creativity owing to his parochial focus on employing Cold War "big unit" doctrine and attrition to combat an insurgent war of unification. The most extreme of such assessments of Westmoreland comes from Lewis Sorley, who in multiple works, notably *Westmoreland: The General Who Lost Vietnam* (Houghton Mifflin, 2011), all but charges Westmoreland with gross negligence.

Gregory Daddis, formerly of the Military History Department at West Point and now associate professor of history at Chapman University, offers what he believes is a more balanced view of this controversial general. In *Westmoreland's War*, Daddis argues that instead of lacking understanding of the conflict in Vietnam and warmly wrapping himself in the comfort of familiar "big unit" doctrine, Westmoreland embraced counterinsurgency approaches

and pacification, strongly supported building up the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN), and recognized the importance of establishing the political legitimacy of the government of the Republic of Vietnam among the South Vietnamese people. Far from the bumbling, career-climbing martinet characterized by Sorley, Daddis's Westmoreland at least asserted an intellectual understanding of the challenges of revolutionary warfare. Daddis argues that Westmoreland recognized the need for pacification and other counterinsurgency measures, but failed to articulate his strategy publicly or to his commanders in the field, ending up conducting what was in essence an unwinnable war. Daddis offers a challenging corrective on Westmoreland, but some will find that his ideas fall a bit short. What Westmoreland said and wrote, which Daddis ably reveals through his extensive and valuable archival research, does not connect to what happened on the battlefield. Westmoreland could not militarily rectify the political problems of South Vietnam, and, as both the military and political situations continued to deteriorate, Westmoreland in turn relied more on big-unit search and destroy operations and the massive firepower the American military had at its disposal. The military situation, arguably, dictated that Westmoreland use his limited resources—yes, limited resources—to stem the tide on the military side at the expense of manpower and resources for pacification and other nonkinetic programs. Attrition, whether Westmoreland intended it or not (Daddis argues not), was the public face of his strategic and operational approach throughout his tenure as commander of MACV. If that was indeed the case, then Westmoreland's

failure is in part one of miscommunicating what it was he believed he was doing in South Vietnam, if not disconnecting that belief through intent or ignorance from the military reality his forces faced, especially from 1966 forward.

Vietnam was not Westmoreland's war. Yes, Westmoreland has been and probably will continue to be the face of that conflict. He is, after all, an easy if not agreeable target on which to place a great deal of blame for the American debacle. However, as Daddis correctly points out, the Johnson administration, not Westmoreland, placed limitations on what Westmoreland could do in Vietnam. Political leaders in Washington, like the military leader Westmoreland, eagerly accepted the primacy of American firepower as a military solution to both military and political problems in South Vietnam. Still, one must accept that the officials of the Johnson administration grounded those limitations in deep political earth. At the time, they believed they had good reasons for approaching the conflict the way they did. Ultimately, as Daddis suggests, it did not matter what those in Washington, Saigon, or MACV did. The war in Vietnam was a bad war that American leadership believed had to be fought nonetheless, resulting in defeat and tragedy that still haunts the United States fifty years later.

Westmoreland's War is an important book. Scholars of the conflict should read it. Daddis offers thought-provoking arguments that counter the Sorley school on the Westmoreland years of American involvement in Vietnam. Whether one agrees with Daddis (or Sorley for that matter), diligent scholars must consider Daddis's point of view and his interpretation of the archival evidence. Daddis has made a valuable

contribution to the discussion, just as he did with his similarly provocative *No Sure Victory: Measuring U.S. Army Effectiveness and Progress in the Vietnam War* (Oxford, 2011). As for Westmoreland, the debate continues.

WILLIAM THOMAS ALLISON



Hill, Christopher. *Outpost: Life on the Frontlines of American Diplomacy*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014. 448pp. \$30

An American diplomat for over three decades, Christopher Hill's service took him all over the globe and into some of the most challenging circumstances faced by a member of the Foreign Service. This account of his unique postings during that dynamic time frame is a vivid reminder of how much the world has changed.

In his memoir, *Outpost: Life on the Frontlines of American Diplomacy*, Hill, now a dean at the Josef Korbel School of International Studies at the University of Denver, traces his rise in the Department of State in a style that is engaging and lively. His writing is honest and reflective as he recounts his interactions with some of the most distinguished and most notorious individuals to grace the world stage. Over the course of his fast-paced narrative, he doesn't pull any punches in his assessments of people or policy decisions and, most importantly, he shares valuable and candid insights (both successes and failures) and lessons learned over his distinguished career.

Prior to his start in the State Department, Hill spent two years in the Peace Corps. He recalls trying to influence a local credit union election in Cameroon

and failing miserably. He learned the folly of trying to change the behavior of an entire community. He writes, "Years later, in the Middle East, in the Balkans, in Asia, I would see time and time again systemized efforts on the part of the United States to pick winners in situations we understood little about. Like my efforts at the Tole Tea Estate's credit union, they never worked."

Another key theme that emerges is the importance of mentoring and how it enabled Hill to reach his full potential in the State Department. His early assignments under Lawrence Eagleburger (later Secretary of State under George H. W. Bush) in Yugoslavia and Richard Holbrooke (lead negotiator at the Dayton Peace Accords and later ambassador to the UN) at the European Bureau exposed him to two of the best practitioners of statecraft in the U.S. government.

After recounting the great success at Dayton, Hill transitions his narrative to the latter part of his career, in which his record as a Foreign Service officer is a little more mixed. He describes the numerous actors, both domestic (politicians and members of the military) and international, that he encountered during some of his most demanding billets. These postings, as the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, envoy to the North Korean nuclear talks for the Bush administration, and the U.S. ambassador to Iraq for the Obama administration, seem to have left Hill unfulfilled and somewhat frustrated.

He takes both administrations to task for what he believes was an unhealthy blend of partisan politics and lack of a long-term policy vision. Of particular note is Hill's withering critique of Vice

President Cheney and his influence in the Bush administration during the Six Party Talks. “The neoconservatives, aided by a vice president’s office deep with suspicions of the Foreign Service, seem to believe that the State Department negotiated with the North Koreans because we enjoyed it. Our effort to explain . . . fell on deaf ears.” Despite Hill’s best efforts, the North Koreans decided not to comply with American demands, and he was soon brought back home.

After a short respite, Hill was selected to replace Ambassador Ryan Crocker in Iraq. He makes many valuable observations about his tour in Iraq, especially his strained relations with the U.S. military leadership responsible for the region, in particular Generals David Petraeus and Ray Odierno. His criticism is also directed at the Obama administration, which he perceived as slow “to grasp the complexities of the region, the seeming confusion within its foreign policy team between wars of democracy and sectarian enmity.”

Outpost: Life on the Frontlines of American Diplomacy is a significant contribution to the international studies field and is a must-read. This volume will appeal to anyone who is interested in learning more about the Department of State or the intricacies of American interagency relationships. However, with all the security challenges facing the United States in the foreseeable future, this book also needs to be read by midgrade and senior military professionals so they may gain a better appreciation of the Foreign Service and the people who serve in that important institution.

T. J. JOHNSON



Friedberg, Aaron L. *Beyond Air-Sea Battle: The Debate over US Military Strategy in Asia*. London: Routledge, 2014. 152pp. \$14.99

Normally, a recommendation regarding for which audience a book is best suited comes at the end of the review. In this case, it comes first because Professor Aaron Friedberg provides a tight monograph that illuminates areas of great misunderstanding to a large population in the policy and defense communities: the debate over the concept of Air-Sea Battle (ASB) and the vernacular of modern maritime strategy. Landlubbers who have been engrossed for the last fourteen years in land wars in South Asia should read this book. As a history professor teaching a population composed predominantly of U.S. Army majors at the Command and General Staff College in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, this reviewer has firsthand experience of this shortfall in knowledge in both uniformed and civilian defense personnel. The book is also recommended to all those who desire a comprehensive discussion of the concept and its variations, alternatives, and origins.

Friedberg, a professor of politics and international relations at Princeton University, made a compelling case in a January 2015 *Washington Quarterly* article about the People’s Republic of China’s (PRC’s) “new assertiveness,” which, he argues in this book, is the primary motivator for the emergence of ASB. From this and his other writings, he clearly believes that a response to this assertiveness is absolutely necessary, if not overdue, and in need of high-profile public debate.

The monograph is organized into an introduction, four thematic chapters, and a concluding chapter, all in about 150 pages of nicely spaced text—making it a comparatively short read, although not a simple one. Friedberg first lays out how ASB came to be and how the concept is defined. Like everyone else, he traces the origins of ASB to the challenge presented by the PRC's adoption of a maritime strategy that includes antiaccess/area-denial (A2/AD), although when ASB emerged it was generically framed and could have referred to other countries, including Iran (see for example this reviewer's "Air-Sea Battle and Its Discontents," *USNI Proceedings*, October 2013). A2/AD involved the expansion of the capabilities of the People's Liberation Army Navy after the Taiwan crisis of 1996 to deny use of the maritime commons inside the so-called first island chain and to challenge approaches to that area (p. 26).

Geographically, the first island chain extends from the Japanese archipelago, through Taiwan and the Philippines, to the exit of the South China Sea (SCS) at the Malacca Strait near Singapore. China began increasing its surface and subsurface fleets and its ability to project air power from land bases into this region, as well as using innovative new weapons such as antiship ballistic missiles to threaten U.S. high-value units such as aircraft carriers, amphibious assault ships, and logistics vessels beyond the first island chain. Additionally, as A2/AD developed it came to represent a "credible threat," according to Friedberg, to the naval and air bases and logistics support by U.S. allies along the first island chain (pp. 27–28). Friedberg describes this all in detail in the introduction and first chapter.

His second chapter then argues that the United States responded belatedly to A2/AD because of the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the 2008 financial crisis and great recession. The former distracted U.S. policy makers from the emerging threat, and the latter prevented a strong response, because of the perceived costs in a dismal fiscal environment. Evidently he believes the current fiscal environment has eased enough to take the challenge more seriously. Here Friedberg could have supported his argument by emphasizing that, in addition to the economic crisis at home, the two wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were consuming inordinate U.S. resources in 2008. Nonetheless, he does a credible job of debunking those critics of ASB who say the A2/AD threat is overstated or that the relationship between the United States and China has improved enough to obviate a response.

Friedberg then outlines in chapter 3 what can be called the classical ASB concept, calling it the "direct approach." This approach is primarily offensive, although it does not posit a U.S. "first strike" but rather a reactive counteroffensive that threatens the PRC's land-based power projection and naval support to A2/AD with commensurate U.S. naval and air power, preferably in concert with allies such as Japan. He addresses critics by examining ASB's efficacy in the following areas (using speculative analysis in some cases): military outcomes, political outcomes, escalation (including nuclear), deterrence value, reassurance to allies, and the effects on competition between the United States and the PRC. Friedberg's inclusion of nuclear escalatory calculus is a welcome component, given how little this topic seems to be factored into policy discussions in

the multipolar nuclear world we now inhabit. The Department of Defense has an Air-Sea Battle Office, as does the U.S. Navy, and his discussion at the end of chapter 3 is aimed, presumably, at the folks inhabiting those organizations and their strategic masters.

Friedberg forecasts two potential ASB approaches: a “linear” approach that uses existing resources and technology and, in contrast, a “discontinuous” approach that relies heavily on new technologies and un-fielded weapons concepts (pp. 95–98). Friedberg seems to prefer the linear approach, given the ease with which it can be implemented (although that ease does not mean it will be inexpensive), but he does not rule out investigating new technologies. He is obviously wary of “betting the farm” on a “futures” approach.

In his final chapter, Friedberg describes two indirect approaches or “alternatives” to ASB: either a distant blockade or what he calls “maritime denial” (pp. 104, 116–17). He again applies an analytic framework to assess the efficacy of these less-offensive-oriented approaches. Distant blockade is merely economic warfare. It would aim at Chinese shipping, principally oil tankers at the key straits’ entrances leading through the SCS to Chinese ports. Maritime denial is simply ASB limited primarily to the global commons and PRC littoral inside the first island chain. One might characterize maritime denial as an active defense of the global commons, but again it is reactive, not something to implement without significant Chinese military provocation. The conclusion reviews the bidding on everything discussed. Here Friedberg comes across as a bit more bellicose than one might expect, implying that a mix

of all three approaches—ASB, distant blockade, and maritime denial—would probably be the best course of action. Friedberg comes closest to the nub of the issue when he writes: “The first dividing line in the debate over this issue is between the advocates of maritime denial, who seek to avoid strikes against targets on the Chinese mainland, and the proponents of ASB, who believe that war cannot be won without such attacks” (p. 137). However, he leaves the door open for the reader to make up his or her own mind on the issue.

While this might be perceived as strength, it is also something of a disappointment, because this reviewer wanted to know what Friedberg *really* recommends. Friedberg is clearly not of the opinion that ASB should be dismissed, and seems to support a course of action that implies the direct approach option while being ready, at a moment’s notice, to implement the other two approaches in response to a PRC “first strike” (p. 37).

Friedberg leverages all the latest writing on the topic, using the work of writers familiar to naval audiences such as Jan van Tol and Wayne Hughes. He has done his homework, and now it is time for all others to do theirs as the United States faces the A2/AD challenge.

JOHN T. KUEHN



Preble, Christopher, and John Mueller, eds. *A Dangerous World? Threat Perception and U.S. National Security*. Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 2014. 224pp. \$12.95

Medical doctors are trained to recognize when patients’ complaints and self-diagnoses need to be ignored, lest

the doctor be responsible for unnecessary medical treatment. It is unfortunate that we do not have similar education for national security officials regarding threats to the nation. With such training, there is a chance we could avoid at least some of the overreactions to misperceived threats that have burdened recent American foreign policy.

There is a significant and growing literature addressing the issue of threat inflation, and Christopher A. Preble and John Mueller's edited volume *A Dangerous World?* is an important contribution in this area. Published by the Cato Institute, it is a collection of sixteen essays by an array of authors, each delving into a different aspect of the U.S. threat environment. Their aim is to question the assumptions that underpin so much of U.S. national security policy: that we live in a perilous world riven by uncertainty and threats, and only a robust, expensive, and active defense preserves the homeland's security.

To this end, the work addresses a wide range of topics, each examined by a different contributor. Francis Gavin and John Mueller separately examine America's history of nuclear alarmism, noting that predictions of imminent explosions in a number of nuclear weapons states have been commonplace for decades. Lyle Goldstein argues convincingly that the threat China poses to the United States is a limited one (he uses the memorable phrase "panda claws") and he claims China's rise can be countered with low-cost strategies. (As of this writing, recent devaluations of the yuan raise the possibility of a future Chinese retrenchment, further reducing the need for a potent American counter.) Former U.S. intelligence officer Paul Pillar explores substate threats (including

terror groups), asserting that America is too quick to seize on new threats. Since 9/11, more Americans have drowned in their bathtubs than have been killed in the United States by terrorist attacks, and improved security cannot account for the entirety of this disparity.

Michael Cohen asks whether other aspects of personal welfare, such as health security, should also be addressed in our discussions of security. Daniel Drezner explores the economic benefits of American military pre-eminence, and finds them elusive. The United States has spent trillions on homeland defense and overseas confrontations since 9/11, Drezner notes, while the total economic impact of 9/11 itself was "only" \$100 billion.

Elsewhere, Christopher Fettweis examines the pervasive anxiety in American national security culture, arguing that "geopolitical fear" has become something of an American tradition, passed on from generation to generation. "Wealth creates insecurity in individuals, and it seems to do so in states as well." Benjamin Friedman explores the issue of threat inflation, arguing that America's vast power "distributes the costs" and "concentrates the benefits" of confrontational policies, creating constituencies that promote (and even become dependent on) maintaining a state of unnecessary vigilance.

In many respects, America can afford to exaggerate the world's perils. There is no meaningful political pressure to reduce the budget of the Department of Defense, and America's national security expenditures, large though they are, constitute only a fraction of the federal budget. At the same time, one must also consider the risk that threat inflation poses to American

lives. More Americans were killed as a consequence of the decision to invade Iraq in 2003 than on 9/11 itself. But there is also the long-term causal impact of the U.S. invasion. The existence of ISIS is another unintended consequence of the American invasion.

It is true that there are dangers in this world. But Preble and Mueller's volume constitutes an antidote to America's tendency to imagine grave peril, and serves as an important counter to the American proclivity to overstate the benefits and understate the costs of an assertive global military posture. The editors argue that America is largely free of threats that require military preparedness or balancing behavior. In his chapter, Fettweis argues that America's tendency to exaggerate the world's dangers can be altered, since it is based on a system of beliefs that can be changed over time. Let's hope he's right.

ANDREW STIGLER



Hassan, Hassan, and Michael Weiss. *ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror*. New York: Regan Arts, 2015. 288pp. \$16.95

The surprising success of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in seizing control of large parts of northern and western Iraq in 2014 has generated many questions for policy makers and the public. How was this group so effective so quickly? Where did it come from and how did so many observers miss its rise? What threat does ISIS pose to the region and beyond?

Hassan Hassan and Michael Weiss address these questions in this recent book about ISIS. The work is part history of

the ISIS movement and part analysis of its nature and strategy. The authors' backgrounds—Weiss is a prolific journalist and Hassan a knowledgeable Syrian analyst at the Delma Institute in Abu Dhabi—combine brilliantly to explain the rapidly evolving events on the ground within the context of the political-military issues in the region. Hassan and Weiss interviewed current and former ISIS movement fighters in Syria, dissected ISIS propaganda videos and statements, and combined other scholarly analyses of ISIS to produce what I consider to be the most accurate assessment of ISIS currently available.

The overwhelming strength of the book is that Hassan and Weiss get the history of ISIS right. Although it is often mistakenly thought of as a recent phenomenon, the authors correctly trace the group's evolution as a core of Salafist-oriented fighters who joined together under Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in Iraq in 2002–2003. Zarqawi's unique outlook, based in the same Salafi-jihadist school as Osama Bin Laden's Al Qaeda, imprinted on the ISIS movement early and has been the biggest factor in the popularization of its distinct ideology and the evolution of its tactics and strategy. The authors capture this dynamic, as well as ISIS's subsequent transformation from a foreign fighter-based organization to a more indigenous Iraqi-led group that eventually split with Al Qaeda.

Because of their understanding of ISIS history, Hassan and Weiss are able to demonstrate the ideological foundation behind ISIS's strategic targeting and why the group takes on such a large spectrum of enemies at once. The authors are also able to explain ISIS's genocidal strategy and how the group promotes its own atrocities to inspire fear in its enemies.

This book illuminates the strategic debate over the importance of uncontrolled spaces to groups like ISIS. ISIS's effective use of low levels of indiscriminate violence to take over large parts of Syria and Iraq since 2013 demonstrates the opportunity that ungoverned space affords malignant actors such as ISIS. The ISIS movement began in the Kurdish areas of Iraq outside the reach of Saddam Hussein in 2002, and moved quickly into Anbar after identifying a security vacuum following the invasion of Iraq in 2003. The collapse of the Assad government in eastern Syria and the defeat of the Sunni Awakening militias and their Iraqi security partners in several Iraqi provinces (2008–12) once again created space for the ISIS movement—this time to recover from its 2007 defeat in Iraq. Despite today's blistering air campaign, ISIS maintains control over most of the Sunni areas of Iraq and Syria, and arguably continues to develop deep roots of support among the population.

The authors also highlight the problems of both the Bush and Obama administrations' war-termination strategies for Iraq, in what has become a recognized weakness in the American way of war. Comfortable with outsourcing security in Sunni areas to an untrained civilian militia, both the Iraqis and Americans turned a blind eye to the fact that ISIS would make the Sunni Awakening an important target in order to reestablish core sanctuaries inside Iraq. The authors point with amazement to the gradual release of hard-core ISIS prisoners (2008–11) back into their communities as one of several factors that helped fuel the growth of ISIS from its post-surge nadir. While the reasons for this shortsighted approach were undoubtedly political and legal in nature, these

policies surely have contributed to the untimely deaths of thousands of Iraqis and the loss of much territory to ISIS. As of 2015, nineteen of twenty of ISIS's top leaders were formerly in American custody at Camp Bucca before being released or escaping from custody.

Overall, I highly recommend this book to policy makers, educators, and military professionals who seek a deeper understanding of the ISIS movement. The authors have provided a very believable representation of a contemporary group that I believe will be vindicated by additional research in the future. Until that time, this book will become the basis for most of our understanding of a highly secretive and effective pseudostate that remains a threat to the region and beyond.

CRAIG WHITESIDE



Muth, Jörg. *Command Culture: Officer Education in the U.S. Army and the German Armed Forces, 1901–1940, and the Consequences for World War II*. Denton: Univ. of North Texas Press, 2013. 376pp. \$29.95

Dr. Jörg Muth has written a serious comparative account of the German and American precommissioning courses and general staff colleges from 1901 to 1940. Any new work comparing German and American military effectiveness in the first half of the twentieth century is guaranteed to be controversial, and Muth certainly achieves controversy. However, there exists a significant revisionist school of thought that offers an interpretation much different from Muth's.

The May 2010 Society of Military History annual meeting, held at the Virginia

Military Institute, featured a very well-attended roundtable that posed the question of American or German operational or tactical superiority. The panel moderator first asked how many of the historians in the room had spent their teenage years reading books promoting the vaunted Prussian and German militaries. Nearly every hand went up. Attracted by the works of Heinz Guderian, F. W. von Mellenthin, Liddell Hart, J. F. C. Fuller, and others, many of these teenagers grew up to be believers in the conventional wisdom that the Germans got it pretty well right. A complementary opinion was that the American military forces got very little right. In 1986, Heller and Stofft's *America's First Battles* became the standard history for those who found in the German army the bravery, intelligence, and aggressive leadership they sought for America.

Muth and this reviewer were both in the audience for the 2010 roundtable, and both of our hands went up. However, the revisionist school, with Michael Doubler's *Closing with the Enemy* (1994), Keith Bonn's *When the Odds Were Even* (1994), and Peter Mansoor's *GI Offensive in Europe* (1999) in the vanguard, is alive and well. Perhaps the most useful direct discussion of this historiographic misalignment was Brian Linn's piece in the *Journal of Military History* (April 2002) "The American Way of War Revisited" and the comments in response by Russell Weigley. Linn's article and Weigley's response effectively frame the distinct difference between interpretations that hold that the German armed forces in both World War I and World War II either were superior to the armed forces of the United States or were not.

Muth has significant challenges using primary and secondary sources.

He seems to relish his biases, and even partly explains those biases in the "Author's Afterword," which Muth states was added upon the sage advice of Edward M. Coffman and Dennis Showalter. Muth's characterization of U.S. Army officers—as people from whom he should hide as a youth hanging out with American soldiers on maneuvers—may be more self-revelatory than Muth realizes.

Muth arguably tries to do too much in a single book. His interpretation of officer education in both Germany and the United States focuses on two levels: cadets in their precommissioning programs and field-grade officers attending the equivalent of a general staff college. Unfortunately, Muth does little beyond making assertions unsupported by evidence. These assertions are frequently that American army officer education was bad, and that the equivalent in Germany was good. He absolutely fails to place either education system in its historical context, going so far as to say that the word *Prussia* would be needlessly complicating, and that he therefore only uses *Germany*. Muth claims that "school solutions" at Leavenworth were "always the norm" and that "ineffective courses were led by instructors who sometimes lacked knowledge of their fields and usually failed in didactics and pedagogics." The only footnote to this paragraph refers the reader to Craig Mullaney's *Unforgiving Minute* about junior officers and tactical combat in Afghanistan. No other source is cited, except for a vague reference to a 2000 West Point graduate.

This is not an isolated case. There are multiple unsubstantiated claims throughout the book. For two more examples, Muth says nothing of the poor reputation of the XI Corps of the Army of the Potomac when he asserts

that German immigrants made for highly respected soldiers in the American Civil War. He also misses the First and Second Schleswig-Holstein Wars of 1848–51 and 1864, respectively, when he asserts that in 1866 Prussia had not been at war for nearly fifty years.

Despite these significant shortcomings, this reviewer hopes that Muth continues to contribute to both the conversation and the controversy.

PETER J. SCHIFFERLE



Philbin, Tobias R. *Battle of Dogger Bank: The First Dreadnought Engagement*. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 2014. 198pp. \$32

This title is the latest work from American naval historian Tobias Philbin, who is probably best known for his 1982 biography of Admiral von Hipper. In the author's words, the book is "designed to provide new insights into the first battle between the largest fighting machines of the early twentieth century." As such, one might expect that a detailed analysis of the conduct of the battle itself would form the heart of the work, with perhaps a supporting explanation of the tactics employed on both sides and a discussion of whether these were or were not in line with prewar expectations. This could have been further supported by brief chapters explaining the strategic situation in the naval war at that point; the role of the key personalities; and the original thinking behind the development of the "fast Dreadnought cruiser" as a warship type, insofar as it might help explain the platform's performance in the battle itself. The work could then have been concluded with a discussion on the lessons learned and whether the

proposed corrective measures were successful. In other words, the focus should have been clearly on the engagement itself and what it vindicated or didn't.

Sadly, however, and despite good intentions, Philbin falls well short of this aim. His coverage of the actual battle is scanty and disjointed, and the remainder of the work is notably deficient or simply inaccurate. This is doubly frustrating given that this battle, the first of only two dreadnought-versus-dreadnought engagements in the entire war, probably represented each side's "last, best chance" to put things right, so to speak, before the better-known battle of Jutland a year later. As such, it is indeed an important area for study by the naval historian.

Philbin's difficulties are threefold. First, and as intimated, the balance is arguably wrong between the coverage of the battle itself and the supporting text. He devotes only 30 of the 150 or so pages to actual analysis of the battle, with the remaining pages dealing with the supporting areas. Unfortunately, these 30 pages, more than many others, fall victim to the second difficulty he has, which is in developing a clear and coherent narrative of a series of events, free from repetition and diversion. Rather than recounting the main features of the engagement in a chronological fashion, he chooses to take the different perspectives of the individual ships involved, which does not help the reader elucidate the decision making as it might have appeared to the opposing fleet commanders at the time—a feature central to his stated aim—and leads to a nonsequential presentation of the main events. None of this is helped by the maps in the book that, although reproductions of the original battle reports and histories, are almost unreadable in the scale presented. Thus, despite

being fairly familiar with the overall engagement, I found myself resorting to Wikipedia for a quick reminder and sanity check. Repetition is also rife throughout the book, sometimes in successive paragraphs, pages, and even endnotes, which makes the reader's journey more laborious than it need be.

The real worry, though, is his third difficulty: that of accuracy and the incorporation of a comprehensive coverage of the relevant scholarship. On the accuracy side, some of the construction dates for the ships involved are incorrect, even according to the sources that he does use; he cites the wrong Lambert in the text on page 6; on page 24, he claims Dogger was the first "battle" in the Anglo-German naval race when it was, of course, the first *dreadnought* engagement; while on page 27 he has HMS *Vernon* as "the gunnery school for the Royal Navy," when it was actually HMS *Excellent*. To make matters worse in the context, Admiral John "Jacky" Fisher was of course closely associated with both of these establishments, albeit at different points in his career. In addition, and while not as specific, there are all sorts of other, more general omissions and inaccuracies in the presentation of the powder vulnerabilities, the ammunition and gunnery practices in use, and the train of thought that led to the all-big-gun ordnance, all of which could have been corrected by reference to some of the more current scholarship from the likes of Jon Sumida, John Brooks, and Norman Friedman. Perhaps most importantly, though, and given that the author attempted to cover the origins of the battle cruiser type in his second chapter, it was disappointing to find Admiral Fisher's role in the whole debate minimized, and the relationship between the true dreadnought and its

battle cruiser variant simplified to an unrealistic degree. This is no trivial matter, because, to a greater or lesser extent, the fact that the battle cruiser was essentially performing in a role that had not been originally envisioned by its creators goes a long way toward explaining the very mixed results these ships achieved. Once again, this could have been better represented with a more searching inclusion of some of the more cutting-edge findings from Sumida, Nicolas Lambert, Matthew Seligmann, and others.

In sum, this book will probably disappoint the serious historian of the period. It does gather together in one place a host of interesting and related facts about the battle and its participants. Given that these can form useful "points of departure" for future work in this area, as well as informing and inspiring the amateur naval enthusiast, all is not lost. But the book could have been so much more.

ANGUS ROSS



Huang, Chun-chieh. *Taiwan in Transformation: Retrospect and Prospect*. 2nd ed. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction, 2014. 233pp. \$52.95

As a native Taiwanese deeply steeped in Chinese historical and philosophical sources, Chun-chieh Huang adds dimensions that are less emphasized in many other perceptive books on contemporary Taiwan. A prolific scholar of treatises on Confucian thought, Huang believes that Taiwan can bring much to contemporary Confucian thinking, since Taiwan interprets the world through a lens of contemporary and vibrant democracy—as opposed to China's legacy of the Cultural Revolution and party control.

In fact, he asserts that Taiwan can help lead China's Confucian revival as the gem in the crown of Confucian thinking.

The book is divided into approximately equal sections of retrospect and prospect, indicating the relative importance that the author gives to understanding the past as a foundation for understanding the present and the future. Before Huang explores the individual and social psychology of what it means to be a "New Taiwanese," he reviews the underlying nostalgia that almost all ethnically Chinese people, including those resident on Taiwan, have for cultural China. This is a powerful shared emotion that has ramifications for contemporary cross-strait politics. Colonized by the Japanese between 1895 and 1945, the Taiwanese suffered second-class Chinese citizenship and were labeled spies and collaborators by their ethnically similar mainland Chinese counterparts. Aside from this broad-based cultural discrimination, the millions of Taiwanese were then also repressed politically on the island by the million or so Nationalists who came to Taiwan after World War II, first to set up a provincial government to replace the Japanese occupying government, then to set up the Republic of China Nationalist government at the end of the Chinese civil war.

The book recaps key eras in Taiwan's history, including the populating of the island by Haklo from Fujian Province, Hakka from Guangdong Province, the Dutch (1624–61), Koxinga and the Ming loyalists (1661–83), the Qing (1683–1895), and the Japanese (1895–1945).

Huang points out that the Chinese are "*Homo historicus*" most clearly, and that all ways forward must take into account the patterns and details of the past when considering the future.

According to Huang, Taiwan's path forward in cross-strait relations lies between those extremes of citizens who in 2013 favored quick integration (3 percent) and those who favored quick independence (7.2 percent). He recommends a necessary long-term steady dialogue examining and reconciling the mutual histories of Taiwan and mainland China. That is to say, Huang is not a proponent of maintaining the status quo but seeks a Confucian "middle way": carefully and compassionately forging an increasing reconciliation over time. Using a metaphor from literature, he posits that Taiwan is an orphan trying to reconcile with its parent. The pathos of the scenario is lessening because the orphan has had great success, but nevertheless there is a core of Chinese identity that still remains to be reconciled with the ever-emerging Taiwanese identity.

Although, as noted, Huang is a native observer of the Taiwanese scene, the book is gracefully written in fluid, clear English. It is useful as core reading for undergraduate and graduate courses on Taiwan, as well as for readers seeking to deepen their knowledge of East Asia. It also provides context that should be considered when thinking about U.S. policy in the Asia-Pacific region.

GRANT F. RHODE

OUR REVIEWERS

Bill Allison is professor of history at Georgia Southern University. He is the author of several books, including *Military Justice in Vietnam: The Rule of Law in an American War* (Kansas) and *My Lai: An American War Crime* (Johns Hopkins). He is a past vice president and current trustee of the Society of Military History and recently served as the General Harold K. Johnson Visiting Chair in Military History at the Army War College.

T. J. Johnson is an armor officer and serves as an instructor in the National Security Affairs Department at the U.S. Naval War College. He is a graduate of Ripon College (Ripon, Wis.) and received his master's degree from the School of Advanced Military Studies at Fort Leavenworth. He has written for a number of publications, including the *RUSI Journal* and *Defense News*.

Dr. John T. Kuehn is the Major General William Stofft Chair for Historical Research at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. He is a retired naval flight officer (2004) and author of *Agents of Innovation: The General Board and the Design of the Fleet That Defeated the Japanese Navy* (2008) and *A Military History of Japan* (2014). His latest book is *Napoleonic Warfare: The Operational Art of the Great Campaigns*.

Major John J. Merriam joined the faculty of the Stockton Center for the Study of International Law as Associate Director for Land Warfare and associate professor in June 2014 after graduating from the Naval War College with highest distinction (first in class). Before coming to the War College, Major Merriam served in a variety of international and operational law positions, including as a special forces group judge advocate and a brigade combat team judge advocate.

Grant F. Rhode holds a PhD from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University in Asian diplomatic history and foreign policies. In addition to being a visiting researcher at the Boston University Center for the Study of Asia, he is an associate in research at the Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies at Harvard University.

Captain Dale Rielage serves as Director for Intelligence and Information Operations for the U.S. Pacific Fleet. He has served as Third Fleet N2, Seventh Fleet Deputy N2, Senior Intelligence Officer for China at the Office of Naval Intelligence, and director of the Navy Asia Pacific Advisory Group.

Angus Ross is a retired Royal Navy officer and professor of joint military operations at the Naval War College. A graduate of the Naval War College, he received a second MA from Providence College and is currently working on PhD studies, studying naval transformation prior to the First World War. His recent published works include articles in this journal and others on the dilemma facing both the Royal Navy and the U.S. Navy in the wake of the *Dreadnought* revolution.

Peter J. Schifferle, PhD, is professor of history at the School of Advanced Military Studies, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and the author of *America's School for War: Fort Leavenworth, Officer Education, and Victory in World War II*.

Professor Stigler teaches classes on foreign policy and national security at the Naval War College, focusing on the international and domestic influences on U.S. national security policy. Stigler has published in *International Security*, *The National Interest*, *Joint Force Quarterly*, and the *Naval War College Review*. He currently has a book under contract with the academic press Transaction (affiliated with Rutgers University) titled *The Military: A Presidential Briefing Book*. The work is a critical examination of the military from the standpoint of an incoming president, examining issues such as force planning, crisis response, presidential command during wartime, strategic change, and postwar reconstruction efforts.

Professor Whiteside teaches theater security at the Naval War College Monterey Program. He is a graduate of West Point and has a PhD in political science from Washington State University. His primary research area is the strategy and tactics of the Islamic State movement from 2003 to the present.