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## Outpost: Life on the Frontlines of American Diplomacy, by Christopher Hill

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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.