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Strategic Thinking in 3D: A Guide for National Security, Foreign Policy, and Business Professionals

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powerful instruments, but Levinger offers caveats. He recommends beginning with a self-assessment to clarify one's own interests, and he cautions that any analysis can only be a "snapshot." Moreover, "in many cases, the interpersonal relationships and the deliberative process established during the conflict assessment will be more valuable than any specific conclusions."

An illuminating chapter on "cognitive minefields" addresses three challenges familiar to many readers: groupthink, "black swans," and psychic numbing. Regarding the latter, Levinger argues that contrary to conventional thinking, emotional response is integral to sound decision making. In the words of psychologist Paul Slovic, the ideal process is "a dance of emotion and reason."

Levinger prescribes five steps for integrating analysis into program planning and implementation: framing the problem, defining objectives, conducting situational analysis, designing a program of action, and monitoring progress. More discussion would have been useful here on specific ways of integrating senior leaders' perspectives into working-level deliberations and on helping them in turn to grasp the dynamic complexity of volatile situations. As Levinger notes, "conflict analysts should not seek to become decision makers, but rather to help decision makers become better conflict analysts themselves."

Levinger offers illuminating case studies, tables, charts, and boxes highlighting key points. The comprehensive appendixes, glossary, and list of resources add further to the value of this book. It should be standard reading in every security-studies program.

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Harrison, Ross. *Strategic Thinking in 3D: A Guide for National Security, Foreign Policy, and Business Professionals.* Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2013. 197 pp. $29.95

Ross Harrison, a professor at Georgetown University and well-known strategic theorist, takes the novel approach that the basic tenets of strategy are applicable to nearly all human endeavors. Rather than accepting the traditional view that the strategic theory relevant to a national-security professional is inapplicable to a corporate executive, Harrison introduces a multistep approach to identifying and applying what he characterizes as universal strategic principles.

Harrison sees the aim of all strategies, regardless of the field in which they are utilized, as being to navigate a multidimensional external environment to the ultimate benefit of one's chosen endeavor. Whether you are a military officer confronting an asymmetric-warfare challenge or an entrepreneur seeking to expand your product's market share, the underlying principles of sound strategy remain constant. Harrison identifies three unchanging dimensions in any strategy: systems, opponents, and groups.

The author states that systems relate to the external environment confronting all strategies, a "web of relationships where a change in one part has an effect on the other parts." A "system" can be as defined as a formal alliance, like the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or as diffuse as the entire Middle Eastern region and its political, economic, and cultural characteristics. Harrison's most subtle and nuanced proposition is that the formulation of strategy in the context of external

environments is directly impacted by the systems that shape that environment.

Harrison's discussion of the opponent—whether a transnational terrorist organization or a corporate competitor—as a universal dimension of strategy builds on his understanding of systems. While one can seek to change the external environment in one's favor by strategizing against a system—for example, U.S. efforts to promote democracy in the Middle East as a long-term strategy to prevent radicalization and extremism—there is a more direct approach available against individual opponents. Businessmen can assess their competitors' products and decide to invest in specific market areas where they perceive opponents to be weak. National-security strategists can recommend the implementation of counterinsurgency strategies focused on protecting local populations because they perceive opponents to be alienating the citizenry.

Finally, Harrison discusses the impact of groups on strategy, whether citizens organizing to protest a business's environmental record or mass public opinion impacting the strategies of governments. By enunciating his concept of groups, systems, and opponents, Harrison performs the service of providing broad categories encompassing virtually all the actors that confront strategists of either a commercial or security bent. In so doing he underlines the point that regardless of the area of endeavor, a strategist will face conceptual frameworks very similar to those facing colleagues in other fields. An important addition to the study of strategy, *Strategic Thinking in 3D* does much to expand the traditional understanding of strategic theory from a narrow subject lacking commonality between

multiple fields of activity to a universal framework for achieving one's goals.

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Simpson, Emile. *War from the Ground Up: Twenty-First-Century Combat as Politics.* New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2012. 256pp. $32.50

Emile Simpson served in Afghanistan as an infantry officer in the Royal Gurkha Rifles. At first glance, the book might appear to be an account of his experiences there; in fact, however, it is a sophisticated examination of twenty-first-century warfare and of the employment of the military instrument of power. Its front cover is embellished with the endorsement "Deserves to be seen as a coda to [Prussian military theorist/philosopher Carl von] Clausewitz's *On War*." This is no small feat, and Simpson delivers an intellectually sophisticated account of the changed nature of warfare, examining war through two lenses. The first lens is the traditional use of armed force to seek to create military conditions within which a political settlement can be reached. Second, he examines armed force deployed for a distinctly political purpose. While these modes are by no means mutually exclusive and can be employed by the same actor at the same time against the same enemy, Simpson asserts that understanding the difference between these two is essential to achieving national-security objectives in the twenty-first century.

Simpson continually refers to two ideas from Clausewitz. The first is polarity—the simple idea that wars are usually contests fought between two sides. The second idea is that traditionally, strategic