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## A Little War That Shook the World: Georgia, Russia, and the Future of the West

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and the development of the military officer corps as a profession. The book serves as a dialogue on those theories and produces often-diverging viewpoints about Huntington's ideas and the condition of the American civil-military relationship.

Regarding Huntington's "The Crisis of American Civil-Military Relations," the book begins with the current state of civil-military relations. Richard D. Betts suggests that while tension may exist between the military and its civilian leadership, it is not unusual, given the realities of our democratic system. This is so because "objective control," although not of a pure form, has kept the military obedient to various administrations. Matthew Moten discusses Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's leadership of the Department of Defense, characterizing it as a period of "broken dialogue" marked by "distrust within the Pentagon and throughout the defense establishment." General Eric Shinseki, retired Army chief of staff, serves as a model for the military response to such strong civilian leadership, providing forceful military advice in private, while publicly supporting political superiors.

The assembled authors agree that military officers should avoid political involvement. When military and civilian leaders disagree on security policy, several authors state, resignation is not an option for the military officer, since it is an inherently political act. Yet James Burk comments that military officers are also morally autonomous and accountable for their actions, not "purely instrumental" agents of the state. Discussing Huntington's assertion that the "military mind" should reflect a conservative outlook in support of American institutions, Darrell Driver cites research

suggesting that no such unifying conservative ideology exists. Yet a number of authors comment on the overwhelming Republican Party affiliation of military personnel. Other authors discuss improvement of professional military education, expansion of military missions to include stability operations, "Madisonian" approach to national security and civilian control, and the responsibility of military professionals to build trust with civilian leaders of inconsistent military expertise.

In the final chapter, Nielson and Snider advance nine conclusions resulting from their research (however, not all contributors are in agreement). The last is probably the most instructive, that Huntington's work provides "continuing value" to the discussion regarding American civil-military relations. This book is best regarded as a commentary on Huntington's 1957 work, one that also provides a good review of the current scholarship on American civil-military relations theory and experience. However, keep a copy of Huntington nearby as you read it.

DAYNE NIX  
*Naval War College*



Asmus, Ronald D. *A Little War That Shook the World: Georgia, Russia, and the Future of the West*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. 272pp. \$27

In August 2008, Russia shattered the post-Cold War peace in Europe by invading the former Soviet republic of Georgia. Though only days long, that war dashed NATO's hopes to expand to the Caucasus and sparked fundamental reevaluations of American and European Union (EU) relations with Russia.

Ronald Asmus's *A Little War That Shook the World* is an engaging read that combines the best available history of the war with a broader analysis of the geopolitical forces that led to it.

Asmus is well positioned to write this book. He was a senior Clinton official dealing with NATO enlargement, and since 2001 he has been a senior researcher at the German Marshall Fund. Asmus has wide access to U.S. and EU officials, and although uncommonly well connected in Georgia, he is not a supporter of President Mikheil Saakashvili. While Russian sources were not forthcoming, overall this is a very well documented account.

The book offers a blow-by-blow account of prewar diplomacy and the conduct of the war, with lively portraits of key personalities. Asmus also puts the war in the context of post-Cold War Europe, arguing that the war was about much more than Georgia. Striking at Tbilisi sent a message to Washington and Brussels. It culminated Russia's decadelong frustration with an international order it believed to be fundamentally against it. From a Western perspective, former Warsaw Pact nations had been freely choosing to associate with NATO and the EU, in an environment where force and "spheres of influence" were passé. Russia, under President Vladimir Putin, saw instead encroachment and a running roughshod over Russian concerns (as when NATO ignored Russia on Kosovo). NATO's halfhearted moves toward admitting Georgia and Ukraine in early 2008 offered Putin a window to act. Georgia's "frozen" separatist conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia provided a pretext that was aided by the

rashness of Saakashvili and the dithering of the Europeans.

Asmus sheds light on important questions like whether the United States gave the "green light" to Tbilisi to escalate (Asmus convincingly argues it did not) and whether Russia's invasion was preplanned or opportunistic (Asmus believes it was preplanned). Ironically, Georgia's preparations for NATO membership hurt its military capability: when war started, 40 percent of its army was in Iraq or preparing to leave. According to NATO doctrine, Georgia had trained and equipped for peace-keeping operations, not territorial defense.

Asmus suggests that more adroit NATO diplomacy would have averted the war. He lays out a clear and compelling case, but given Russia's demonstrated willingness to incur costs, the claim is not fully convincing. Even President George W. Bush was far less willing to risk a U.S.-Russian conflict than were the Europeans. The disparities of interest, risk tolerance, and geography made the Western goal of a Georgia in NATO very difficult without a fight, but Asmus is correct that the United States and the EU could have better played their hands.

What emerges is a larger story of American overstretch and a failure to balance ends and means. The United States simultaneously wanted to have its way in the Balkans and the Caucasus; to obtain Russian support for Iranian sanctions, Afghan logistics, and counterterrorism; and to enjoy active EU support for all that, even as U.S. policies were highly unpopular among EU voters. Washington did not credibly back its Georgia policy militarily or politically, nor would it choose between competing

goals. Asmus thinks more skill and resolution might have carried this through, but one wonders whether the bigger lesson isn't really about the finite nature of national power.

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Cronin, Audrey Kurth. *How Terrorism Ends: Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 2010. 311pp. \$29.95

Audrey Kurth Cronin's engaging and enlightening book examines how terrorist movements come to an end, focusing almost exclusively on terrorist organizations over the last half-century. She offers six pathways by which terrorist groups end: decapitation, negotiation, success, failure, repression, and reorientation.

One of the book's strengths is that it captures the full spectrum of possible outcomes for terrorist organizations and explains why particular campaigns did or did not end. The organization of the book is laudable—by looking in each chapter at tactics and strategies for ending terrorism, rather than simply marching through case studies, one is able to examine more soberly specific strategic approaches to counterterrorism and their effects. In this regard, this book will be very useful for policy makers and counterterrorism practitioners.

Cronin is cautious in making causal claims. For example, in her chapter on decapitation she recognizes that killing the leaders of terrorist organizations has sometimes contributed to the

eventual end of the organization (Sendero Luminoso, for example) but in other cases has not (Hamas). Though she does offer insights into the different outcomes, she tempers her conclusions by emphasizing that the act of decapitation provides "critical insight into the depth and nature of a group's popular support." In effect, one cannot know in advance.

The final chapter, "How Al-Qaeda Ends," attempts to apply some of these lessons. Cronin convincingly argues that decapitation will not end al-Qa'ida. Beliefs that decapitation will have a dramatic impact on that organization are "tinged with emotion, not dispassionate analysis." Killing Bin Laden, Cronin argues, might "actually enhance his stature, in practical terms."

Although Cronin firmly states that all terrorist groups end, this reviewer read the final chapter wondering whether there are numerous aspects of al-Qa'ida (all of which Cronin notes in some capacity) that make it a candidate for some form of irrelevant perpetuity among terrorist organizations. It is transnational in influence like no other group in Cronin's study. In 2001, al-Qa'ida struck an unprecedented blow against the sole global superpower. Cronin asserts that the group's message will have staying power for some people as a call for resistance that will endure for many years, no matter what Bin Laden's fate. This may be an unprecedented recipe for unusual longevity.

A combination of increased counterterrorism measures, a military offensive in Afghanistan, and al-Qa'ida's own underrecognized organizational and operational deficiencies have rendered the group unable to execute a successful