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BOOK REVIEWS

TAIWAN: PROVINCE OR INDEPENDENT NATION?

Kagan, Richard C. *Taiwan's Statesman: Lee Teng-hui and Democracy in Asia*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2007. 240pp. \$30

Wachman, Alan M. *Why Taiwan? Geostrategic Rationales for China's Territorial Integrity*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Univ. Press, 2007. 272pp. \$65

An international issue at or near the top of any list of potential nuclear conflicts is the status of Taiwan. Beijing insists the island is merely another Chinese province, Taipei insists the island is an independent nation, and officially Washington stands with neither view but insists on a peaceful resolution. The two books under review here address this important matter. Both authors, Richard Kagan and Alan Wachman, are experienced academics specializing in China and able to access Chinese sources. Their works join other scholarly efforts to explain the imbroglio over Taiwan, including those by Richard Bush, Alan Romberg, and Nancy Bernkopf Tucker.

The best thing about *Taiwan's Statesman* is its price, which is remarkably low for today's market. However, it is unfortunate that throughout the entire text Kagan does not offer an objective biography of Lee Teng-hui, the former president of Taiwan. He has written instead a hagiography that fails to justify its presumption of Lee as an

internationally important "statesman" or as a seminal figure in the development of "democracy in Asia." This is regrettable, given both the author's scholarly expertise and the importance of Lee in late-twentieth-century Chinese and American history. In addition, *Taiwan's Statesman* contains factual errors, such as an assertion that President Richard Nixon's visit to China took place in 1971 (rather than February 1972), as well as chronological confusion, apparently caused by questionable editing.

Kagan on several occasions describes Lee as a George Washington-like figure. His objectivity is problematic when describing the very difficult position in which Taiwan found itself after 1979, when the United States finally shifted diplomatic recognition of "China" from Taipei to Beijing. Kagan's repetitive description of Lee's "Zen and Christian approach" does not support his contention of Lee as providing "a new model" of democracy for Asia.

This book is best left on the shelf.

A far more important work is *Why Taiwan?* by Alan Wachman, a professor at Tufts University. He undertakes the difficult task of analyzing why this relatively small island, approximately the size of the combined land area of New Jersey and Delaware, is so important to China. How is it, Wachman poses, that in the late seventeenth century the island was viewed by China as “a place beyond the seas . . . of no consequence to us,” when in 2005 Beijing passed the Anti-secession Law threatening the use of military force to prevent Taiwan’s de jure independence?

Relying on an impressive array of primary and secondary sources, Wachman explains the change in China’s view through historical background, legal analysis, and examination of the current state of relations and future possibilities, all couched in both analytical and theoretical terms. He succeeds in this daunting task in just 164 pages, leaving the reader wishing for more.

Wachman decides (correctly in my view) that China’s current modernization of its military was sparked by observation of U.S. prowess in the 1991 Persian Gulf War, heightened and expanded as a result of the 1996 Taiwan Strait crisis, and is primarily focused on possible Taiwan scenarios, including conflict with the United States. The author also suggests that the variation in China’s view of the salience of Taiwan has been due more to the island’s relative insignificance on the list of national security concerns from the seventeenth century through the first half of the twentieth. China’s rulers were often concerned with more important issues, ranging from the Qing overthrow of the Ming dynasty to Japan’s invasion of China in the 1930s, to the Cold War

perturbations that forced Beijing’s attention elsewhere.

Wachman’s thesis is that China’s primary concern about the island’s status is geostrategic, although he discusses domestic, political, ideological, and nationalistic rationales, including an excursion into a theoretical construct of national awareness. However, he fails to mention the “century of humiliation,” which is somewhat surprising, given the Chinese propensity to dwell on it. Wachman paints a convincing picture of China’s worries about Taiwan’s history as an entrée for foreign invaders; as recently as November 2007 Beijing expressed this concern.

One possible explanation for China’s evolving consideration of Taiwan is that the globalization phenomena of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have simply made the island more accessible and important to the mainland. Geography does not change, per se, but today’s technological and scientific advances have certainly altered its influence in certain political situations.

One criticism is that the author tends to argue his points in a judicial manner; “it is noteworthy,” “how odd it is,” and “as the preceding chapter makes evident” are some examples. He has much greater success convincing the reader with sound geopolitical analyses of the China-Taiwan situation than with word parsing.

That said, Wachman does succeed in demonstrating that many of China’s current military strategists, both academics and military officers, view Taiwan’s importance in geostrategic terms, seeing it as vital to their nation’s security and as having serious implications for national-security policy making in

Beijing, and in Taipei and Washington as well.

For China, that means not allowing the island to become an independent state widely recognized by the international community of nations, but forcing or drawing Taiwan into reunification with the mainland. Beijing has frequently stated its willingness to use military force to prevent Taiwan's independence, but Taipei seems to ignore it, while Washington continues to tread a tenuous line between the two. While Wachman focuses on policy-making motivation and attitudes in Beijing, he makes a significant contribution to our understanding of this complex and dangerous situation.

BERNARD D. COLE
National Defense University



Hicks, Melinda M., and C. Belmont Keeney, eds.
Defending the Homeland: Historical Perspectives on Radicalism, Terrorism, and State Responses. Morgantown: West Virginia Univ. Press, 2007. 233pp. \$27.50

Defending the Homeland is not about homeland defense as defined by the Defense Department—the military defense of U.S. territory from external attack. Rather, what the editors provide is a wide-ranging examination of, first, how the United States has responded to a variety of internal and external threats over its history and, second, how societal reactions to terrorism may unintentionally encourage the terrorist mind-set. The volume comprises nine academic essays from among those submitted to the 2005 Senator Rush D. Holt History Conference at West Virginia University.

As Jeffrey H. Norwitz notes in his introduction, “The greatest battle is to remain a nation of law in the face of a ruthless enemy who would consider this our weakness.” Illustrating the point, Ellen Schrecker surveys our history from the Alien and Sedition Acts to the first “red scare” of World War I, while coeditor Keeney tells the story of strikes and labor violence in West Virginia coalfields in the first three decades of the twentieth century. The writers conclude that we are too easily willing to suspend constitutional rights in the face of sometimes-specious threats to the nation. Even such a luminary as Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes accepted limitations to freedom of speech in wartime, saying, “When a nation is at war, many things that might be said in time of peace . . . will not be endured so long as men fight . . . and no Court could regard them as protected by any constitutional right.”

The book's second section examines the factors that push activists toward radicalism and from radicalism ultimately to killing in the name of social justice or religious purity. For instance, according to Jean Burger's essay on the role of women in revolutionary Russia, tsarist Russia contributed to its own demise by systematically eliminating any peaceful means of bringing education, health, and opportunity to the state's peasants, industrial workers, or women. Benjamin Grob-Fitzgibbon points out that not only is there a wide variety of terrorisms but that the distinctions between terrorists and “people who use violence and are not called terrorists” grow ever thinner over time. We therefore need to take care that in the effort to perfect homeland security we do not

lose the body of tradition and law that defines our homeland.

The editors cover an ambitious amount of ground for such a slim volume, and the space available does not permit a variety of perspectives on each topic. An examination into the U.S. government's reactions to racial and political unrest at home after the McCarthy era, for instance, would have been welcome. However, the book's essays seem selected to provoke the reader to explore their subjects more deeply, and the contributions are uniformly well supported. The citations provide ample direction for readers wishing to explore on their own the issues presented.

RANDY L. UNGER
Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense
Homeland Defense & American Security Affairs



Cann, John P. *Brown Waters of Africa: Portuguese Riverine Warfare, 1961–1974*. St. Petersburg, Fla.: Hailer, 2007. 248pp. \$29.99

Counterinsurgency warfare is what used to be called “colonial warfare.” Although the association might make some people uncomfortable—Americans perhaps more than most, given their aversion to colonialism—much of the strategic intent and many of the tactics, techniques, and procedures of modern counterinsurgency derive directly from the colonial wars and police actions of the past.

In some respects riverine warfare suffers from the taint of colonialism more than do other aspects of counterinsurgency, a prejudice that is currently reinforced by the apparent trend for insurgents who worry the West to center their operations in urban rather

than rural environments and to seek sanctuary in the anonymity of cities rather than remote countrysides. In many parts of the world, however, rivers remain the principal transport routes, and their control remains of fundamental importance to the success or failure of insurgent movements.

The last great colonial empire in Africa was Portuguese, and a history of the riverine campaigns fought in its defense between 1961 and 1974 is long overdue. John P. Cann, a retired Marine Corps University professor with a doctorate in African counterinsurgency from King's College London, shows that the Portuguese took what they could from British and, particularly, French experiences and adapted it to suit their particular circumstances and the often limited resources at their disposal.

After placing the total effort in the strategic context of the Cold War, the historical context of twentieth-century Portuguese history, and the contemporaneous political context of the regime of António de Oliveira Salazar, Cann demonstrates how the Portuguese navy and naval infantry, the *fuzileiros*, fought an effective campaign in three diverse theaters: on the rivers of Angola; on the Rovuma River and Lake Niassa in Mozambique; and among the estuaries, deltas, and swamp forests of the West African enclave of Bissau.

Cann recounts with balance and clarity the lessons the Portuguese drew from the experience. Insurgency is political war where the center of gravity is the population. Consequently, the naval role differs very little from that of the army. The essence is to develop and maintain contact with the civilian population so close and regular that it often amounts to “armed social work.”

Presence—achieved by living, and conducting river and foot patrols, among local people to gain their trust and to build sound knowledge about the enemy—is equally important, as is, at the same time, keeping the insurgents off balance through the use of deception and irregular patrol patterns, a combination the Portuguese were able to achieve because units were deployed in two-year cycles.

The Portuguese also learned the importance of joint effort. Wherever the navy and army disagreed and failed to operate together, which happened in Bissau particularly, results were affected. Also, that no campaign could be isolated from the wider political context was a lesson that became painfully apparent following a militarily successful but politically damaging raid on Conakry, the capital of Guinea, to free hostages and destroy insurgent sanctuaries.

In short, all practitioners and students of riverine warfare will be grateful that John P. Cann has written such an excellent account.

MARTIN N. MURPHY
Corbett Centre for Maritime Policy Studies
 Shrivvenham, England



Smith, Perry M., and Daniel M. Gerstein. *Assignment Pentagon: How to Excel in a Bureaucracy*. 4th ed. Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2007. 273pp. \$22.95

For this, the fourth edition of his well received book, Major General Perry M. Smith, U.S. Air Force (Ret.), has added a coauthor, Colonel Daniel M. Gerstein, U.S. Army (Ret.). Colonel Gerstein served for twenty-six years in combat, peace, and humanitarian operations.

He also served in the Pentagon for almost ten years in senior advisory and leadership roles.

This edition has been expanded into sixteen chapters, each adding considerable value to the publication. One of the more interesting and vital chapters for properly grasping the workings of “the building” is devoted to “understanding the process.” This chapter succinctly describes the Joint Strategic Planning System (JSPS), the Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System (PPBS), and the Joint Requirements Oversight Council (JROC). These entities are extremely complex by their very natures, but it is vital to understand how they all fit together for our nation’s defense. The authors do a superb job of simplifying these systems, giving additional references for in-depth understanding.

Smith and Gerstein also briefly address military ethics, touching upon military interaction with Congress and ethics within the executive branch. Problems are identified and solutions are suggested, but it is beyond the scope and intention of this book to address these issues other than superficially. The reader should already be educated regarding ethics and ethical behavior; this chapter serves simply to remind us that doing the “right thing” continues to be difficult at times.

As with the earlier editions, the present one addresses many day-to-day business elements related to serving at the Pentagon. The book allows the reader, whether a newly assigned military member or civilian, to obtain a preliminary understanding of the complex nature of this intense mixture of military and civilian bureaucracies.

One of the primary values of this book is that the views and perspectives shared are not the authors' alone but those of many uniformed and civilian sources, both inside and outside of the Defense Department, as well. For example, two of many fact-filled chapters address working with defense contractors and "the interagency." Both these areas are discussed in a way that allows the reader to gain perspective that might prove helpful when sitting across from a contractor or an employee of the State Department.

This work serves the reader very well, providing knowledgeable insight into the formal and informal processes of this important element of national security and the Department of Defense. The perspective and information contained here is particularly important for the military member or civilian assigned to the Pentagon for the first time.

ALBERT J. SHIMKUS
Naval War College



Ford, Daniel. *Flying Tigers: Claire Chennault and His American Volunteers, 1941–1942*. New York: HarperCollins (Smithsonian Books), 2007. 384pp. \$15.95

In this vivid and fact-filled historical account of aerial combat, Daniel Ford completely updates and revises his 1991 work describing the extraordinary accomplishments of the pilots and support crews of the 1st American Volunteer Group (AVG) in the earliest days of World War II. Ford—a writer for the *Wall Street Journal*, a recreational pilot, and author of *Incident at Muc Wa* (made into the Burt Lancaster

movie *Go Tell the Spartans*)—has used recent American, British, and Japanese sources to both improve and shorten the original book. Famously known as the "Flying Tigers," the AVG was a group of American volunteers recruited by Claire Chennault from the aviation ranks of the U.S. Army, Navy, and Marine Corps to help protect China and key areas of Southeast Asia from unrelenting attack by the Japanese army air force. In their Curtiss P-40 Tomahawks, with their iconic shark's teeth motif painted on the noses, the Flying Tigers flew combat missions from three days after Pearl Harbor until July 1942, when the unit was absorbed into the U.S. Army Air Corps. During this seven-month period, the AVG, never numbering at any one time more than about seventy pilots and a roughly equal number of aircraft, inflicted disproportionate damage on the Japanese (1:28 ratio for aircrew losses). This deadly aerial struggle kept the vital 750-mile supply line from India across Burma and into China open and operational for as long as possible during the Japanese onslaught. The men of the AVG did this while living in mostly deplorable conditions, with at best erratic maintenance and logistic support.

The author's depictions of air combat are especially gripping, often describing individual pilots flying for both sides, while providing ample technical information on the types of aircraft in the engagements. Of course the primary characters are all here, from Chennault, a chain-smoking, tough, and innovative leader, to pilots Tex Hill, Eddie Rector, and Greg Boyington (later of VMF-214 "Black Sheep" fame). Ford's history is serious, but it is also rich with stories about this colorful and adventurous

group, including the beautiful and mysterious Olga Greenlaw, wife of the AVG's executive officer.

While correcting some errors and omissions, Ford stands his ground on the most controversial viewpoint expressed in his 1991 edition—that the Flying Tigers' claimed official record of 296 combat victories (including aircraft destroyed on the ground) was greater than what they actually achieved. Citing comprehensive research into the historical records of all involved, Ford makes a good case that because of the predictable stress, fear, and chaos involved in vicious aerial combat, the AVG's reported victories were inflated over a true figure likely closer to 115. Ford's book, then, is not a glorification of the Flying Tigers, but its meticulous examination of their genuine and courageous achievements pays them greater homage than the numbers would, however tallied. Ford closes his book with these words: "More than sixty years ago, in their incandescent youth, they were heroes to a nation that needed heroes. . . . All honor to them." Indeed, and acclaim to Daniel Ford for his thorough telling of an eventful war in the air, one that should be remembered.

WILLIAM CALHOUN
Naval War College



Raman, B. *The Kaoboy of R&AW: Down Memory Lane*. New Delhi, India: Lancer, 2007. 288pp. \$27

During the Cold War, views from the "other side" proved endlessly fascinating to students of international affairs. Books such as *The Russians*, by Hedrick Smith, and the multiple memoirs of Viktor Suvorov provided insights into

thought processes and value systems. Most national-security professionals today cannot afford the luxury of focusing on one nation or topic. And as a nation, the United States cannot afford to ignore India.

The Kaoboy of R&AW is B. Raman's informal (and somewhat unfocused) memoir of his time with India's external intelligence agency, the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW).

"Kaoboy" refers to the protégés of R. M. Kao, the first director-general of the organization. Raman was a professional intelligence officer who spent much of his career in operational assignments. He spent twenty-six years in R&AW, retiring as head of the agency's counterterrorism unit. He later served in the Indian National Security Secretariat and is currently the director of a think tank in Chennai. Reading between the lines, he likely worked in clandestine intelligence collection, liaison, and paramilitary roles. In some cases (such as discussing security shortfalls in protecting Indira Gandhi) he provides many details; however, in many instances details are noticeable only for their absence.

While the book is valuable, most American readers will find it frustrating. It was written for an Indian audience; the reader without a background in Indian politics since the 1950s will frequently find it obscure. Likewise, those unfamiliar with South Asian geography must occasionally stop reading to check an atlas. The writing style is somewhat folksy but different from the Anglo-American equivalent. Also, it is not strictly chronological. Unfortunately, the memoir is not a representative example of Raman's work; he is a prolific writer on international security issues, his articles are well written and

thoughtful, and his byline bears watching. The astute reader may conclude that Raman was not well served by his publisher.

Despite these obstacles, the book is worth reading. Raman provides an interesting view from India on critical past and current U.S. policies, from our long-term support for Pakistan to relations with China, to the current global conflict on terrorism. He outlines several instances of R&AW working with the CIA to counter Chinese moves, while at the same time claiming that the CIA was working against India—sometimes with Pakistan, sometimes not. While expressing a fondness for the American people, Raman is definitely no fan of the U.S. State Department. Curiously, he displays no animosity for the CIA, despite his claims that the agency engineered a key defection and conducted “psywar” campaigns against India. But perhaps the lack of rancor is explained by a story that Raman could not tell.

JOHN R. ARPIN
Major, U.S. Army Reserve (Retired)
Centreville, Virginia



Bethencourt, Francisco, and Diogo Ramada Curto, eds. *Portuguese Oceanic Expansion, 1400–1800*. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2007. 536pp. \$34.95

Globalization, as a form of worldwide economic expansion and global interaction, can trace its origins back more than five hundred years to the expansion of Europe and to the first European maritime empire, established by Portugal. From this beginning, the story of globalization is traced through the

better-known eras of Spanish, Dutch, French, and British maritime dominance to our present modern phase of more sophisticated global interaction. Although the earlier maritime empires were based on separate, competing maritime economies rather than the current ideal of a single global economy, these earlier examples of development are important to understand in terms of their limitations and successes. Among these maritime empires, the history of Portugal’s contribution has been the least well known to the anglophone world.

Two recent important anniversaries have brought Portugal’s role to wider attention. The first occurred in 1998 to mark the five-hundredth anniversary of Vasco da Gama’s pioneering voyage around the Cape of Good Hope and across the Indian Ocean in the first European direct sea voyage to India. The second was in 2000, commemorating the five-hundredth anniversary of the first landing in and subsequent colonization of Brazil by Portugal. In connection with these anniversaries, the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University in Rhode Island became the locus for a major attempt to make available to English-language readers an up-to-date and wide-ranging analysis of Portugal’s early contribution to oceanic expansion. The fruit of that effort may be found in this volume, providing a major update of scholarly interpretations. The chapters in this edited collection cover a wide range of topics. The book’s fourteen chapters, each by a different author, are distributed into four parts. The first part examines economics and society, focusing on such themes as markets, economic networks, costs, and financial trends. The second deals with

politics and institutions, looking at patterns of settlement, political configurations in relation to local powers, and the role and structure of the Catholic Church in the context of global expansion. The third is devoted to the cultural world, examining the interaction of cultures and the creation of an imperial and colonial culture, as well as the wider world's influences on the Portuguese language, literature, and the arts, with the roles of science and technology as a key element in oceanic expansion. The fourth part, entitled "The Comparative Dimension," is a masterful single chapter by Felipe Fernández-Armesto that summarizes how "Portuguese expansion carried the 'seeds of change' that transformed so many environments and reversed the age-old pattern of evolution."

The naval readers of this journal may relate most easily to the essay by maritime historian Francisco Contente Domingues, "Science and Technology in Portuguese Navigation: The Idea of Experience in the Sixteenth Century." In his interesting historical analysis, Domingues shows how the direct personal experience of Portuguese

mariners who navigated to other parts of the globe had a major effect in dismantling the preconceptions inherited from the ancient classic writers. The direct observations that mariners made while voyaging on new seas and seeing new stars, new lands, and new peoples provided the basis for the idea that a new era in the world had begun and, in the sixteenth-century context, stimulated much new learning. Thus, Domingues shows the origins and rationale for the mariner's now long-standing penchant for direct experience over book learning.

The world of Portugal's oceanic empire is a distant one, distinctly foreign to that of our own time. Yet despite the vast differences and contrasts between the Portuguese oceanic empire and our own time, this volume allows a reader to contemplate the very wide range of issues that this early example of global reach involved. Here one can find a range of examples of justification, reform, critique, and resistance, intermixed with and tied to the broad issues of war and peace.

JOHN B. HATTENDORF
Naval War College