Peace at Any Price: How the World Failed Kosovo,

John R. Schindler
Iraq's undiminished insurgency has cast an unmistakable pall over the U.S. military's nation-building mission, which until recently seemed a core competency for the Department of Defense. Both advocates and critics of America's efforts to bring peace, order, and good government to Baghdad agree that the aftermath of the Balkan wars of the 1990s offers examples of what was not done in the wake of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM's epic Phase III success in spring 2003. The idea that extended U.S. military operations in Bosnia and Kosovo have resulted in long-term political successes built on well executed nation-building is accepted almost without question. But is it so?

King and Mason's account is balanced and just, sparing no group, least of all the UN, the European Union, or NATO, from fair criticism as to how Kosovo has been governed since mid-1999. This is not a history text—it leaves out all but a limited, necessary understanding of how Kosovo became so troubled by the end of the 1990s—but rather a detailed telling of how ineffective Western political and military institutions have been at transforming Kosovo into anything resembling a law-abiding or self-sustaining society. The authors spend considerable time detailing the depths of interethnic hatreds, from the grand to the petty, that continue to cripple daily life in Kosovo, while refusing to spare Western nongovernmental organizations from critiques of their naiveté and ineffectiveness in dealing with mutual Albanian-Serb fear and loathing.

Peace at Any Price ends with a helpful guide on how the international community can do better the next time it is confronted with a Kosovo. King and Mason's counsel is wise and well taken, ranging from how to improve war termination to ensure a lasting peace, to how security and the rule of law must be established before democracy can take root, and above all to how "bad habits," including local "traditions" of
banditry, criminality, and interethnic violence must be altered, by force if necessary, if Western governments and organizations expect to make failed, war-torn states into bona fide members of the international community.

One only wishes that this little gem of a book had been published earlier.

JOHN R. SCHINDLER
Naval War College


It does not take exceptional analytical talent to recognize that U.S. policies in the Andean region of South America face severe challenges, especially those dealing with the war on drugs. Neither does it take an exceptional historian to recognize that the United States has all too often paid insufficient attention to its regional neighbors and partners. Finally, it takes no exceptional mastery of international relations to recognize that South America is becoming increasingly important to the safety, well-being, and future prosperity of the United States. For all these reasons, a clear explanation of U.S. policies in the region and evaluation of those policies’ track records and potential future consequences are especially welcome.

To a degree, and despite a somewhat incendiary title, Addicted to Failure provides a portion of the needed understanding. Its editor asked a rather impressively credentialed group of analysts to examine each of the countries in the Andean region and the role that U.S. policy has had in shaping those states’ political futures. These analyses follow Brian Loveman’s own overview of U.S. policies in the entire region. A chapter devoted to the European Union’s efforts follows a state-by-state review, and the book concludes with an examination of a possible preemptive U.S. intervention in Colombia on the scale of operations currently being conducted in Iraq.

However, this volume is not a resounding success. Loveman’s introductory chapter is a case in point. His basic argument seems to be that U.S. policy, whether crafted by Republican or Democratic presidents, formed during or after the Cold War, altruistic or operational in nature, intentional or accidental, has been consistently wrong. U.S. policy, Loveman argues, has for decades made matters worse for Andean states. There are two problems here. First, Loveman’s disdain for past and present U.S. actions actually begins to obstruct and detract from his central argument. Readers expecting to find a more academic and objective analysis may question the objectivity of the author at the expense of the merit of his argument. The second problem is even more serious. Loveman seeks to prove his contention with official U.S. reports and documents, but the quotations are highly selective and all too often presented without context. Indeed, had an equally passionate voice argued the distaff side of Loveman’s argument, this would have been a most interesting volume.

Luckily, the next six chapters are different. Authored by well known and respected scholars, they draw a compelling picture of U.S. policy in the Andean region. Although all are worthy, Orlando Perez’s evaluation of U.S.-Venezuelan policy and Enrique Obando’s analysis...