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Making War, Thinking History,

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warfare in World War II, aircraft carriers, and the Soviet impact on Arab armies (Soviet tanks were delivered, but Soviet doctrine was not adopted). More recent examples include the Soviet approach to managing the Warsaw Pact, the “special relationship” that has existed since 1945 among English-speaking democracies, and the patterns of nuclear proliferation and the spread of information technology.

This work is directed to both the social scientist and the policy practitioner. The chapters are well written and rich in detail, with excellent footnotes, thus making this a handy volume for anyone doing research in these areas.

There are times when the unifying theme of the diffusion of “technology and ideas” becomes so broad that it seems to include everything militarily that has happened or that is going to happen, for what else is there to a strategic confrontation but the weapons owned and how they will be used? Yet this work brings the subject into sharper focus, revealing how ideas about the appropriate use of weapons do not always travel as well as the weapons themselves. The introductory outline thus helps to maintain that focus, and the concluding chapter by Emily Goldman and Andrew Ross is extremely valuable for sifting out the recurring patterns that emerge from the evidence presented.

Among the important conclusions mentioned are that transformation leaders do not long monopolize their transformations; leaders are frequently surpassed by followers; leadership effecting a military transformation is no guarantee of victory; and wholesale replications of the innovations of a transformation may not be necessary. Most

central to this work is the finding that “software” (ideas and doctrine) does not travel as well as “hardware” (physical weapons). The explanation for this last limitation is the basic theme of the entire book.

Collections of conference papers often do not hang together well, or when they do, they typically do not wander far enough away from a simple theme. This book suffers from neither drawback, being rich and eclectic in the materials it offers, yet at the same time remaining focused on an important set of questions. It offers a great deal for anyone concerned with the military-technology revolution.

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Record, Jeffrey. *Making War, Thinking History*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2002. 216pp. \$28.95

Jeffrey Record is professor of strategy and international security at the Air War College, Maxwell Air Force Base. He is the author of four books and numerous monographs on U.S. military strategy and has extensive Capitol Hill experience, including service as a professional staffer for the Senate Armed Services Committee.

This work assesses how the experiences of Munich and Vietnam influenced presidential decisions on the use of force in every administration from Harry Truman to Bill Clinton. Both Munich and Vietnam are regularly invoked in current political debate in an attempt to justify a viewpoint, especially since the Cold War foreign policy consensus has broken down in recent

years. The terms have become shorthand for “appeasement” and “quagmire.” Yet the real influence of these two cases on presidential decision making about the use or nonuse of force has been subtler, and has depended considerably on the background of individual presidents and on the formative experiences they brought with them into office.

For some presidents, historical analogy was an explicit factor in their use of force. After 1945, there was broad consensus that “Munich is about *whether* to use force and about what can happen when force is *not* used.” Thus Truman based his 1950 decision to intervene in Korea on what happened, or more precisely on what did not happen, in Munich, noting that a president “must make the effort to apply this knowledge [of history] to the decisions that have to be made.” John F. Kennedy was heavily influenced during the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 by Barbara Tuchman’s *The Guns of August* (1962). Munich was a powerful factor in leading both Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson into Vietnam, on the basis of the imperative to stop cross-border aggression.

Vietnam is a more complex matter. Indeed, thirty years after Vietnam, there is still little agreement on the lessons from that conflict. There are many arguments about *how* force should have been used there, many implying that the “right” use of force would have resulted in a U.S. victory, or at least not a defeat. Others argue that Vietnam “teaches that force should have never been used in the first place, thus rendering moot discussions about the amount of force necessary and how it should have been employed.”

Record traces the predominant post-Vietnam schools of thought that influence political discussion today. He discusses major intellectual themes, such as Caspar Weinberger’s six “tests” for use of U.S. military force, later subsumed by Colin Powell’s principle that “winning meant going in with overwhelming force, getting the job done quickly, and getting out cleanly”—though he notes wryly that the real world is rarely that immaculate. Another policy discussed is the imperative to avoid anything like Vietnam. Presidents have been more willing to cut their losses in places like Lebanon and Somalia. “On balance, post-Vietnam presidents have displayed significantly greater risk aversion, and especially sensitivity to incurring casualties, than their predecessors. In this they have been reinforced by an even more timid Pentagon.”

The consequences have been great. Indeed, the lessons of Munich were the basis for U.S. Gulf intervention in 1990–91. “The haste with which the Bush administration terminated the war . . . reflected a Vietnam-driven dread of involvement in postwar Iraq. This fear of getting sucked into a bloody Arab quagmire drove the Bush administration to end the war prematurely,” with all the dire consequences that follow today. Similarly, “U.S. behavior before and during Operation ALLIED FORCE [in Kosovo] constituted the most dramatic display to date of the Vietnam syndrome at work and its operational and political consequences for American foreign policy.” Indeed, Saddam was not wholly foolish to wonder whether the United States would really invade Iraq in March 2003.

Moreover, the continuing differences within administrations over what Vietnam means has been actively harmful to American policy. The deeply hostile relationship between George Shultz and Caspar Weinberger, based on their differing views of the post-Vietnam use of force as a tool of American foreign policy, damaged the Reagan administration. Similar ongoing antagonism between Colin Powell and Donald Rumsfeld has done considerable harm to U.S. post-11 September strategy and policy execution.

Record briefly ponders whether the 1991 Iraq war constitutes a third seminal case that could serve as a historical marker, but then suggests not, because it did not entail “bloody and soul-searing foreign policy disasters.” Yet it suggests another key issue, namely the recurrent American failure to tie in a war’s military ending with political and strategic objectives. Examples include the abandonment of Europe in the aftermath of World War I; the failure to take Berlin in April 1945, when doing so might have forestalled some of what was to come in the Cold War; and the premature cease-fire ordered by George H. W. Bush, which is not unconnected with why we occupy Iraq today (which in itself may yet become another instance).

Reasoning by historical analogy has many pitfalls. While analogy may be helpful in making decision makers ask the “right questions” in a current crisis, “past employment and deployment of the Munich and Vietnam analogies suggest that they can teach effectively at the level of generality, but are insensitive to differences in detail.” Whatever the utility of reasoning by historical analogy as a tool of policy formation and

implementation, it is clear that policy makers will continue to be influenced by past events and what they believe those events teach. It is also clear that a presidents’ (and key advisers’) knowledge of history varies widely and that reasoning by historical analogy is but one of a host of factors at play in presidential decision making, that “every president’s knowledge of past events is different and is subject to political bias.” Perhaps the greatest actual effect of historical analogy is how it frames the worldviews of key protagonists, not how it may lead to “the right answer” in new situations.

The 2003 Iraq invasion and its aftermath make this book particularly interesting and topical. While the cases discussed end in the 1990s, surely the “lessons” of Munich and Vietnam (and likely the first Gulf War) influenced the post-9/11 views of President George W. Bush and other key actors about how to react to al-Qa’ida and what to do about Iraq and Saddam and other perceived threats. In fact, one of the reasons the Bush administration has come under such fierce criticism in the national security realm is that its decisions and actions are so counter to the general run of post-Vietnam American policy, as described in *Making War, Thinking History*. This book provides a good framework for thinking about the vital security issues the United States faces today.

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Wright, Evan. *Generation Kill: Devil Dogs, Iceman, Captain America, and the New Face of American War*. New York: Putnam, 2004. 354pp. \$24.95