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Paradoxes of Strategic Intelligence: Essays in Honor of Michael J. Handel

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only to those involved with North Korea. Anyone involved in negotiations will benefit from this book.

XAVIER K. MARUYAMA
Monterey, California



Betts, Richard K., and Thomas G. Mahnken, eds. *Paradoxes of Strategic Intelligence: Essays in Honor of Michael J. Handel*. London: Frank Cass, 2003. 210pp. \$114.95

The essays in this collection were written for an international conference held in honor of the late Michael J. Handel at the U.S. Naval War College. Handel wrote several seminal pieces in the relatively new field of intelligence studies, and his colleagues are to be complimented for producing this impressive Festschrift. Betts and Mahnken put together an impressive group of practitioners and academics to write on various aspects of the work of intelligence agencies. It begins with four articles of a theoretical nature, followed by three articles that focus on historic case studies.

This volume appropriately opens with a classic by Handel on strategic surprises, published almost thirty years ago, which serves as an excellent introduction to a book devoted to intelligence. It is typical of Handel's general thinking on strategic affairs, pointing out several paradoxes inherent to the potential for strategic surprise that have become the common wisdom of the intelligence field. Handel claims that due to the great difficulties in differentiating between "noise" and "signals" (relevant information), all data amounts to noise, making the collection of additional information designed to clarify the

situation additional noise. Handel also stresses the paradox of estimating risk. The riskier a military course of action, the less a rival anticipates and prepares for it, paradoxically making its eventual adoption less risky. Handel also suggests that successive intelligence successes increase not only the agency's credibility but also the risk of strategic surprise, because its conclusions will be less subject to critical questioning. There is also the self-negating prophecy. A warning of an impending attack triggers military preparations that in turn prompt the enemy to delay or cancel his plans. Such a scenario makes it almost impossible even in retrospect to know if the military preparations were warranted. Another scenario that may lead to a strategic surprise is a quiet international environment that may be used to conceal the preparations for an attack. Following a fascinating analysis of the problems of perception, the politics of intelligence, and the organizational and bureaucratic features, Handel reaches the realistic conclusion that surprise is almost always unavoidable.

The second article, by editor Richard K. Betts, starts with the unconventional premise that politicization of intelligence services is not necessarily bad, and sometimes it is even advisable. Betts presents two opposing models of intelligence work. The first portrays the intelligence agency striving to achieve professional credibility by presenting thorough analysis, while the second depicts the intelligence organization stressing the supply of data that is useful and relevant to decision makers. In the second case, the managers of intelligence organizations make compromises and tailor the information

to influence the decision-making process. Betts points out that there is inevitable tension between maximizing credibility and utility, but he makes a convincing case for reducing this tension by accepting a certain level of undefined politicization. Betts's recommended recipe for minimizing the damage of politicization in the intelligence community is organizational pluralism.

Woodrow J. Kuhns, a senior CIA official, next points out that despite the fact that a significant number of intelligence failures have been documented, there is no clear track record for estimates or warning judgments issued by the intelligence community. Moreover, there is no accumulated knowledge for distinguishing between failures attributed to collection, or to analysis. Nevertheless, Kuhns still tends to regard intelligence forecasts as closer to science than to pseudo-science, despite the methodological problems in producing forecasts, and suggests additional systematic research to clarify the issues he has raised.

James J. Wirtz then discusses the theory of strategic surprise and admits to operational difficulties. Wirtz claims that every curriculum of the officers corps stresses strategic surprise as a force multiplier, and as such, military doctrine is predisposed to carry out surprises. Wirtz elaborates on the risk paradox first mentioned by Handel, pointing out the attraction of surprise for the weaker parties of the conflict. At this point, Wirtz argues that surprises may produce only temporary spectacular results, leaving the general balance of forces to finally determine the result of armed conflict. Nevertheless, Wirtz concludes that strong countries such as

the United States must do their best to prevent unpleasant surprises—such as 9/11, for example.

John Ferris reviews the evolution of British military deception during the two world wars. He provides a detailed narrative on the deception efforts that were highly regarded by the British generals. Ferris argues that deception benefits the stronger player in the conflict and the one holding the initiative, but he displays skepticism of its final utility. This article could have benefited from heavy editing, as it is deficient in organization and in the use of theoretical concepts.

Uri Bar-Joseph's article addresses the question of why some Israeli intelligence officers—even at the highest rank—erred in their estimates of the probability of an imminent war in 1973. He argues convincingly that the two officers most responsible for the intelligence failure were Y. Bandman and E. Zeira, making the more general point that organizations cannot transcend the weaknesses of their personnel. However, Bar-Joseph could have made this important point concerning the human factor by explaining the lack of a strategic warning before the 1973 war without belittling other reasons for the main misfortunes of the Israeli military in its encounter with the Egyptian and Syrian armies.

The final chapter, by Mark M. Lowenthal, who is also with the CIA, looks at the U.S. war-fighting doctrine that originally emphasized information dominance (Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1997), and subsequently more modestly aspired to superiority only (2000). Lowenthal warns against the belief that technological advances can remove the fog of war. Even the best technologies need appropriate

doctrine to be useful. He argues cogently that advanced intelligence systems have their own vulnerabilities, and that lacunae of information are inevitable both before and during war. Moreover, by using examples from the American Civil War, Lowenthal demonstrates that good information about the enemy's moves and intentions is not enough for winning the battle. It is generalship, the human factor, that will continue to be decisive in the outcome of a war.

This is an excellent introductory collection for students and the professional reader to the gamut of issues with which the field of intelligence grapples.

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Clancy, Tom, with General Tony Zinni (Ret.) and Tony Koltz. *Battle Ready*. New York: Putnam, 2004. 440pp. \$28.95

This excellent book documents the military and postmilitary career of General Tony Zinni, USMC (Ret.). It should appeal to any reader interested in the U.S. military, the U.S. Marine Corps, and national security affairs.

The book follows an engaging and mixed style. Clancy and Koltz use short biographical sections to introduce phases of General Zinni's career. At the end of each phase, Zinni's own words (in italics) pick up the action. One has the sense of being right there with the general, sharing his experiences and watching him develop into an exceptional military role model and leader.

The book actually begins with the end of Zinni's career. It is November 1998, and he is halfway through his last

assignment as the sixth commander in chief of Central Command. We are introduced to the refined thinking of a fighting soldier and leader, thinking based on his extensive tactical, operational, and strategic experience in war, conflict resolution, and peacemaking. At that time, Zinni's immediate focus was Saddam Hussein and supporting the UNSCOM (United Nations Special Commission) inspectors under Richard Butler. By mid-December, UN teams began departing Iraq. What follows is the four-day, preplanned attack of Operation DESERT FOX. Although the planning for the attack provides insight into General Zinni's war-fighting skills, such as the importance and execution of surprise, it is the introduction to his breadth of strategic thinking that is most interesting.

At the start of his command in August 1997, Zinni proposed a six-point strategic program for Central Command to President Clinton's secretary of defense, William Cohen. His objective was to take a more balanced approach to a wide range of evolving security issues, not just Iraq and Saddam Hussein. After presenting the program to Cohen and senior members of Congress, Zinni was politely told to "stay out of policy and stick to execution." That raises an important point for military officers preparing themselves for high command. Civilian control of the military and selfless military service to the country are fundamental to our government, going back to George Washington and George Marshall. Based on the rest of the book, it is apparent that Zinni consistently struck that delicate professional balance between the truthful, informed, and forceful advice and respect for civilian authority.