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Rumsfeld's War,

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U.S. primacy in the face of chronic economic challenges.

These issues are featured in assessments of three alternative national security strategies. The first alternative, "U.S. Dominance and Preventive Action," is embraced by neoconservatives and those within the administration and elsewhere who have been referred to as "assertive nationalists." It begins with the premise that "the most serious threats to American security come from the combination of terrorism, rogue states, and weapons of mass destruction." The capability and will to act preemptively and unilaterally are essential; American military dominance must be maintained; and U.S. security requires widespread democracy and capitalism.

The second option, "A More Stable World with U.S. Power for Deterrence and Containment," is said to be favored by moderate Republicans and Democrats. They share the characterization of the threat provided by advocates of option one, yet counsel against elevating "preemption" to the status of a doctrine, emphasize the need for international support in the ongoing war on terror, and warn against the strategic overextension that may well result from proactively spreading free-market democracies.

The distinctly liberal third option, "A Cooperative World Order," is reminiscent of the Clinton administration's national security strategy—"Engagement and Enlargement," in Anthony Lake's formulation. To the nexus of terrorists, rogue states, and weapons of mass destruction, its proponents add the longer-term threats posed by "global poverty, growing lawlessness, and the increasing isolation of the United States from like-minded states." This

multitude of dangers requires international diplomatic, economic, and military cooperation; military responses are not to be given pride of place. The United States must strengthen, not tear asunder, international norms and institutions. Even the world's dominant military power cannot unilaterally ensure its security.

Korb masterfully translates the three alternatives into full-blown presidential addresses to Congress and the nation. He also systematically and evenhandedly assesses the strengths, weaknesses, and political impact of each. Significantly, "liberal," for Korb, is not a four-letter word. Unlike many Republicans, he knows how to count. This volume should be required reading for President George W. Bush, his advisers, and the broader U.S. national security community.

ANDREW L. ROSS
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Scarborough, Rowan. *Rumsfeld's War*. Washington, D.C.: Regnery, 2004. 253pp. \$27.95

Rumsfeld's War is a close-up look at one of the most influential figures in the Bush administration, and a key leader in the current war against militant Islamism. The book examines Rumsfeld the man, reviewing his long and varied career at the top levels of government and industry, and analyzes his role in the two principal themes of his tenure, transformation of the Cold War military and defeat of Middle Eastern terrorism.

Rowan Scarborough is a well known *Washington Times* reporter, specializing in defense issues. While not a panegyric,

his book provides a sympathetic look at Rumsfeld. This is not surprising, in that the *Washington Times* has been notably supportive of the Bush administration. As in his reporting, when writing his book, Scarborough doubtless benefited from close and frequent contact with the senior people around the secretary of defense.

One characteristic of Donald Rumsfeld that leaps from the pages is his utter self-assurance, bordering on arrogance, which manifests itself as remarkable decisiveness and precision in thought and speech. The book opens with Rumsfeld's conversation with President Bush soon after American Airlines flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon. He is noted as saying, "This is not a criminal action, this is war." His phrase crystalized a radical shift in strategic thinking that decisively took America from the listless strategic drift of the 1990s to one of activism and intervention. As noted by Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith, "That was really a breakthrough strategically and intellectually. Viewing the 9/11 attacks as a war that required a war strategy was a very big thought and a lot flowed from that."

The twin themes of transformation and fighting wars are inextricably intertwined. Serving as secretary of defense for President Gerald Ford from 1975 to 1977, Rumsfeld returned to the White House a second time with a specific mandate from President Bush to "transform" the military—bring strategy and military capabilities into better balance with the post-Cold War geopolitical context. The Bush administration came into office believing that the Pentagon was too wedded to expensive, obsolescing systems from the Cold War and to the accompanying policies,

processes, and mind-set that demanded more of the same. When Rumsfeld aggressively set out to overturn the tables in the Pentagon, he was met with determined resistance, for both substantive and stylistic reasons. By early September 2001, there were widespread rumors that Rumsfeld would be the first cabinet secretary to resign, over his inability to foster change in the Pentagon.

Flight 77 changed all that. The United States was no longer chasing criminals, it was at war. The operations in Afghanistan were dominated by remarkable synergies between special operations forces and precision weapons, themes that had long been pushed by "transformation" advocates. In both Afghanistan and Iraq, Rumsfeld insisted on far smaller numbers of ground combat units than the military leadership was comfortable with, arguing that the synergies possible in a heavily netted joint battle space, coupled with precision weapons and targeting, greatly increased the lethality and effectiveness of U.S. forces. The combat results amply repaid his confidence.

The lessons from the fighting merely redoubled Rumsfeld's determination to keep transforming the Department of Defense. Battlefield results notwithstanding, change in the military bureaucratic processes remained difficult. Rumsfeld noted that he "was struck by . . . how resistant people are to looking at strategy in a different way and pursuing advantages, rather than focusing on reacting to threats." On the other hand, his often abrasive manner needlessly antagonized people otherwise willing to help bring about overdue change in the Pentagon.

There is no doubt, however, that Rumsfeld has made an enormous effort

to overcome the stultifying stasis of the huge Department of Defense bureaucracies—military and civilian—and the mental inertia of fifty years of Cold War thinking. As Scarborough notes, “Rumsfeld’s task of reconfiguring the military and fighting the war on terror is so immense that it will take the light of history to determine exactly what he finally accomplished and at what he failed.” If nothing else, Rumsfeld created, if not institutionalized, the state of intellectual ferment that antecedes major change in any large organization.

Rumsfeld’s War is a quick, instructive read from a pro-Rumsfeld perspective. In that sense, it perhaps could be considered a counter to Bob Woodward’s two recent “insider” books on the current war, for which Woodward received very little support from Rumsfeld, and in which Rumsfeld is not sympathetically depicted. On the downside, the book stylistically feels somewhat as if the author threw together some of his day-to-day reporting text and called it a book. Also, fully one-third of the book consists of appendices, with copies of various memos and papers, many classified “secret”; no military reader can applaud the open use of such documents. However, the book is an interesting depiction of a remarkable man. As Scarborough notes on the final page, “It is hard to imagine any other man to whom Bush could have turned to fight this war with more tenacity, panache, and, at the appropriate time, good humor.”

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Machiavelli, Niccolò. *The Art of War*. Edited and translated by Christopher Lynch. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2003. 262pp. \$25

Machiavelli’s classic, if now rarely read, *The Art of War* was probably the single most popular military treatise in Europe prior to Jomini—Clausewitz was a professed admirer.

At first sight, this book, with its apparent attempt to revive the infantry-centered military organization of the imperial Roman legions, seems hopelessly irrelevant to present concerns. Even within its historical setting (it was originally published in 1521), Machiavelli’s work is often dismissed today for its alleged failure to appreciate the social and technological trends—particularly the growing importance of gunpowder—underpinning the “revolution in military affairs” of the sixteenth century. Christopher Lynch makes an excellent case that such interpretations neglect the literary or rhetorical dimension of *The Art of War* and its relationship to Machiavelli’s larger intellectual project. In an extensive introduction, as well as an interpretive essay, Lynch rebuts the criticisms of contemporary scholars, defends Machiavelli’s grasp of the military realities of his own day, and reinterprets the intention of the work in relation to Machiavelli’s more famous political treatises, *The Prince* and *Discourses on Livy*.

Lynch’s key point is that Machiavelli was not simply the backward-looking admirer of Rome he is often taken to be but a revolutionary thinker who combined elements of past military and political systems in a novel synthesis. His apparent reliance on Roman models is to be understood fundamentally as a