Know Thy Enemy: Profiles of Adversary Leaders and Their Strategic Cultures,

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Recommended Citation
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military-like activities and distinguishes between providers, consultants, and support firms. The next three chapters are devoted to contemporary examples for three types of firms: Executive Outcomes, the notorious but now officially disbanded South African–based mercenary group, illustrates a military provider firm. MPRI, an American-based firm founded, run, and largely staffed by retired flag officers, illustrates a military consulting firm; and Brown and Root, logistics providers, is a U.S.-based Halliburton subsidiary and illustrates a military support firm. In addition to clarifying the types of firms, these chapters are engaging case studies of prominent and influential corporations.

The book contains some significant flaws, but they generally stem from the groundbreaking effort to comprehend the significance of these firms. There are also many loose assertions, insinuations, and innuendos that are unlikely to withstand closer scrutiny, but for now, as an opening argument, they should be taken seriously.

The effort to differentiate the firms in an analytical and useful fashion breaks down in part 3, entitled “Implications.” The words “possible,” “might,” and “can” show up with inordinate frequency and are indicative of a looser, more speculative analysis. Here, Singer has a hard time maintaining the distinction between the firms he had carefully created earlier. The effect is often to tar all provider firms that bear the most resemblance to mercenaries or traditional military combat organizations. Singer darkly intones about the pitfalls and potential problems that can arise from the use of private military corporations, suggesting guilt by association with a small number of admittedly distasteful companies. This tendency to associate loosely all firms with the sins of the most egregious ones (almost always provider firms) seems even less fair given the fact that elsewhere Singer notes that such firms constitute a small fraction of the overall private military firm population. Many of his accusations do not apply well to support firms. A more useful approach would have been to assess the implications for each type of firm with respect to contracting dilemmas, market dynamics, accountability, civil-military relations, morality, and effectiveness.

Corporate Warriors is a valuable point of departure for understanding private military firms. It has cut a path through the dense thicket of concerns about their appropriate role but has by no means cleared the way. The book opens a debate that should engage military professionals, civilian national security leaders, and civil society. In the pursuit of national objectives there are many potentially useful instruments, and this book is clearly one of them. Better understanding private military firms and addressing their appropriate role are essential challenges.

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The devastating attack of 9/11 starkly revealed how the United States failed to
understand its adversary and, by extension, itself. The difficult, age-old challenge for the United States to accurately assess foreign leaders has not changed, nor has its spotty track record of getting it right.

It is a tough business getting at human identity and predicting the behavior of reclusive, complex characters to whom we have no access and who possess weapons of mass destruction. However, with America’s extraordinary resources one must ask why the United States has not brought to bear its best know-how to fill this serious vacuum of understanding.

The U.S. Air Force’s Counterproliferation Center’s “America’s Adversary Project” has tackled this problem and produced *Know Thy Enemy*, which is a fine collection of studies on the personalities and cultural context of such dangerous international rivals as Iran, North Korea, Libya, Syria, and terrorist groups like al-Qa’ida.

Co-editors Jerrold Post, psychiatrist and former CIA profiling guru, who now heads the Political Psychology Program at George Washington University, and Barry Schneider, director of the Counterproliferation Center at Maxwell Air Force Base, assembled a formidable group of leadership assessors with regional knowledge and functional expertise ranging from history, international relations and security, and war fighting to Japanese art.

Schneider’s introduction, “Deterring International Rivals from Escalation,” critiques the inadequacies of classical political science deterrence theory relative to twenty-first-century enemies armed with lethal weapons. The United States must know these enemies’ “hot buttons” and what contingencies could affect their decision to use weapons of mass destruction.

Both authors argue that although necessary, traditional profiling is not sufficient to understand the enemy. A deeper appreciation of individual personalities and their strategic cultures is necessary to supplement deterrence theory’s shortcomings. What is now required in each case are specific U.S. deterrence policies tailored to each leader’s unique profile, which directly informs our policy and public diplomacy.

Three essays bookend seven leadership profiles, offering a loose theoretical alternative and some recommendations. The seven assessments are timely, in-depth, and informative. “Kim Chong-Il’s Erratic Decision Making and North Korea’s Strategic Culture” by Merrily Baird is well done, synthesizing excellent research analysis into a working model for assessment.

Two other thought pieces are Alexander George’s “The Need for Influence Theory and Actor-Specific Behavioral Models of Adversaries” and the concluding chapter by Post and Schneider, “Precise Assessments of Rivals: Vital Asymmetric War Threat Environment.” George argues that it is necessary when dealing with irrational adversaries to distinguish between abstract concepts and real-time strategy. He states that “actor specific” calls for a more differentiated behavioral model of adversaries, but he qualifies the recommendations in light of the high degree of uncertainty and context specificity within strategic cultures. Post and Schneider reiterate that to avert an adversary’s use of weapons of mass destruction, models of actor-specific psychology and decision making are required.
For those seeking more than a basic education, this work provides a serious guide to today’s “hottest” adversaries and their weapons of mass destruction. Through well researched history, biography, and analysis of the cultural and strategic setting, this book acquaints readers with today’s enemies and invites them to ponder critically the propensity of these enemies to use their weapons.

A curious omission of this research is its lack of any systematic methodological discussion. The book’s primary assumption is that deterring adversaries requires an understanding of their strategic culture. Yet nowhere do the editors formally define strategic culture or its link to the adversary. The reader comes to appreciate, however, that each study uniquely attempts to make the connection. Between the lines, this study calls for a new paradigm, yet the book itself mostly relies on an outdated theoretical approach that ultimately handicaps what it set out to do—assess adversaries. That kind of work requires a deeper analytic template for profile analysis than presently conceived, one that cannot be wedged into political science paradigms. Ultimately, knowing the enemy requires a better appreciation of the advanced capabilities that studies of such behavioral areas as emotion, cognition, and performance can offer. Alongside traditional political science and psychology, this brings a deeper understanding to the urgent and complex problem of knowing our adversaries in relation to deterrence, information warfare, and psychological operations. An adversary’s behavioral structure reflects his identity and a consistency of pattern and style that no amount of image management can disguise. Direct microanalysis at the level of structure of a leader’s videotaped expression offers insights into psychological states and cognitive patterns, cues into how these contextually unfold over time, and topic-yielding insights into stress, credibility, level of certitude, and conflict that can still remain undetected after years of traditional analysis.

Challenging the way policy makers and analysts think about this vacuum in understanding weapons of mass destruction and foreign adversaries is the problem that this book illuminates, and it is perhaps ultimately its most significant contribution.

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Among many military historians, the release of a book by John Keegan is cause for celebration, and the sentiment is not altogether out of place. Keegan’s prolific output of insightful studies, reaching back to his seminal Face of Battle (1992), has won for himself devotees from both the academic and public sectors. In his latest book, Intelligence in War, Keegan returns to the distinctive format he used in The Face of Battle, dividing his study into several vignettes from a broad range of military history—what he labels here as “a collection of case studies”—organized, in this case, to highlight the effect that good intelligence has on military operations, and the general role intelligence plays