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Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo

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Daalder, Ivo H., and Michael E. O'Hanlon. *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2000. 343pp. \$26.95

Since the end of the Cold War, Nato has been experiencing an identity crisis that has not yet been completely resolved. In the last decade instability has been Nato's principal adversary, and the Balkans, as a result of the atrocities of Slobodan Milosevic, became its prime area of interest. In March 1999, following the Serb tyrant's driving of eight hundred thousand Albanian Kosovars from Serbia, Nato fought, and won, a war to return and protect Kosovo's Albanian population.

Winning Ugly is a recounting of the causes, conduct, and consequences of this war. It is derived from interviews of many of its central players by experts on Balkan policy and security affairs. Not surprisingly, this conflict has been dissected and closely scrutinized by many pundits, because its lessons will play a central role in fashioning future alliance defense policies, as well as U.S. force planning and doctrine development.

Daalder and O'Hanlon scrutinize virtually all elements of the Kosovo operation, and they are both understanding and critical. As to the causes and inevitability of the conflict, the authors conclude that, given Milosevic's perfidy and malice, it would have been difficult for Nato to avoid taking military action. As to the result, they unabashedly declare Nato the victor, with few qualifications. In fact, the authors' assessment should be labeled "near term," since we have yet to witness enduring stability in the region as a result of the conflict and the subsequent Nato "occupation" of the province.

Daalder and O'Hanlon's examination of the conduct of the war, however, is the best part of the book, bringing to light the strategic and tactical mistakes committed by Nato's heads of state, diplomats, and generals alike. Perhaps the most important of the internal conflicts were between (and among) Americans, a point underlined in General Wesley Clark's recent account of the Kosovo conflict, *Waging Modern War*.

The role that the air campaign played to achieve overall success in the war is a point hotly debated in defense-policy circles. Kosovo was proclaimed exclusively an air war, President Clinton having promised that the United States had no intention of fighting a ground war in the Balkans. It was a remarkably successful one, at that; air defense capability by the Yugoslav armed forces was moderate, yet no Nato pilot lost his life in combat. But this was not initially the air war that U.S. Air Force strategists had envisioned—pilots were restricted to flying above fifteen thousand feet, and target sets were limited early in the war due to asset availability and bad weather. Most importantly, the thrust of "effects-based operations" (in this case, bending the enemy's will through paralyzing the country's infrastructure) was diluted, as the Nato alliance pursued elusive Yugoslav tanks in the Kosovo countryside.

However, as the war progressed, American air-combat strategy increasingly held sway, while Milosevic continued to hold firm. The authors conclude that the diplomatic consensus was that the Yugoslav dictator did not consider blinking until faced with a united alliance that began talking seriously about a ground war. Milosevic eventually yielded when his last possible ally, Russia, conspicuously associated itself with the message of alliance

resolve. The authors leave us with the (lukewarm) lesson that airpower, properly employed, is a necessary, albeit insufficient, tool of defense and foreign policy.

The Kosovo war provides today's students of international affairs a textbook case in the traditional art of statecraft in the world of realpolitik. Many old lessons are emphasized: strategy must be driven by policy, coercive diplomacy works only when one possesses military might and resolve, armed forces must be given proper strategic direction, and alliance solidarity is crucial.

However, *Winning Ugly* adds new lessons as well, because Kosovo was Nato's principal test to date in conducting military operations outside its borders against a sovereign nation for essentially humanitarian purposes. Nato's performance in Kosovo may have helped define the practicality and desirability of this role in the twenty-first-century world. This book enhances our understanding of what may become the future of Nato as well as some part of the future of war.

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House, Jonathan M. *Combined Arms Warfare in the Twentieth Century*. Lawrence: Univ. Press of Kansas, 2001. 364pp. \$45

A retired Army officer formerly on the faculty of the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, Jonathan House has written an updated edition of a text he authored in the 1980s to support the education of Army officers. His express intentions are to strip the jargon in order to make the subject intelligible to a more general

readership, and to update the book with an analysis of combined-arms progress in the 1990s. The result is a readable and lucid analysis of combined-arms warfare in the twentieth century, a work that a layman can follow without keeping a dictionary of military terms handy.

For those with a genuine interest in military affairs, this book is ultimately rewarding. However, it is more about organizational dynamics than about battles and tactics, and that may prove tedious to the casual reader. House methodically traces the development of combined-arms practice in the major armies of the world, offering just enough description of battles and campaigns to illustrate the effects of the various technical and organizational developments over the years.

House tends to focus his analysis through the lens of organizational design (an inclination shared by this reviewer) and comes up with some interesting results that do not always conform to conventional wisdom. For instance, he makes the case that the French and British defeat in the 1940 Battle of France can be adequately explained by their centralized and "stovepiped" organizational structure, which inhibited the formation of flexible combined-arms task forces. Moreover, the lack of experience in defending against a fluid combined-arms offensive caused the allies to create a rather brittle, forward-focused defense instead of the defense in tactical and operational depth that was later found effective against the blitzkrieg. In addition, the failure of the German advance into the Soviet Union in 1941 was due not so much to the oft-cited reduction in panzer divisions (which House cites as an actual advantage, in that it created more balanced divisional structures) as to the