Cover

An F/A-18C Hornet approaches the flight deck of USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) on 30 October 2001 for a landing. The Arleigh Burke–class guided-missile destroyer USS McFaul (DDG 74) is visible astern on plane-guard station. The Theodore Roosevelt battle group was participating in Operation ENDURING FREEDOM against Taliban and al-Qaeda targets in Afghanistan, embodying the nation’s leadership in the global fight against terrorism. Such campaigns, however, are only one element (most prominent since the events of 11 September 2001) of the role of the United States in the world—several aspects of which are taken up by articles in this issue. Judge James Baker, who was in the White House during the 1999 Nato Kosovo campaign, assesses the obligations of legal advisors to the president in contemporary warfare; a panel of distinguished scholars exchange views on the nature (and limitations) of transformation of the U.S. military to meet its global responsibilities of tomorrow; and Professor Roger Barnett of the Naval War College argues that, thanks to a number of factors, the scene depicted on our cover—the U.S. Navy in the forefront, influencing events ashore with great effectiveness—is emblematic of the future.

U.S. Navy photo by Chief Photographer’s Mate Johnny Rivera.
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When Lawyers Advise Presidents in Wartime

Kosovo and the Law of Armed Conflict

James E. Baker

The events of 11 September changed how we perceive national security as a society, a government, and as individuals. This is as true of national security specialists, who have been aware that America has been at war with terrorism since at least the 1990s, as it is for those whose sense of geographic security was shattered in New York and Washington. There is talk of “new war” and “new rules,” and concern that we not apply twentieth-century lessons to a twenty-first-century war.

Over time, 11 September and its aftermath will test our interpretation and application of domestic law. It may also test the traditional framework under international law for resorting to and applying force. But much will, and should, stay the same for lawyers. As a result, my objective remains, as it was when I spoke at the Naval War College before 11 September, to give some personal insight into the application of the law of armed conflict to the 1999 Nato Kosovo air campaign from the perspective of a lawyer serving the president as commander in chief. I offer these observations not out of any desire to tell my story. Almost all of my instincts as a lawyer, former national security official, and judge run against my doing so. However, I have overcome my reticence because I am committed to constitutional government, and I believe that national-level legal review is critical to military operations, not just in determining whether the commander in chief has domestic and international legal authority to resort to force, but also in shaping the manner in which the United States employs force. Lawyers also have an important role to play in sustaining “good-government” process, offering a degree of detachment and long-term perspective.
Constitutional government means that every decision should be made according to law; it also means that, as a matter of process, certain elected and appointed officials should be involved in decisions to resort to force as well as decisions on use of force, even when the need is immediate and the military option clear. Knowing how lawyers performed these tasks during the Kosovo conflict will not answer today’s contextual legal questions, but it may offer insight on how to lawyer better and how policy makers effectively use their lawyers as part of a national security process that is necessarily secret.

Kosovo underscores that process and legal judgments are contextual. The contextual parameters in responding to terrorism are different from those for responding to a Balkan crisis. Clandestine and remote military operations against a hidden enemy will dictate different decision processes than do Nato air operations against fixed targets, as will the different political and policy parameters of both situations. As a result, I have not sought to modify an August text about limited air operations against a conventional military into a global text about use of force against terrorists. The legal framework is also different. For example, some of the concerns I anticipated after Kosovo and discuss below about dual-use targets may be less relevant to a war on terrorism, but they remain just the same and may arise in other contexts.

At least at the outset of current operations against terrorism the United States and its allies will operate within a more permissive legal context. Unlike Kosovo, in responding to 11 September, the *jus ad bellum* is self-evident and beyond rational debate. Those nations responding to terrorism are doing so pursuant to an inherent right of self-defense under customary international law and recognized in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. The domestic legal context is equally clear—the president’s authority as chief executive, as commander in chief, and in conducting foreign relations is at its broadest when defending United States territory. The executive branch acts militarily as well with the unqualified statutory authority of the Congress expressed in Public Law 107-40, the “Authorization for Use of Military Force.” Enacted on 18 September, this joint resolution authorizes the president “to use all necessary and appropriate force against those nationals, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on 11 September 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations or persons.” As Justice Robert H. Jackson wrote half a century ago,
in such cases the president’s "authority is at its maximum, for it includes all that he possesses in his own right plus all that Congress can delegate."\(^1\)

Even when threshold legal questions involving resort to force are settled, decision makers must continue to make judgments involving application of the law of armed conflict to the use of force. Regardless of how a conflict is characterized, and regardless of the reciprocal application of the law of armed conflict, U.S. military actions are subject to the law of armed conflict. Title 18 U.S. Code 2441 may also apply. It is long-standing U.S. policy and doctrine to apply the law of armed conflict to U.S. military actions regardless of circumstance. This is good. This is who we are. As I discuss below, how these principles are applied—at what decisional level and with what degree of specificity (e.g., target-by-target, category of target, with what rules of engagement)—will depend on context.

As I also discuss below, the protection of innocent civilian life remains the fundamental principle behind the Geneva Conventions and, more broadly, the law of armed conflict. Indeed, part of our revulsion and contempt for terrorism lies in the indiscriminate, disproportionate, and unnecessary nature of terrorist violence against civilians and noncombatants. Therefore, the moral imperative and relevance of this legal regime is even more apparent today than it was before 11 September. As with Kosovo, policy makers will appreciate that these principles are not only found in domestic and international law; they make for good policy where international public and state support is essential and, particularly in a global contest, where economy of force is imperative.

KOSOVO, 1999
Kosovo was a campaign during which the law of armed conflict was assiduously followed. The campaign was conducted with uncommon, if not unprecedented, discrimination. I believe the process for reviewing targets within the U.S. government worked well. Where there were mistakes, they were not mistakes of analytic framework or law. Where the process did not work smoothly or effectively, the idiosyncratic nature of a Nato campaign likely came into play. We should not lose sight of the fact that the combination of diplomacy and military operations that constituted the campaign was successful in achieving Nato’s objectives.

I intend to focus on a particular aspect of Kosovo—the process of reviewing targets going to the president. At the outset I would like to correct a misperception. I have asked military friends what they would be interested in hearing explained on this subject. I was struck by the number of times thoughtful officers asked me why the president insisted upon approving all air targets—involving images of President Lyndon Johnson crouched over maps of Vietnam. As a matter of fact, the commander in chief did not approve all targets
during Kosovo but only a subset, which I describe later. Carrying the analysis to the next step, in my opinion presidential review did not impede effective military operations in Kosovo. Rather, such review was efficient, contributed to the rule of law, and allowed the president to engage more effectively with Nato allies.

My military friends have also asked about the role of lawyers, and particularly the role of a civilian lawyer at the National Security Council (NSC), in the conduct of military operations. Therefore, I will begin by describing and assessing my role in applying the law of armed conflict. I will close with a few concerns about the impending collision among the law of armed conflict, the doctrine of effects-based targeting, and a shared desire to limit collateral casualties and consequences to the fullest extent possible.

TARGETING PROCESS
Before, during, and after the air campaign, I performed three integrated roles with respect to the law of armed conflict.

Preparation
First, I educated and advised the president, the national security advisor, the Principals and Deputies Committees,* and the attorney general on the law of armed conflict before (as well as during and after) the air campaign. As with any client, the time spent in education at the outset pays huge dividends when the law has to be applied in a live situation (a secure conference call at four o’clock in the morning is not the time to introduce any client, especially the national decision maker, to the concepts of proportionality, necessity, and discrimination).

At the most practical level, I provided background and advice in the form of memoranda, e-mail, and oral input. My sources were customary international law (including those portions of Protocol I recognized by the United States as customary international law), the Geneva Conventions, the Geneva Convention Commentaries, U.S. military manuals and academic treatises, and all who taught me along the way.

I have often thought that questions about the president’s domestic authority to resort to force are driven by one’s constitutional perspective and doctrinal convictions. In contrast, the principles underlying the law of armed conflict are generally

* The NSC Principals Committee, chaired by the assistant to the president for national security affairs, included the following core members during the Kosovo conflict: the secretary of state, secretary of defense, assistant to the vice president for national security affairs, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, U.S. representative to the United Nations, and the director of central intelligence. The Deputies Committee, chaired by the deputy assistant to the president for national security affairs, included the deputy secretary of state or under secretary of state for political affairs, the undersecretary of defense for policy, deputy assistant to the vice president for national security affairs, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, deputy U.S. representative to the United Nations, and deputy director of central intelligence.
agreed upon: necessity, proportionality, discrimination, and military objective. It is the different application of these principles to decisions to resort to force and to decisions regarding how force is used (targets) that generates most debate.

The law of armed conflict is not law exclusively for specialists. We expect junior personnel to apply the same principles on a tactical level. These are principles that policy makers must understand and apply to their most solemn responsibility—the exercise of force and the taking of human life. I would add that in this respect government lawyers share a common duty with law professors and other experts to educate the policy maker of today and tomorrow in advance of the crisis—not just to comment after the fact.

Advance guidance on the law of armed conflict also helps establish lines of communication and a common vocabulary of nuance between lawyer and client. In a larger, more layered bureaucracy than the president’s national security staff, where the lawyer may be less proximate to the decision maker, I imagine that the teaching process is even more important. Not only does a good advance law-of-armed-conflict brief educate the policy maker, but any policy maker who hears such a brief will be sure his or her lawyer fully participates in the targeting process. In addition, the policy maker will understand in a live situation that the lawyer is applying “hard law”—specific, well established, and sanctioned—and not kibitzing on operational matters.

I say that in part because some policy makers treat international law as “soft law,” and domestic, particularly criminal, law as “hard law.” The law of armed conflict is, of course, both. Indeed, in some of the literature on Kosovo, limitations on collateral casualties and consequences seem always to be referred to as a political constraint and rarely as the legal constraint that it also is. Whether this reflects lack of knowledge about the law or merely recognition that the policy hurdle was often the first encountered is hard to say. Nevertheless, under 18 U.S. Code 2441, specified war crimes committed by or against Americans violate U.S. criminal law.

Target Categories
My second role related to the law of armed conflict was the review of target categories identified by certain rubrics, such as air defense or lines of communication, under which specific targets were almost always approved in-theater. Among other things, I would ensure that such categories were consistent with the president’s constitutional authority and with his prior direction. How did I play this role in practice?

Where specific targets or categories of targets were briefed, suggested, or debated at Deputies or Principals Committee meetings, I was immediately available—in the room—to identify issues and guide officials around legal rocks and
shoals. It might be asked why principals discussed military targets at all. First, as General Wesley Clark, Supreme Allied Commander Europe during the Kosovo campaign, has made clear, Nato alliance operations involved the careful orchestration of nineteen national policies and—I will add—nineteen legal perspectives, many of which hinged on the nature of targets selected and the risk of collateral casualties. If the secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, was to address an appeal from one foreign minister or another to change the course of the campaign, she needed to understand the campaign.

Second, policy makers brought to bear extraordinary regional knowledge, including insight into Serbian pressure points. The principals had perspectives on the effects of targeting that a military staff officer might not have.

Principals also bore a heavy responsibility for the policy outcome of Operation ALLIED FORCE. I believe it was their duty to test the scope of operations to ensure we were doing all that we should do to achieve Nato’s objectives, but in a way that would hold the alliance together. This was a duty fulfilled.

Targets
My third law of armed conflict–related role was to review specific targets. If the president was going to be asked to approve a target, it was my duty to ensure the target was lawful. Time and again I returned to the same checklist: What is the military objective? Are there collateral consequences? Have we taken all appropriate measures to minimize those consequences and to discriminate between military objectives and civilian objects? Does the target brief quickly and clearly identify the issues for the president and principals?

It might be asked why the NSC legal advisor, and not a military lawyer, was doing this. There are at least three reasons.

First, the European Command staff judge advocate and the legal counsel to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, among other military officers, were performing these reviews as well. The system of legal review, however, was sufficiently streamlined that it was advisable for me to serve as a fail-safe to ensure that review had in fact occurred on targets going to the president. Moreover, authority to approve is also authority to modify or change, and it was essential that any such changes received legal review prior to final approval by the president.

There is a propensity in government to adopt smaller and smaller decision-making circles in the interest of operational security. The circle can become too small. A decision-making process limited to cabinet principals may ask too much of too few if those principals are to address issues of policy and law on operational time lines. In my view, there should be at the most senior policy level a lawyer who is directly responsible (and feels responsible) for applying at that level the law of armed conflict to each decision involving the use of force.
Second, it was in Washington—at the Pentagon, the State Department, and the White House—that issues of law, policy, and operations came together. At the “political” level, a Nato alliance objection to a particular target might be couched in both policy and legal terms. Having a lawyer involved helped to avoid “default judgments” when legal issues were raised by foreign heads of state or ministers.

Finally, and importantly, I implicitly assumed an additional role as a trustee to the process. I was not self-appointed; rather, this is what the national security advisor, then Samuel R. Berger, expected from his lawyer.

In short, it was my job to make sure that in doing the right thing the U.S. government was doing it the right way. I had a standard mental checklist. Are all the relevant facts on the table? Do the president and his principal officials know what they are reviewing? Have the longer-term repercussions of striking a target been identified? Have the right process steps been taken? These are, of course, not inherently legal questions, but the lawyer in the room may be the staff person best positioned to test the process, detached from commitment to any particular policy approach and with an eye to what Justice Jackson referred to as the “enduring consequences” of the decision.

It is also important to think broadly about who may be missing from a particular process. For example, I would ask, is this a matter that the attorney general, Janet Reno, should review? If not, might she nonetheless be asked by the press or the Congress for her legal view on whether an action is consistent with the president’s constitutional authority? In responding to such queries, it might be asked, would the attorney general be substituting her judgment on military matters for that of the commander? Of course not. Wishing to understand the military objective of an action is not to question the military recommendation. It is, however, central to evaluating constitutional authority and the application of U.S. law to particular facts—and that is a lawyer’s task.

At the level of practice and lessons learned, the critical process link was between the National Security Council and the legal counsel to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs—then Captain (now Rear Admiral) Michael F. Lohr, who worked in concert with the Department of Defense (DoD) general counsel. As the national-level military lawyer closest to the operational line, Admiral Lohr served as my primary contact, through whom I could track and review target briefs as they came to the White House from the chairman of the Joint Chiefs and secretary of defense. This communications channel kept me ahead of, or at least even with, the operational time line and ensured that the president, and not just the Pentagon, had the benefit of military and DoD legal expertise. It also provided for a single chain of legal...

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Whether actors like it or not, Kosovo may serve as a harbinger of the manner in which specific U.S. military actions, down to the tactical sortie, will receive legal scrutiny.
communication, thereby avoiding confusion. Working together on hundreds of targets, we came to understand each other’s vocabulary, tone, and expressions. When I could, I provided my input and advice in writing. First, I felt I should be no less accountable for my legal concurrence than the president would be for his decision. Second, I wanted to make sure my advice was received. Relying solely on oral communication is to run the risk that the process will move forward without your input, if the principal does not have time to meet or talk before operational time lines dictate a decision. Finally, I found that my advice was cumulative and that policy makers were likely to apply the principles of the law of armed conflict in other contexts, perhaps during conversations and meetings that I did not attend.

ASSESSMENT
Having given a sense of the legal process in the White House involving target review, let me now assess how that process worked, focusing first on the commander in chief and then on the lawyers.

The Role of the Commander in Chief
Briefings for the president on military operations by the chairman included all proposed categories of targets (such as air-defense or ground-force units in Kosovo). The president also reviewed a subcategory of individual targets. Such targets were for the most part targets of heightened policy concern. They might raise, among other things, potential negative allied reactions and, especially, pose potential risks of collateral casualties. Not surprisingly, these were the targets that also raised more difficult questions under the law of armed conflict. Of the approximately ten thousand strike sorties against some two thousand targets during the campaign, the national security advisor and I reviewed two or three hundred individual targets, of which the president examined a subset.

The president’s review of targets was crisp: he would hear the descriptions, review the briefing materials, and at times raise questions. He expected issues to have been addressed before they reached him and that any still requiring resolution—perhaps those involving an ally—be quickly and clearly presented. This was not a ponderous process but the kind of decision making that one might expect of a commander in chief.

There is a school of thought that would have preferred that the president review fewer targets, and a qualitatively more limited category of target, than the president did in this case, on the grounds that such review amounted to micromanagement of the armed forces. In this view, which has its genesis in the Vietnam era, the president should issue strategic guidance—a statement of
mission and commander in chief’s intent—and blanket authorization to pursue necessary targets.

While I think it is prudent to test whether the right balance was struck between military efficacy and civilian control in this or any other context, I disagree with the “minimal review” school as applied to Kosovo. In my view, the right balance was struck between national-level and theater-approved targets in this context. I believe the success of the campaign is highly relevant in this debate—the alliance was sustained, and Nato’s objectives were achieved.

Why was presidential review important? As General John P. Jumper, U.S. Air Force,* and others have pointed out, Kosovo was a highly idiosyncratic campaign involving coalition warfare by nineteen democracies—fourteen of which had deployed forces. In this context, some individual target decisions assumed strategic policy implications. A government might fall. A runway might no longer be available. Nato consensus might collapse. In my view, those are implications of presidential dimensions. When allied concerns about targets arose, the president was called.

Further, I would argue that some of the targets the president reviewed required his approval in a context where force was being employed pursuant to the president’s constitutional authority and the president had not provided the regional commander in chief blanket authorization to employ force. At the very least, his review removed any possible legal question as to whether select targets went beyond existing presidential authorization.

Finally, a president is accountable to the American people for U.S. operations and casualties. Whether a target was approved at the tactical, operational, or national level, its consequences would ultimately, and usually immediately, rest with Nato’s political leaders—and on none more than the president of the United States. This last argument may be a truism, and it was not unique to this campaign—but it applies to an analysis of Kosovo, just the same.

If I were asked to strengthen the process, I would make doubly sure that national-level target suggestions, or nominations, are processed in the same manner as targets originating in the military chain of command—that there are no shortcuts and that there is no deference to grade or position. This would ensure that all targets receive the same measure of staff review and analytic scrutiny. I am not in a position to know just how many times senior officials sought to curtail the process through backchannel communications, but during the campaign I sometimes heard that this or that senior official was pushing for a certain proposed target to be included in the next presidential brief, without the regular chain of review. Whenever I became aware of such “advice” I would channel it

into the normal process of selection and review. In any event, the potential for error diminishes if target nominations all receive the same stepped process of review up the chain of command. Where operational necessity dictates speed, my answer is to make the process work faster and smarter but not to accept shortcuts.

**The Lawyers’ Role**

Although I think legal review at the NSC worked well with respect to Kosovo targets, there is no single “best” process. Indeed, one scenario is likely to be so different from the next in terms of policy and military context that it would be dangerous to generalize—or to insist that one template fit all conflicts. Kosovo was not DESERT STORM. DESERT STORM was not DESERT FOX. One has to maintain situational awareness, to find the measure of process and approval that ensures application of the law of armed conflict and meets operational time lines, in part through appreciation of the difference between the strategic, theater, and local targets, as well as of the difference between a fixed and mobile target. If there is no one right way to lawyer, however, there is a wrong way—and that is to absent oneself from the decision-making process or simply defer to others’ conclusions.

Lawyers are not always readily accepted into the military targeting team. This reluctance has to do with concerns about secrecy, delay, “lawyer creep” (the legal version of mission creep, whereby one legal question becomes seventeen, requiring not one lawyer but forty-three to answer). Also, of course, there is the fear that the lawyer may flatly say no to something the policy maker wants to do. I was fortunate that the national security advisor, secretary of defense, and chairman and vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff needed no persuading as to the need for close-up lawyering. During the Kosovo campaign, legal advice may not have always received warm and generous thanks, but policy makers never hid from it or sought to shut it out.

In return, I think the lawyers fulfilled their responsibilities under the contract. We kept the number of participants to the absolute minimum. For example, if knowledge of a matter of domestic legal authority needed to be limited within the Justice Department to the attorney general alone, then the attorney general alone it was. Within the U.S. government, NSC legal review met all but one operational deadline—one fixed target was put on the president’s brief before legal review was complete. When the Oval Office briefing reached that target, I asked that it be set aside until the review was done.

While I always felt pressure, I never let it dictate my analysis. One source of pressure that I had not fully anticipated, however, was the extent of international legal scrutiny that U.S. actions received. In any event, we applied the law because it was the law, not because there was an audience.
Whether actors like it or not, Kosovo may serve as a harbinger of the manner in which specific U.S. military actions, down to the tactical sortie, will receive legal scrutiny—from nongovernmental organizations, ad hoc tribunals, and perhaps in the near future, a standing International Criminal Court. The latter two may attempt to assert jurisdiction over U.S. personnel. As a result, policy makers should anticipate that public statements intended to influence an adversary might also influence legal observers. Policy makers, and not lawyers, should surely decide what points to emphasize in public statements, but they should do so conscious of the legal implications of what is being said. The review of the 1999 Kosovo action by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia is an illustration. That review concluded that Nato military operations were indeed lawful, but the very fact that it was carried out served notice that doing the right thing, and doing it well and carefully, will not necessarily immunize actors from international legal scrutiny under the law of armed conflict.

AREAS OF FUTURE TENSION
I will close with a few words of caution involving three areas where I would forecast that tension is likely to arise between doctrine, policy, and the law of armed conflict.

Proportionality, Necessity, and “Going Downtown”
First, there is a potential tension between proportionality and necessity on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the military importance of striking hard at the outset of a conflict to surprise, shock, and thus effect a rapid end to a conflict. There has been commentary about the incremental nature of the Nato air campaign, and the merits of delivering an all-out attack—“going downtown,” in the American vernacular—earlier. On one level this aspect of the campaign was dictated by the fact that Nato’s combined political leadership had approved specifically a phased air campaign; that fact, therefore, defined the limit of authorized military operations and alliance.

Legal considerations did not drive this result. Indeed, the political self-restraint agreed to by the alliance was reached well before any legal constraint based upon necessity or proportionality was reached. In my view, at the strategic and national level, as a matter of law, these principles provided significant leeway for response given Nato’s legitimate objectives of preventing ethnic cleansing and avoiding a larger regional war. But looking forward, we should not lose sight of the fact that there is a legal facet to any decision to “go downtown.” Legal judgments depend on factual predicates and judgments. If policy makers believe a symbolic show of force alone (for instance, a flyby) will accomplish the permitted goal, a lawyer will find it difficult, applying the principle of necessity, to
concur in a significant use of force, such as the bombing of national-level military targets in a capital city.

**Dual-Use Targets**

Similarly, so-called dual-use targets embrace any number of inherent tensions. The law of armed conflict attempts to posit, in the distinction between military objective and civilian object, a clarity that may not exist on the ground. I found that dual-use targets—like media relay towers or factories—largely fell on a continuum between objects that were distinctly civilian and those that were distinctly military. This seemed particularly true because we were dealing with a dictatorship with broad, but not always total, control over potential dual-use targets. In such an environment, facilities can be rapidly converted from civilian to military use at the direction of a government not bound by *Youngstown Sheet & Tube Co. v. Sawyer* (that is, a domestic legal regime that recognizes that the head of state or of government does not have unlimited authority over private property even in time of war, as the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1952, when it barred President Harry Truman from authorizing the government seizure of private steel mills in the face of a Korean War steel-mill strike, absent legislative authorization to do so).³

In such a context, “effects based” targeting (roughly, a framework for targeting that starts with the identification of a political objective from which flow target selections based on their potential effect on an enemy’s decision-making process, rather than the identification of targets based on the direct and immediate military advantage of their destruction) and the law of armed conflict may be on a collision course. The tension is particularly apparent where a facility or enterprise financially sustains an adversary’s regime, and therefore ultimately the regime’s military operations, but does not make a product that directly and effectively contributes to an adversary’s military operations. The *policy* frustration is that these may be exactly the targets that if attacked might not only persuade a dictatorial adversary of one’s determination but also, more importantly, shorten the conflict and therefore limit the number of collateral casualties that would otherwise occur.

I am not arguing here for a change in the law; I am very conscious that too malleable a doctrine of military objective will send the law hurtling down the slippery slope toward collateral calamity. Nor, I should be clear, am I suggesting that the United States applied anything other than a strict test of military objective, as recognized in customary international law and by those states that have adopted Protocol I of the Geneva Conventions. My purpose is to identify a very real area of tension that warrants further review and that will confront lawyers in the future.
Protection of Noncombatants and Traditional Understandings of Military Objective

The law of armed conflict generates a number of potential ironies in the interest of higher principles and clarity. For example, the law of armed conflict prohibits “treacherous killing”—for instance, the hiring of a noncombatant to poison a military leader—but permits the use of more dramatic force, even with significant collateral consequences, to attack the same military leader or a military headquarters with the same objective—disrupting command and control. During the Kosovo campaign, lawyers were never squarely confronted with a target that was of sufficient financial or symbolic value to the regime that it might well end or shorten the conflict with minimal collateral consequences but that nonetheless failed a traditional test of military objective because it did not make a direct and effective contribution to military operations or was civilian in nature. But I sensed that such an issue could have arisen.

Without diminishing the paramount principle of protection for noncombatants, I wonder whether the definition of military objective deserves another look, in the interest of limiting collateral casualties. Are traditional definitions adequate, or do they drive military operations toward prolonged conflict and ground combat? Do they provide enough guidance to shield the commander from prosecution for legal judgments made in good faith?

These are more than academic questions of passing interest. The potentially poor fit between traditional categories of military objective and the reality of conflict in which targets fall on a continuum of judgment between military and civilian becomes more perilous in an age of international scrutiny where good-faith differences of view can take on criminal implications. Those who do evaluate such actions should do so in the awareness of the factual and temporal context in which the decisions were made. National security decision making is not judicial decision making. Time is more of the essence, and information is not necessarily of evidentiary quality.

Just as conflicts with low military casualties, even none at all, have resulted in a public expectation—some suggest a de facto policy constraint—regarding the scope of U.S. military action, some have used Kosovo to advance a legal view that the law of armed conflict virtually prohibits collateral civilian casualties. This is an honorable and worthy aspiration, but not law. Nor should it be law, or the tyrants of the world will operate with impunity.

The law of armed conflict does not prohibit collateral casualties any more than international law prohibits armed conflict. It constrains, regulates, and limits. War is almost never casualty free, and we will be extraordinarily lucky if future conflicts incur as few collateral casualties as Kosovo did.
I hope that these recollections and perceptions give some insight into the process of legal review at the commander-in-chief level during the Kosovo air campaign. I also hope that they have given a sense of the issues, at least in a manner consistent with my duty to safeguard the deliberations that took place. In turn, such a review, I hope, will inform current and future policy-legal teams as they address America’s conflicts.

My messages are clear. First, lawyers are integral to the conduct of military operations at the national command level. They must be in the physical and metaphorical decision-making room.

Second, lawyers can perform their duties to the law in a timely and secure way that meets operational deadlines and needs. Those who uphold the law of armed conflict bring honor to the profession and to the armed forces.

Third, the law of armed conflict is hard law. It is U.S. criminal law. Increasingly, it will also serve as an international measure by which the United States is judged. The law of armed conflict addresses the noblest objective of law—the protection of innocent life. The United States should be second to none in compliance, as was the case in Kosovo.

Finally, application of the law of armed conflict is a moral imperative. If international law regulates but does not prohibit war, the law of armed conflict provides a framework to ensure that force is used in the most humane and economical manner possible. Whether we agree on the precise definition of military objective, or on each and every Kosovo target, I am confident that all can agree on the moral imperative of minimizing civilian casualties and suffering to the fullest extent possible.

NOTES

McCarty Little Hall
Dr. Andrew Ross, moderator, is a professor in the Strategic Research Department of the Naval War College’s Center for Naval Warfare Studies. A coeditor of the 1995, 1997, and 2000 editions of Strategy and Force Planning, Dr. Ross currently directs the College’s project on “Military Transformation and the Defense Industry after Next.”

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WHAT DO WE MEAN BY “TRANSFORMATION”?  
An Exchange  

Andrew L. Ross, Michèle A. Flournoy, Cindy Williams, and David Mosher  

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hat exactly do we mean by “defense transformation”? How might it affect the nation's strategy and the military forces that it deploys? How long might a process of transformation take, and what might it cost? The Secretary of the Navy's Current Strategy Forum held at the Naval War College on 12–13 June 2001 asked one of its four discussion panels to address these issues. Its members had long grappled with such questions from different vantage points.

MICHELÉ FLOURNOY  
I think transformation is one of the most important topics that the defense community needs to grapple with today. Accelerating transformation of the U.S. military and of the Department of Defense more broadly will be a major theme of the new administration’s defense strategy when that is unveiled. To be successful, however, the secretary of defense, Donald Rumsfeld, will have to be more clear in the guidance he gives on transformation, in terms of the objectives we are striving for, the desired capabilities we want the process to yield, and the trade-offs we are willing to make to accelerate transformation.

I want first to ask, why transform? Why is it so important? Second, I wish to articulate what I think are the primary objectives of transformation. Third, I want to give an assessment of where we are in the process today. Fourth, I will focus on some of the “long poles in the tent”—the things that are hardest to do and take the longest—before concluding with some recommendations. This material is drawn primarily from my own experience in the trenches of the Office of the Secretary of Defense but also from an opportunity I had to serve on the Defense Science Board task force on transformation.
Coming Soon to a Theater Near You: Reasons and Objectives

I see many reasons why we should be treating transformation of the U.S. military as a priority. One is that tomorrow’s wars will not be like today’s. The primary lesson for any potential adversary of the Gulf War was not to be so stupid as to confront the United States head-on, militarily. Look for weaknesses to exploit; look for strengths to undermine; look for asymmetric means of attacking the United States. A principal asymmetric means will be to deny and delay our access to their regions, to use anti-access strategies against us. The scenarios for which we are currently planning do not adequately reflect those challenges. They do not represent some of the most likely future challenges we will face.

Another reason is that the future is coming sooner than we think. The real challenges to our ability to project power in the face of anti-access challenges do not lie twenty or twenty-five years off. We do not have to wait for the rise of a near-peer competitor in 2025. The proliferation of key technologies and capabilities means that lesser countries, regional powers, will be able to pose significant anti-access challenges to us within the next decade. As I like to say, this threat is “coming soon to a theater near you.” Current U.S. capabilities and concepts of operations will be severely challenged, absent transformation.

We should also transform the U.S. armed forces because of the opportunities this allows. New technologies offer new opportunities to be more effective in future warfare. Examples include information technologies, biotechnologies, directed energy—the list goes on. Of course, fiscal pressures will continue, and they will continue to require the Defense Department to do things in smarter ways, to get more efficient. Transformation should support that.

Finally, transformation takes time. If we want to be ready ten years down the road—twenty years, for some new challenges—we need to start the process now. There must be time for the inevitable missteps, failures, and blind alleys, and for learning from them.

Let me turn to the objectives of transformation. I think the primary objective is ensuring continued U.S. military superiority and, with that, our ability to advance and to protect our national interests in the face of emerging and future threats. This means several specific things, such as an ability to project rapidly and then sustain combat power in the face of strategies designed to thwart our ability to do that. It entails an ability to operate across the spectrum of conflict—not only high-end warfare but smaller scale contingencies, presence, and so forth. It means underwriting deterrence and “shaping” with a force that remains combat credible in a changing environment. That involves the transformation of forward presence. In sum, it requires maximizing the effectiveness and efficiency of U.S. forces. Those are the objectives of transformation, at a very broad level.
The Good News and the Bad News

How are we doing? Here is the good news. The “transformation” section of the Quadrennial Defense Review of 1997, not so long ago, was virtually blank for at least one service. There was not much happening in transformation in 1997—but today there is a great deal. Transformation became a recognized defense priority of the previous administration, and certainly it will be for this one. The military has articulated an ambitious joint vision for 2020. That vision is very broad, with little specific guidance, but it is compelling. Each of the services individually has established transformation “road maps” and “battle labs”; they are conducting transformation activities, war games, concept development, and experimentation. We have come a long way toward translating rhetoric into real activity and action. The establishment of Joint Forces Command has increased the importance, and improved the resourcing, of transformation in the joint arena.

But there are still barriers to transformation, and that is the bad news. The Bush administration will have to address these barriers if it is serious about transformation. Perhaps the largest obstacle is complacency, the absence of the pervasive sense of urgency that has existed in the past when transformations have occurred. “Of course we will transform,” the services seem to say, “but at our own evolutionary pace and without making any hard trade-offs. This will naturally happen, over time; that is how we do business.” Another barrier arises from the fact that, historically, periods of low operating tempo have been most conducive to urgent military innovation; today, we are trying to transform even as we are responding to major international challenges.

Not the least of the problems is a general underestimation of what it takes actually to change the status quo in a large organization like the Department of Defense. There is no department-wide strategy or road map laying out or translating the very broad Joint Vision 2020 into more concrete mission objectives and priorities. There are no clear metrics for measuring progress. There is no lens through which we can judge investment priorities and trade-offs, no Defense vision linking the transformation of the military to the transformation of the department and of its business practices more broadly. We have stated that the linkage exists, but we have not fleshed it out in specific terms. In any case, transformation has not been given “teeth,” has not been made a priority by the department in the services’ planning, programming, and budgeting processes.

While I would applaud many of our experimentation efforts, some of them have been too constrained, infected with a “zero defect” culture that promotes showcasing as opposed to true experimentation. There has been an inadequate emphasis in some cases on real discovery, which requires a tolerance of failure.
Sometimes the most productive experiment is one that fails; we have not seen much of that. Further, many of the models and measures of effectiveness by which we evaluate results do not adequately reflect how a transformed force would operate. Finally, joint experimentation has tended to focus too narrowly on the seams between the services rather than on new “concepts at large” for utilizing the joint force.

Relatedly, there is an inadequate process for translating the results of experimentation into real programs. Suppose the experimentation process discovers something promising. Do we have an adequate way of making sure that it gets into the defense program? The answer is yes, theoretically; but there are not many success stories yet. What we learn from experiments should lead us to reassess our priorities and resource allocations, with respect not only to matériel but to doctrine, concepts, and organizations.

A further barrier is the shortage of institutional advocates; there is as yet no full-time staff in the Pentagon dedicated exclusively to transformation. There are no adequate mechanisms for consistently focusing high-level attention on this issue. If we are going to get transformation, it will require impetus from the top. On the other hand, short tours of duty—that is, rapid rotation of key personnel—limit the impact of many military professionals who are at one time or another responsible for transformation activities. They stay only two or three years in the job, and that tends to limit their efficacy in those roles.

We must also acknowledge the specter of interservice rivalry, a Pandora’s box that senior leaders are so afraid to open that they do not create fora where ideas and concepts of operations can really compete. Relatedly, even a very promising concept developed and experimented with by a particular service may be viewed with suspicion by the others if it is brought into the joint arena—as if the service in question were bent on using the innovation to increase its own budget share and decrease others’.

Finally, as I have hinted, we face the reality of near-term demands. Any new strategy, even one that would genuinely increase the emphasis on transformation, must deal with the demands of the real world, the here and now. Transformation often gets crowded out by more immediate concerns. Those concerns include the effects, which are still with us, of the procurement holiday of the 1990s. A number of recapitalization needs are in direct competition with transformation priorities.

The Long Poles in the Tent, and Recommendations

Let me turn now to the two most important areas upon which we should focus. The first is development of new concepts of operations for priority mission areas. Concept development has not been given high enough priority; too few
“racehorses” are dedicated to the task. The services typically give the task either to contractors or to small “futures groups,” not core elements of their own staffs. In the joint realm as well, there are too few avenues for vetting and testing new concepts. Joint Forces Command is a tremendous addition, but it cannot do it all, certainly not at its current size and level of staffing.

Within the headquarters, there has been a general lack of incentives to break with current doctrine or current approaches; there is a general sense that if you are too innovative, you may dash your promotion opportunities. Now, contrast that with how the Germans, before World War II, came up with the concept that eventually yielded the blitzkrieg. The German army told a group of lieutenant colonels and colonels that, in effect, they could not be promoted unless they came up with something that broke current doctrine.

What I am really arguing for is a fundamental change in culture from one of consensus—which would pursue a transformation that causes no one to be uncomfortable—to a productive and open forum where ideas and concepts for solving priority mission problems or tasks can truly compete.

The other “long pole in the tent” is organizational change—the transformation, or more broadly the rationalization, of the Department of Defense itself. If transformation focuses only on the fighting “tooth” and ignores the supporting “tail,” it will ultimately fail. We have to reduce unnecessary duplication between the services in key support areas like logistics, C4ISR*, possibly even some aspects of training. We need acquisition reform. We have to eliminate unneeded infrastructure, to outsource and commercialize functions like accounting, health care, long-haul communications, and so on. If the Defense Department does not transform the way it does business, it will not have the resources to transform the U.S. military. Nor would it be able to support effectively a transformed force. There are huge political and bureaucratic barriers to surmount here, but this issue has to be put on the table if transformation is going to succeed.

The recommendations I would offer are largely drawn from the Defense Science Board task force on transformation. The number-one recommendation is to establish a sense of urgency at the top. Such a sense may be growing inside the office of the secretary of defense, but not in all of the services. It is largely absent on Capitol Hill, among the people who control the purse strings. Next, we need an implementation road map to energize and focus transformation efforts. The broad vision of Joint Vision 2020 has to be converted into much more specific articulations: what are the key operational challenges? On what mission areas will we focus? What capabilities do we want the transformation process to yield?

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* Command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance.
Then we need to establish and use appropriate metrics to assess progress. Also, we should strengthen the voice of joint force commanders; they will be the people in the field upon whom we will rely in the future, and they should be engaged today to help articulate needs.

I am urging us to change organization cultures and incentive structures, so as to allow and reward real experimentation, open competition between concepts and ideas, and innovation. I am also calling for an overarching vision that links military transformation with the department’s own transformation and that ultimately creates a cadre of professionals who are committed to and, very importantly, accountable for progress in transformation.

CINDY WILLIAMS
Let me begin by agreeing wholeheartedly with Michèle—the Department of Defense and the U.S. military have been stuck for a decade in a Cold War mindset. They need to change, and change quickly, both to overcome the challenges of the future and to take advantage of new technologies. Instead of the term “transformation,” however, I prefer the old-fashioned words “innovation” and “change.” “Transformation” has come to evoke specific solutions, like precision weapons or the Army’s current transformation plan. In that regard, the term is often associated with a view of military change that starts with the technologies and then seeks problems for the technologies to solve, instead of the other way around. In looking to the future, it is critical that we start with the military problems and then seek solutions. Some of the solutions will be technical, but others may be procedural or conceptual.

Another reason I shy away from the term “transformation” is that transformation as often touted—large and fundamental change in every aspect of military affairs—may be too much to hope for. Transformation, or revolution, is relatively rare in large institutions, which are conservative by nature; how do we make it happen unless something big and bad occurs? In industry, for example, transformation is most likely not when a firm is riding high, but when it has lost market share and is worried about its very survival. Military transformation is most likely not when a state enjoys overwhelming primacy, as the United States does today, but when the military has lost a war or otherwise lost the confidence of civilians. The fact is, an institution that is already best-in-class typically finds it difficult to make even modest changes, let alone transform itself. I worry that when the vision of large-scale transformation is not realized, disappointed advocates may lose confidence that even more modest change is possible or worth pursuing.

For both these reasons, I prefer to talk about spurring the military to solve specific problems that it will face in the future. I look for innovation or change to
meet concrete needs, rather than lists of technologies and top-down efforts to find ways to use them—which often seem to be the unspoken goal of “transformation.”

**Strategy and Resources**

When the Quadrennial Defense Review for 2001 began, the services did not want to repeat the method used during the Quadrennial Defense Review of 1997, a process they called “budget driven” or “cost driven.” They wanted instead a “strategy-driven” review process. I agree completely that reviews should be driven by strategy. But my understanding of strategy is quite different from the concept those advocates have in mind. Proponents of a “strategy-driven review” say they want first to look at what the nation needs to do in the world, and second to make a list of everything the military should be capable of doing. Next they would decide what forces are needed to do all those things. Finally, they would figure out the cost of those forces in the future, add up the bill, and present it to the American public in the expectation that taxpayers will pay it in full.

That is not strategy. If the military has all the resources in the world, if it can bring all the forces in the world to bear at every point, it does not need a strategy. The whole point of strategy is to set priorities and make choices among competing alternatives when resources are constrained. What the proponents of the laundry-list approach have derided as a “budget-driven process” is the essence of strategy itself.

Setting a top line for defense and working within it is fundamental to devising a strategy. The Defense Department needs to know how much money it will have, in order to know how deeply it will have to cut into the areas where, as Michèle Flournoy likes to say, it can accept greater risk. But that does not apply when setting the top line for the individual services. In the 1997 quadrennial review, the defense budget “pie” was divided up among the services using the same formula as was used year after year during the Cold War.

That is counter-strategic. The department needs not only a joint process to determine its requirements but a joint view to determine its strategy. We must decide priorities not on the basis of what is best for the Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps, but on the basis of what is best for the nation. If this means that the Navy’s share of the defense budget grows while the Army’s shrinks, so be it.

Allowing the services’ budget shares to shift from year to year may benefit innovation. As I discussed earlier, bringing about innovation in a large institution that is already the best is not easy. Unless the military faces substantial competition from the outside or fails in war, it is not predisposed to change. But one way to promote change is to reward it, not only in individuals but in services. A service that has more innovative ideas, that looks to the future rather than back to
the Cold War, might be rewarded with a larger share of the budget. It is possible to set up an incentive structure that could at least reward and thereby encourage innovation, if not the more ambitious goals of sweeping transformation.

**Nothing Comes Free**

Ten years from now, keeping today’s strategy, all of today’s forces (equipped in the way that is currently planned), with today’s infrastructure, is going to cost somewhere between thirty-five and fifty billion dollars a year more than it does today. However, it is possible instead to have strong forces and a military strategy that meet the challenges of this century instead of the last one, and to do so at today’s, or even last year’s, level of funding—that is, with a budget held constant for the next decade, adjusted only for inflation every year.

In fact, at least three possible military strategies and plans would allow the Defense Department to hold the line on defense budgets but at the same time to stimulate a significant degree of innovation, pursue a strong modernization program, and still pay the troops as currently planned.* Each of the three would produce a very strong military, certainly stronger than today’s and probably stronger than the military we will have if we continue down the present path, even spending that extra thirty-five to fifty billion dollars. Of course, nothing comes free. Saving tens of billions of dollars means giving something up. In the three future plans I have looked at, the main engine of savings is force-structure reduction. Each of these three plans cuts forces that are less useful and keeps those that will be more useful in the world of the future. Each also makes modernization cutbacks in areas that do not fit in with its strategic concept.

Of these three plans, one would resonate with a naval audience, and also, I believe, with the Bush administration, much more than would the other two. It assumes that the dangerous fault line that existed on the Eurasian landmass, where Nato and the Warsaw Pact stared each other down across the inter-German border, is gone, more or less for good. Instead, it posits a need for more attention to Asia and the Pacific. It assumes that the United States enjoys overwhelming primacy today but that with that primacy come some pitfalls. One of them is that weaker, and poorer, countries who oppose us are going to look for the cheapest ways they can find to defeat our very expensive systems. That means mines, cheap submarines that operate in coastal waters, and man-portable air defenses—the kinds of things that are often referred to as “asymmetric threats.” It assumes, as Michèle Flournoy argues, that access to theaters is going to be increasingly difficult to come by.

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On the basis of these assumptions, it emphasizes forces that can self-deploy—especially maritime and space-based forces—more than the nation has emphasized them in the past. It tries through military means to avoid reliance on fixed bases and ports. It emphasizes weapons, techniques, and tactics to defeat other countries’ cheap asymmetric threats. It recommends that the Army be cut back substantially and reorganized, but along the lines of the Army’s own transformation proposals, and equipped with lighter and self-deploying forces. It recommends that the Air Force be reduced in size somewhat and that its fighters be made more easily deployable. It recommends that the Navy stay at its current size and suggests the innovative use of information technologies and other equipment that might allow us to defeat cheap asymmetric threats.

A force like this is affordable at today’s level of spending. It is one that would seem to fit within the world view and the strategy embraced by the Bush administration. Though it is substantially smaller, especially in the Army and to some degree in the Air Force, it is stronger in the areas where strength will be most needed over the long term.

DAVID MOSHER
Missile defense is our future. We are headed there. It is not a matter of if, but when—and also, to some degree, how. The very things that are driving us to transformation—preserving freedom of action, concern about asymmetric threats—are compelling reasons why we need theater missile defense, national missile defense—and the term *du jour*—“allied missile defense,” the current administration’s proposal to provide missile defense to our allies.

In some sense, missile defense is at the heart of transformation: if the nation could protect itself easily from ballistic missiles and cruise missiles, the effectiveness of asymmetric strategies would be reduced significantly. In part it is the difficulty of missile defense that is driving this push to transformation. The whole effort could be significantly affected by our ability to predict accurately what missile defense will cost, what its capabilities will be, and what the timetable is likely to be.

That is what I would like to talk about here, focusing on two things—first, why missile defense costs seem to rise so inordinately quickly, seemingly faster than almost anything else, and for national missile defense (NMD) in particular; and second, why those costs matter.

*Costs Grow and Schedules Slide*
In acquisition programs generally, the historical cost-growth rate has been somewhere between 20 and 30 percent, but missile defense seems to grow a lot faster than that. Early in the 1990s, the cost of a single-site hundred-interceptor
system was thought to be about five billion dollars. A few years later, it was eight billion dollars. Today we are talking about twenty billion dollars or more—a fourfold increase for a system that has essentially not changed. Other examples are theater missile-defense programs. The Navy Theater-Wide program is rising quickly. SBIRS-Low* was estimated at four billion dollars originally; now we are talking eight billion, and it will not get beyond where it presently is without a significant infusion of cash.

Why are ballistic missile defense programs fundamentally different from others? I have a theory, involving three basic factors: the ballistic missile defense debate is taking place in an extremely political environment; it is responding to what is perceived to be a very urgent threat; and, perhaps most important, the technical challenges of missile defense have been significantly underestimated. As a result of all this, costs grow and schedules slide. The implication is that if we do not get those problems under control, missile defense is going to keep sliding farther and farther to the right.

Missile defense was born in the crucible of ideological combat. Those who want missile defenses and those who are opposed to them approach the topic with religious zeal. The only other debate that elicits similar passion is that on abortion. In fact, that comparison suggests the highly moralistic and political tone of the missile defense debate and the kinds of pressures that give rise to these programs. Visionary thinking often underlies missile defense programs, but it is frequently not consistent with technical reality. Ronald Reagan’s “Star Wars” (Strategic Defense Initiative) speech in 1983 was highly visionary, but the needed technology was decades away. Another example is the Navy Theater-Wide System. It has never hit a target, and yet there is a core of people, some in the Navy but most of them outside, who say that it can do not only theater defense but national defense, boost-phase defense, midcourse defense, ascent-phase defense. Any one of those capabilities will cost, they claim, only two billion dollars.

This political warfare is amplified by concern that there are looming threats to our forces and to the United States—the enemy is at the gates. This leads to a crash-program mentality, and that introduces some real problems. Urgency leads to optimism, then overoptimism—we can do this technically difficult thing, very quickly, and for not much money. Missile defense proposals are not fully matured, well conceived acquisition projects but ideas, concepts floated in a “crash environment.” Because of the sense of urgency, however, they are treated as well-constructed programs. Rough cost estimates are assigned to them, which the budgeteers in the Pentagon and Congress accept as well-crafted figures—but

* Space-Based Infrared System.
they are not, because they lack the thorough analysis and pessimism needed for good cost estimates.

Particularly, there has not been enough thinking about the technical complexity of missile defense in general. The result is poorly designed programs with insufficient attention to testing, to system integration, to the reduction of technical risks. All that, in turn, leads to unrealistic estimates of what the systems can do, when they will be able to do it, and how much they will cost. A few examples are in order here. The Global Protection Against Limited Strikes (GPALS) system was proposed in the George H. W. Bush administration. Its goal was to protect the United States against up to two hundred Soviet warheads launched by a rogue commander. The price tag was forty-two billion dollars for the national missile defense component, which included a thousand satellites to intercept missiles and 750 ground-based interceptors. Today, for thirty billion dollars, or three-quarters the cost, we are likely to get only a hundred ground-based interceptors. GPALS also had a theater missile-defense “underlay,” which was advertised at twelve billion dollars. Today, for the Army’s Theater High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) and the Patriot Advanced Capability (PAC-3) programs alone, we are talking about over twenty billion dollars.

When William Perry, secretary of defense from 1994 to 1997, started thinking about this issue, he challenged the Defense Department and the services to develop over two years missile defense systems that could be deployed, if the threat required, in two additional years. It was an insurance program, and there was no cost estimate placed on it. The “two-plus-two” idea grew into a “three-plus-three” plan that envisioned a cost of eight billion dollars. As I mentioned, the cost today for essentially the same system has risen to twenty billion or thirty billion, depending on which version of the hundred interceptors you are talking about, and those estimates keep climbing. The Bush administration is now proposing a system with five interceptors by 2004 with no national missile defense radar, at least not initially. The goal is to get something done quickly and to worry about the details really later—another example of the rush to deal with the perceived urgent threat.

The Bush administration of 1988–92 strongly believed in missile defense and wanted to do a great deal with it; that produced pressure to underestimate. The Clinton administration did not like national missile defense but was backed into a corner by a Congress that wanted missile defense, and then by the Rumsfeld report; the Clinton White House also underestimated the program’s costs, but for different reasons. However, the net result is the same—missile defense programs that promise, if not the moon, at least a great deal, and for a small amount of money.
But crash programs do not save money; they cost more. There are large technical risks, and because a crash program is by definition in a hurry, it deals with those problems in ways that cost a lot of money and even then may not solve them. If a threat is urgent and a nation wants a crash program, it has to put real resources into it, to have at least a shot at solving the technical challenges.

This Has Not Been Done Before
The technical challenges of a national missile defense system have been significantly understated. If theater-level missile defense is difficult—and it obviously is—NMD will push the state of the art in more dimensions than any other weapon system—“hit to kill,” sensors, radar, interceptors, “man in control,” data fusion. The list goes on and on; NMD will be very tough to do. Consider, for example, the systems integration. It is as if we wanted to build, in five or ten years, the nuclear deterrent that we have now—all the warheads, bombers, missiles, submarines, command and control systems, early warning sensors—from scratch, all at once, and properly tie them all together. Actually, for NMD the systems-integration problem is even worse, because the tolerances are far lower; for our nuclear deterrent, times are measured in minutes, but for missile defense times are measured in milliseconds—and the distances in centimeters. This has not been done before.

Three elements are necessary to deal with this technical challenge. They are familiar to anyone who has worked in the acquisition world: robust risk mitigation, careful system integration, and proper testing.

Robust risk mitigation requires alternative technologies developed in parallel. If we are pushing fast on something and it fails, we need to be able to throw it out and fall back on something that is working. An example was the Polaris submarine-launched ballistic missile program, which pursued parallel development efforts in the mechanism by which the missile was ejected from the tube. One of them was not working; the managers just brought in the other one, and the program continued apace.

That does not happen often in missile defense programs, because of the cost. Risk mitigation is expensive—a billion, two billion dollars a year, maybe higher. The THAAD program would be, I would argue, much farther along today had it not settled on a single contractor so early. The program needed competitive approaches—in the sensor, in the interceptor itself—and it did not have them. In case after case, alternative approaches were in the baseline plans of missile defense programs but were among the first things thrown over the side when costs started to go up.

The second element of managing the technical risks of missile defense is system integration, which cannot be emphasized enough. It is not part of development; it
is central to development. It is not cheap, either—a billion dollars a year was planned for system integration in the GPALS effort, and that was clearly not enough.

The third element is testing, but proper testing for missile defense puts us in a new paradigm. In the old days, to develop, say, a ballistic missile, you tested by launching a lot of them—for Minuteman I, fifty-six in the initial flight test program; for Polaris A-1, forty-two; for Polaris A-3, fifty-five. A ballistic missile goes from point A to point B—it does not try to hit a moving target—and that is a much simpler task than missile defense. Trying to hit a rapidly approaching, perhaps maneuvering, target is much more like air defense, where, for example, the Safeguard system had 165 flight tests, Patriot conducted 114, and the Advanced Medium-Range Air-to-Air Missile 111. Extensive system testing is also required on the ground for all the hardware “in the loop.” The right facilities are needed for all of it.

Somebody Else’s Problem
Why do we care about NMD costs? It is rather arcane. It is somebody else’s budget, somebody else’s problem. That is the wrong attitude, because the budget is tight. We are not going to have enough money for everybody’s needs, even with budget increases. If the costs of missile defense keep growing and not enough money is available, it is going to eat up transformation and modernization. The missile defense budget is now five billion dollars a year; maybe it will grow to ten billion a year. That is not a lot in defense-budget terms, but if it takes from other programs the marginal billion dollars that would have allowed them to achieve their goals, that will be a problem.

There are also national concerns. To get support on Capitol Hill, a system has to look credible, and its cost estimates have to be credible. Systems that keep going over budget, running into technical difficulties, and being delayed are eventually perceived as weak—and are then cut back or killed. If the administration wants missile defense, it will have to push very strongly for it.

What the Bush administration is going to do, we do not know for sure. What is clear is that it wants “layers”—a ground-based component and probably some sea-based component. The system may be designed to attack missiles in the boost phase, or maybe in midcourse; in any case, the administration wants it quickly. The problems I have warned of here are going to arise. Transformation and missile defense are not scientifically or even politically incompatible. They may be budgetarily incompatible, however, unless we are realistic and honest about what missile defense is going to cost, what the challenges are, and how long it will take to do it right. We must soberly decide how the costs and uncertainties
of a crash program for missile defense should be weighed against other defense priorities. Missile defense will crowd out transformation if we do otherwise.

ANDREW ROSS

I would like to go back to a point that Michèle Flournoy and Cindy Williams raised. We used to speak of the “revolution in military affairs.” “Transformation” sounds less radical than “revolution.” Are they the same thing? Should we be thinking about this somewhat less ambitiously? What we are engaged in is innovation, but transformation advocates are talking about innovations that are rather far-reaching, that change what our military looks like in a fundamental sense. We have not restructured since the end of the Cold War; we are just smaller. So, what is it we should be engaged in here—fundamental transformation, evolution, or merely a series of innovations?

CINDY WILLIAMS

I am skeptical of the notion that we are really engaged in transformation or revolution. When I use the word “transformation,” I am talking about Admiral Owens’s* notion: a combination of information technologies and precision weapons that can completely transform the way that our military fights, by essentially lifting the “fog of war.” I have already discussed the institutional reasons why transformation is not likely to happen in the way visionaries have in mind. A second problem is that lifting the fog of war is not entirely a technical problem and cannot be addressed entirely by technical means. No amount of technology will tell you the opponent's strategy, what he is thinking, what his goals are, what he wants.

But even the technical aspects involve technology that we thought ten years ago we would have by now but that is nowhere near being deployed. Advances that we imagined would be made in the private sector—like communication systems that were going to make bandwidth virtually free—did not happen, for business reasons. A third reason is operational. In many ways, we are not going to be entirely happy with the implications of lifting the fog of war. Already, individuals in the field complain of information overload, of “cyber-rubbernecking” by the leadership in Washington.

Finally, information technologies are not free. People seem to think that they are cheap compared to platforms, but today we are spending about sixty billion dollars to buy and operate command, control, communications, intelligence, and information systems. That is about a fifth of the defense budget; it is not far from the size of the entire budget of the U.S. Army.

MICHELE FLOURNOY
First we had the “revolution in military affairs.” We decided that had too much “baggage,” and we came up with “transformation.” Now that too has come to mean all things to all people. If we substitute “innovation,” in four years it will suffer from the same problem. Words matter, and choice of terms is important, but in this case what matters is operational challenges. What are the specific missions that we want to be able to carry out, in what operating environments? What capabilities do we want? I do not care what we call the process; I want to know what are we talking about.

ANDREW ROSS
Let us get to what is at the heart of the matter—cost. The Chief of Naval Operations has warned that there are inadequate resources to transform for the future, that there may be a trade-off between current and future readiness. It has been widely agreed that significant additional increases in defense spending are unlikely. How big a problem is that for transformation? Some, on the other hand, have said the problem is not more money but creativity and management. Who is right?

MICHELE FLOURNOY
My sense is that in the near term, money is not the problem; concept development and organizational change are the immediate deficiencies. Down the road, translating the results into new programs will involve some real costs and trade-offs. Throwing money at the problem is easy, in a way, but it puts the cart before the horse. In the near term, the problem is to change a culture, to foster concept development and innovation, and that is much harder.

The specific technologies that people associate with transformation are not always cheaper. The unmanned aerial vehicle is an example. People call them “drones”; it sounds like a cheap replacement for an airplane, one that would not cost much to operate because it does not have a pilot inside. It turns out that the Global Hawk System would cost fifty-five million dollars a copy—an air vehicle plus its ground control center. That is very comparable to the price we paid for the U-2s, which it can be thought of as replacing. Will there be savings in operational costs because there will be no pilots on board the aircraft? No—the Air Force plans to have two pilots on the ground running it. Unmanned aerial vehicles have many advantages, but they are not necessarily cheaper.

DAVID MOSHER
There are inherent internal pressures in the defense budget, aside from transformation, that force trade-offs. One is the mysterious fact that operations and
maintenance costs climb every year. The migration of money from procurement into the operating accounts keeps growing, and no one really knows why. It is something to keep in mind.

ANDREW ROSS
Among the barriers to transformation that have been mentioned is complacency. Some of the visionaries feel a sense of urgency regarding transformation, but the larger defense establishment and the country as a whole do not. In striking contrast, in the national missile defense realm there is a great sense of urgency; it has become highly politicized, and that has led to problems. The ballistic missile defense testing program has been characterized as a "rush to failure." If somehow a sense of urgency is generated for transformation, will we see the same kinds of problems?

MICHÈLE FLOURNOY
It is a double-edged sword. Historically, major transformations and innovations have been driven by military failures. We can certainly wait for that to happen, but that would be an unfortunate way to proceed. The day after some catastrophe, there will be enormous pressure to do something substantial—and quickly; of thirty choices made then, ten are likely to be bad. So what I advocate is not waiting for that to happen but taking a measured approach that values serious threat assessment.

I would rather see the Pentagon and the services look closely at threat assessments—what regional powers are procuring, what their doctrine says, what they are writing about, how they say they would take on the United States, what they are doing with their own defense investment. Two things are blocking such an assessment. One is that countering those threats may call for systems that would compete with preferred procurement programs already in the pipeline. Many, many potential transformation ideas never get off the ground; they are seen as threats to established priorities, and they have no natural institutional advocates. That is a mistake. I recognize the downsides of a sense of urgency, but I think that they can be managed.
Between 1966 and 1975, the Royal Navy, primarily, conducted one of the more unusual blockades of modern history—a maritime-interception operation that became known as the “Beira patrol.” The Royal Navy and Air Force monitored shipping in the Mozambique Channel in an attempt to ensure that no oil reached landlocked Southern Rhodesia (today Zimbabwe) via the port of Beira, in the Portuguese colony of Mozambique. Although the military executed these operations skillfully, Britain’s overall oil embargo against Rhodesia, which had unilaterally declared its independence in 1965, failed. Well aware of oil “seepage” to Rhodesia, London did not (and could not) extend maritime interception operations to other ports in Mozambique or elsewhere. On the other hand, it refused to abandon a mission that was, because of substantial and growing resource constraints, increasingly unpopular within the Navy. The Beira patrol had become too visible a component of London’s commitment to the maintenance of United Nations sanctions against its rebellious colony. Whitehall (that is, the British government) would relieve the Ministry of Defence of this mission only when Mozambique gained independence from Portugal in 1975 and could credibly assure the UN that no oil would cross its territory to Rhodesia.

Today, in the light of dozens of recently declassified British documents, the Beira patrol is a cautionary tale for states that must decide upon, and commanders who must then orchestrate, maritime interception operations. It illustrates the challenges of shaping an
appropriate force for maritime sanctions and shows vividly how demanding even a small blockade can be, especially if prolonged. It reveals the difficulties of fashioning credible rules of engagement and the complexities of the interplay between rules and force posture. It also exemplifies the legal, resource, and political obstacles to modifying a blockade once it has started.

Most important, Britain’s experience in the Beira patrol demonstrates that the symbolic utility of naval forces can be compelling in unforeseen and unwelcome ways. Implementing a naval blockade with carriers, frigates, and land-based aviation, Britain established a dramatic and public commitment to sanction enforcement. But the use of such highly visible forces (ultimately mandated by an unusual, British-crafted UN Security Council resolution) had a downside—Whitehall found it awkward to cease or reduce maritime interception operations when it might have wished to do so. Diplomatic objectives consistently outweighed Ministry of Defence protests that the patrol had become of questionable utility and that demands upon naval resources were disproportionate. Because warships off Beira were such powerful symbols, the Royal Navy found itself in an open-ended campaign. A prisoner of its own Security Council resolution, the United Kingdom could not end its maritime sanction enforcement—however ineffectual—as long as it remained committed in principle to sanctions against Rhodesia.

THE “UNILATERAL DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE”

The Beira patrol originated from a dispute between the United Kingdom and its increasingly rebellious colony, Rhodesia. In 1964, the two northern portions of the colonial Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland achieved independence as black majority–controlled states—Malawi (once Nyasaland) in July and Zambia (the former Northern Rhodesia) in October. London anticipated that the whites of Southern Rhodesia, who controlled the colony although they constituted a small minority of its population, would attempt to preempt the domestic and international pressure for black-majority rule by establishing Southern Rhodesia as a white-controlled state. Prime Minister Harold Wilson of Britain outlined in October 1964 his government’s preconditions for granting the colony independence: a guarantee of unimpeded progress toward majority rule; guarantees against unconstitutional amendment of the 1961 constitution (a document that had implied movement toward majority rule); an immediate token of improvement of the political status of Africans; progress toward cessation of racial discrimination; and agreement on a settlement acceptable to the entire population, using a general referendum or similar device.1

Instead, on 11 November 1965, Salisbury (later Harare, the capital of Southern Rhodesia), issued a “Unilateral Declaration of Independence,” asserting the
existence of the sovereign state of Rhodesia, under Prime Minister Ian Smith. The Security Council retaliated on 20 November with a regime of voluntary sanctions. UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 217 called on all members of the United Nations to withhold recognition of Rhodesia, refuse assistance to its government, sever economic relations with Salisbury, and embargo petroleum shipments to the rebellious colony. This resolution was to serve as the original (if flimsy) legal justification for later British maritime intercept operations, giving the United Kingdom reason to expect the cooperation of the flag states of suspect tankers. In December, London banned selected imports from Rhodesia and prohibited the export of British oil to it.

Unwilling to invade its colony, Britain publicly forswore outright military intervention, thus eliminating a potential tool for coercion. Indeed, Wilson at first ruled out (in a statement of 21 December 1965 to the House of Commons) even a blockade of products going to Rhodesia. Believing that a potential oil boycott by certain Middle East producers and cessation of oil exports by government-controlled British companies would be sufficient, the prime minister did not then intend to submit an oil-blockade resolution to the United Nations. Instead, the Foreign Office and the Commonwealth Relations Office sought to formulate a strategy of limited sanctions to erode Smith’s domestic white, middle-class support. London would ultimately declare a series of unilateral sanctions and also support several UN sanctions that gradually increased pressure upon Salisbury.

Unfortunately, London had other, conflicting objectives as well, especially a desire to lure Rhodesia back into the colonial fold. Whitehall therefore sought to treat its problems with Rhodesia as a conflict between metropole and colony. Even when urging UN involvement in the dispute, London would discourage multilateral military action against Rhodesia or any extension of sanctions to Rhodesia’s backers in white-ruled South Africa and Mozambique. However, a major bloc in the UN, comprising especially the newly independent African and Asian states, wanted military measures taken directly against Rhodesia, along with expanded sanctions. Britain attempted to blunt such initiatives; a regime of economic sanctions, particularly maritime, would become Britain’s way of containing the international repercussions while pressuring its colony. This overarching desire to limit the dispute would later lead Wilson’s cabinet to reject the Defence Ministry’s own plans to extend the blockade.

“ACTIVE AND URGENT STEPS”
Even before the naval blockade was started in March 1966, the British bureaucracy sent mixed signals about the utility of sanctions against Rhodesia. In October 1965, the Joint Intelligence Committee (the United Kingdom’s highest
estimative body) advised the political leadership that even a full trade embargo would “not in itself [have] crippling effects on the Rhodesia economy.” However, the committee also suggested that prolonged and severe economic pressure “might in time induce the white electorate to throw out the rebel government.”

Prime Minister Wilson, for his part, had high hopes that these sanctions would work. On 7 January 1966, he told the Jamaican prime minister that sanctions were “beginning to bite.” He estimated that in three months the rebels would at least rescind the unilateral declaration of independence and reconsider their stance on minority rule. He made an even bolder prediction in a convocation of Commonwealth foreign ministers on 10 January 1966—that the cumulative effects of economic and financial sanctions might well bring the rebellion to an end “within a matter of weeks rather than months.” Wilson based this prediction on several factors: feedback he was seeing in the Rhodesian press, a presumption that South Africa and Mozambique would honor the British sanctions in order not to escalate the crisis, and optimism that Zambia would agree to freeze the movement of goods across its territory to and from Rhodesia.

As Wilson made these optimistic statements, nevertheless, the Foreign Office was beginning to look at the possibility of a maritime embargo. On 7 January, as an aside to a statement that Britain had no formal contingency plan for a blockade, it observed that the carrier HMS Eagle and two frigates were near Mombasa, Kenya, and could be available for such a task within days.

This early planning proved prudent. The government’s grounds for optimism were dashed during the first week of February, when British press reports of tanker-truck shipments of oil from South Africa to Rhodesia raised serious questions about South African neutrality and the possible effectiveness of oil sanctions. Rhodesia had in the past received oil through three primary routes: by road, across the Beit Bridge from South Africa; by rail, through Mozambique from either South Africa or the port of Lourenço Marques (now Maputo); and by pipeline, carrying crude oil from Beira to the Rhodesian refinery in Umtali.

The prime minister became increasingly frustrated over the oil “seepage” into Rhodesia by land. On 16 February Wilson directed his personal secretary to issue a warning to key cabinet departments: “The Prime Minister is very concerned about reports in the press which indicate that the oil embargo in Rhodesia is being circumvented with increasing effectiveness. . . . [T]here is clearly very serious leaking in the oil sanction machinery. . . . [T]he Prime Minister’s view is that the oil leakage into Rhodesia is serious, must be taken seriously and he hopes that the Departments concerned will take active and urgent steps to have it stopped.”

Two days later, the foreign secretary, Michael Stewart, warned Wilson that the black African states might push for more “urgent” sanctions in view of the
continuing oil flow into Rhodesia. Indeed, they might raise the issue at the UN at any time. Against this backdrop, the Chiefs of Staff Committee, Britain’s senior purely military decision-making body, opined on 24 February that “pirate” tankers could arrive in Beira “un-noticed.” In response to a request from an interagency Rhodesia contingency steering committee, the committee directed that a maritime surveillance plan be prepared for submission to the prime minister. This would be no mere planning exercise; the likely operational commander would prepare the plan, which would involve both surface and air components. Headquartered in Aden, Middle East Command would control the operation until relieved of this responsibility by Far East Command in May 1967. The committee had in mind Majunga (now Mahajanga), in the Malagasy Republic (as Madagascar called itself from its independence in 1960 through 1975), as a staging base for Shackleton maritime patrol aircraft.

In other words, oil smuggling had become the issue of the day, and the naval blockade planning effort was about to get a big push. Later in February 1966 the Rhodesian crisis as a whole developed a maritime flavor when the British government (and the world press) started to focus on tankers carrying oil for Rhodesia. The Rhodesians themselves had set the stage. On 25 February, the Rhodesian minister of commerce and industry had announced that a tanker would arrive at Beira with oil for Rhodesia “in the foreseeable future.” Some days later he predicted, “The day our first tanker arrives in Beira we shall have won this economic war.”

London had already received numerous reports of tankers. Between 7 January and 1 March, Whitehall, working with a host of commercial and intelligence sources, had investigated thirty-two reports and found them to be “phantom tankers”—nonexistent or innocent.

This mixture of Rhodesian public relations “spin,” rumor, solid intelligence, and unwanted publicity forced Britain to “do something” to prove its commitment to sanctions; on 1 March, accordingly, it established the Beira patrol. The Royal Navy stationed the *Rothesay*-class antisubmarine frigate HMS *Lowestoft* off Beira and directed it to prepare for intercept operations, to start on 4 March. Gannet Mark 3 airborne early warning aircraft flying from the carrier HMS *Ark Royal* (which had been diverted from a transit to the Far East) joined the search in the Mozambique Channel on 6 March.

The need for the patrol was immediately confirmed—the government soon received evidence that two tankers might be making for Beira with crude oil for Rhodesia. The *Joanna V*, a Greek-flag vessel, had been making an unusual voyage; after steaming from the Arabian Gulf to Rotterdam via the Suez Canal, it had entered the Atlantic as if to return the long way, around Africa. Its Greek owner, it developed, had contracted with a South African shipping agent to deliver a total of twenty-seven cargoes—about a year’s supply for Rhodesia—to an
unspecified customer. A second tanker, the *Manuela*, was also reported en route to Mozambique across the Indian Ocean from Bandar Mashur, Iran.\(^{20}\)

Meanwhile, the Chiefs of Staff Committee was refining its arrangements and prospects for success. On 8 March, in light of evidence it had received of construction in progress of six oil tanks in Beira, the committee concluded that oil had (as the Rhodesian commerce minister had already asserted) become emblematic—if oil reached Beira, sanctions of all kinds would appear to be failing. The committee assessed, though, that Rhodesia already had sufficient oil stocks to maintain morale even if Britain could impose an effective embargo.\(^{21}\)

In a message on 10 March to the prime minister of New Zealand, Keith J. Holyoake, Wilson elaborated on the criticality of the oil embargo, despite the apparent policy turnabout it represented:

> I am worried at the possibility of a dramatic breach in the oil embargo such as would result from a tanker entering Beira with a cargo for Rhodesia. . . . [1]f a tanker were to arrive we should face increasing pressure from African states for a Chapter VII [of the UN Charter] resolution [i.e., authorizing the use of armed force] in the UN. It remains our view that we should try and avoid this. If we once admit that Rhodesia is a threat to peace, there is no knowing where we may find ourselves. . . . Nevertheless, we recognize that the pressure for a Chapter VII resolution would probably be irresistible and our aim would have to be to channel it in a direction of an embargo solely directed to oil supplies for Rhodesia.\(^{22}\)

The Commonwealth Relations Office elaborated on this objective in a message sent to British embassies worldwide in early April:

> Our immediate and urgent purpose is to obtain authority to prevent the arrival at Beira by vessels reasonably believed to be carrying oil to Rhodesia. . . . You should, therefore, emphasize importance of our decision which reflects determination of British government to end rebellion in Rhodesia as soon as possible. There will no doubt be pressure to extend the resolution, e.g., to cover South Africa in relation to the oil embargo, and possibly to extend other economic sanctions generally. . . . We have already approached the South African government with the object of persuading them to modify their policy vis-à-vis Rhodesia and so avoid a confrontation between themselves and the United Nations. If this approach is to have any prospect of success we must avoid reference to South Africa’s position in the Security Council.\(^{23}\)

SURVEILLANCE, INTERCEPTION, AND DETERRENCE

The initial British commitment of naval forces soon comprised a carrier, two frigates—*Lowestoft* and *HMS Rhyl*—and a logistical support ship. If the carrier had to depart station, the Royal Navy would deploy a third frigate. Either *Ark Royal* or *Eagle* would have patrol responsibilities until 25 May 1966, when Britain eliminated the requirement for a carrier. For the remaining nine years of the
blockade, a succession of Royal Navy “small boys”—two destroyers or frigates at any one time (until the last months of the operation)—carried the burden of the surface blockade.

The warships, operating twenty to forty miles off Beira, were to intercept suspect tankers that had been detected by shore-based maritime patrol aircraft, upon which they would rely, once the involvement of carriers ended, for surveillance, alerting, and vectoring. Difficulties in securing basing rights, however, delayed the participation of maritime patrol aircraft; France rebuffed Britain’s request to use Majunga. The British Middle East Command accordingly prepared to launch patrol aircraft to the Mozambique Channel all the way from Mombasa, Kenya.

Meanwhile, during the blockade’s first two weeks, Ark Royal, Lowestoft, and Rhyl steamed in the Mozambique Channel. Ark Royal’s Gannets searched out to 350 miles from Beira. When they gained radar contact, the carrier sent Buccaneer strike aircraft or Sea Vixen fighters to investigate. In this way, tankers were typically detected fifteen hours before they could reach Beira. As discussed below, in the early weeks of the operation London was required in that time to approach the tankers’ flag countries and arrange to stop and board the ships, if necessary; with the passage in April of Security Council Resolution 221, Britain would no longer have to secure this approval, and early airborne detection would become less critical.

On 16 March the French relented, and by 19 March a detachment of three Shackletons was flying daily single-aircraft patrols from Majunga, at first complementing the carrier-based patrols and then replacing them. Although in 1969 the Royal Air Force was to reduce the Shackleton detachment from three to two aircraft, the Navy would enjoy dedicated maritime air support until 1971.

At first, each Shackleton flew daily twelve-hour missions, normally from 6 A.M. to 6 P.M. local time; in June 1966, the patrols dropped to three a week. The bombers would fly at maximum speed along the shipping lanes to the northern end of the Mozambique Channel and then south to a point fifty miles south of Beira. Radar was their primary sensor; it covered a swath between forty and sixty nautical miles on each side of track. When the Shackletons acquired contacts, they would fly over them to investigate. The aircraft were required to report the
location, course, speed, and identity of all tankers, bulk carriers, and warships sighted to the officer in tactical command—the senior Royal Navy warship commanding officer present. (The officer in tactical command might order a surface unit to investigate, but only the Ministry of Defence could authorize it to stop or divert a suspect tanker.) The aircraft were also to notify that commander should they sight any previously designated “suspect tanker,” any tanker not on the weekly “innocent list,” or any tanker on the list that was apparently steaming for Beira after having declared for another port. In such a case the officer in tactical command would send a “flash” (highest-precedence) report to the Ministry of Defence.29

The Defence Ministry prepared a comprehensive press release to be issued in April 1966. It noted that aircraft from *Ark Royal* and *Eagle* had flown by then nearly a thousand surveillance sorties. Four different frigates and destroyers, as well as seven auxiliaries, had supported the operation. Three Shackletons had been involved, each initially flying four hundred patrol hours a month.30 Although the sortie rate soon dropped to only three missions a week, the Shackletons still flew 220 operational sorties between March 1966 and April 1967.31 During the same period, the two carriers and seventeen other combatants, in addition to Royal Fleet Auxiliaries (resupply vessels), had participated in the patrol at one time or another.

The Middle East Command characterized the period starting in mid-June 1966 as the patrol’s “deterrent phase.” The military now hoped to deter future attempts at oil-sanction “busting” by means of highly conspicuous surveillance over the Mozambique Channel. “It would soon become common knowledge throughout the merchant fleets that it was impossible to get through the Mozambique Channel without being investigated by a Shackleton. They would warn the frigates off Beira who would intercept and arrest with the probable loss of an expensive cargo. The game was not worth it.”32

**RULES OF ENGAGEMENT**

At least four sets of rules of engagement—issued by Flag Officer Middle East on the basis of guidelines supplied by the Ministry of Defence—governed the Beira patrol between 1966 and 1968. The successive changes were significant because they reflected the evolution of British understanding of the legal basis of the operation. With one early exception, the rules became successively tougher; eventually, following an embarrassing incident in 1967 involving the French tanker *Artois*, London would authorize, if all else failed, gunfire directly at a tanker’s bridge.

The first set of rules, issued on 15 February, delineated the responsibilities of the blockading ships. Flag Officer Middle East instructed his frigates that if ordered
to intercept a tanker bound for Beira, they were to direct it to another port. If the vessel did not comply, the commanding officer was to take a series of escalatory steps, including firing shots across the bow and training guns directly at the ship. A boarding party might then be sent to order the master to divert; if he refused, the party was to “take over ship with minimum force” and steam it out of the area. To preclude untoward incidents, however, Flag Officer Middle East also warned that none of these actions would occur before the United Kingdom had secured permission from the tanker’s flag state. The patroller’s only initial action would be to interrogate and shadow the tanker until Britain secured this approval.

Reviewing this plan, Prime Minister Wilson became concerned with ensuring that the Royal Navy would scrupulously respect the limits of British authority under international law, particularly in light of the voluntary nature of Security Council Resolution 217. Speaking through his personal secretary on 11 March, Wilson warned that “before any action to intercept is taken the consent of the flag state should have been obtained.” He also desired that commanding officers be given a “clear understanding that any force used must be kept to a minimum.”

Defence Ministry guidance to Flag Officer Middle East had assumed that a tanker’s flag state had given Britain permission to divert the ship. A week after the prime minister expressed his concerns, the Defence Ministry modified its guidelines; now, if a tanker refused to turn away when challenged, a boarding party would warn the master, in the name of the vessel’s flag state, to change course. If that did not work, a shot across the bow was authorized. Gone was any option of commandeering the ship. Indeed, if a tanker absolutely refused to comply, the warship could only escort it, and then only to the Mozambican six-mile territorial limit. In other words, the tanker could proceed to Beira unhindered.

These modified rules of engagement tightened up considerably when the UN Security Council passed Resolution 221 on 9 April 1966. The unusual voyage of the Joanna V, which had drawn British attention in early March, had ended on 5 April in a highly embarrassing way—the Greek-flag tanker had entered Beira after all, unmolested, under escort by the frustrated HMS Plymouth, and with wide publicity. The day before, still at sea, the frigate had attempted to persuade Joanna V to go to another port; Greece having refused permission to divert it, Plymouth could not use force. Consequently, it was the Royal Navy that was deterred, before the watchful eyes of the world press.

Whitehall’s legal advisors still warned that Britain would be liable if it attempted to force a diversion without permission of the flag state. They added on 7 April that use of force must be in accordance with an appropriate Chapter VII resolution. That same day, the Commonwealth Relations Office sent a flash-precedence message to British embassies that Britain would seek an
emergency meeting of the Security Council to obtain UN authority to use force to stop vessels carrying oil to Beira.\(^{37}\)

Over the next several days the United Kingdom lobbied furiously in the Security Council for a new resolution that would give a stronger legal basis for its embargo. It argued that continued seaborne deliveries of oil were a threat to peace, because if sanctions failed, violence might erupt in southern Africa. Britain argued that under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, preventing their failure might justify the use of force. (The United Nations had used the provision only once before, at the beginning of the Korean War.)\(^{38}\)

The British drew up such a resolution, crafting it to limit the risk of escalation. It confined the blockade to Beira only and specifically authorized only the United Kingdom to employ force. For reasons that will be discussed below, the Defence Ministry was leery of allowing other navies to participate. In the event, the new resolution, passed as UNSCR 221, was to have the unintended and costly effect of forcing the Royal Navy (aside from assistance for several years from the Royal Air Force) to maintain the nine-year blockade entirely alone.

The resolution called upon Portugal “not to permit oil to be pumped through the pipeline from Beira to Rhodesia” and “not to receive at Beira oil destined for Rhodesia.” All states were to ensure the diversion of “any of their vessels reasonably believed to be carrying oil destined for Rhodesia which may be en route for Beira.”\(^{39}\) The teeth of the resolution, however, were in paragraph 5, which “[called] upon the Government of the United Kingdom to prevent by the use of force if necessary the arrival at Beira of vessels reasonably believed to be carrying oil destined for Rhodesia, and empower[ed] the United Kingdom to arrest and detain the tanker known as the Joanna V upon her departure from Beira in the event her oil cargo [was] discharged there.”\(^{40}\)

With this resolution, the Defence Ministry liberalized, from the blockading force’s viewpoint, the rules of engagement but continued to limit the use of force to “the very minimum.” Ministry approval would still be required for diversion of vessels, and the Royal Navy had to remain outside Mozambique’s territorial waters. The Middle East Command acknowledged that the “resolution radically altered the whole concept of our operations. With a tight ring of frigates around Beira having authority to stop any suspected runners, the early warning to give maximum time for diplomatic action was no longer essential.”\(^{41}\)

The Royal Navy felt, however, that Mozambique’s six-mile limit was problematic. Soon after the Security Council issued its new resolution, the Defence Ministry advised Prime Minister Wilson that it was possible for a tanker to transit to Beira from Durban, South Africa, entirely within South African, and then Mozambican, territorial waters; without authority to enter those waters, the Navy would be unable to act. Fortunately, no “pirate tanker” ever tried to challenge
the Beira blockade in this way. Had one taken advantage of the territorial limits of an unsympathetic power, the British blockade force would have been hard pressed to stop it without creating an international incident.\textsuperscript{42}

The new system stood until late the following year, when the French forced the Royal Navy to reconsider what constituted “minimum force.” On 19 December 1967, HMS *Minerva* challenged the French-flag tanker *Artois* as it made for Beira. *Artois* was not on the “innocent list,” so *Minerva* requested the ministry to clarify its status. Meanwhile, the tanker continued to approach Beira. *Minerva* signaled “Stop or I will open fire”; *Artois* refused. By the time London finally notified the frigate that *Artois* could legitimately enter Beira, “because it was not carrying oil destined for Rhodesia,” *Minerva* had already fired warning shots; the tanker had ignored them and entered Mozambican territorial waters.\textsuperscript{43}

Fearing that a smuggler might emulate *Artois*, the minister of defence, Denis Healey, castigated the existing rules of engagement for “lack of precision”: “Not only does it place an unfair burden on commanding officers to leave them in any doubt about how far they are expected to go in the enforcement of their requests, but it exposes the Royal Navy to the risk of international discredit should an illegal tanker disregard the threat of force and be allowed to get away with it.” He presented the cabinet with two options: restricting the Beira patrol simply to identifying smugglers, or directing commanding officers to use disabling gunfire against tankers that failed to heed other warnings.\textsuperscript{44}

The attorney general reviewed the proposal and gave as his opinion that the Navy had to satisfy two criteria to remain within the bounds of UNSCR 221. The force used had to be “necessary,” and the United Kingdom had to have a “reasonable belief” that the tanker was carrying oil consigned to Rhodesia. The attorney general also opined that UN responsibility was political only—“Any legal responsibility would almost certainly fall on ourselves.”\textsuperscript{45}

The foreign secretary, George Thomson, replied that Britain could reasonably meet both criteria. Though the Ministry of Power (the source of much of the Royal Navy’s tanker-movement intelligence) had expressed “some anxiety” about its ability to meet the second standard absolutely, the foreign secretary concluded that it had taken “every possible precaution” to do so. Consequently, he concurred with stiffening the rules of engagement and issuing a stern warning to the United Nations about what might happen to blockade runners.\textsuperscript{46}

On 21 March 1968, the Defence Ministry informed the Commander in Chief Far East (who, in Singapore, had assumed responsibilities as operational commander of the Beira patrol from his counterpart in Middle East Command in 1967) that the rules of engagement were being “clarified” and that UN member states were being notified that blockading ships would “enforce their requests to stop, if necessary by opening fire on the vessel.” The ministry directed
the commander to issue new instructions immediately—if naval headquarters
at the Defence Ministry ordered that a tanker be diverted, the intercepting war-
ship was to challenge it. If the tanker did not stop, the frigate or destroyer was to
take a series of escalating measures: firing across the bow with small-arms trac-
ers, 20 or 40 mm shells, or a 4.5-inch (for a few ships, four-inch) round; then, ap-
proaching to point-blank range and warning that it would open fire; and finally,
firing surface-practice (that is, not high-explosive) ammunition at the ship’s
funnel. If these successive measures did not stop the tanker, the frigate was to fire
a series of antisubmarine “mortar bombs set shallow about one cable [some two
hundred yards] astern of the ship.” Finally, if all that failed, the unit was to “open
fire with 4.5/4” service ammunition at either the bridge or the engine room or
both and continue until the ship does stop.” 47

The British delegation to the United Nations issued a warning to the member
states: “[Her Majesty’s] ships have been instructed that if their requests to stop
are not complied with they may enforce them, if necessary, by opening fire on
the vessel. The master of such a vessel would thus, by refusing to stop, put at risk
the lives of his crew and the safety of ship and cargo. . . . [A]ll member states will
take the necessary action to ensure that the masters of vessels subject to their ju-
risdiction are made aware of the terms of Security Council Resolution No. 221 . . .
[Her Majesty’s government] would also urge member states to ensure that operating
companies subject to their jurisdiction give advance notification to any
[British] diplomatic or consular missions of a proposed call on Beira by an oil
tanker.” 48

The new rules of engagement were apparently sufficient. After the Artois inci-
dent there were no more attempts to disregard the Royal Navy blockade of Beira
and no further major revisions to the rules of engagement.

**FASHIONING A MORE EFFECTIVE BLOCKADE**

The government and the vocal Conservative opposition were well aware that the
blockade was porous. In September 1966, the Secretary of State for Common-
wealth Affairs reported a “leakage” of 220,000 gallons of oil daily to Rhodesia;
under strict rationing, the self-declared nation required only two hundred thou-
sand. 49 Considerable staff work was therefore devoted to making the blockade
tighter or to finding ways to share the burden with other navies. All such initia-
tives failed, for a variety of reasons. Some exceeded resources; for instance,
blockading both Mozambican ports capable of transshipping large quantities of
oil (Beira by pipeline, Maputo by rail) would be too demanding for the Royal
Navy. Others required confronting South Africa, a Commonwealth member, di-
rectly, or risking an expanded debate in the UN—neither of which London was
willing to do.
As early as 1966, the Navy had calculated what forces would be needed to extend the blockade. To blockade all ports in Mozambique and South Africa would require seven carriers and thirty escorts, which meant, allowing for rotation of ships on and off station, at least sixty frigates. The Defence Ministry, for its part, doubted that the entire UN could mount such an ambitious effort, U.S. Navy assistance being unavailable due to the war in Vietnam. Even had the forces been available, the United Kingdom lacked the political will for such a grandiose operation. A member of the Foreign Office advised in January 1967, “I must repeat what we have said in the past, namely that we think it is at present outside of the bounds of political reality to envisage the need for such large scale naval enforcement.”

To blockade even only the two major Mozambican ports (Beira and Lourenço Marques) would mean keeping six or seven frigates on station, for a total of between fourteen and seventeen if selected export sanctions were to be enforced as well. A pessimistic ministry staff study warned the minister of defence that such a force “would amount to the greater part of the total overseas frigate strength of the Royal Navy and would go far to denude the Mediterranean, Middle East and Far East stations.” The Royal Navy could stop oil going into the two major ports, but the blockade would “not really bite since oil could still reach Rhodesia via South Africa.”

Nevertheless, the United Kingdom continued to toy with the idea of an expanded blockade. In March 1968, an internal Defence Ministry document noted that whereas Rhodesia was still getting “all or more oil than it needs,” and whereas Security Council Resolution 221 was still binding on Britain, the ministry was searching for ways to make the blockade more effective. The matter was taken up also by the Defence and Oversea Policy Committee, which was chaired by the prime minister personally. The DOPC’s conclusions about expanding the blockade to both major Mozambican ports were pessimistic; such an effort, which would cost 1.5 million pounds monthly and tie up fifteen frigates and four or five auxiliaries, would oblige the Royal Navy to abandon most of its other worldwide commitments. In other words, despite early optimism, a comprehensive naval blockade against even Mozambique alone would be beyond the Royal Navy’s capabilities.

A second approach considered was to request a commitment from Portugal to guarantee that no oil would reach Rhodesia via the territory of Mozambique, its colony. Lisbon had consistently challenged the legality (and binding nature) of Security Council Resolution 221, and the United Kingdom saw little hope of Portuguese cooperation. Nevertheless, the Foreign Office laid out a proposal in which the Beira patrol would be suspended in return for such a commitment. In March 1968, Whitehall again predicted that Portugal would not acquiesce in
such a scheme unless the South Africans were willing to refrain from making good Rhodesian shortfalls caused by loss of the Mozambique connection. It seemed certain that the white-minority government of South Africa would not cooperate; hence, the Defence Ministry concluded, “We cannot therefore count on the acquiescence of the Portuguese.”

The Foreign Office visited this scenario yet again in December 1969. This time, the concept was to co-opt the Mozambique railways and pipeline company—in return for financial compensation, they would agree not to transship oil to Rhodesia. To make the proposal attractive to the United Nations, however, the foreign ministry sought and received prior agreement from the Royal Navy to reimpose the blockade quickly should such an arrangement break down. However, London proved unable to obtain the necessary agreement of Portugal or commitments from the other parties that would have been involved.

In addition, the idea of naval burden sharing arose several times during the course of the blockade. There were inherent complications. UNSCR 221 authorized only the United Kingdom to use military force to enforce the blockade; other nations that might wish to participate would need to seek similar legal protection for their navies. That would reopen the UN debate about sanctions enforcement and, because of the widespread hostility in the General Assembly to the white Rhodesian regime, would risk widening the sanctions in ways Britain wished to avoid.

In any case, the Defence Ministry was ambivalent: “We certainly would not want to get involved with help from embarrassing sources, e.g. [the] USSR, from whom it might be difficult to refuse any offers.” The ministry saw no prospect that the UN would allow Britain to select its partners. It also foresaw additional costs; Britain, it presumed, would be required to provide logistical support to units of foreign navies. In any case, the ministry was skeptical that even “Old Commonwealth” navies could be persuaded to participate.

Nevertheless, in June 1969 Prime Minister Wilson decided that the government should consider inviting other countries (such as Canada) to participate in the patrol. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (or FCO, as the previously separate bodies were now jointly known) was “not entirely pessimistic” that the Royal Navy might be able to secure naval assistance. The Defence Ministry did not share this view. In November 1969, the FCO ruled out U.S. participation, given its “full scale re-examinations of their policy in southern Africa—and of their overseas commitments generally.” Sweden and Norway had the capability to support the embargo and might be willing to do so, but the Foreign and Commonwealth Office felt that Western European Union countries should be approached first. However, the FCO soon cooled even to that possibility:
The potential savings to our resources accruing from foreign participation in the patrol between now and the completion of our withdrawal from the Far East at the end of 1971 is not sufficient to outweigh disadvantages and to justify the substantial risk inherent in such an initiative of embarrassment at the UN and of a rebuff from the governments we approach. Financially, there would be a modest savings in foreign exchange. Operationally, the weight of argument is against it; there might also be increased difficulties of disengagement.64

Nonetheless, the FCO left open the option of approaching foreign navies as Royal Navy force reductions made it increasingly difficult to maintain the blockade. The cabinet secretary echoed this prospect to Wilson in March 1970.65 None of these approaches was fruitful.

“GETTING SHOT OF THE COMMITMENT”

However professionally the Royal Navy and Air Force conducted the blockade, this inevitably ineffectual operation, conducted so far away from home, became increasingly unpopular within the Defence Ministry. Indeed, many of the burden-sharing initiatives discussed above were outgrowths of an underlying desire to eliminate the commitment entirely. The ministry raised persuasive arguments about the costs of the patrol for a nation that had decided to end its commitments east of Suez. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office, however, fought to maintain the patrol because of its political visibility; the prime minister was to endorse that position. As long as Britain attempted to reverse Southern Rhodesia’s unilateral declaration of independence, it would be committed to sanctions; as long as it was committed to sanctions, it was tied to UNSCR 221 and the Beira patrol.

Queried by the Commonwealth Office in February 1968 as to the costs of the patrol, the Defence Ministry eagerly responded: “We are very willing to play our part in an exercise [exchange of correspondence] which will give ministers a broad indication of the savings to be had from stopping the Beira patrol. From the Navy’s point of view the patrol reduces ship availability and it is not a task from which we derive any great training value.”66 The ministry argued that maintaining the patrol, particularly after 1971, would “greatly reduce” the nation’s ability to respond to contingencies outside of Europe.67 Nevertheless, in March 1968 the Defence and Oversea Policy Committee concluded that the time “was not ripe” to end the patrol, although from the purely military view “one should be glad to get rid of the tasks.”68 The DOPC concluded that the political disadvantages of ending the patrol outweighed any financial gains or operational relief to be expected from its cessation.69 However, the committee agreed to reconsider cessation of the patrol “if the balance of advantages changed.”670
In November the Defence Ministry tried again, asking the Foreign and Commonwealth Office whether the Beira patrol could be ended unilaterally. The reply was that the patrol would have to remain in effect until such time as Parliament should grant Rhodesia independence.\(^{71}\) (In the event, Parliament did not accede to a settlement of the Rhodesian/Zimbabwean issue, which was to become wide-reaching and infinitely complex, until 1979.)

In May 1969, the Ministry of Defence again raised the cost issue and the risk of “overstretching” the Navy’s frigate force. In a draft memo, the minister pointed out that a total of six frigates was being required to maintain two on patrol. He cited the low training value of the patrol, operational flexibility penalties, the longer frigate deployments involved, the necessity of permanently deploying fleet maintenance assets and, for all these reasons, a resulting lowered standard of operational readiness. “There would be clear advantages in terms of ship availability and operational flexibility if the patrol could be given up as soon as possible. The operational penalties imposed by the task will be substantially greater if it is necessary to continue the patrol after the withdrawal of our forces from east of Suez.”\(^{72}\) The minister’s staff continued this refrain the next month: “There is no training value in the patrol[,] for the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force aircraft cannot combine it with their antisubmarine role. Because oil products are patently reaching Rhodesia through other routes[,] the men employed on the patrol cannot be expected to derive any satisfaction from it and it is not a popular task with the Royal Navy.” The staff urged its minister to push the sanctions bureaucracy to study ways and means of “getting shot of the commitment.”\(^{73}\)

In June 1969 the Defence Oversea Policy Committee agreed to review burden sharing and ending the patrol, but it warned that the “present juncture is not one at which we can afford to give the impression that we are weakening on sanctions.”\(^{74}\) Nonetheless, the committee commissioned “in great secrecy” a parallel study to investigate “unobtrusively” the prospects of ending “sanctions altogether or at least reducing their scale and cost.”\(^{75}\) These studies were still under way when in September 1969 Wilson made it clear that he was not about to abandon the patrol—the patrol’s future “involves wider issues than those relating merely to defense.”\(^{76}\)

In the next year the Defence Ministry was still unable to shake the political leadership’s commitment to the patrol. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office forestalled even a proposal to reduce the patrol temporarily from two to one frigate that spring; elections in Britain were about to take place, and the government required that two ships be kept on station. On 16 June 1970, the personal secretary to the defence minister predicted, “Until the election is over, the political
significance of the number of ships engaged in the patrol would make it extremely difficult to agree to any reduction.”

The elections brought in a new government, that of Edward Heath and the Conservatives. Despite rumors in the press, the new cabinet supported the Beira patrol. In July 1970, the new foreign minister, Sir Alec Douglas-Home, confirmed that the United Kingdom would continue it. Ultimately, however, unalterable external factors—the elimination of the British military commitments east of Suez in 1971 and reduction of the fleet—would force further reduction of the resources committed to the patrol.

Although the Defence Ministry had lost its battle for a policy decision to eliminate the patrol outright, the force itself was whittled down between 1971 and 1975. By the spring of 1975, the patrol was to be a shadow of the carrier, frigate, and Shackleton force of 1966. The reduction occurred in several stages. In March 1971, within a year of its election, the Heath government allowed the Royal Navy to patrol Beira with one frigate instead of two. This relaxation produced a drop from 717 ship-days on patrol during 1970 to 354 ship-days in 1972.

The patrol then lost its air component. In June 1971, the Malagasy Republic asked the Royal Air Force to eliminate the Shackleton detachment at Majunga. Thereafter, because of an overall drop in the number of frigates in the fleet, the Royal Navy was allowed to make the patrol intermittent; in 1973, the Navy assigned frigates to the station for only 161 ship-days (typically by diverting ships transiting to or from the Far East). “Gapping” the patrol could be justified by the argument that the Umtali refinery was inoperable; not having refined oil since January 1966, the facility could resume doing so only after a lengthy recommissioning process.

The Beira patrol finally wound down completely on 25 June 1975, the day Mozambique became independent, having assured the United Kingdom that it would not transship oil to Rhodesia. On that day HMS Salisbury went off station, and the Royal Navy was finally off the hook. Whitehall was likely reassured in this decision when Mozambique gained independence and then sealed its border with Rhodesia in March 1976. Still, the effort had been demanding: seventy-six Royal Navy ships had supported the patrol during its ten-year history. One estimate placed total operating costs at a hundred million pounds.

The Beira patrol, a useful case study of a unilateral approach to naval sanctions enforcement, offers interesting lessons at several levels. For all of the ship-days and aircraft sorties it required, the patrol appears to have accomplished remarkably little. During its heyday (March 1966–March 1971), the force intercepted a total of forty-seven tankers bound for Beira. Of these, forty-two were allowed to

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proceed. The other five did not stop or were escorted from the area.\textsuperscript{83} Meanwhile, as the government continuously documented, oil got through to Rhodesia from South Africa and the port of Lourenço Marques. The Portuguese announced that between April 1966 and May 1967, 169 tankers entered Lourenço Marques; fifty-eight, the Portuguese reported, had flown the British flag.\textsuperscript{84}

Yet the British government was convinced throughout that the patrol was useful as a symbol of the nation’s commitment to sanctions against the separatist Rhodesian regime of Ian Smith—a commitment London was obliged to sustain by the legal box in which it had put itself in the UN. Because Security Council Resolution 221, which Britain had drafted, mandated British military action, the government (at least the Foreign and Commonwealth Relations Offices) considered the political costs of discontinuing the patrol greater than the concrete costs of conducting it. Even the Defence Ministry acknowledged that Rhodesia had to expend more foreign exchange moving oil by rail from Lourenço Marques than it would have had the Beira-Umtali pipeline been open.\textsuperscript{85}

At the level of practice, the role of the news media proved critically important. At first overconfident about the speed with which sanctions could take effect, the Wilson cabinet was forced to react rapidly in March and April 1966 when world attention focused on two “pirate tankers” steaming toward Mozambique with oil for Rhodesia. Far more oil than such tankers carried was already moving across land borders; nonetheless, the publicity given their approach forced Britain to take action quickly or be accused of weakness.

Had the vessels’ arrival in Beira been discovered only after the fact, Whitehall might have been able to draft a less reactive, more thoughtful Security Council resolution. As it proved, Britain learned that while such a resolution can be the ultimate stamp of international legitimacy, it can also be oppressively binding. The United Kingdom felt naturally obliged to use its own navy to deal with its breakaway colony, but the burden could have been made less painful at the onset. For example, British diplomats might have considered calling, in what became paragraph 5 of UNSCR 221, upon all UN member nations, not just the United Kingdom, to contribute military force to enforce the blockade. The blockade, of course, would then not have been under total British control, and ships of the Royal Navy might have found themselves steaming alongside those of its nation’s adversaries. Nonetheless, had London realized that sanction enforcement would last so long, it might have welcomed participation by other navies.

Inherently, a multinational force would have further complicated the formulation of rules of engagement, a task that was difficult enough as it was. As vital as rules of engagement are in all such cases to the credibility of sanctions enforcement, it took Britain time (and a Security Council resolution) to create a set
sufficiently robust to allow its ships to stop “pirate tankers.” Even then, it was shown that the blockade could be challenged with impunity, and the rules had to be toughened again (in December 1967). Until that was done, and thereafter to the extent that it could still be evaded, the Beira patrol gave the impression of ineffectiveness.

Still, the most effective sanctions are not necessarily the most visible ones. If Security Council Resolution 221 and the naval blockade it mandated did not really deprive Rhodesia of oil, they were only part of an array of United Nations measures against Rhodesia that ultimately isolated Salisbury and drained the Rhodesian economy. But the process took years, not weeks.

The Beira patrol represented Britain’s hurried response to a highly publicized challenge from its breakaway colony of Southern Rhodesia. The patrol allowed London to limit the escalation of a potentially volatile situation while providing a credible demonstration of its commitment to sanction enforcement, which was the course Whitehall wanted to pursue. The experience ultimately proved, however, that Security Council resolutions—public and formal pronouncements with the authority of the United Nations and the stature of international law—can, when used as weapons, turn in the hands of their wielders. A resolution that had mandated a multinational response would appear to have been less painful for the Royal Navy; it would also have allowed the patrol to be made more effective by generating enough naval force to extend the blockade to other ports. The flexibility offered by a more broadly conceived instrument would have been worth the challenges of preparing and implementing it.

NOTES


3. Ibid., p. 409.
6. On 21 December 1965, Wilson had said, “Certainly we have no intention of imposing a naval blockade around Beira, and we never have had. . . . [I]f there is a decision under Chapter VII which suggests a couple of frigates be placed outside Beira to stop oil
tankers going through, that is what will happen, and happen by international decision." "What the Prime Minister Said on Oil and the Use of Force," London Times, 11 April 1966.


17. Ibid., p. 135.

18. Ibid., p. 136.


21. Minutes, Chiefs of Staff Committee meeting, 8 March 1966, DEFE 4/196.

22. Commonwealth Relations Office to Wellington, New Zealand, 10 March 1966, CAB 164/26 (enclosing the prime minister’s message to Holyoake).


24. Memorandum, Minister of Defence to prime minister, 20 April 1966, DEFE 24/517.


28. The MOD estimated that a force of five Shackletons would give the UK a 90 percent chance of detecting a tanker up to 250 miles from Beira; three Shackletons would have a 70 percent chance of detection. See memorandum from Vice Chief of Defence Staff to cabinet secretary, “Surveillance of the Mozambique Channel,” 18 March 1966, CAB 164/26. In another estimate, CINCME estimated that one twelve-hour sortie a day by a Shackleton would give a 60 percent chance of detecting an eighteen-knot tanker before it was within six hours’ steaming of Beira. See Director of Naval Operations and Trade, “Memorandum to Summarise Planned Arrangements for Beira Patrol,” 12 May 1966, DEFE 24/517.


32. Ibid.

33. Message, Flag Officer, Middle East to HMS Rhyl and HMS Lowestoft, 15 February 1966, CAB 164/26.


37. Law Officers Department memorandum to prime minister, 7 April 1966, CAB 164/68. Message from Commonwealth Relations Office to British High Commissions, 7 April 1966 PREM, 13/1139.


40. Ibid., quoted in its entirety. Hubbauer notes that the UN would introduce even more stringent sanctions in 1968 and 1973. UNSCR 253, approved in May 1968, imposed comprehensive sanctions calling for, among other things, a ban on all exports to Rhodesia (except medical supplies and humanitarian goods). UNSCR 333, passed in 1973, called on member states to punish any of their citizens continuing to deal with clients in South Africa, Mozambique, Angola, Portuguese Guinea, and Namibia "after it had become known that such clients were shipping goods either to or from Rhodesia."

41. CINCME, "Report on Surveillance."

42. Memorandum, "Passage of a Tanker from Durban to Beira inside Territorial Waters," Naval Intelligence to prime minister, 14 April 1966, PREM 13/1140.

43. Foreign Office to British UN mission, undated, CAB 164/616.


46. See memorandum from defense minister to prime minister, "Surveillance in Mozambique Channel," 20 April 1966, DEFE 24/517. The MOD also professed confidence in the quality of maritime intelligence support. In April 1966, the defense minister, Denis Healey, noted, "Our experience so far has been that we have had intelligence warning of every suspect tanker entering the Mozambique Channel; the chance is remote of one entering the area in future without our knowledge."

47. MOD (Chief of the Defence Staff) to Commander in Chief Far East, "Beira Patrol," 21 March 1968, DEFE 24/588.


50. Memorandum, Director for Naval Operations and Trade to Vice Chief of Naval Staff, "Blockade of South Africa and Mozambique," 30 November 1966, DEFE 24/517.

51. "Mandatory Sanctions on Oil Supplies to Rhodesia from Mozambique: Action in the United Nations," briefing for use of the Minister of Defence in Rhodesia Talks Committee meeting scheduled for 11 October 1966, DEFE 24/517; and Secretary of State for Commonwealth Affairs, "Supply of Oil for South Africa and Mozambique," note, 2 September 1966, PREM 13/1141. Portugal refused to stop transshipping oil to Rhodesia, asserting that sanctions enforcement was the responsibility of the international community, particularly those countries whose flags flew on tankers entering Mozambique. Besides, Portugal argued, oil was not really going across its colonial territory to Rhodesia. In frustration, Wilson exploded, "If they are so goddam pure and have nothing to hide, would they agree that we should have a chap down there to watch it?" Note from prime minister’s office to Foreign Office, 12 May 1966, PREM 13/1140.


53. "Mandatory Sanctions on Oil Supplies to Rhodesia from Mozambique."

54. MOD memorandum to Commonwealth Office, 15 February 1968, DEFE 24/588.

55. DOPC briefing paper, 28 March 1968 (115), DEFE 24/588.


57. Letter, FCO to MOD, 10 December 1969, DEFE 24/588.
59. “Rhodesia: Beira Patrol: OPD (68) 24,” briefing for Secretary of State for Defence to use in DOPC meeting, 27 March 1968, DEFE 24/588. The OPD was the Overseas Policy Committee (i.e., subcommittee) of the Defence and Overseas Policy Committee.
61. “Rhodesia: Beira Patrol: OPD (68) 24.”
63. Cabinet Office memorandum, “Far East Run-down: Beira Patrol,” 18 September 1969, CAB 164/616. The ten full members of the Western European Union, which had been established on 23 October 1954 to provide mutual defense and to move toward political unification, were and are Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom. Norway has since become an associate member and Sweden an “associate partner.”
64. FCO to MOD, 10 November 1969.
67. Ibid.
68. Briefing for Secretary of State for Defence, 8 March 1968, DEFE 24/588.
70. “Rhodesia: Beira Patrol: OPD (68) 24.”
73. “Beira Patrol—MISC 226 (69) 8 and 12,” briefing for defence minister, 2 June 1969, DEFE 24/588. The document steams with frustration: “You may wish to make it clear that the Ministry of Defence does not accept the patrol as a commitment extending indefinitely. . . . If the matter is merely kept under review, the chances are that the issue will be determined on short-term considerations on the next occasion. You are recommended, therefore, to propose that officials should be charged with carrying out a detailed study of ways and means of getting shot of the commitment.”
74. Ibid.
76. Memorandum, cabinet secretary to Lord Gardiner, 26 September 1969, CAB 164/616.
77. Memorandum, APS/Secretary of State to Secretary [for Defence], Chief of Naval Staff, “The Frigate Shortage and the Beira Patrol,” 16 June 1970, DEFE 24/588.
78. Memorandum, R. Armstrong to prime minister, undated (probably 5 August 1970), PREM 15/162.
81. Royal Navy in the Post-War Years.
82. Bailey, Oilgate, p. 158. Evidently it was remarkably tedious as well. The Sunday Times of 3 September 1978 carried a naval officer’s description of the patrol experience as “a fortnight of intense boredom, relieved only by kite-flying competitions, the dropping of mail into the sea from ancient Shackletons, while watching with increasing apathy as the ships passed un molested.”
83. Royal Navy in the Post-War Years.
The 1999 air war over Kosovo re-ignited a feud between the military and the news media that is generally believed to have been a permanent undercurrent of media-military relations since the Vietnam War. The events of 11 September 2001 and the subsequent declaration by President George W. Bush of a “War on Terrorism” temporarily drove the feud underground. But soon the media began, albeit tentatively, to second-guess Pentagon strategy in Afghanistan. Indeed, the general consensus among military people, the press, and academics is that a cooperative working relationship between the press and the military that had been established in World War II collapsed in the 1960s. While these groups disagree significantly on whether media criticism of U.S. policy and strategy contributed to America’s defeat in Southeast Asia, the view that Vietnam was a turning point in media-military relations is widespread. “The War in Southeast Asia changed the fundamental contours of military-media relations,” write a sociologist and a Pentagon reporter. “As in World War II, a group of young correspondents—David Halberstam, Neil Sheehan, Malcome Browne, Peter Arnett and Charley Mohr—who arrived in Vietnam in the early 1960s, became famous for their reporting. Unlike World War II,
however, these reporters incurred the wrath of the official establishment for their contrary accounts of the war’s progress.\textsuperscript{1} Paradoxically, according to this view, media-military relations may have been better when censorship was in force, as in World War II.\textsuperscript{2}

This article will argue, however, that the strained relationship between the media and the U.S. military has nothing to do with censorship—for the simple reason that media-military relations have always been rocky, never more than in World War II. The difference between World War II and Vietnam was not the presence of censorship but the absence of victory. In other conflicts, victory has erased memories of a troubled relationship; after Vietnam, the media was caught up in the quest for a scapegoat. Furthermore, the nebulous goals of the War on Terrorism, the fact that it is likely to be a prolonged operation, and the inherent difficulties from a media perspective of covering a war fought from the air and in the shadows virtually guarantee a degeneration of the relationship between two institutions with an inherent distrust of each other.

How then do we account for chronically poor media-military relations in America? The basic explanation is that the natures and goals of the two institutions are fundamentally in tension. For its part, the military, like most bureaucracies, prefers to do its business behind closed doors—all the more so because the nature of its business is so often shocking to the sensitivities of the public, on whose support it must rely. Therefore, the military inherently sees the media as a subversive, rather than a positive, element. The press, however, responds to the requirement of democracy to expose the actions of the government—including, especially, the military—to public scrutiny. Moreover, in recent years, the tendency to formulate U.S. foreign policy with little or no formal debate between the administration and the Congress has left a vacuum that the media has rushed to fill. Even were that not the case, however, the press has a responsibility to question the matching of policy to strategy.

Theoretically, this interaction is mutually beneficial, for it could allow the two institutions to work symbiotically to build support for policy and to tell the military’s story. Nevertheless, there is a shadow over media-military relations, which the legacy of the Vietnam War has darkened.

Finally, future trends are likely to make media-military relations more, rather than less, difficult. An increase in humanitarian operations, the reliance on air campaigns and stand-off weapons, the difficulties of covering a “terrorist war,” the emergence of “information operations,” and changes in the media environment pose severe challenges. Nevertheless, the two institutions must recognize that it is in the interests of both to make the relationship work.
FROM THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION TO VIETNAM

Poor media-military relations are in reality symptomatic of a deeper issue for civil-military relations in the United States. One of the sources of misunderstandings between the media and the military is the widely held perception among conservatives, both inside and outside the military, that the press was largely responsible for America’s defeat in the Vietnam War. This “subversion” is held to have been a new departure in media-military relations, perpetrated by a new generation of skeptical “liberal” reporters, different from their predecessors.

In fact, however, the relationship between the media and the military did not suddenly collapse during the Vietnam War. Animosity between the two is as old as the foundations of the Republic itself. During the Revolution, George Washington complained that loyalist newspapers undermined patriotic morale, while patriotic ones lacked the most elementary notions of military secrecy. Soon afterward, officers sent by President John Adams to impose taxes on Pennsylvania farmers publicly flogged newspaper editors who criticized their actions. In 1814, during the New Orleans campaign, Andrew Jackson jailed and attempted to court-martial a local editor who had dared to publish an article without submitting it for censorship. The Mexican War of 1846 was the first in which papers competed to publish stories sent back by the newly invented telegraph and the Pony Express. This produced a nineteenth-century “CNN effect”; political leaders as well as the general public learned of developments from press stories that arrived before the official reports. The Associated Press was founded in 1848 to pool reporting resources, disseminate correspondence from soldiers at the front, and communicate the government’s war goals to the public. Also in that war, the military published “camp newspapers,” an early public-affairs attempt to keep up troop morale. The civilian press used them as sources “from the seat of the war.”

During the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln realized early on that newspapers would be a key component in sustaining support in a deeply split North. In April 1861 the government took control of telegraph lines leading to Washington and in August threatened court-martial should any of the five hundred Northern journalists covering the war breach security. The noncombatant status of the 150 or so correspondents who reported from the front was seldom respected. General William T. Sherman, a firm believer in press censorship, blamed the Union defeat in the first battle of Bull Run on the publication of orders of battle in Washington and New York newspapers. Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton seized newspapers that were too liberal with military information, while manipulating others into publishing false reports. This did not prevent “Copperhead” papers in the North from vehemently attacking Lincoln and the war.
Neither is press-driven policy a recent phenomenon. The “yellow journalism” promoted by rivals William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer is often blamed for provoking the popular agitation that led to the Spanish-American War of 1898. Major General Nelson A. Miles replicated Stanton’s manipulation of the press, deliberately misleading reporters about the location of his intended landing in Puerto Rico. The Espionage Act, which accompanied America’s entry into World War I, followed by the Sedition Act of 1918, severely restricted the ability of the press to publish information on military operations or war production, let alone disparage the uniform and the flag. Woodrow Wilson established a Committee on Public Information that both regulated censorship and produced propaganda for the American cause. Credentialed war correspondents, sworn to tell the truth, reported from military camps well behind the lines in France. General John Pershing, commanding the American Expeditionary Force, accredited only thirty-one reporters and forbade even these to travel to the front lines. Fear of a “stab in the back” lurked behind these measures; censorship was justified by the need “to keep up the spirit of the armies and people of our side.”

**WORLD WAR II AND KOREA**

World War II is often viewed as the golden age of media-military relations—a time when the country stood fully behind the war effort and the press reflected the patriotic mood. Civilian reporters were treated as part of “America’s team,” willingly acquiescing to “press codes” as a condition of accreditation by the War Department. The identities and movements of forces and materiel, production figures, casualties, and locations of archives and art treasures were forbidden to reporters; even weather forecasts and temperatures in major cities were censored. But the press accepted censorship with barely a murmur, and the reward for compliance was substantial—relatively free access to combat theaters.

Wearing the uniforms of officers, journalists joined press camps attached to and moving with combat forces. Print journalists, more or less “embedded” in units, wrote, often poignantly, of the horrors of battle and the suffering of the GIs. Twenty-seven reporters accompanied the D-day assault in Normandy. The precursor of the modern “press pool” emerged among radio correspondents, serving as a “neutral voice” representative of all correspondents. Some service-men who had been journalists before the war were made “combat correspondents” after basic training; their stories and photographs were released, after
censorship, by the various service departments. Overall, the Office of War Information and the Office of Censorship exercised their control through persuasion, though the Espionage Act always lurked menacingly in the background.

Both pools and “embedded reporters” foreshadowed recent practice; many broader patterns now thought of as contemporary also emerged in World War II. In the first place, the press sometimes shaped policy and influenced strategy. For instance, descriptions of valiant Britain beneath the German “blitz” in the summer of 1940 helped to firm up the destroyers-for-bases arrangement and ultimately Lend-Lease. “Press and radio commentators were uniformly hostile, some passionately so,” to the agreement General Mark Clark struck in November 1942 with Vichy admiral Jean Darlan to halt the fighting between Vichy French and Allied troops in North Africa. “I have been called a Fascist and almost a Hitlerite,” General Dwight Eisenhower, Clark’s superior, complained. Press criticism of the Darlan deal propelled the “unconditional surrender” policy adopted by the Casablanca Conference in January 1943. Newsweek continually pointed up the disparity between American goals in Europe and the resources available, as well as differences among the Allies over the future of Europe, reviving the arguments of congressional isolationists.

The press also, as now, heavily influenced the fortunes of prominent commanders; even the most popular generals could be second-guessed. Drew Pearson was prepared to deflate the most exalted reputations in his syndicated column, “Washington Merry-go-Round.” In the opinion of Eisenhower’s son John, the press came perilously close to ending Ike’s career. His decision in September 1943 to maintain Marshal Pietro Badoglio, one of Mussolini’s ex-henchmen, and King Victor Emanuel in power in Italy was denounced by the New York Times as the continuation of military dictatorship supported by a puppet king. After the Normandy breakout in August 1944, Newsweek allowed retired British general J. F. C. Fuller to criticize Ike for violating the principle of “concentration of force.” Even in making Eisenhower its “Man of the Year” in December 1944, Time cautioned that Hitler’s Ardennes offensive cast doubt on the Supreme Allied Commander’s strategic judgement.

It is often forgotten that some officers who received favorable press coverage assiduously cultivated reporters. “Without preaching or complaining, [Eisenhower] told [correspondents] frankly about what was going wrong, and made it possible for them to see the problems with their own eyes. He then counted on them to make the country aware of what was needed.”

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had expected to find Eisenhower “jumping all over the place issuing orders right and left” instead discovered a man “more like a big industrial executive who, on the day the plant is breaking production records, will show visitors around the mill as if he had nothing else to do.” In contrast, commanders whom reporters thought inadequately prepared were particular targets. The press, for instance, alerted the American public to shortcomings revealed by the Louisiana Maneuvers of August–September 1941.

Further, “investigative journalists” sought out opportunities to roast aloof or abusive commanders, like George S. Patton—who slapped and cursed soldiers hospitalized for shell shock. A “gentlemen’s agreement” initially suppressed that incident, but in an egregiously departure from journalistic ethics, war correspondents demanded that Eisenhower remove Patton, under threat of going public. When Eisenhower tried to compromise, Drew Pearson broke the story on his syndicated radio show. The subsequent public tempest was so violent that Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson had to justify to the Senate Eisenhower’s decision not to court-martial Patton. That incident, and others like it, demonstrated the high price political leaders had to pay to defend generals who offended norms of democratic behavior.

In the Pacific, General Douglas MacArthur was notorious for pressuring reporters to file stories that reflected positively on him. However, he could not control reporters not accredited to his command. In January 1944, the American Mercury suggested that MacArthur’s heroic image was a Republican-manufactured myth to use against Roosevelt. The Army War College library distributed the article to American servicemen all over the world; Republicans in the Senate blasted the War Department for carrying out a “smear.” A blistered War Department subsequently prevented Harper’s Magazine from publishing a second unflattering article; its editor objected, “This situation is intolerable in a free country.” In the summer of 1944 the press publicized the fact that MacArthur was the only senior general allowed to have his wife in theater. It also reported, unfairly, that he made his headquarters in luxurious colonial mansions while his troops battled malaria.

The surprise attack that opened the Korean War in 1950 found the military completely unprepared to handle the reporters who arrived to cover the panic and confusion of the war’s early days. This inevitably provoked criticism that an uncensored press was giving information of use to the enemy and undermining the morale of United Nations forces. Local commanders responded with their own rules; ultimately the Overseas Press Club petitioned the Pentagon to replace this patchwork of “voluntary guidelines” with formal, standard ones. MacArthur (now supreme commander of UN forces in Korea) imposed formal censorship, forbidding reporters to criticize, among other things, military reverses,
failures of U.S. equipment, or the South Korean government; true to form, MacArthur also banned all articles critical of his leadership. His successor, Matthew Ridgway, virtually barred the press from the armistice talks.

**The Vietnam War and Its Legacies**

Vietnam has been called the “first TV war,” a test of the American public’s tolerance for battle brought into its living rooms. Journalists were allowed practically unrestricted access, accompanying units and freely filing stories, photographs, and film. The idea that reporters opposed to the war used this freedom to publish negative stories that contributed significantly to the final defeat quickly became standard; it was espoused by Presidents Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon, as well as by the U.S. commander in Vietnam from 1964 to 1968, General William Westmoreland.

This explanation, however, has been discredited by numerous studies. In fact, press coverage was generally favorable until the Tet offensive of 1968. As later became clear, that dramatic campaign was a military disaster for the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong; nonetheless, it blasted the credibility of claims by the White House and Westmoreland that the United States and South Vietnam were on the threshold of victory. The critical tone adopted by the press thereafter “confirm[ed] the widespread public view held well before Tet, that the people had been victims of a massive deception” and that the prospects for success were in fact doubtful. Arguably, then, the press did not create public skepticism but simply reflected public concern about casualties and the lack of tangible progress. Certainly, neither the White House nor the military was honest with the press. Official briefings in Saigon—dismissed by the press as the “Five o’Clock Follies”—were remarkably uninformative, when not deceptive. On the other hand, coverage of the increasingly violent antiwar protests shored up support for the war, because it showed the peace movement in an unflattering light.

One cannot blame the press for asking searching questions about a poor policy strategy match. That is its duty. Nevertheless, the impact of the Vietnam War on U.S. media-military relations has been profound. The press today regards the practically unrestricted access and uncensored reporting that it enjoyed in Vietnam as the norm, not a historical anomaly. The more superficial, or arrogant, of its members further believe that Vietnam confirmed and validated the power of the press to influence public opinion and, by extension, policy.

The military, for its part, saw proof of its long-standing suspicion that the press is an adversary and must be kept at arm’s length during conflicts. The Army in particular feels that a new, and distinctly destructive, press was born in Vietnam—skeptical of authority, liberal in political outlook, and invariably hostile to military values and missions. The mistake of Vietnam, many military
people feel, was to give the media free rein, license that they used to subvert pop-
ular support. A piece of “military wisdom” emerged from Vietnam: “Real men
don’t talk to the press.”

THE ROOTS OF POOR MEDIA-MILITARY RELATIONS
If the poor media-military relations of today are not wholly a product of the
Vietnam War but have existed throughout the nation’s history, how does one
account for them? First, the institutional cultures of the two communities are
virtually antithetical. Whether or not the media have a liberal bias, it is certainly
true that journalists see it as their role to expose abuses of power by large institu-
tions, and in the military arena to publicize instances where democratic and mil-
itary values clash. As a practical matter, however, the press is fragmented into
many competing and self-regulating subgroups; there are no broad professional
standards. “The great strength of American journalism is its amateur nature,”
insists one correspondent. “Anyone can become a reporter. This guarantees
many different perspectives.” It also guarantees that journalists have a great
deal of competition; each must not only collect information but package it in a
form that will sell to the general public—and therefore be blessed by edi-
tors—before other journalists do. Reporters are therefore under great pressure
to bend, even break, rules in pursuit of a “story”—and a by-line.

If the world of the journalist is freewheeling and entrepreneurial, the task of
managing violence imposes on the soldier an organization and attitude that is
hierarchical and disciplined. The soldier is a “team player” in an institution with
strict professional and ethical standards as well as rigorous, even ritualized, pro-
cedures. “The natural tendency of the military [is] to keep things under control,”
an Army public affairs officer observes. The military man or woman particu-
larly values loyalty and is deeply suspicious of, even offended by, the “publish
and be damned” journalistic ethos. Further, if recruitment, outlook, and tech-
nology make the “Fourth Estate” a heterogeneous institution—if it is an “insti-
tution” at all—a number of factors, especially the fact that soldiers, sailors,
Marines, and airmen live apart from civilian society, tend to impose insularity
upon them and to homogenize their attitudes. The political outlook of military
people tends to be conservative.

Second, the goals of the two institutions are different. The journalist seeks to
tell a story of such interest that the public will pay for it; every member of the
military, however, is to pursue national objectives by fulfilling specific missions
assigned by political leaders. Moreover, the mechanism by which the military
performs its role is war, or the threat of war—and war is an awful thing, a job the
military is understandably reluctant to perform in public. Military people typi-
cally believe that reporters, untutored in the fundamentals of the military
profession, are psychologically unprepared to deal with the realities of combat. They fear that reporters, in quests for sensationalism rather than truth, may publish stories or images that breach security, cost lives, or undermine public support. For their part, reporters insist upon their professional obligation and constitutional duty to report the news. They consider the military’s culture closed, its insistence on operational secrecy exaggerated, and its “command climate” a barrier to outside scrutiny.

These two dichotomies are in themselves the raw material for deterioration of the media-military relationship, but a third factor, some journalists argue, aggravates it—the increasingly haphazard way U.S. foreign policy is formulated. All concerned recognize, at least in theory, that media scrutiny is an aspect of a healthy civilian control of the military and also an exercise of free speech—both cornerstones of the Constitution, which military people are sworn to uphold. In that light, media activism becomes especially necessary when military operations are undertaken after only minimal public debate among elected officials. Many journalists argue that Washington seems to assume a public grant of “virtual consent” for the employment of military force whenever the president chooses, what one reporter calls a “fire-and-forget foreign policy.” They hold that the media have a charge to step into this policy vacuum, to supply the information and provide the deliberation that officials and politicians withhold and shirk—and even to shape policy. In retrospect, it seems hardly surprising that good will crumbled (as we will see) during the Kosovo conflict and appeared to be on shaky ground during the early stages of the assault on Afghanistan. The real question is why such deterioration was a surprise at the time; it had been foreshadowed in every American military involvement since Vietnam, especially in the Persian Gulf.

ATTEMPTS TO ESTABLISH A WORKING RELATIONSHIP

Warfare is a political act. Political leaders, in democracies at least, must inform the public about foreign policy goals; the military must convince the public that it can achieve those goals at an acceptable cost; and both must do so largely through the press. Press reports of success and progress strengthen and extend public support. The media also familiarize the public with the military and with the complexity of its tasks. In short, the media offers the military a means to tell its story. The press, as we have seen, has its own incentives to report on military affairs, and it needs the military’s cooperation to do so effectively. Therefore, both the media and the military have reasons to work with the other in a symbiotic relationship.

For the military’s part, the necessary first step is to recognize that the press is a fact of life, a feature of the battlefield environment—“kind of like the rain,” as
one Marine put it. “If it rains, you operate wet.” Unfortunately, past attempts to establish effective, let alone harmonious, arrangements have foundered on hostility and distrust bordering sometimes on paranoia.

Press Pools

In the 1980s, the media and the Pentagon agreed on ground rules for cooperation. Each major command was issued public-affairs guidance acknowledging the right of the public and Congress to “timely and accurate information” about military operations, to the extent compatible with security. It set out precise rules on the accreditation of reporters, standards for stories, security reviews, and the support of media in combat zones.

The plans were first tested in Urgent Fury, the 1983 operation that rescued U.S. medical students on the island of Grenada. Two serious flaws quickly emerged. First, rather than integrating media affairs in its planning, the command simply handed off the press to a specialized corps of public affairs officers. Because these officers were themselves kept in the dark, they were unable to satisfy the press’s curiosity about military goals, preparations, and progress. The second problem grew from the first—the military was logistically unresponsive to press needs, largely because the media had not been factored into operational planning. As a consequence, over six hundred disgruntled reporters were marooned in comfortable exile on Barbados while the story played out, unseen and hence unreported, on Grenada.

The resulting media outcry prodded the military to review its practices. A commission was convened under Major General Winant Sidle, U.S. Army, to reconcile press access with operational security. The Sidle Commission’s major accomplishment was the Department of Defense National Media Pool, created in 1985. Journalists nominated by the major news organizations and agreeing in advance to abide by security regulations and to share reports with nonpool reporters would be ready to move to the “seat of war” at a moment’s notice. The Media Pool would operate as a group only until the “main body” of reporters appeared. Practice deployments in Central America suggested that the pool was logistically manageable, would produce a core of reporters versed in military affairs, and would ensure prompt coverage of events.

The pool was first mobilized operationally during Earnest Will, the reflagging of Kuwaiti merchant ships in 1987–88; it encountered problems that would become acute in subsequent deployments. The next opportunity came in December 1989, when U.S. troops were ordered into Panama. Unfortunately, that experience showed that old attitudes had not yet died. The secretary of defense, Richard Cheney—who held the media responsible for undermining public morale in Vietnam and “did not look on the press as an asset”—delayed
calling out the pool.27 The result was that nonpool reporters simply traveled to Panama on their own, to practice “four-wheel-drive journalism”; when the press pool was finally mobilized, its members, all specially prepared for the job, were fobbed off with briefings and not allowed to cover the action.28

If Panama did little to foster trust between the media and the military, the war in the Persian Gulf lifted matters to a new plateau of acrimony. At the outset of DESERT SHIELD, things looked generally promising. Cheney quickly activated the seventeen-member Media Pool—only to learn that King Fahd of Saudi Arabia refused to grant visas to reporters. Some journalists simply flew to Bahrain and crossed the border into Saudi Arabia illegally—the “unilaterals,” prowling on the margins of the conflict, in constant fear of expulsion by the U.S. military or the Saudi police.29 When CNN began to broadcast from Baghdad, however, Fahd was persuaded to lift his ban. The pool got its initial briefing five days after the first U.S. troops deployed in Saudi Arabia in early August. It remained in existence for three weeks, even as the forces in Saudi Arabia were being swamped by 1,600 other reporters. In response to this massive media interest in the first large-scale military deployment since Vietnam, the military organized new, ad hoc press pools; accredited reporters who agreed to abide by security regulations would be escorted in small groups to visit military positions and be briefed by unit commanders. “Noncompetitive” ground rules made photographs, notes, and stories available to reporters not in the pools; the military would transmit the stories back to parent news organizations, using a communications facility in Dhahran.

Despite appearances of success, however, the pool system as practiced in the Gulf War had several problems. The primary issue was what seemed to journalists to amount to censorship and manipulation, arising from tight restrictions on all media travel. Press veterans of Vietnam were rapidly disabused of the notion that they would be free to flit about the war zone, then return to Dhahran to file stories. In fact, most reporters never saw the war; only 186 reporters ever joined the news pools, less than 10 percent of the journalists enrolled by the Central Command’s Joint Information Bureau.

Also, journalists rapidly concluded that logistical support for the pools was low in the military’s priorities, and that this was intentional. Requests to visit units were frequently rejected because of lack of transport (when not declined for security concerns). The system was cumbersome and unresponsive to breaking news. The military did not file pool products expeditiously. The media tours were “too canned.” Ultimately, chafing under restrictions, journalists charged

“The great strength of American journalism is its amateur nature. Anyone can become a reporter. This guarantees many different perspectives.”

...
that delays and press-shy officers reflected a command mandate that there were to be “no bad stories.”

Worse, from the press viewpoint, “When the war happened, we couldn’t see it.” Veteran reporter Walter Cronkite later insisted that the Pentagon’s censorship policy in the Persian Gulf “severely restricted the right of reporters and photographers to accompany our troops into action, as had been permitted in all our previous wars.” Two Australian scholars concluded that “the campaign to liberate Kuwait was perhaps the most underreported and media-managed conflict in history.”

The U.S. Marines—who perhaps realize more than the other services the value of the press—welcomed journalists, but ironically, even this openness backfired. The media later claimed that it had been unwittingly co-opted into an elaborate deception designed to draw attention to the Marine amphibious force off the coast—a force that the joint commander in chief, General Norman Schwarzkopf, did not intend to employ—so as to distract the Iraqis from the true objectives. The press charged that General Schwarzkopf had deceived it in other ways as well. One was the false impression given that precision, laser-guided ordnance dominated the air campaign. Another was exaggeration of the success of Patriot missiles in intercepting Iraqi Scuds (although these claims had been made in good faith). To such complaints the military simply replied that it could not have allowed the media to reveal the coalition’s true plans—especially not the “left hook” through the desert of southern Iraq into Kuwait.

If it strained media-military relations, the pool system also—by its emphasis on collective effort and shared products—divided the journalistic fraternity itself. Journalists are competitors by nature, not team players. “[Competition] is their livelihood. They don’t like the other guy’s take on a story. [A public affairs officer] cannot tell other reporters what each is working on. That’s death!”

Unable to compete freely for stories, reporters in the Gulf and their employers sought ways to circumvent the rules. The larger press organizations plotted to exclude members of smaller or independent ones from pools or groups selected for particular visits; certain “nontraditional” media in the field, like women’s magazines, fought to be included. Reporters jostled to lobby public affairs officers or generals for priority. Such infighting, combined with arbitrary selection procedures for pool trips, sometimes pushed aside reporters experienced in military matters in favor of novices. A few journalists evaded pool restrictions by becoming “pet journalists,” willing to report favorably on a general or unit in return for access to the front.

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Ultimately, in the view of media cognoscenti, the Gulf War pool system produced a mediocre product. It seemed to these veteran reporters an undifferentiated pap, distilled from the collective observations of the few journalists allowed into the field, rather than the creative perceptions of individual reporters free to fashion stories out of the raw drama they observed. They thought the journalistic quality of pool stories “depressing. . . . [A]bout one in ten has anything in it that’s useful. . . . It’s really pretty superficial stuff.”

Pools, therefore, are not popular with the press, which sees them as attempts to limit access and thereby censor, even manipulate, information. The immediate postwar result was the issuance of new guidelines declaring, “Open and independent reporting will be the principal means of coverage of U.S. military operations.” The directive retains the option of censorship—a clause that the media decided not to protest, believing that “security reviews” would soon become unenforceable, for reasons discussed below.

**Embedded Media**

The advent of “operations other than war” and journalists’ objections to the pool system revived the concept of “embedded media,” an approach first used in World War II and Vietnam, applied in Haiti in 1994, and expanded for the Bosnia intervention the next year. In this arrangement, a reporter is assigned a unit, deploys with it, and lives with it throughout a lengthy period of operations. All in uniform are considered spokespersons for the military and for their missions. However, interviewers must nevertheless respect soldiers’ privacy, as well as operational security. Rules also prohibit reporting on intelligence collection, special operations, or casualties.

“Embedding” reporters in units has much to offer both sides. These reporters, who usually bond with their units, are likely to appreciate the difficulties of the mission and tend to file favorable reports. On the other hand, the military cannot hope to mask bad policy or hide incompetence from such journalists. In general, living together breaks down media-military hostility, allows the press to blend into the operational landscape, and in turn makes soldiers far less self-conscious about the presence of reporters—whom they often respect for sharing their dangers and hardships. The reporters get their stories, and the military gets free and generally favorable publicity for a job it performs with great credit. “I learn stuff every day with a unit,” a veteran correspondent observes. “I’ve never been in a front line unit that didn’t enjoy having reporters. . . . [They see it] as a sign that the American people are interested. The troops really love it. I was called ‘our reporter.’”

“Embedding” also attracts criticism, however. The media worry that reporters may identify too closely with “their” units and lose journalistic objectivity.
For its part, the military dreads the off-the-record conversation or the minor or poorly understood event that produces an unflattering story. Loose lips sink not only ships but careers—and few officers who run afoul of the press today are likely to receive the sustained high-level support needed to save General Patton. In Bosnia, reporter Tom Ricks once reported in print that an American battalion commander had told African-American troops in his command, by way of warning, that Croats are racists. The subsequent ruckus produced in the military what is called the “Ricks Rule”—that all conversations with journalists are off the record unless otherwise specified. Even that is considered weak protection against reportorial bad faith: “Any [public affairs officer] will tell you that there is no such thing as ‘off the record.’ There is no legal basis for it. There is only a thin journalist ethic.” Ricks himself argues, however, that the “rule” betrays unwillingness of seniors to support subordinates, and ultimately distrust of civilian control of the military: “The amount of stuff I don’t publish is astounding.”

KOSOVO AND THE FUTURE
The last decade has produced factors likely to make media-military relations more difficult than ever to manage. They include the advent of humanitarian operations, an increasing use by the United States of airpower and stand-off weapons, the “war on terrorism,” and the emergence of “information operations.” Further, changing technological and institutional features of news coverage have outpaced formal attempts to order media-military relations. These factors first began to manifest themselves in the Nato attempt in 1999 to expel Yugoslav troops from the province of Kosovo.

Kosovo
Both the media and the U.S. military embarked upon Nato’s bombing campaign with deep reservations. The media was profoundly skeptical of the undertaking, an attitude that got its dealings with the military off on the wrong foot. Kosovo, the first war that Nato nations had fought since DESERT STORM, was scripted in the same way, less the ground invasion. Nato’s fundamental assumptions—that airpower alone was sufficient, that President Slobodan Milosevic of Yugoslavia would bend to the alliance’s will without a ground assault—had been debated only in private, within alliance councils and the U.S. executive branch. In agreement with broad sectors of expert and popular opinion, most correspondents believed that these assumptions amounted to wishful thinking. Most newsrooms sensed that the air strategy was simply the “lowest common denominator” available to an irresolute and deeply fractured alliance. Nor did Nato bolster its credibility with the press when its miscalculation of Milosevic’s resolve became clear. Far from capitulating in a matter of days, if not hours, Milosevic remained
defiant and intensified his torment of Kosovo Albanians. In the view of many journalists, neither the American nor the British peoples had an emotional investment in the conflict; both governments, the media concluded, would abandon the effort rather than undertake a ground invasion.⁴⁵

Inevitably, then, the press was wary of information supplied by the military. Press conferences evoked the media’s unhappy Gulf War memories of press pools, denial of access, obfuscation, and apparent manipulation; the press resolved not to be fooled twice. Because reporters had scant access to Kosovo, it could not see “ethnic cleansing.” Nor could it effectively cover the air war.⁴⁶ Nato-supplied videos of precise strikes made the strikes appear to be extremely accurate—but so had they appeared during the Gulf War, when only a small percentage of the coalition air arsenals turned out to have been precision guided munitions. The fact that Nato aircraft were ordered to fly higher than fifteen thousand feet over Serbia and Kosovo seemed to confirm media pessimism over the ability of air strikes to prevent ethnic cleansing.⁴⁷

Humanitarian Operations

On the surface, the advent of humanitarian operations has removed several sources of tension in media-military relations. Censorship is seldom an issue; operational security is not paramount, and the military is usually unable to deny the press access to the theater even if it wished to. In fact, humanitarian intervention has stood the traditional relationship between the American military and the press on its head. Unlike wartime, national survival is not at stake; the main effort is political, not military. The deployed force is only one of several organizations involved, and its mission is merely to facilitate the work of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civilian governmental organizations, which have the primary tasks. “In the end, it is the NGOs’ war to win or lose.”⁴⁸

Therefore, press pools, if deployed, are merely temporary expedients, quickly abandoned. In fact, the media usually arrive before the military does; where in wartime the military briefs reporters on the situation, in peace operations reporters are usually better informed than the soldiers.⁴⁹

Still, the tensions inherent in media-military relations do not dissipate at a stroke. On the contrary, they are complicated, particularly by the presence of nongovernmental organizations. Military commanders often believe the media have drawn them into operations that they view as dilutions of their true mission of fighting wars. The root problem seems to be that humanitarian operations

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The media offers the military a means to tell its story. The press has its own incentives to report on military affairs. Therefore, both the media and the military have reasons to work with the other.
typically lack high-level direction; policy vacuums form, in which the media are susceptible to the influence of NGOs—which “are increasingly involving themselves directly in social, political, and even at times, military matters.” NGOs, the argument goes, depend for funding on publicity and accordingly solicit the media to disseminate pictures of starving children and desperate refugees, thereby generating pressure on the politicians, who in turn catapult soldiers into altruistic but poorly conceived missions.

Perhaps, as some correspondents believe, the isolation from the media of intervention forces, in their protected compounds, puts them at a distinct disadvantage in any battle with NGOs to sway public perceptions. Others are not so sure; because nongovernmental organizations are frequently international, they lack drawing power for an American press corps focused on a national news market. Additionally, the media often find it difficult to understand a contradictory NGO culture that combines hard business attitudes with a “flaky-do-gooder” image.

The Somalia intervention of 1992–95 began as an object lesson in media-military cooperation. The media were waiting on the beach when Navy SEALs landed as part of a “signal” to the Somali militias about the power of U.S. forces. However, relations soon went downhill. The media categorically refused thereafter to submit to military control. As the security situation deteriorated, the media images of starving Somalis were blamed for the decision to intervene in the first place, for contributing to “mission creep,” and finally, for undermining popular support by focusing on casualties. For the military Somalia offered further proof of the media’s power to inflict a “stab in the back,” as in Vietnam.

The operation in Haiti in September 1994, however, saw a much more harmonious relationship. Ground rules were worked out in advance, and the press willingly complied with most of the military’s operational security concerns. A Joint Information Bureau, set up by the intervention force in Port-au-Prince, processed requests from 1,300 journalists to visit units. No escort officers were requested or supplied. The only hint that media might be driving policy occurred when news reports caused the U.S. military to intervene to stop beatings of Aristide supporters by paramilitary forces loyal to deposed President Raoul Cedras.

*Air Campaigns and the Media*

Whatever progress was made during the humanitarian operations of the 1990s was disrupted, as we have seen, in Kosovo—in part because Nato chose to fight that war with airpower alone. From a media standpoint, the air campaign meant renewed dependence on the military for information. There are only three ways, all unsatisfactory, to cover an air war. A reporter can “hitch a ride” on an aircraft; this may give technical insights into how an air war is prosecuted, but a
correspondent is unlikely to be able to gauge its effects from fifteen thousand feet in the air. The second option is to sit through military briefings and look at videos of precision strikes—that is, what the military wants the press to see. This leaves the third option, which is for reporters to cross the lines to get the other side’s version.

The press received a particular incentive to elicit Serb and Russian accounts when Nato and Pentagon spokesmen and the Supreme Allied Commander contradicted each other in their responses to the mistaken bombing of a convoy of refugee tractors near Djakovica on 19 April 1999. Nato “couldn’t get its own story straight.”

Collateral damage, rather than ethnic cleansing and the refugee crisis, threatened to become the central issue of the Kosovo conflict, undermining the moral credibility of, and hence public support for, the campaign. The problem was compounded by the fact that Nato’s stand-off air campaign made the alliance look like a ponderous Goliath assaulting a nimble David—a problem repeated in Afghanistan.

Information Operations

Information operations, an outgrowth of “information warfare,” emerge from the idea that instantaneous communications have revolutionized warfare. They have certainly revolutionized press coverage—with the result, some argue, that open media information is a more important dimension of information operations than familiar technical issues like “cyber attack.” Kosovo focused attention on the role in conflict of media images; the view emerged that the will of a population to prosecute a conflict can be undermined by media-generated images, and that therefore the media strategy must be an integral part of a campaign plan. “Public information is a battle space,” it was argued, “that must be contested and controlled like any other.”

The room for improvement was obvious. A militarily weak Milosevic repeatedly forced the Nato allies onto the defensive by showcasing collateral damage caused by bombing. Nato’s slow and sometimes inaccurate responses wounded its credibility. Nato’s press offices were understaffed and lacked specialists able to monitor Yugoslav media and anticipate propaganda ploys. Nato had no integrated, forceful public-relations/information campaign. Separate briefings in London, Washington, and Brussels often sent conflicting signals.

However, concentration on information operations is a potentially dangerous development in media-military—even civil-military—relations. It has led enthusiasts to view information as a commodity to be manipulated for operational advantage, rather than as a shared trust. In any case, the concept is nothing new in war; in 1870, for instance, Otto von Bismarck edited the “Ems dispatch” to goad Louis Napoleon into declaring war on Prussia. A new element was the
press’s willingness to go to the enemy for sources—as in Kosovo, and in Peter
Arnett’s famous broadcasts from Baghdad during the Gulf War—opening a
channel for the enemy’s own information operations. Osama Bin Laden,
and even the media-shy Taliban regime, discovered Al-Jazeera and the small,
Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic News Agency to be useful vehicles for dissemi-
nating their messages in the Muslim world, messages that invariably found
echoes in the Western news media. The perceived need to do so stems in part
from the reluctance of the military to supply information, to impose
“gray-outs” that leave the press hungry for material and instigate charges of se-
crecy and manipulation.

Some even in the defense community argue that to treat information as a
“battle space” has “dreadful implications,” that mixing public affairs with infor-
mation operations could do great harm.\textsuperscript{58} BBC news set the “gold standard” for
millions during World War II precisely in that, unlike its Axis competitors, it
vowed to broadcast the bad news as well as the good. By manipulating media
images for operational advantage, the military courts skepticism and hostility.
The 1999 bombing of Serb television facilities suggests that in future conflicts
journalists may be regarded as military targets. Foreign governments may re-
taliate against Western reporters, closing off an important information channel.
In the end, the public may become inoculated against government pronounce-
ments of success, as during the Vietnam War, and withdraw its support.

Finally, to treat information as “battle space” confuses operational success
with strategic victory. If goals are clear, popular, and achievable at reasonable
cost, no amount of media manipulation by either side will decide the issue. U.S.
public support for the Kosovo war remained unshaken despite pictures of collat-
eral damage, despite even the Chinese embassy bombing. The effectiveness of
Serbian media ploys—such as posting its stories on the World Wide Web, in
English—should not be exaggerated.\textsuperscript{59}

\textbf{Changes in the Media Environment}

Two trends in the media world—one technological, the other market related—seem
to offer contradictory indications about the future of media-military interac-
tion. Technological advances are likely to make information increasingly avail-
able to the press and independent of military control. Market trends, however,
suggest that the media’s dependence on the military for sellable material will
increase.

In future operations in which security risks are high, the military will no
doubt insist on control of information; however, “security at the source” (that is,
at the level of the individual service member) will necessarily become the rule,
because media infrastructures like “joint information bureaus” are already
becoming irrelevant. Journalists can file directly from the field, anywhere on the globe, using cell phones, the Internet, and remote-area network data systems transmitting compressed video signals. Satellite, microwave, and fiber-optics systems are becoming miniaturized and increasingly mobile. Reporters have access to commercial satellite images that can reveal such things as troop deployments—making refusals for reasons of security to guide press pools to deployed units less credible and effective. In fact, the security issue may soon be reversed: an enemy missile could home on a reporter’s signal. Commanders in the future may have to ask reporters willing to take that risk to move several hundred yards away from their positions first.

The advances in technology, of course, cut both ways. Satellite imagery can be easily modified. Video images are for the moment more difficult to alter, but that will change. Manufactured videos and misleading stories can be posted on the Internet. The media itself should be the first line of defense, filtering this information to determine its credibility. But if journalists suspect that they are being censored, denied information, manipulated, or deceived by their own military, they may be more inclined to give the other side’s version of events the benefit of the doubt.

Notwithstanding the media’s new ability to collect and disseminate information independently, it is unlikely to go entirely its own way. A balance will probably be struck, not least because the long-term market trends are poor for foreign news coverage in general, and for military stories in particular. Today the media, though multinational in organization, must increasingly focus on regional niche markets. News is a business, and polls and focus groups inform editors that the priorities of the public are local news first, foreign news last. CNN, for instance, has begun regional production to feed “foreign” news to the markets where it is not foreign. In the United States, the international news most likely to be covered is that which produces the most dramatic footage or has an American connection. To obtain such material, the U.S. media needs the military; in that framework, the military itself is the story.

The media perceives that the American public suffers from “compassion fatigue.” What sells a story is not the crisis but the fact that the military arrives to do something about it. “Unless U.S. troops are involved, it is difficult to convince an editor that a story is worthwhile.” In any case, there is strong marketing pressure on the media to conform to audience expectations; it is not in the interest even of an international news organization like CNN to show footage, or give its reporting a slant, that will offend the sensibilities of the American public. In fact, the criticism of the allegedly “liberal” American media after 11 September 2001 was that they became cheerleaders for the War on Terrorism, “a knee-jerk pandering to the public,” according to Australian journalist Carwyn...
James, “reflecting a mood of patriotism rather than informing viewers of the complex, sometimes harsh realities they need to know.” For his part, CNN president Walter Isaacson confessed, “If you get on the wrong side of public opinion, you are going to get in trouble.”

This creates a great initial advantage for the military—if, that is, it embraces the media rather than shuns them.

Indeed, ignorance and misinformation are far more dangerous for the military than is informed reporting, however critical in tone. But the media need help here. Because the press is fragmented, competitive, sometimes ignorant of military realities, and constantly whiplashed between the demands of the market and those of journalistic ethics, however defined, the quality of coverage of military events is inevitably uneven at best. Today, however, the situation is aggravated by the fact that newsrooms are no longer “old-boys networks,” inclined to accept some of the military’s more traditional ways as part of the journalistic landscape. The tendency of unprepared reporters, charging from crisis to crisis, unaware of the issues at stake or of how the military functions, is to frame complex matters in simplistic ways—or even to indulge in “gotcha” journalism (focusing on errors and misstatements). For its part, the military owes access to information both to Congress and the American people. Furthermore, it needs to get its story out—for the military will be competing with other groups, and enemies, eager to put their “spin” on events. To do this, it needs the media.

It will be impossible in the future to embargo news, as has sometimes been done in the past. An artificial news vacuum would be filled by “on-line correspondents,” nongovernmental organizations, and even the enemy. The media gravitates toward the sources that are most obvious and available; tyrants and terrorists like Saddam, Milosevic, and Bin Laden learned to welcome reporters. Future enemies can be expected to develop sophisticated media strategies to draw attention to, and assign external blame for, the suffering of their people; the possibilities available to them for distortion, manipulation, and disinformation are growing. Therefore, it is imperative that the U.S. military establish a solid working relationship with the media, that it integrate them into its strategy—and not keep reporters at arm’s length, as if they were hostile interlopers in a private domain.

NOTES


10. Ambrose, Eisenhower, p. 129.


12. Eisenhower, Eisenhower at War, p. 219. For Patton’s and Bill Mauldin’s mutual antipathy—Patton was sure the “Willie and Joe” cartoonist was trying to “incite a goddamn mutiny,” and Mauldin thought “the stupid bastard was crazy”—see Carlo D’Este, Patton: A Genius for War (New York: HarperCollins, 1995), pp. 543, 694–5.


19. General John Shalikashvili, USA, quoted in Aukofer and Lawrence, chap. 3.

20. Tom Ricks, interview with author, 23 June 2000. Charles Moskos cautions that one must not take the “amateur” nature of journalists too far. Journalists are professionals “in the sense that they are trained in their vocation, have a corporate self-identity, and serve in an institution that is a cornerstone of a democratic society.” Moskos, p. 47.


22. Aukofer and Lawrence, introduction.


24. Fialka, p. 27.

25. Publisher Larry Flynt unsuccessfully sued the Defense Department, claiming that denial of access to the battlefield on Grenada was a violation of First Amendment rights.

27. For Cheney’s attitude, see Aukofer and Lawrence, p. 5.

28. The press center was inadequately equipped, which delayed stories up to four days. On 30 March 1990, the Joint Chiefs of Staff issued new guidance for public affairs requiring regional commanders in chief to coordinate all public affairs activities with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, provide guidance for all public affairs activities, offer adequate communication and transport support, and ensure the implementation of all Defense public affairs policies and programs. For the up-to-date version, see Doctrine for Public Affairs in Joint Operations, Joint Publication 3-61 (Washington, D.C.: Joint Staff, 14 May 1997).


30. See Fialka.


33. Young and Jesser, p. 281.

34. For a summary of media and military attitudes in the Gulf War, see Aukofer and Lawrence, chap. 2.


36. Fialka, p. 41.

37. Ibid., p. 5


40. Ricks interview.

41. General Mike Dugan was fired as chief of staff of the U.S. Air Force by Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney in September 1990 after a reporter allowed to fly back to Washington on Dugan’s plane quoted him as saying that the Gulf War would consist of a massive air campaign targeting Saddam Hussein. Two years later, a reporter took exception to a comment by the commander of U.S. forces in the Pacific, Adm. Richard Macke, concerning an Okinawan rape case, ending the admiral’s career.

42. Anderson interview.

43. Ricks interview.

44. Some believe that media skepticism was a predictable by-product of the military’s tendency to view one conflict through the lens of another. If so, this phenomenon is hardly unique to the media—and Somalia remains the gold standard for those dubious of the benefits of humanitarian operations.

45. See Roberts and Strobel.

46. Two hundred fifty reporters were allowed to fly in Nato aircraft and interview ground crews. This generated stories on the complexity of carrying out an air campaign but gave little insight into how well Nato’s air strategy was working. Indeed, pictures of apparently unscathed Serbian tanks leaving Kosovo at the conclusion of the conflict gave the impression that airpower had been a complete shambles. Gary Pounder [Maj., USAF], “Opportunity Lost: Public Affairs, Information Operations, and the Air War against Serbia,” Aerospace Power Journal, Summer 2000, pp. 70–1.

47. The media assumption was that high-altitude flying had been ordered to avoid casualties. It did in fact lessen the threat of surface-to-air missiles and antiaircraft artillery, but it also increased the accuracy of precision guided weapons, by affording more guidance time from a more stable controlling aircraft.


52. Moskos, p. 33.

53. Veteran journalist Warren Strobel argues that it was not the casualties per se that provoked the military withdrawal from Somalia. Rather, the downing of a Blackhawk helicopter reignited a policy debate in Washington over the escalating goals and risks of the operation, a debate that had become dormant because of the good news to that point and apparently low costs. The media highlighted the true costs of the operation in a particularly dramatic way. Strobel, p. 221.

54. Ricks interview.

55. Ignatieff, p. 162.


58. One is Colonel P. J. Crowley, USAF (Ret.), Principal Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, quoted in Pounder, pp. 60, 65.

59. A Nato spokesman points out that these events did impact public opinion in Nato countries where support for the war was soft, like Germany, Italy, and Greece. "Partners or Partisans?"

60. Some of these technical developments are discussed in Young and Jesser, pp. 12–4.


64. "News versus Snooze."
This “letter” marks the beginning of a new department wherein from time to time Professor Geoffrey Wawro of the Naval War College’s Center for Naval Warfare Studies will report on his research visits to places and events of strategic or technological interest. This relatively informal approach—a departure in style and tone from the articles, essays, and reviews that are this journal’s stock in trade—is an attempt to share a special and valuable kind of insight developed in the normal course of the College’s work.

Geoffrey Wawro is professor of strategic studies in the Naval War College’s Center for Naval Warfare Studies. Specializing in military and naval history, especially European, he earned a doctorate at Yale University in 1992. He has taught at Yale, Oakland University (in Rochester, Michigan), and previously at the Naval War College. Since 2000 he has appeared on cable television as the anchor of the History Channel’s program Hardcover History. His most recent book is Warfare and Society in Europe, 1792–1914 (Routledge, 2000). His shorter publications include journal articles, op-ed pieces, and entries in the Oxford Companion to Military History (2001). Professor Wawro’s travel in Iran occurred in August 2001. Photographs by the author.
OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

LETTER FROM IRAN

Geoffrey Wawro

In Frankfurt airport, I witnessed an unexpected phenomenon. The Iran Air flight that will carry me to Tehran is disgorging its Frankfurt-bound load of passengers, Iranians all. As they disembark, the women stop in the departure lounge to remove their *hejabs*—*chador*, *rouposh*, and head scarf—and brazenly comb out their hair before applying makeup to face and nails. Already I begin to doubt the severity of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Backsliding like this in the early days of the revolution would have been punished by black-shirted “moral police.” When my outbound flight is called, dozens of homeward-bound women irritably unpack their *hejabs* and put them on.

The airliner descends on Tehran through a noxious haze of carbon and nitrogen monoxide, ozone, and sulfur. The classic panorama of the Elborz Mountains and snow-capped Mount Damavand is nowadays seen through a chemical fog that all but bleaches the mountains from view. On the ground, I am confronted with grim-faced women in black *chadors* who scrutinize my passport and then very cordially let me in. I change a hundred dollars at Bank Melli and suddenly have more money than I know what to do with. Wherever one goes in Iran, a fine dinner will cost no more than three dollars, a long cab ride twenty-five cents.

The traffic in Tehran is deadly. Though the city contains the usual array of traffic lights, signs, and crosswalks, no one pays the slightest attention to them. This is not like Rome or Paris, where pushy motorists will clog up the streets or nudge you off the pavement; this is a place where every traffic signal is routinely
ignored. Cairo is the only other place I have been that is even remotely like this. On the first day, visitors are frozen with fear. By the last day, they have adjusted and get around the way everyone else does—by wits, eyes in the back of the head, and imploring eye contact with every approaching motorist, at risk of death. Because of drought while I was there, Tehran was cutting off the water in a different part of the city every day. If one’s hotel was in such an area, bad luck—no shower, no toilet, no running water.

I visited the former American embassy, a vast, forested compound in the heart of Tehran, now occupied by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC, Sepah for short). Anyone who thinks the size of the place connotes American neo-imperialism must drive by the British and Russian embassies. Built on land deeded over in the nineteenth century (when Britain and Russia vied for control of Persia), they are much bigger—town-sized, high-walled tracts on Ferdosi Street, the most desirable artery of central Tehran. The wall outside the U.S. embassy is painted with anti-American slogans (“The U.S. will be made to suffer a great defeat”—“America, our most hated enemy after the Qods [Jerusalem] occupier regime”—“We shall mourn on the day that America praises us”) and murals depicting the 1988 USS Vincennes shoot-down of Iran Air flight 655. Though 290 Iranian passengers and crew were killed in that incident, no pedestrian or motorist pays the least attention to these incitements; rather, they hurry past without glancing at them, or sit in traffic without looking over. Next to the gate, the seal of the United States of America has been chiseled off, though its traces are still discernible. Peering through a crack in the gate, one sees that the embassy (which will revert to the United States in time) is in a sad state of decay. The fountains are dry, the steps broken up and strewn with gravel, the cypresses parched, the lawns dried up, the building thrown open to the elements. A passerby hazarded to me that the Pasdarans (revolutionary guards) are “probably” using the main building as a school. Another thought it might be a military headquarters, which is more likely, for the walls are manned by sentries.

The National Archaeological Museum, built by the Pahlavis in the 1930s to exalt Iran’s pre-Islamic past, is a beautiful, French-designed building, now decreasingly visited because of the heroin addicts that lounge around the entrance. Next to it is a horrid, poorly ventilated building put up since the revolution to rival its pagan collection with an Islamic one that, I thought, failed to impress—calligraphy, pots, jugs, scimitars, and so on. The building itself was vintage East German, thin marble facades pasted onto cement, cracked tiles, and plenty of glass to let in the roasting sun.

Waiting on the tarmac at Mehrabad Airport to board the flight that would take me south to Kerman, on the dusty edge of Baluchistan, I studied the plane. It looked like a Boeing 727 but cruder. I looked closer and saw that it was a
Tu-154. Observing my interest, the pilot strolled over and invited me to fly with him in the cockpit. I accepted and sat the whole way on a jump-seat between the pilot and copilot. This was fortunate, because Iranian flights are heavily subsidized; a two-hour flight costs no more than twenty dollars, so every seat on every flight is taken, no exceptions. The Tupolev is an uncomfortable plane, only superficially like the Boeing; it has feeble air conditioning, and the seats hardly recline. The flight engineer was a Russian who had come with the aircraft. He was a big, amiable Slav with a ready smile; he winked when I asked what he did for vodka. The pilot had been a lieutenant in the Imperial Iranian Air Force before the revolution. Trained in Texas, where he had learned to fly F-5 Freedom Fighters, he loved America; indeed, like so many of the shah's veterans, he seemed American, having absorbed its ways in the United States and in his dealings with the large American military advisory group based in Iran in the 1970s. However, like everyone I met who had been in the shah's armed forces, he refused to criticize the new regime; rather, he seemed to see himself as an Iranian patriot, whatever the form of government. On our approach to Kerman, we flew at ten thousand feet over “Desert One,” a speck in the desert of Dasht-e Kavir between Yazd and Tabas, where the hostage rescue mission came to grief in April 1980.

Deplaning in Kerman, I was shoved aside by a horde of chador-clad pilgrims returning from the Shia holy places at Karbala in Iraq. They swarmed into the arrival hall and gazed in awe at the baggage carousel. Clearly they had never seen anything like it. They would shriek and gesticulate wonderingly each time the bags circled the conveyor and reappeared. This was my first glimpse of the gulf between town and country in Iran. In Kerman, I met my guide and interpreter. An Iranian Kurd and another ex-pilot in the IIAF (also F-5s), in the next two weeks he would take me anywhere I wanted to go and translate virtually any conversation I wanted to have. He also had little love for the Islamic Republic, but, like the pilot who had flown me to Kerman, he was an Iranian patriot through and through.

We drove two hundred kilometers to Bam, a sprawling walled city and citadel begun two thousand years ago by the Parthians. Abandoned in the early nineteenth century, it has been a ghost town ever since, baking under a hard sun against a backdrop of craggy, brown mountains. The Pahlavis kept a small garrison here.
until 1931, and one can stand in the commandant’s lodge in the citadel and look out at the bleak vista of desert and dust, experiencing for a moment the isolation and hopelessness that must have afflicted every soldier posted here. The drive to Bam and back gave a glimpse of the Islamic Republic’s war on drugs. Since we were near the Afghan and Pakistani borders, we were continually stopped by heavily armed police looking for heroin and opium. Nowhere was there the least hint of baksheesh-seeking corruption; rather, the police would glance at my U.S. passport and wave us on with a smile and without even popping the trunk. There are quite a few Afghans in southeastern Iran, and Gypsies too—whom the Iranians call “Kabuli,” believing them to have originated there. Also, there are many Baluchis; their straw lean-tos and campfires are to be seen along the road. They have returned to their traditional nomadic ways since the Pahlavi years, when they were forcibly settled. Those forced settlements—also visible from the road—bake mostly empty in the sun. Squat, windowless, mud blockhouses, they look as inhospitable as Palestinian camps I once visited on the West Bank.

Most of Iran is desert, though whenever I would say this, my guide would protest. He would wave at a blighted, glistering plain of sand and stone and pronounce it fertile and green. “Desert” to an Iranian is a salt desert, like the Dasht-e Kavir; everything else can be sown with dates, figs, and pistachios and watered with sprinklers or the ancient subterranean canals called qanats. We drove through many small towns and villages. Most are clean and tidy, in a very un-third-world way. Each is placarded with the regime’s cult of death—portraits of martyrs everywhere, almost always men killed in the 1980–88 war with Iraq. A typical mural depicts a martyr lying on a bed of red tulips, blood gushing from a neck wound. Underneath it says, in tall letters, “He is gone; what have you done?” No one pays any attention to the bloody pictures or their exhortations—“A martyr is a true man,” “Martyrdom is another word for honesty.” It is interesting that these billboards are not faded and weathered but fresh. The Iraq war has been over for fourteen years, but the Iranian government keeps the memory alive. Death, blood, and suicidal sacrifice are the keynotes of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and his hard-liners. The majority of the population, born or matured since the war, resents this morbid cult of blood and tulips.
From Kerman we drove in my guide’s Iranian Peugeot for seven hours at high speed to Shiraz. The roads are good. The government has invested heavily in public works, to solve the unemployment problem (25 percent or higher), and the roads reflect it—few potholes and a good surface, though no shoulders. The road crews I saw throughout the trip were state employees or contractors, all with modern equipment. I had read that the basiji (paramilitary youth brigades) were being press-ganged into this kind of work but saw no evidence of it anywhere. The drivers are bad. Deadly wrecks litter the roadside; we passed a large truck on its side, steel pipes scattered like matchsticks, the driver hunkered over, grimacing with pain. My driver flew past without stopping, like everyone else on the road. As we sped along, Radio Iran announced a gasoline price hike; the first eight gallons would continue to cost twenty cents a gallon, but every gallon over eight would now cost sixty cents. My driver spat curses and furiously thumped the steering wheel for a full minute—though in fact gasoline is cheaper than bottled water in Iran, which, at twenty-five cents per liter, costs five times more. Having pledged to right the wrongs of the Pahlavis, the Islamic Republic has created a kind of socialism. Gas is subsidized, as are utilities, rents, and food. In the cities, people line up in front of state depots to collect cut-price bread, meat, rice, and cooking oil, for which they are issued monthly coupons.

Shiraz was balm to my tired, dusty soul. It is the most elegant and sophisticated city in Iran. Once famed for its vineyards—the Syrah grape originated here—it is dry now, but it has other charms, namely its gardens, lively streets, and beautiful women. The latter disdain, in much larger numbers than anywhere else but Tehran, the chador and appear in what might be called “sexy hejab,” a snug-fitting manteau, or housecoat, a scarf barely covering their hair and full makeup. They stare and giggle shamelessly and flirt with the young men. Mullah Sada Street, the fashionable zone of Shiraz, is a wonderful place, with restaurants, shops, and handsome young people rummaging with wild, materialistic abandon through clothing and electronic stores. I first saw an Iranian prostitute here, a homely, middle-aged woman in full hejab standing on the curb. She would engage men in conversation, which I thought strange in this land of feminine modesty.

My guide put me in the picture. All of this behavior is proscribed by the prim Islamic Republic, but in Shiraz no one seems to care. Shiraz also has more “cafénets”—Internet cafés—than other places. When I called up Yahoo mail in one of them, I found that my Iranian predecessor had forgotten to close his mailbox. I curiously scanned the subjects of his messages. They were all about girls, love, and sex: “Where the girls are”—“How to meet single women”—“Sex, sex, sex”—and so on. The mullahs are in a losing battle with human nature and hormones, and they know it. The editors of Tehran’s English-language dailies,
the *Iran News* and *Tehran Times*, rail every day against sensuality, decadence, “consumerism,” and “westernization,” and they vow (unconvincingly) to extirpate all four from Islamic life.

Meanwhile, the front pages speak only of the economy, a daily litany of high unemployment, low living standards, and interminable recession. With its young population, Iran needs eight hundred thousand new jobs a year, but it is falling short. Unless they fix the economy—this failed “socialism in one country”—the mullahs are in trouble. But to do that, they must open to the West, which they fear would bury the Islamic Republic under Gaps, Tower Records, Blockbusters, and Burger Kings. So it is that Iran goes nowhere, throttled by its internal contradictions and its dread of the global economy.

On the outskirts of Shiraz I visited the military museum, which is really the last Pahlavi’s gun collection on public display. Shah Muhammed Reza, who reigned from 1941 to 1979, was truly eccentric, obsessed to an unnatural degree with weapons and firearms. We know that he personally ordered every piece of hardware for the imperial armed forces (after hungrily devouring the catalogs and brochures of the foreign manufacturers), but did we know that he collected virtually every rifle and sidearm made in the world from the eighteenth century to 1979? The museum is also interesting for its ideological laziness—labels mentioning and even exalting the shah have not been changed. Like the Krupp howitzers and Bofors guns rusting in the courtyard, the labels are curling and yellowing to dust, fading alongside the photos of Muhammed Reza’s jackbooted colonels supervising construction of the museum in the 1960s.

To stand in the palace of Darius I at Persepolis and look out at the vast sweep of fields and mountains is to grasp the vastness of the ancient Persian Empire. As for Persepolis, a capital built by the Achaemenian dynasty for the purpose of entertaining vassal nations and accepting their tribute, one wonders how Alexander the Great even found the place, let alone conquered it. Today the ruins and tombs fill with a steady stream of Iranians on holiday and large numbers of foreign tourists. It is a spectacular site; the ruins are better at Ephesus, in Turkey, but nowhere else are bas-reliefs like these to be seen. They are 2,500 years old but as clean as if they were carved yesterday. Most depict envoys of subject nations—Parthians, Bactrians, Arabs, Thracians, and many others—paying homage to the Achaemenian emperors, who ruled Iran from 559 to 330 B.C. and are best
remembered by their first names: Cyrus, Darius, Xerxes, and Artaxerxes. All but Cyrus are entombed in the cliffs around Persepolis.

One of the more remarkable aspects of modern Iran is that no statesman entertains irredentist claims to any of the “lost provinces” of the ancient empire, whether in Africa, Europe, or closer to home in Iraq, Turkmenistan, or Afghanistan. Indeed, there was much domestic groaning—and an international outcry—when Shah Muhammed Reza went to Pasargadae in 1971 to visit Cyrus’s tomb. Since his homage to the first Achaemenian—“You are sleeping, we are awake”—seemed to portend a reconquest of the Persian Empire, even the usually solicitous Nixon administration recoiled. (The Saudis went farther, demanding that Washington remove the shah.) But that was the stillborn extent of Iranian irredentism. Contrast this apathy with nationalism like Hungary’s, where even today peddlers do brisk business in the sale of wishful maps depicting a reborn Hungary astride the entire Carpathian Basin.

No less interesting than the ruins of Persepolis are those of the Shah’s notorious “Persepolis party” of October 1971. Held to commemorate “2,500 years of Iranian Empire,” the Persepolis party cost $500 million at a time when most Iranians lived in grinding poverty. I remember reading at the time that the shah lodged his guests in luxurious tents. Passing through a cut in the barbed wire, I entered the old encampment, which is set up like a Michigan suburban subdivision, semicircular cul-de-sacs thrown out from feeder roads divided by exposed, dried-up fountains and water mains. The tents are still there, rusted steel frames flying forlorn scraps of blue and gold canvas. Inside are cracked tile floors, water and waste pipes (if only camping were really like this!), broken toilets and sinks, and amputated power lines. The tents get bigger as one approaches the grand pavilion, where the infamous royal banquet was held—infamous because malnutrition and disease were still chronic in Iran when the shah sat down to that banquet, the culmination of his three-day spectacle. Although the celebration drew only a “B list” of dignitaries—men like Spiro Agnew, Josip Broz Tito, Haile Selassie, Nicolae Ceaucescu, and Jeremy Thorpe*—no expense was spared. The Pahlavis flew in chefs and 180 staff from Maxim’s of Paris and fed their guests ninety peacocks, stuffed roast lamb and truffles, quail’s eggs, two thousand pounds of golden imperial caviar, mousse of crayfish tails, champagne sorbet made with wine of the 1911 vintage, and creamed figs with raspberries in port wine.

By a marvelous coincidence, the British foreign office was declassifying all documents relating to this bacchanal when I stopped in London on the way

home from Iran. I looked over some of the documents while engaged in other re-
search at the Public Record Office in Kew. They reveal that Queen Elizabeth, who
had considered going to Persepolis, was dissuaded by her minders, who called it
“an event too tasteless and dangerous for the Queen of England.” Yet relations
between Iran and the United Kingdom were so delicate that the queen felt con-
strained to offer up the Prince of Wales, so as not to offend the shah at a moment
when the Pahlavis were weighing the purchase of 760 Chieftain tanks. Setting a
sterling example for war college students everywhere, Prince Charles actually re-
fused, declaring that he could not miss a few days of classes at the Royal Naval
College. In the end, Princess Anne and Prince Philip joined what the British for-
eign office judged “a motley collection of heads of state or, more likely, their re-
presentatives.” Anyone who remembers it as a glamorous event was hoodwinked;
a foreign office analyst reminds us that “it [was] the greatest non-event of our
time, a creation of royal despotism taking advantage of the bedazzled mass
media.”

Today the grand pavilion of the Persepolis camp stands erect and apparently
intact, in contrast to the smaller tents. Closer inspection, however, discloses a
Potemkin facade. The rear of the pavilion has been crushed, as if by a bomb or tor-
nado. Air conditioning ducts hang crazily, interior doors and walls are smashed in,
exposing expensive wallpaper and trim. It is an eerie, evocative place.

Back in Shiraz, I successfully penetrated the Madraseh-ye Khan, a serene
seventeenth-century theological college. In my diary I afterward wrote, “I have
wondered where all the hard-liners are, and here they are.” The madrasehs are
where the mullahs train; most of the novices are seventeen to twenty-one years
old. If not exactly the shock troops—most are too dim for that—these are the
foot soldiers of the Islamic Republic; they will become the men who intersperse
Friday prayers all over Iran with anti-Western, anti-Enlightenment injunctions
or flesh out the lower ranks of the civil service. As I strolled around the court-
yard, admiring the architecture and mosaics, I felt eyes boring into me. The boys
live five or six to a room along the second story of the stone-walled school. They
were peering curiously down at me, my interpreter, and two young Frenchmen
who had joined us in the bazaar. “Where are you from?” an English-speaker
called. “America and France.” Shock! “We don’t let Americans into Iran, how did
you get in? Have they reopened the embassy?” There was a burble of excited con-
versation. The youngsters seemed half-scared and half-interested. Gradually
they descended from their rooms to crowd around, many sniffling and coughing
despite the summer heat. I was shocked by their appearance; all were dirty and
rank, their palms sweaty when they shook hands—and this was the Harvard or
Yale of Iranian madrasehs. I was reminded of Nasir-ed Din-Shah, one of the
westernizing Qajar kings of the nineteenth century, who deplored “the vermin-
infested priests who lurk in the corners of the madrasehs.” They did seem rather lousy, and I was scratching afterward.

It suddenly dawned on me that this might be a truer representation of Iran than the beautiful people whom I had been admiring on Mullah Sada Street. These boys were from the villages and the slums, educated just enough to begin to take in, along with the Koran, the prejudices of their elders, several of whom approached to glare at us and then stalk away. They brimmed with questions—that is, for me. The French did not exist for them. The questions give insight into the curriculum at the average madraseh: “Why does America support Israel?” “Why do Americans favor Jews over Palestinians [philistines, in Farsi]?” “Why does America arrest people who go to Cuba?” “Why does America accuse Iran of bombing Khobar Towers when everyone knows that it was the English secret service?” “Why did Clinton have sex with Lewinsky?” “Jesse Jackson had a girl like Lewinsky too, didn’t he?” These credulous boys are exempt from military service. They attend state schools until the eighth grade, spend six years in the madraseh, then three more in Qom, the Vatican of Shi’ism. Their education complete, most return to mosques in their natal villages or neighborhoods. None of the boys could think of anything to say to the two French visitors, not even thanks for succoring Imam Khomeini after he was expelled from Iraq in 1978. Soccer, however, is as avidly followed in the madraseh as everywhere else, and as we left the students shouted their only words of French: “Jean-Pierre Papin!” (a retired player) and “Paris St. Germain!” (a team). My two French companions looked rather glum; such is the hypnotic power of America everywhere you go.

The mausoleum of Shah-e Cheragh is a holy place in Shiraz; there the brother of Imam Reza, one of the twelve imams of Shi’ism, is buried. Sitting inside the mirrored great hall, I saw my first revolutionary guards, members of the Sepah. Although their uniforms are the same faded khaki as those of the soldiers of the Artesh (regular army), they are invariably better turned out and are sometimes armed. These “revolutionary guardians,” or Pasdaran, are also recognizable by their beards and mustaches; the Artesh are clean shaven. The guards also seem pious. In two weeks in Iran, I never saw an Artesh in a mosque, with the sole exception of the Disneylike Imam Khomeini shrine south of Tehran, which is not really a
mosque anyway. Every large mosque had its complement of barefoot Pasdarans, fervently bowing and praying, kissing the holy objects, and backing away from the shrines so as not to turn their back on them (few others observe this nicety). This is not to suggest that all guards are zealots. The Sepah is manned the same way the Artesh is, with twenty-month draftees; many are volunteers from the draft pool who requested assignment to the guards, but others are simply eighteen-year-olds forced into the IRGC to fill quotas.

I met three revolutionary guards of the latter category in the Hafez Gardens of Shiraz. All were from Isfahan, all very nice and oh, so innocent. They thought I was English, because I had said that I speak “Ingilisi.” When my guide came up and explained that I was from the United States, one of the boys asked him, “So, does he speak English or United States?” The other two laughed uproariously. These three had been drafted into the IRGC and were unhappy about it: “They make us pray more than the Artesh,” one of them told me. All three were delighted to meet a real live American and asked me shyly to write or draw something in their little notebooks, which all Iranians seem to carry. I asked them what they planned to do after military service; all three wanted to go to university, but places there are limited, so one would be an electrician, the other two didn’t know.

In another park I met a nineteen-year-old in army uniform. He hated the service but would soon be done with it. All he was interested in was Western music. Iron Maiden, Back Street Boys—he whispered the forbidden names, as if letting me in on a great conspiracy. I asked him what he knew about America: “At school and from the government we hear bad things, but we believe the opposite of everything we hear. We think America is great!” I asked him if any of his friends studied at madrasehs: “Thank God, no!” Who, then, attends the madrasehs? “Poor kids, stupid kids, usually from religious families.” What kind of government would you like to see in Iran? “Democracy—but I guess I don’t really know what democracy is. They say that we have ‘democracy’ here, but it’s not democracy, because it never matters what we want, things just get decided for us.” Like most other places, Shiraz is full of Afghan laborers, who work like mules for four dollars a day, contributing to the 25 percent unemployment among Iranians.

From Shiraz we flew to Bandar Abbas, Iran’s principal port and naval base. This is a seedy place, the temperature well over a hundred degrees and humid in summer. It is filled with Afghan traders, who buy on the duty-free island of Qeshm, sixty minutes away, and sell on the streets of Bandar at a slight markup. (I bought a toy for my son from a trader and paid seventy cents for it; he had bought it on Qeshm for fifty cents and seemed content with the transaction.) I saw more junkies here, strung out and passed out on the sidewalks. Dealers
would flit past whispering, offering not drugs as I assumed but CDs: “Mariah Carey, Britney Spears, Madonna.” Propaganda murals here were more explicitly anti-American than elsewhere in Iran: a wall-sized rendering of two martyrs downing a U.S. Navy helicopter from a motorboat, a ghostly Koran rahl (a wooden rack) hovering above a U.S. guided-missile destroyer to bat away its missiles, or a plump American soldier with his boots straddling the Gulf and something hateful scrawled underneath. I drove eighty-five kilometers west along the coast from Bandar Abbas and passed the naval base, but there was not much to see from the land side, as the base is walled. It is huge, encompassing the navy’s shipyard, where three 1,200-ton corvettes are being laid down.

We crossed to Qeshm, flanking the Strait of Hormuz. One gets there on rental Boston Whalers that blast through high seas, slamming sickeningly up and down. Viewed in the shah’s time as strategically vital, the island seems little valued today (aside from its duty-free privilege), with only a drowsy police presence and a few rusted coils of barbed wire here and there. Still, in a trip in which I was largely left alone, someone thought to send us two gentlemen who claimed to be from the (nonexistent) Ministry of Tourism but looked more like Stasi agents. They accompanied me everywhere and saw me down to the water’s edge when I left. We drove around much of the island but saw little besides gas lines, dhow yards, and the occasional sleepy village, invariably filled with Afghan refugees. The island of Hormuz to the northeast, famous for its ruined Portuguese castle, was largely deserted, with no military or naval presence that I could see. It is ironic that the last shah seized nearby Abu Musa and the Tumbs in 1971 on the pretext that islands like these could be seized in a coup de main by “terrorists” to block the flow of Gulf oil. It is no exaggeration to say that I, my guide, and the two Polish tourists we were traveling with that day could have taken Hormuz with our jackknives.

“Isfahan is half the world,” or so the locals boast. I thought it a most disappointing city, but that was probably because it was even hotter than Bandar Abbas. It reminded me of Florence in August, the big central maidan, or square, crammed with rug and souvenir shops whose owners were busily dickering with foreign tourists. (Like Florence, Isfahan is famed for its ancient bridges, but the river has been dry for years. It is strange to stroll back and forth across the bridges in the evening as the locals do and not hear the gurgle of water below.) Isfahan is also unexpectedly pious, like one of Stendhal’s provincial capitals, where everyone apes the Bourbons and the clergy. To a woman, females in Isfahan wore the chador; only Qom is more severe. I toured Isfahan with an Emirati from Dubai who now teaches at Ohio State. He marveled at the changes here. The last time he had been in Iran was before the revolution, when Arabs
had come here to drink and carouse with legal prostitutes. This straitlaced Iran was as alien to him as a Puritan Las Vegas would be to Americans.

On the road from Isfahan to Qom, we stopped in Kashan. There I had a long conversation with Ansarian, a young mullah who teaches school in the nearby town of Natanz and was supervising a field trip to the famous Fin Gardens. Ansarian was rather frightening; smooth and assured, he gave voice to the worst prejudices of the mullah state. “The American people are not the Great Satan, the American government is the Great Satan—Bush, Carter, and so on.” I asked him why the Islamic Republic represses dissident politicians, scholars, and editors if it is truly a republic. “We are a republic, but we will not tolerate anyone who does not respect our martyrs or Islam. All others, yes.” Why do you restrict the freedom of your people by banning Western films, music, literature, and television? “If it is sunny and you pull a shade across the window, is that bad? Westernization is like a plague of flies, and we are trying to put screens on our windows. Is that bad?” Are you worried by the prospect of counterrevolution? “There might be some trouble like that, but it would be against God, so it would fail.”

Leaving the gardens, I chatted with an Artesh and a policeman on duty at the gate. Both were draftees. Pondering my discussion with Ansarian, I asked them if they would fire on rioting students at Kashan University if ordered. They both twisted uncomfortably for at least thirty seconds before answering. Finally, the policeman said: “Well, they’d never ask us to—they’d get the basiji to do that.” There are perhaps three million basiji in Iran. They are the “minutemen” of the Islamic Revolution. In a crisis they would be called to arms by the Friday prayer leaders. They tend to be fourteen-to-seventeen-year-olds but can be as old as sixty. They are volunteers, paramilitary boy scouts, ultimately controlled by the Sepah and used to intimidate or thrash restless students.

Qom has always queered Iranian politics, the mullahs demanding a share of political power even in secularizing times like the Pahlavi era. The city is a bastion of bureaucratic Islam, redolent of Rome in the seventeenth century, full of robed clerics and functionaries in the service of the Supreme Leader. I visited Ayatollah Khomeini’s humble house in a back alley and sat for tea where he had sat before his exile to Iraq and France. The Imam Khomeini Educational and Training Institute is an aggressively political body masquerading as a nongovernmental...
organization. When I was there the staff had just folded up an exhibition entitled “The White Coup.” Intended chiefly for the novices and clergy who throng Qom, the exhibit had aimed to dispel “doubts and assaults on sacred truths” and “put viewers on their guard against poison pens and questionable foreigners.” The closed walls of provincial madrasehs close even tighter here. Whereas mullahs are a rare sight in most Iranian cities, there are legions of them in Qom. In the 1930s, the wife of Reza Shah, the last shah’s father, was once insulted by a mullah here; the king drove down in an armored car with four hundred troops, motored into the holy shrine of Fatimah, and slapped the offending cleric. Looking at the vast domed shrine with its army of mullahs and pilgrims, I had an inkling of how daring that act had been. Timid Muhammed Reza—the introverted product of a Swiss boarding school, not the Iranian Cossack Brigade—would never have done it.

En route to Tehran we stopped at Behesht-e Zahra, a cemetery of the Iraq war south of the city. It is a heartbreaking place, as grandiose as the Omaha Beach cemetery but even more affecting, because of the way Shias display their dead. Whereas we erect plain white crosses, the Shia builds a glass case with mementos, and in many cases a photograph of the corpse, no matter how badly burned or pummeled. The photos of smiling boys turned to armless or legless trunks, their faces constricted with pain or blasted away entirely, were shocking. My guide, who had served in the war, was reduced to tears. His teenaged son, who had come along, wandered off, bored by the whole thing. I remembered the assumption of Americans during that war that the Iranians were “fanatics.” Here I was reminded of their ordinariness.

The penultimate stop was Mashad, which used to be an important halt on the Silk Road. Once it glittered; today, it chokes under smog and heat. The people here, hard by the border of Afghanistan and Turkmenistan, look more like Turkmen than Persians, with broad Asiatic faces. Mashad seemed limitless, an ugly sprawl of shanties and garages out to the horizon. The masses come here on pilgrimages to the shrine of Imam Reza. Inside the shrine, I was reminded again that many Iranians are devout and superstitious; they will travel thousands of miles at great expense to prostrate themselves at this shrine. Infidels are not allowed inside, but I went in anyway; there was nothing else to do in Mashad. No one stopped me or took much interest. Outside, the courtyards were full of Pakistani Shias, sitting in circles, singing prayers and hymns. There were no cafénets anywhere in the city, my guide conjecturing that Khorasan Province—seat of this “place of martyrdom”—might forbid them on cultural grounds. Wanting to contact my wife, I asked the head of the Imam Reza shrine’s library if I could use his Internet connection. Now here was an interesting man—not a mullah but a loyal servant of the theocracy, his desk heaped with the regime’s propaganda.
After forcing me to sit through a lecture on America’s ills and the urgent need for a “dialogue of civilizations,” he decided that I could not use his e-mail after all.

Two weeks earlier I had thought Tehran a grimy, stinking, third-world city. On my return there, it felt like London, New York, or Paris. Northern Tehran, which rises steeply from the center, is where the shah and the rich people lived during the Pahlavi era, and where the rich people today live as well. The million-dollar villas of the old regime’s “petro-bourgeoisie” are now inhabited by bazaar merchants (bazaari) and other creatures of the new regime. Threatened by the shah’s program of westernization, which was opening their captive markets to foreign competition, the bazaari allied with the mullahs to oust the shah in 1979. The “Islamic Association of Bazaar Merchants” remains a principal prop of the Islamic Republic, for all trade great and small passes through its hands—as long as westerners are excluded. To hear the bazaari splashing in their swimming pools behind high walls on the heights two thousand feet above the suffocating streets of Tehran is to understand at last their otherwise inexplicable support for the theocracy. (Has there been another case in history where merchants supported priests in a revolution against “secularism”?)

Then there are the Islamic “new men,” who cling to this not-so-new government as adeptly as the shah’s money-grubbing parvenus clung to the last one. One such is Supreme Leader Khamenei’s private physician, who has been made an army general and promoted to chief of staff of the Iranian armed forces despite a complete lack of military experience. Another example, and perhaps the most striking one, is Mohsen Rafiq-Dust, a humble nobody who, beginning as Ayatollah Khomeini’s chauffeur in 1979, rose to command the Revolutionary Guards ministry before ending as chairman of the ten-billion-dollar Foundation of the Oppressed and Disabled, the most notorious of Iran’s extragovernmental bonyads, or foundations, which covertly finance terrorism, vigilantism, death squads, black propaganda, and other skullduggery for the Supreme Leader.

Rafiq-Dust’s sycamore-shaded mansion is near the shah’s old palace complex at Saad Abad, where the Pahlavi White and Green Palaces are now open to the public. To reach them, one passes the ex-Hilton and the ex-Hyatt Hotels. I stopped at the former, to see how it has fared since 1979. It is a time warp, filled with sixties decor and furnishings, like a set from I Dream of Jeannie or The Brady Bunch: Naugahyde-padded bar, burnt-orange shag rugs, harvest gold curtains, lime chairs. The famous pool patio where American businessmen once sold their wares is crumbling, the pool and sundeck filled with Iranian males in black Speedos who jerk to attention every time a (fully clothed) female crosses to the hotel.
At the palace complex, my guide led me inside with a guilty air. Middle-aged Iranians still do not feel quite right trespassing here, where the “king of kings” once roamed. The White Palace is in the Nazi style favored by its builder, Reza Shah, who was forced to abdicate by the British and Russians in 1941 because of his fondness for Hitler. It resembles nothing so much as Rudolf Hess’s “Brown House” in Munich—which is, of course, not brown but white. Since the revolution, the bronze statue of Reza Shah that once stood at the entrance has been sawn off at the boots. Yet half a boot is still man-tall, which suggests the Brobdingnagian proportions of the vanished monument. If the palace’s exterior reflects the father, however, the interior is the son’s. There are oil portraits of Napoleon, wall-sized paintings of Frederician grenadiers in action, and statuettes of the last shah on horseback with toga and broadsword, à la Marcus Aurelius.

Every guidebook I consulted deplored the shah’s lack of taste, and rightly so. The elegant wood-paneled billiard room was ruined by the addition of a Space Invaders machine, which squats odiously between leather club chairs. Upstairs were only two memorable sights, the first of them the last shah’s bedroom, which is a frilly, feminine place modeled on Marie Antoinette’s Versailles boudoir. Since the shah and his queen kept separate bedrooms, this is a revealing detail. (In the Green Palace, favored by Muhammed Reza’s father, there is no bed in the shah’s bedroom; the old Cossack preferred to sleep on the floor.) The other is a cheap-looking nineteen-inch Zenith television on a steel cart in Queen Farah’s bedroom. It was easy to picture Farah sprawled on the bed watching Dallas reruns while the air conditioners roared and her husband, fifty yards down the hall, sat up in his own bed looking at the pictures in Jane’s Defence Weekly.

I sat in a tearoom by the palace-complex guardhouse, puffing on a hubble-bubble pipe—moist, spiced Egyptian tobacco inhaled through water—and reflecting on what I had seen and heard in the last two weeks. I had met dozens of Iranians and joined briefly in the whirl of their lives. My deepest impression was of a gulf between the Iranian government and its people. Educated Iranians seem tired of the mullah state, with its pieties and hypocrisies. How can a self-styled “religious democracy” wield oppressive powers of “public supervision” and still expect the support of its citizens? Young and middle-aged Iranians—96 percent of the population—chafe at the restrictions and often defy them. The “sexy hejab” in northern Tehran is even more advanced than in Shiraz, and cars there sometimes pull alongside playing forbidden Western music.

As yet, no one talks about a counterrevolution, because of the likely bloodshed and the absence of any counterrevolutionary organization. A coup by secular, pro-Western officers seems out of the question; the military has been effectively “coup proofed” by its division into competing forces, the Artesh and
Sepah. Nor is there a conspicuous political alternative to the Islamic Republic. Iran’s first constitutional movement, in the early 1900s, was snuffed out by the military. The country’s last monarchy disgraced itself through waste, corruption, and a secret police that maintained sixty thousand agents and three million informers in a country of just thirty million. The liberal movement led by Mohammad Mossadeq in the 1950s was brought down by its own irrational flailing, but also by the mullahs, who feared Mossadeq’s irreligiousness and so joined with the British and Americans in Operation AJAX, the coup that restored full powers to the last shah.

In Iran today there is no obvious answer to Lenin’s famous question, “What is to be done?” Hence people watch and wait, enduring their gloomy government for want of an alternative. What seems clear is that Iranians are anything but “fundamentalists.” They are weary economic refugees with no place to go and few prospects. They judge their government corrupt and insincere, interested only in clinging to power. Most rate the mullahs better than the last shah, but that is not saying much, and Iran’s refusal even to consider supporting a restoration in Afghanistan of the eighty-seven-year-old former king, Zahir Shah, suggests that the theocracy is more than a little concerned about the possibility of a Pahlavi restoration. Their concern can only have been deepened by the “soccer riots” of October 2001, when more than a million Iranians assembled after each of three World Cup qualifying matches to denounce the clerical regime and demand an easier, more secular government and way of life. If oil prices—down 33 percent—continue their fall, public pressure for jobs and relief may become unbearable. The street mobs that chanted “death to the Islamic republic” in October 2001 will collide with Sepah and basiji units ordered to defend the revolution. The martyrs may yet have their day of blood and tulips, or the whole regime may pass peacefully away like Honecker’s East Germany or De Klerk’s South Africa. Or the Islamic Republic may right itself, pulling just enough support from the slums and villages, the Sepah, and the bazaar to get it through this crisis and the next. Iran is that unpredictable.
IN MY VIEW

A DISSERVICE TO RUSSIAN DEMOCRATS

Sir:

I am pleased that in his review of my book, *The Russian Presidency* (Naval War College Review, Summer 2001, pp. 165–8), Sergei Khrushchev agreed with me (and we are among a very few in the scholarly community who have agreed on this issue) that presidentialism will serve Russia better than the parliamentary alternative. But elsewhere, Dr. Khrushchev disagrees with me, and I am writing not only to clarify to readers of the Review the nature of that disagreement but also to take issue with places where I believe he has mischaracterized the book.

First, it is understandable that Dr. Khrushchev objects to my argument that the current state of affairs in Russia is largely the result of the horrific policies of the Soviet era. His father helped to build, and then headed, the Soviet system, and no one can blame Dr. Khrushchev if filial loyalty hampers his objective evaluation of that era. However, he is flatly wrong when he writes that placing the blame on the Soviets is “a usual mistake of Western studies.” Even a cursory reading of Western academic opinion reveals that most scholars (many of whom, ironically, are ardent fans of socialism) think the problem with Russia is the current environment of capitalism, not the legacy of Soviet authoritarianism. Dr. Khrushchev may not like the latter argument, but it is in no way a typical one.

Likewise, his assertion that “seventy years of Soviet rule did not change the Russians” is staggering; the Soviet system not only increased levels of urbanization and education but also, let us never forget, murdered tens of millions of people. To say that this did not change the Russians or have an impact on current Russian political culture defies the evidence as well as common sense.

Also, a few matters of fact are worth clearing up. Dr. Khrushchev asserts that I paint figures like Ruslan Khasbulatov in “exclusively dark tones.” I realize—and I say in the book—that Yeltsin and Khasbulatov represent two visions of the future of Russia. But the fact remains that Khasbulatov tried to ignite civil war (he
called on the army to mutiny) and shared a podium during the 1993 standoff with a renegade general who promised to see to it that Yeltsin’s supporters would “wash in their own blood.” If there is a lighter way to depict such people, it will have to come from a more imaginative author than I.

The review also claims that “Nichols declares it to be well known that [Vladimir] Zhirinovsky and his party have always been controlled by the government.” I said nothing so categorical. I noted, in a footnote regarding the late 1990s, that it is widely believed in Moscow’s political circles that Zhirinovsky had been bought off by the government with special perks and that this had made him a less credible opposition figure.

Finally, Dr. Khrushchev writes that my drawing of a distinction between Belarusian president Aleksandr Lukashenko and Boris Yeltsin was “propagandistic,” “used without concrete evidence,” and “inadmissible,” that it “reduce[d] confidence in the author.” (By contrast, he writes that “Lukashenko is the very image of Yeltsin.”) If calling Russia democratic and Belarus authoritarian is “propagandistic,” then it is propaganda that has been engaged in by the United States, the European Union, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. As I noted in The Russian Presidency, the OSCE said in 1997 that Lukashenko was “constructing a system of totalitarian government” and that both the OSCE and the EU found the voting procedures in Belarus so clearly rigged that they refused to send election observers. In Russia, American and European observers alike certified the voting in both the 1996 and 2000 elections to be free and fair, despite occasional irregularities. If Dr. Khrushchev finds such judgments “inadmissible,” I suggest that his quarrel is with the many observers from the Western democracies and not with me.

The real problem in the review is that Dr. Khrushchev, like so many Russians who cast a cynical eye on events after 1991, sweepingly dismisses Russian political life as “merely reflections of a struggle for national power among oligarchic-criminal groups that emerged as a result of fraudulent privatization.” That is a disservice to the many Russian democrats who are trying, however imperfectly, to build a new political system. But more disturbingly, if that is his starting point for analysis, then any book on Russian politics, save one that is completely and scathingly critical of every institutional change and political event in Moscow, will inevitably fail to meet his standard of acceptability.

The fact remains that ten years after the Soviet collapse, democracy and its institutions survive and are deepening in Russia. Especially at such a crucial time in history, when it is imperative during our war against terror to separate the civilized nations who might be our allies from the malefactors who are our enemies, the readers of the Naval War College Review deserve a more judicious discussion
of events in Russia than the relentless (and unfounded) pessimism represented by Dr. Khrushchev.

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CB IN DESERT STORM: SUFFICIENT CONDEMNATION

Sir:

While I appreciate Lieutenant Commander Pietro D. Marghella’s notes on my “meticulous and forthright discussion” of chemical and biological (CB) warfare during the Gulf War (Naval War College Review, Summer 2001, pp. 172–3), I take exception to some of his criticisms.

My book did use acronyms extensively and was focused on the Army’s contributions to CB defense. The book was written to inform the members of the Army community who do not know that the Chemical Corps had an effective defense capability for the armed forces during this conflict, especially those misled by the media and other critics to believe we had little or no defensive capability during the Gulf War. Frankly, I had no good contacts in the other services with whom to talk about their CB defense efforts. But I will note for the record that in 1990 the Army had the most credible operational and logistics capability in that area; the other services were very unprepared, due to their parochial approaches in developing service-specific CB defense—none more so than the Navy, with its unique chemical detectors, chemical suits, and biodetection research-and-development program, and lack of any decontamination capability. The unpreparedness among the services is the reason Congress directed a joint program approach by the four services in 1994, the services having continued their separate acquisition efforts after the war.

Marghella takes issue with my use of the term “weapons of mass disruption.” I contend that CB weapons are mass casualty agents only if used as long-line resources against an unprotected population, as General John J. Pershing noted after World War I. How many people did sarin kill in the Tokyo subways in 1995?
Twelve. How many people has anthrax killed (as of late October) in the terrorist letter campaign that began in September 2001? A very few (four victims to date). How many lives did these acts disrupt? Tens of thousands. Our failure to acknowledge this simple fact has caused the logjams in defense policy and continued failures to model and simulate the realistic effects of CB agents.

I am sorry Marghella takes issue with my treatment of medical topics. I did not mean to imply that the doctors and medical specialists could not recognize chemical and biological casualties (although there was an acknowledged intensive education effort conducted during DESERT SHIELD). What we lacked as a force was the ability to treat and evacuate mass casualties; we had no ability to decontaminate and move contaminated human remains; and we certainly had a very limited biological vaccine capability. The 101st Airborne Division’s commander flatly asserted that it would have been better to have no vaccines than enough for only a third of the force. That in itself should be sufficient condemnation of our medical capability during the Gulf War.

Last, Marghella says the United States “never considered the use of chemical weapons in the Gulf War.” This is flatly untrue. The Defense Department leadership, with Army Chemical Corps advisors, discussed the chemical option as a counter to Iraq’s chemical weapons threat and decided against it. The department’s policy envisioning the use of chemical weapons had been negated only by the U.S. signature of the Chemical Warfare Convention. My sources were in the room where the discussion took place and participated in it; I doubt that Marghella’s could say the same.

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A QUESTION OF STRATEGIC NUCLEAR WEAPONS POLICY

Robert L. Gallucci


Both books are about America’s strategic nuclear weapons policy. Jan Lodal, author of *The Price of Dominance*, knows a lot about the subject from having helped make nuclear weapons policy in both the Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford administrations, and at the Pentagon during the Jimmy Carter administration. George Quester, author of *Nuclear Monopoly*, is also an expert, having written important books about nuclear strategy and nuclear proliferation for more than three decades. Lodal analyzes the current U.S. strategic posture and, finding it wanting, advocates a change in policy. Quester analyzes that brief period in America’s past when it was the only nation with nuclear weapons, and asks why U.S. policy was not then different from what it was, and what lessons might be learned for future policy. These are very different books, from authors with quite different experiences, but both speak to America’s unique position of power in the world and what the United States might do with that power.

Lodal begins by identifying the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) as the most immediate serious threat to the security of the United...
States. He then asserts that “intense international cooperation” will be essential if the United States is to deal with that threat but that America’s overwhelming nuclear power and the current direction of policy undermine cooperation. Thus, the price of America’s strategic nuclear dominance will be increased vulnerability to chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons in the hands of many states.

There is an assertion here of a direct link between the U.S. strategic nuclear weapons posture and its nonproliferation efforts; Lodal finds the strategic vision that should constructively connect the two to be absent or confused. Specifically, he sees recent U.S. policy as informed by a muddle of three visions: one that would require more of the same kind of negotiated arms control that the United States has been pursuing for decades; one that would replace arms control with a robust missile defense; and a third that would move the United States to the abolition of all weapons of mass destruction. The first he describes as stalled, caught in gridlock without the cooperation from other countries necessary if it is to succeed; the second he pronounces technically impossible to achieve; and the third he easily puts aside as politically implausible. The way then is clear for Lodal’s new strategic vision of deterrence and cooperation, the central features of which are a strategic force of a thousand nuclear weapons deployed aboard B-2 bombers and submarines, plus an additional two hundred weapons in Europe to maintain “coupling” with Nato, and a “thin” missile defense of one hundred interceptors, with deployments in space limited to sensors for warning and tracking.

This prescription follows from the view that America must avoid adopting a force posture with the combination of offensive strategic nuclear forces and a robust missile defense that would imply overwhelming dominance. Lodal notes that current strategic nuclear-strike plans call for the United States to maintain a capability to respond to the warning of an attack with the prompt launch of a counterstrike at an enemy’s forces to reduce the amount of damage suffered and to ensure that U.S. forces are used before they are destroyed. However, this requirement, he says, is a fiction because of the short time available to make such a decision to “launch on warning.” The capability to attack promptly and destroy an enemy’s forces is really a preemptive capability. Moreover, if present U.S. offensive forces are maintained or reduced to a level no lower than 2,500 weapons, and if even a “thin” missile defense is deployed, America would appear to have a first-strike capability—the ability to launch preemptively a disarming strike against any combination of enemies and deter retaliation by a combination of retained offense and deployed defense.

Before this begins to sound too appealing, we are reminded that the United States should not want this strategic dominance, because of what it would cost
in other nations’ willingness to cooperate with American efforts to control WMD—the real threat to U.S. security. There are other benefits to Lodal’s slimmed-down, purely deterrent strategic posture besides avoiding an alienating dominance. First, mutual de-alerting of offensive forces becomes possible, since all U.S. forces are survivable and have no prompt-response mission. Second, the thin defense would be available to cope with accidents, unintended launches, and irrational rogues, and to improve crisis stability by forcing an enemy to launch, or threaten to launch, a significant strategic attack if it sought to prevail by escalation or intimidation.

There is much to recommend Lodal’s prescription but less reason to believe it will be embraced. While he is surely right about the emerging American first-strike capability if U.S. offensive forces are not drastically reduced as a national missile defense is deployed, there is no reason to believe that the Bush administration (or any other administration, for that matter) would assess the price of such dominance the way Lodal does or decide not to pay it. But Lodal’s discussion of this central argument is the best part of the book. It is stronger than his brief treatment of the complex issues of regional WMD proliferation, and it deserves careful reading and serious discussion.

Quester’s critique of U.S. nuclear policy addresses the period beginning in 1945, when the United States built its first nuclear weapons, and ending in 1949, when it was sure the Soviet Union had done the same. The author finds it fascinating that a nation that had just emerged from a world war with a monopoly (which it could be sure would not last long) on nuclear weapons did not do something to keep its advantage and thus avoid a foreseeable eternity of vulnerability and dependence on deterrence.

The reader, of course, initially may not find the point nearly as fascinating as Quester, believing instead that launching a nuclear attack against the Soviet Union’s nascent nuclear facilities and cities—that is, “using” its monopoly to start a preventive war—was and is unthinkable in terms of American values. It is precisely this attitude that troubles Quester. He argues at length that a number of important thinkers in the United States and Britain considered “using” the monopoly and that U.S. explanations for why Washington did not try harder to preserve its position of dominance are not all that persuasive. As the author puts it, this book is “all about” the idea of “imposing rather than proposing the Baruch Plan.”

As it turns out, whether one finds the essential question as compelling a paradox as the author does is less important than the analysis and argument of the case with all its variations. It is unfortunate, though, that with all the creative rigor Quester brings to his discourse, he is not more careful to distinguish between the case for attempting compellance, intimidation, or just more assertive
diplomacy predicated on a military posture of nuclear monopoly, on the one hand, and the actual launch of a nuclear strike in a preventive war, on the other. Too often the many uses of America’s nuclear monopoly are lumped together, when clearly some are much more “thinkable” than others.

In sum, both these books should be read by strategists, military professionals, and concerned citizens, because each speaks to the question of American nuclear dominance and how it ought to be used in the broader national interest. Lodal’s book is clearly more sharply focused on current policy prescription, and it is easier to find in this work propositions to embrace as well as those with which to take issue. Quester’s book is a more enjoyable read, however, providing at least as much to argue over, particularly for those who thrive on counterfactual propositions.
IS THIS THE END OF THE NATION-STATE?

Lawrence E. Modisett

Like the proverbial demise of Mark Twain, rumors of the death of the nation-state may be exaggerated, but in recent years they have become rife. The end of the great-power standoff between the United States and the Soviet Union, and the ensuing surge in global economic relations, gave rise over the past decade to a flood of books and articles postulating a new age in international relations. A general theme has been that the era that began in 1648 with the Treaty of Westphalia is ending, that we are witnessing a no less dramatic transition in which both transnational and local forces will eclipse the importance of national polities. The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 can only reinforce this argument, having apparently been orchestrated by a globally based, subnational network that targeted the World Trade Center, the paramount symbol of economic and cultural globalization.

On the other hand, those who accept the basic premise that the importance of the nation-state is declining differ as to the implications of that development, and some scholars continue to deny it is occurring at all. For the U.S. Navy, the debate is far from academic; the image of the future that prevails will shape tomorrow’s fleet and influence its employment.

Visions of a future that is no longer state-centric range from utopian to menacing. An early optimist was Francis Fukuyama, who in a seminal essay in 1989 postulated that “the end of history” had arrived: with
the global triumph of liberal democracy, no further evolution of human intercourse was necessary or desirable. Similarly sweeping assessments emerged from the business community. Management guru Peter Drucker wrote of a “post-capitalist society” in which the four-hundred-year dominance of the nation-state faced challenges at every level, from the transnational down to the tribal. In addition, quintessential banker Walter Wriston, seeing a transition from a “material” economy to an “information economy,” concluded that the ability to transfer instantaneously huge amounts of capital was undermining national boundaries and sovereignty.

Of the authors whose books are here reviewed, Richard Rosecrance falls most squarely in the lineage of those with a positive view of the effects of globalization. We may call them “post-nation-state optimists.”

Rosecrance, a professor of political science at the University of California, Los Angeles, is the only author reviewed here who is not a journalist. Using quantitative analysis to buttress his arguments, he bases his case upon the proposition that money and power no longer derive from land—a fixed asset—but from capital, labor, and information—assets that are mobile. Moreover, he asserts that “the most mobile—information—has created the greatest value.” Because the key factors of production have become so mobile, the importance of boundaries is diminished, and Rosecrance considers this a good thing: “The theory this book offers is fundamentally optimistic. It sketches a future with an ever-widening zone of international peace.”

A balanced and systematic thinker, Rosecrance presents his case in four parts. The first outlines his theory and attempts to refute the “conflict as usual” thesis. The second discusses political and international implications. The third undertakes a global tour, assessing where each major country stands in the process of becoming a virtual state, which Rosecrance defines as one where “services total as much as 80 percent of GDP [gross domestic product] and manufacturing less than 20 percent (with the remainder in primary products).” He maintains that Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan are already virtual states and that among major developed countries the United States has advanced the farthest. The Middle East and South Asia, by contrast, remain part of the “old” world, where land remains the dominant economic factor, and nineteenth and twentieth-century patterns of conflict endure.

The fourth part of Rosecrance’s book looks at the new international system from a combined political and economic perspective. It concludes that “world-wide economics is no longer captured by the parochial organization of nationalist states. Rather, states are trapped in the international coils of economics.” This does not mean, however, that it is time to write the obituary of the nation-state. Indeed, Rosecrance predicts that in the twenty-first century, “nation-states will
remain the major organizing factor in international politics.” They “will continue to compete,” although this competition will be economic, not about land. At the same time, the global economy will require “some form of political coherence among great states, supervising and protecting the market. If such protection succeeds, the twenty-first century will be the first epoch in history to offer the prospect of peaceful transformation and enduring global stability.”

Against the optimists like Rosecrance stand those who see the decline of the nation-state as more likely to bring conflict than prosperity. We may call them “post-nation-state pessimists.”

Four years after Fukuyama’s visionary article appeared, Samuel Huntington offered a far darker prognosis. He first broached it in an article entitled “The Clash of Civilizations?” in the summer 1993 issue of Foreign Affairs. Despite the question mark in its title, the article strongly argued that “the fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future.” Breaking with the traditional paradigm of the nation-state, Huntington maintained it had become more meaningful to group countries in terms of their culture and civilization rather than their political or economic systems or level of development. He predicted that the “central axis of world politics” would become one of conflict between “the West and the Rest,” the latter in particular constituting a Confucian-Islamic connection that would challenge Western “interests, values and power.”

Huntington’s thesis sparked a firestorm of controversy, which received new impetus when he expanded it into a best-selling book. It remains controversial, especially the prediction of an anti-Western “axis” uniting Asia and the Middle East. Nonetheless, the unfolding of events in recent years has gained Huntington many adherents. The events of 11 September seem bound to strengthen his credibility.

A year after Huntington’s article appeared, a different but equally disturbing portrait of the future made its debut in the Atlantic Monthly. In the February 1994 issue, contributing editor Robert D. Kaplan, who had previously written the influential best-seller Balkan Ghosts (1993), published “The Coming Anarchy.” It portrayed the underdeveloped regions of the world as marked by “the withering away of central governments, the rise of tribal and regional domains, the unchecked spread of disease, and the growing pervasiveness of war.” Kaplan shared the pessimism of the neo-Malthusian Thomas Fraser Homer-Dixon, who foresaw spreading disease, malnutrition, and competition for resources. Kaplan also accepted the conclusions of Martin van Creveld that future conflicts would be low-intensity and subnational. He elaborated on these themes in a second best-seller, The Ends of the Earth: A Journey to the Frontiers of Anarchy, in which he recounted his observations in West Africa, the Near and Middle East, Central Asia, India, and Cambodia. While his judgments and degree of pessimism
varied from region to region, his common themes were the breakdown of authority, increased violence, and a trend toward rule by warlords or their equivalents—"guerrilla armies and urban mafias."

_The Coming Anarchy_ reprints Kaplan's article and a series of subsequent essays that reflect the evolution of his thinking. The latter includes an emerging philosophy of international relations that may be characterized as stark realpolitik. Warning of the perils of attempting to implant Western democracy where it does not fit, he compares its potentially disruptive effects to those of Christianity in the fourth-century Roman Empire, observing that "democracies do not always make societies more civil." To oppose the breakdown of order in the underdeveloped world, he recommends that the United States adopt "proportionalism." Under this policy, foreign aid would not increase, but its focus would shift from political reform to population control, women's literacy, and projects aimed at preserving or renewing dwindling resources. American policy makers would have to be constantly on the lookout for trouble, but they would also have to be highly selective about intervening. A decision to do so would require consideration of the difficulty of the operation, the strategic value of the location in question, and the potential for the operation to influence events elsewhere. Even with these policy modifications, Kaplan sees U.S. ability to influence the trend toward global anarchy as limited.

By the time _New York Times_ foreign correspondent Thomas L. Friedman published _The Lexus and the Olive Tree_, he had the benefit of previous writings on the decline of the nation-state by both optimists and pessimists. His own approach was to offer a synthesis of the two. Thus the "Lexus" of his title symbolizes the revolutionary changes globalization is bringing to national security, politics, culture, finance, technology, and the environment, while the "olive tree" represents resistance to those changes from traditionalists struggling to preserve their cultural roots, often suffering the dislocations of globalization without enjoying its benefits. In other words, the Lexus represents the world of Fukuyama and Rosecrance, and the olive tree that of Huntington and Kaplan.

In his introduction, Friedman compares his feelings about globalization to his feelings about the dawn—"It does more good than harm," and in any case, it is inevitable. While not blind to globalization's negative effects, particularly on the environment, he emphasizes the positive, especially democratization. The attractiveness of his arguments is enhanced by his ability to coin a phrase. Thus, the "Electronic Herd" refers to global investors who are capable of moving billions of dollars into or out of a country instantaneously in reaction to decisions by its government. This phenomenon, previously noted by Wriston, contributes to another, which Friedman calls "Globalution," or "revolution from beyond." He argues that the need to attract and retain foreign investment is forcing
nondemocratic countries to adopt practices that will become the “building blocks” of democracy. These include transparency, international business standards, and intolerance of corruption. Once a country adopts these “rules of the free market,” it puts on a “Golden Straitjacket” since its prosperity depends upon continuing to observe them.

Like Rosecrance, Friedman is unready to write off the nation-state. In fact, he stresses that “globalization does not end geopolitics.” What it does is create a “much stronger web of constraints” on the foreign policy of nations plugged into the system. Friedman sees the United States as occupying a unique position. In a chapter called “Revolution Is U.S.,” he notes how closely globalization equates to Americanization, a linkage that arouses both admiration and resentment—as became horribly apparent on 11 September. At the same time, Friedman believes the United States cannot retreat from its role if it wants to continue enjoying the benefits of globalization, for world stability depends upon U.S. strength and willingness to engage: “America truly is the ultimate benign hegemon and reluctant enforcer.”

Not unlike Friedman, John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge fuse elements of optimism and pessimism in A Future Perfect: The Essentials of Globalization. Correspondents for the Economist, they previously coauthored Witch Doctors, a survey of faddish management theories and those who hawk them. The authors’ views on globalization, perhaps reflecting their ties to the international management community, are highly positive. Indeed, they state as “the underlying message” of their book that “globalization needs not merely to be understood but to be defended stoutly.” Their advocacy rests upon both economic and political grounds. They believe that the number of people who have benefited from globalization is far larger than that of those who have been hurt, and that many of the latter would have fared poorly whether or not globalization took place. Like Friedman, they view globalization as a force for democratization, and they appear to share none of Kaplan’s reservations about the value of democracy to the developing world.

However, as the quotation above suggests, Micklethwait and Wooldridge do not share Friedman’s view that globalization is as inevitable as the dawn; they believe it faces serious challenges and could even be reversed, like similar trends a century ago. In language reminiscent of Kaplan and Huntington, they write, “Far from bringing nations together, globalization has often helped awaken old nationalist or fundamentalist impulses. In some cases, such as Quebec and Scotland, these revivals are merely inconvenient. In others, they are vengeful and bloody.”

Like Rosecrance and Friedman, Micklethwait and Wooldridge take a measured view of the degree to which globalization is affecting the role of the nation-state.
While they maintain that the forces driving globalization—technology, mobility of capital, and the internationalization of management—are blurring national boundaries, they do not see those boundaries as disappearing. Indeed, in a chapter entitled “The Strange Survival of the Nation-State,” they argue the opposite: “Globalization is fundamentally a democratic process, driven by individual choices, and what most people still want are senses of culture, place, and nationality. National politicians are not powerless, history is not ending, and the basic substance of foreign policy is, for better or worse, little different from what it was a century ago.” They then cite Peter Drucker: “Whenever in the last 200 years political passions and nation-state politics have collided with economic rationality, political passions and the nation state have won.”

Finally, some writers disagree with all the authors considered thus far, denying either that globalization is a major force or that the nation-state is in decline. We may call these skeptics “nation-state traditionalists.”

A leading representative of this group is the renowned international relations scholar Kenneth N. Waltz, author of the classic Man, the State and War (1965), who challenged the apostles of globalization in an article in the spring 2000 National Interest. Waltz begins by noting that extravagant hopes for globalization, which he calls “the fad of the 1990s,” are nothing new. Sir Norman Angell’s widely read The Great Illusion claimed in 1910 that the growing interdependence of national economies ruled out future wars and promised an era of prosperity and democracy. Within a few years, World War I had shattered that vision, and events over the next fifty years fed the resulting disillusionment.

Waltz disputes the notion that economic activity is shifting to the international level, noting that the process called “globalization” is in fact leaving out many regions, including most of Africa and all of the Middle East except Israel. He further claims that economic interdependence in 1999 was no greater than in 1910, and that even financial markets, the most globalized, are no more integrated now than in 1900. Moreover, he maintains that “the range of government functions and the extent of state control over societies and economies has seldom been fuller than it is now.”

Waltz offers an alternative view to those who believe the world is increasingly ruled by markets. He sees the distinguishing feature of today’s international politics not in the increased interdependence of states but in their growing inequality, which has become “extremely lopsided” since the end of the bipolar era. Rather than elevating economic forces, he believes, these inequalities “enhance the political role of one country.” He concludes, “Politics as usual prevails over economics.”

As noted at the outset, the way these contending visions get sorted out will have a direct impact on the future U.S. Navy. If the view of the post-nation-state
optimists prevails, the Navy’s role might look at first glance much as it did to Alfred Thayer Mahan a century ago—protecting the shipping lanes for commerce, while maintaining sufficient capability to deter any potential challenger. These tasks, however, would be far less demanding than in Mahan’s era. Then, the nation-state still reigned supreme, and several potential rivals had navies powerful enough to challenge even the strongest, or the capability to build such navies. Today, the United States has neither a peer at sea nor a potential peer. In the world of the post-nation-state optimists, the U.S. Navy could grow significantly smaller and the tempo of operations shrink to occasional presence and minor policing actions. America would still maintain some surge capability and a sufficient advantage in numbers and technology to dissuade any potential rival from trying to compete, but it could size its fleet in the expectations that there would rarely be a need to deploy for combat and that the prospect of a navy-against-navy conflict would be practically nil.

On the other hand, if the post-nation-state pessimists prove correct, the evolution of the Navy would follow a very different course. The future force would need to be capable of a wide range of operations. Many would be like those of the 1990s and today—widespread deployments to demonstrate presence, and active engagement in low-end, littoral operations in support of ground forces. At the same time, the Navy of this scenario would also have to hedge against challenges of a higher magnitude. This would be a world from which regional hegemons might emerge, and the prospect of using naval forces for missile defense could raise demand for high-end platforms to be deployed abroad for early interception or off U.S. shores for homeland defense. These considerations point toward a fleet at least as large as today’s, with significant capabilities across the spectrum of conflict.

What if the world of tomorrow turns out to be much like the world of yesterday, that of nation-state traditionalists? Such a world might bring a reduction in low-end conflict from today’s levels and a commensurate reduction in the tempo of naval deployments. The rise of a peer competitor would remain unlikely, or at most a distant prospect, but regional challengers could arise, and planning would have to focus on the possibility of navy-to-navy conflict at the theater level. Force levels might be somewhat lower than today’s, but the emphasis would be on high-end capabilities.

With views of the future varying so sharply, the challenge of planning tomorrow’s Navy has never been greater.
NOTES

1. Francis Fukuyama, “The End of History?” *National Interest*, Summer 1989, pp. 3–18. Fukuyama expanded his ideas into a book, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992). In it he describes a transition period marked by the coexistence of two “worlds.” In the “post-historical world . . . the old rules of power politics would have decreasing relevance,” and “economic rationality” would “erode many traditional features of sovereignty.” In a continuing “historical world,” on the other hand, the nation-state would remain the “chief locus of political identification” (pp. 276–7).


7. The authors somewhat misrepresent their own position by naming the first part of their book “The Remaking of a Borderless World.” Their account makes it clear that neither the earlier move toward globalization nor the present one has had that effect.


10. Ibid., p. 51.

11. Ibid., p. 56.
ANOTHER LOOK AT HISTORY

Paul G. Halpern


Stephen Roskill’s two-volume Naval Policy between the Wars (London: Collins, 1968 and 1976) has dominated the history of Britain’s interwar navy. Roskill—author of the official British naval history of World War II—had a vast store of knowledge, as well as personal experience and contacts with many of the individuals about whom he wrote. However, it is now well over a generation since his volumes were published, and it was inevitable that over time more and different questions would be asked, new material would be uncovered, and existing material would be reconsidered, until even the finest scholarly work would become subject to modification. Consequently, Christopher M. Bell’s new history of the Royal Navy between the First and Second World Wars is of considerable interest, though Roskill’s work remains the basic reference.

The “silent service” emerged from World War I with great, though aging, material strength and in certain fields, such as naval aviation, a significant technological lead. That preeminent position quickly eroded (the lead in naval aviation disappeared, never to be regained), and by the late 1930s the Royal Navy had to determine how to address the difficult problems of a resurgent Germany, an expansionist Japan, and responsibilities in both European and Far Eastern waters—problems compounded especially after 1935, when the Mediterranean could no longer be considered secure.

Bell is currently a research analyst for the Center for Naval Warfare Studies at the Naval War College. He establishes his aims in a clearly written introduction: “This book identifies and analyzes the central body of ideas which guided navy policy-makers during the interwar period, and explores how these ideas influenced Britain’s naval and strategic policies. Here it will be applied principally to the naval profession, a group which is often thought to have held no important ideas of its own, but which did in fact possess distinct views about the nature and application of seapower.”
In his first chapter, “The Politics of Seapower: The ‘One-Power Standard’ and British Maritime Security,” Bell examines the question of “naval standards,” which were subject to change and which he considers “little more than a bargaining tool.” “Only by viewing them from this perspective is it possible to understand how the navy attempted to secure the resources it needed.”

Bell relies heavily on Admiralty war plans and strategic appreciations to show what British naval leaders thought seapower might accomplish in future conflicts. The titles of the relevant chapters give a good indication of their content: “‘Main Fleet to Bermuda’: Naval Strategy for an Anglo-American War,” “Far Eastern War Plans and the Myth of the Singapore Strategy,” “‘The Ultimate Potential Enemy’: Nazi Germany and British Defense Dilemmas,” and “The Search for the ‘Knockout Blow’: War Plans against Italy.”

The idea of potential war with the United States makes odd reading now, but Bell draws an interesting link between this contingency and the possibility of war with Japan. The Admiralty realized that “if British seapower alone could not hope to defeat decisively a major non-European naval power, then war with that power would have to be avoided at almost any cost. This proved to be a sound appreciation, and one which was based on a clear understanding of the limitations of seapower.” As for the “Singapore strategy,” Bell derides haphazard use of the term. He points out that there were actually several “Singapore strategies,” and that the dispatch of a fleet to Singapore was not an end in itself but rather only the opening move in “a prolonged war of attrition.” Bell concludes that the Far Eastern plans were not based on obsolete thinking but that the navy planners had to struggle with inadequate means to preserve British interests. “In the end, they failed to preserve all of these interests, but the explanation lies in the magnitude of the threat facing Britain in 1941 rather than in any fundamental errors in the navy’s strategic planning.”

Bell also gives credit to the Admiralty’s planning for a war against Germany. He believes insufficient attention was given to the problem of antisubmarine warfare but considers the British strategic defensive strategy—similar to that which it had adopted in World War I—sound during the first eight months of the war, until the fall of France undermined existing assumptions and created a new and grave situation.

Bell has an interesting chapter on the navy’s effort to help British industry. It is appropriately titled “‘Showing the Flag’: Deterrence and the Naval Armaments Industry.” Even though the results of the program were not up to expectations, Bell argues, they were not misguided and cost little. He is more critical in his chapter on naval propaganda. The title is most expressive: “‘Something Very Sordid’: Naval Propaganda and the British Public.” The navy’s aversion to “self-promotion” may have diminished during the course of the interwar period,
but it was still strong enough nearly to cause the loss of what Bell calls the battle for the “hearts and minds” of the British public. He concludes that given “the service’s declining popularity, . . . if the Second World War had not broken out when it did, the navy would have been in a difficult position to withstand Treasury attacks when the debate over naval expansion was resumed.”

Bell’s overall conclusions, however, remain positive. While not understating flaws and mistakes, which are fully analyzed in the text, Bell believes that the Admiralty was “largely powerless to prevent the government undermining the foundations of British seapower after the First World War.” But this was not due to bad advice from the Admiralty. Had the government in the period between 1921 and 1934 listened more carefully to the navy’s pleadings, it could have averted the decline and greatly strengthened Britain’s strategic and diplomatic position in the following decade. Bell’s final assessment is well put: “The navy did make many mistakes of its own, both before and during the Second World War, but few of its failures were the result of a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature and application of seapower.”

To appreciate fully the quality and sophistication of Bell’s analysis, one must read the book. The text is solidly based on Admiralty records in the Public Record Office, Kew. It is clearly written, and even those who are primarily interested in the U.S. Navy will find it accessible and useful for comparison with the American experience during this era. Those interested in the Royal Navy will find Bell’s study indispensable.
Luce Hall, c. 1938. Recruits of the Naval Training Station (housed in what is now Sims Hall) are pitching tents on Dewey Field.
TIMING IS EVERYTHING


“Timing is everything,” so the saying goes. Timing was certainly a factor in developing a fair and reasoned review for this book; it arrived in this reviewer’s mailbox on 12 September 2001. Since the major thesis of Donald Snow’s concise and cogent work is that peacekeeping will be the most likely type of early twenty-first century military operation for the United States, the book initially appeared quaint and somewhat nostalgic: how nice and simple it would be to deal with questions of how to bring and sustain peace to other lands.

However, when the inevitable strong feelings associated with the horrific attacks of 11 September dissipate somewhat, one finds this book to be a valuable, if flawed, addition to the professional national security studies student’s library. There is no other single work available comparable in scope to this book in its thorough investigation of the driving forces, necessities, and demands of peace operations.

Snow, recognizing the ad hoc nature of much, if not most, national security literature, has attempted to develop an integrated approach, connecting theory to practice, and yielding findings and conclusions that should awaken and disturb those in the national security strategy establishment. He begins with a broad diagnosis of a national security policy “adrift” in the first decade following the end of the Cold War, explaining well why realist and neorealist paradigms of international relations and the use of force no longer can explain or predict real-world behaviors. Similarly, he introduces the concept of a two-tiered world, with developed free market democracies in the first tier, and all others in the second. It is with this second, heterogeneous group of nations that Snow finds that the realist paradigm cannot explain or describe behaviors and relationships, which in that group are sometimes chaotic.

Snow uses this observation to develop in the second chapter a theoretical construct by which the United States can adapt its strategic “lens” to focus better on security problems with second-tier nations, combining the still-relevant aspects of the realist legacy with idealist paradigmatic tensions (between internationalism and isolationism). Carefully constructing his case, Snow then describes the spectrum of conflict that he
believes the United States might experience. He finds that the most likely form of conflict will be Kosovo-like peace operations, and he explains why operations addressing these conflicts are so difficult. This section provides some of the most dramatic and compelling information and analysis in the book, particularly concerning his operational distinctions between conflict suppression and state building (the latter being the most problematic for this country). *When America Fights* concludes with a recommendation of realistic internationalist national strategy based on five major influences of modern grand strategy, and it offers the reader fifteen guidelines on how to increase the probability of success in peace operations.

The book provides a consistent thread of argument and analysis on the use of American armed force. However, notwithstanding the author’s preface, *When America Fights* is a highly opinionated work. It does not comprehensively analyze the implications of other possible points on the spectrum of conflict, nor does it pursue alternative or possible conflictual guidelines that might be generated by applying the theoretical framework to those other types of conflict. Further, the two-tier world concept simply is neither the only way nor the most widely accepted one of attempting to organize the chaos of the post–Cold War international environment. Finally, the conclusion that there are two types of armed force employments—of necessity (forced on the nation) or of choice (at the nation’s discretion)—is most intriguing (I have already adopted the lexicon in my courses) but it is not the only typology that one might consider.

There are two admittedly minor but irritating faults in the book. First, being a very old-fashioned academic, this reviewer appreciates the value and information provided by footnotes; they are totally lacking in this work. True, there is a bibliography following each chapter, but that is an empty vessel for serious research. Second, Ralph Peters, a most insightful strategist of the current age who is quoted in the last chapter, is a retired Army, not Air Force, officer.

*When America Fights* is an excellent book on the use of armed force as applied to peace operations. It is a book with a point of view and a strong theoretical base. Regardless of whether one agrees with the author on the flow and form of his argument, the reader will find the material engrossing and invaluable—even though this nation is now engaged in what Snow has viewed as the less likely scenario for force employment, that of necessity.

JONATHAN E. CZARNECKI
Naval War College, Monterey Programs Office


This book “addresses a need widely recognized but long neglected: to adapt and modernize the system by which the United States manages the largest and most successful security establishment in history.” Do not be misled into thinking that the word “managing” in the title suggests a dry treatment of managerial practices requiring extensive change. *Keeping the Edge* deals with that, but it primarily examines many key organizational strategy issues; these studies will have comprehensive value to anyone within academia or the national security
environment wishing to improve what the authors regard as management and organizational shortfalls that impede implementation of wise strategy and policy choices. Collectively, the distinguished editors and authors contend that, if unattended, these shortcomings will seriously diminish our unmatched military capability. At the same time, they hold that the “national security establishment is deficient not so much in deciding what to do” as in lacking the means to implement defense policy effectively.

The book is organized into eleven chapters, each of which discusses deficiencies in a key area of national security. Each chapter describes the changing security environment relevant to the subject of discussion, then offers comprehensive suggestions to improve the execution of whatever policy choices are made. Most of the chapters also provide superb insight into what future policy choices should be. Among the chapters are: “Managing Defense for the Future,” “Keeping the Edge in Joint Operations,” “Exploiting the Internet Revolution,” “Keeping the Edge in Intelligence,” “Countering Asymmetric Threats,” “Keeping the Technological Edge,” “Advancing the Revolution in Business Affairs,” “Ensuring Quality People in Defense,” “Managing the Pentagon’s International Relations,” “Strengthening the National Security Interagency Process,” and “Implementing Change.” Each chapter is comprehensive and would serve as an excellent guide to new policy makers who wish actually to see their policies implemented. I doubt that any organizational or managerial improvement has been omitted.

The material in the book resulted from a research collaboration project between the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, and Stanford University. The list of contributors represents a who’s who in national security experience and in the study of national security processes: Ashton B. Carter, David Chu, Victor A. DeMarines, John Deutch, Robert J. Hermann, Arnold Kanter, Michael J. Lippitz, Judith A. Miller, Sean O’Keefe, William J. Perry, Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall, Brent Scowcroft, John M. Shalikashvili, and John P. White. The core group of authors have occupied practically every senior position in the national security environment, while others have dedicated their professional lives to the study of national security policies and supporting structures. They speak with as much authority as one could possibly find in a single book.

This book addresses those in policy positions who wish to reform organizations and practices that, according to the authors, increasingly sap the vitality of our military capability; it is concrete as well as comprehensive in its recommendations. Keeping the Edge will also help people who are not currently in positions to affect policy to understand the substantial flaws in the anatomy and physiology of the organizations that implement national security policies. Experienced national security scholars and practitioners will respond to the authors’ contention that existing policy-implementing practices themselves are a threat to future U.S. national security.

The book must be read by anyone interested in improving these processes and structures; it contains important guides for people who can marshal the influence at least to begin organizational and managerial change, if only on the margin. The preface warns that the authors have no illusions that the chronic organizational
and management problems will be solved any time soon. One can only hope, nevertheless, that this book’s comprehensive recommendations will encourage and guide courageous leaders to make a start.

WILLIAM E. TURCOTTE
Naval War College


Unconvincing—that one word accurately describes this effort of the prolific author and former Brookings fellow John Steinbruner to explain why and how the “potentially catastrophic consequences of traditional security practices” mandate radical changes in U.S. defense policies.

Steinbruner argues that discontinuities in the international system make obsolete the realist view that nation-states need to rely on military power for their security. From this premise, he implies that the United States should not seek to maintain military superiority over potential opponents. In this new formula, deterrence, which he describes as a Cold War doctrine, should be “subordinated to the countervailing idea of reassurance.”

Globalization, Steinbruner holds, has made it “too expensive to rule by force,” and competition among nations or societies is being replaced by cooperation; therefore, the whole notion of needing a strong military defense is dangerous. Unfortunately for his premise, Steinbruner then turns around and uses a pseudo-realist argument to explain why other nations would “naturally” seek to oppose and confront American military superiority in a world in which they are benefiting from United States–led globalization.

At its core, the book’s fundamental problem is that it approaches all military issues as if they were but subsets of strategic nuclear deterrence. The irony of this approach—Cold War thinking at its grimmest—appears completely to have eluded the author, who spent much of his scholarly career worrying about issues of deterrence theory and nuclear command and control. At the same time, Steinbruner does not see the end of the Cold War as a victory for deterrence or democratic ideology. Referring to it rather as an unexpected “spontaneous event” that took everyone involved by surprise, he sees it as the result of “the working of very large forces”—presumably the forces of globalization, although he is never very clear on that.

Steinbruner’s treatment of globalization itself—which he describes only in terms of advances in technology and population dynamics—is disappointing. Others have written much better treatments. The book does not contain a serious examination of the direct impact of globalization on national security or military forces, only a continuing assertion that globalization has effects and that, whatever they are, they justify adoption of the author’s “reassurance” policies. These policies are similar to, but more radical and seemingly less practical than, those put forward as “cooperative security” by former secretary of defense William Perry. He certainly would not agree with Steinbruner that all national militaries must be equalized in capabilities and force structure. Steinbruner cites the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the founding of Nato as examples of reassurance and equal treatment of nations in regard to security, but he forgets to
mention violations of the NPT or to explain why nations would have joined Nato had there been no inequitable Soviet threat. Even those who share the author’s beliefs in a smaller American defense structure or minimal deterrence would be confused by many of his supporting reasons. At one point, Steinbruner castigates the former colonial powers for not intervening quickly enough in the civil wars of their violence-prone former colonies. How would they do so without possessing superior military force? Steinbruner describes the internal conflict that plagues much of the world, including terrorism, as a “contagion”—as if it were a theoretical illness that had nothing to do with actions of actual people. As in the logic (some might say illogic) of the prisoners’ dilemma and tit-for-tat games once used to describe the theory of nuclear deterrence, neither the magnanimity nor the fears of the human spirit play a role in this book’s equation.

Despite the publisher’s reputation and the implied support of influential (mostly retired) authorities, serious students of globalization or defense policy should avoid this book. It is not merely a weak argument; these are not principles of global security for the real world.

SAM TANGREDI
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This is the rare book that actually lives up to its blurbs. It should be required reading for U.S. defense planners, especially Bush administration officials for whom increasing defense spending rather than “holding the line” is an article of faith. They would profit greatly from the volume’s analysis of where not to look for the savings that might pay for the administration’s promised transformation of the military. Hint: cutting infrastructure will not pay for military transformation.

Cindy Williams, a senior research fellow in the Strategic Studies Program at MIT and a former assistant director for national security at the Congressional Budget Office, has assembled an impressive group of contributors. In a focused, well-integrated volume, they take on a range of pressing defense issues that converge on a central, critical question: how can the U.S. military be reshaped—transformed—while holding the line on defense spending? Holding the line means maintaining defense spending at about $300 billion (in fiscal year 2000 budget-authority dollars) for ten years. That amount, it is argued, is sufficient for transformation if it is spent effectively and efficiently—which requires merely discarding outmoded strategy and force structure.

In her introductory chapter, Williams lays the foundation for what follows with an instructive discussion of the post–Cold War drawdown, the pressures generating rising defense costs, the reasons we should not succumb to those pressures, and the need to reconcile strategy and practice and to recalibrate the two-major-theater-wars yardstick that was used to size U.S. conventional forces after the Gulf War. An effective force-protection device, the two-major-theater-wars standard is both the source of rising defense costs and an obstacle to a fiscally responsible transformation of the U.S. military. Williams is especially struck by the fact that each service’s share of defense
spending has been held essentially constant since the end of the Cold War. Strategy and force structure alternatives advanced by three of the contributors propose to take care of that problem. Lawrence Korb develops Williams’s account of contemporary defense planning with a critical appraisal of the Pentagon’s three post–Cold War reassessments—the first Bush administration’s 1990 “Base Force,” which introduced the two-major-regional-wars construct; the Clinton administration’s 1993 Bottom-Up Review; and the 1997 Quadrennial Defense Review, which also embraced the two-war view. Korb also delightfully exposes the misleading assumptions that inform the conventional wisdom about the inadequacy of current levels of defense spending.

The search for ways to utilize Department of Defense monies more effectively and efficiently begins with nonsolutions. Williams convincingly argues that infrastructure reform—eliminating functions, consolidating and collocating activities, privatization, and outsourcing—“will not be the miracle cure for the Pentagon’s budget woes.” Gordon Adams finds that for strategic, political, technological, and economic reasons, contemporary burden sharing by America’s European allies can yield no more of a budgetary payoff than it did during the Cold War. Further cuts in nuclear forces will not result in significant savings either, according to David Mosher, who expects, not unreasonably, that “missile defenses will be the most likely cause of budget growth.”

The resources required for transformation can only be extracted from the conventional force structure. It is the Army, Air Force, or Navy (and Marines)—take your pick—that will bear the brunt of restructuring. Owen Cote advances the alternative likely to be most popular among readers of this journal—a naval-centric strategy and force structure that features a significantly more innovative Navy. Under this alternative, a somewhat smaller Air Force and a more significantly reduced but more mobile Army would be the bill payers. James Quinlivan proposes what he considers a balanced future force structure centered on a reorganized, modernized Army. The Navy would lose two carrier battle groups under this alternative; the Marine Corps and the Air Force would be smaller as well. To support what he labels a “flexible power projection strategy,” Karl Mueller would shift resources from the Army and Navy to a modernized, more capable Air Force. The Army would give up 30 percent of its active combat forces and two-thirds of its National Guard units, while the Navy would have to make do with nine rather than twelve aircraft carriers.

Cote, Quinlivan, and Mueller each identify the strategic assumptions upon which their respective force structures are built. Their assumptions about the future security environment differ significantly. Unfortunately, we do not know what that security environment will actually look like. Defense planners, by nature cautious and conservative in the face of uncertainty, will want to hedge against each set of problems the authors identify; one way of doing this is to acquire the full range of capabilities they describe. In the end, while we know we should look to the conventional force structure to resolve the resource dilemma, the dilemma remains unresolved. What we still need is a reliable means of choosing among the assumptions—no small intellectual challenge. A larger dose of grand strategy
than provided in Williams’s introductory chapter is required for that undertaking.

ANDREW L. ROSS
Naval War College


Bart Brasher begins his retrospective discussion of Implosion with a simple synopsis in chapter 1, “The Last 1,000 Days of the Cold War.” Mentioned in this chapter is a discussion of the period of the Reagan administration when Defense personnel numbers and budget authority reached their peaks. He includes interesting USA Today statistics about defense spending in the United States and in the USSR, as well as a breakdown of how many soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines were serving. He also discusses how each service recruits, tests, and promotes its enlisted and officer personnel. Brasher then proceeds to the topic of the security environment (primarily by describing where U.S. military forces are deployed and in what numbers), the demise of the Soviet Union, and various operations that the U.S. military was involved in through the end of the 1980s. He closes this chapter with a discussion of the base realignment process, military readiness at the end of the Cold War, and the size of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, reserve components, and nuclear forces.

The book’s style is readable, and Brasher takes time to explain acronyms, even to describe how civilian control of the military is organized. His explanations about the military and government processes are clear even for the uninitiated. However, it is clear well before the end of the first chapter that the author’s approach consists primarily of stringing together information gleaned from various sources; the first thirty-four-page chapter contains 151 endnotes. Also, the book is replete with numbers and statistics; the average paragraph contains at least two or three. For example, the following is the concluding paragraph of the discussion of Operation JUST CAUSE: “Casualty figures for the invasion included 24 Americans dead, including two who were killed accidentally by their own forces. The number of U.S. wounded was 324, while the PDF suffered 314 killed, 124 wounded, and 5,313 captured. Serious estimates of Panamanian noncombatants killed ran from 100 to 202. Within a few years, Panama was a democracy and Noriega was in a stateside prison, convicted of the narcotics charges brought against him.”

The next several chapters fall into a pattern. For each year from 1990 through 1994, Brasher uses statistical tidbits to discuss human resources, the security environment, the “Base Force” (and other alternate force structures), military readiness, and downsizing. Each chapter sets forth the “security environment,” a chronological account of defense and military issues, primarily illuminated by force-deployment statistics. Subchapters cover in a clear and concise fashion such subjects as contingency operations, the Bottom-Up Review, the base closure process, modernization, and “topsizing.” Chapter 7 covers the downsizing of the military from 1995 and 1996, and chapter 8 covers the “Quadrennial Defense Review and the Out-Years, 1997 to 2015.” Brasher’s conclusions, which occupy two pages, include: “Although many equate the initiation of personnel and force structure
reductions with the end of the Cold War in 1989 or the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, DOD, as a whole, started downsizing in 1988. The Army and Air Force started trimming forces in 1987 and the Marine Corps followed suit the following year. The Navy did not start reducing numbers until 1990”; “For the most part, it seems though DOD has managed to keep the cream of the crop in a smaller labor pool. . . . [T]he quality of the Army officer contingent, already high, has been improved by the SSB and VSI initiatives, as most of the commissioned soldiers accepting the bonuses were from the bottom third of their year-groups”; “Some were concerned that African-Americans, as well as other minorities, might bear a disproportionate share of military personnel cuts, but that has not transpired. Along the same line, opportunities for women in the armed forces have not been put on hold because of the downsizing. In fact, their representation has reached record levels”; “Local communities have been hurt by the reduction in the number of DOD installations that started in 1988. However, in many cases, that damages have been significantly less than originally estimated. Thanks to a higher percentage of personnel cuts than base closures, the infrastructure of our fighting establishment is now even more out of sync with force structure than it was in 1987.”

Other conclusions address the need for increased modernization funding, force hollowness (although not on the scale seen in the 1970s), and reductions in personnel and funding (unaccompanied by reductions in global security commitments).

The author (a former Air Force officer of thirteen years’ service) has consulted hundreds of sources for his book. The bibliography is sixteen pages long. The numbers and statistics are interesting individually, though their sheer volume is overwhelming. The appendices are simple graphs showing a downward trend from 1987 to 1998. What is missing are conclusions and projections (beyond those contained in the Quadrennial Defense Review) about the implications. Implosion does a credible job of describing, with key statistics and simple explanations, the magnitude and process of the downsizing of the military (the active components were reduced 35.3 percent between 1987 and 1998), but Brasher seems too enamored of statistical pronouncements, leaving the reader waiting for an answer to the question “What does it all mean?” What will this massive force and budgetary reduction mean for the future of the United States military and its role on the international stage?

If you are looking for a book full of quotable, surprising, and interesting statistics, or for a concise, clearly explained, chronological timeline of how the military was downsized since 1987, this book is for you. However, you will not find pronouncements or predictions about how the reduction in military forces and funding, so carefully detailed and described, will affect the future. Nor does this book pass judgment or offer praise or criticism of how the downsizing occurred. Brasher discusses downsizing much as a good reporter might (just the facts), rather than as a commentator or political analyst. Given the time frame advertised in the title (1987–2015), the author has done only half his job.

CARL CARLSON
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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.

TOM FEDYSZYN
Naval War College


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
failure of the Wehrmacht to prepare logistics support suited to the resulting depth of the theater.

If the book has a fault, it lies in the numerous maps and organizational charts that accompany the text. Though House’s prose is clear and straightforward, the maps do not help the layman really grasp the dynamics of the battles. Similarly, although House thoughtfully includes a key to the numerous symbols that soldiers use to depict units on maps and tables of organization, he leaves out a number of the more esoteric ones that inhabit the book. This is a minor irritant—in general the book is well supported by a glossary of technical terms and acronyms, liberal annotations, and an extensive bibliography—but it should be fixed in the next edition if the book is to be considered a true introductory text.

House has a clear thesis that permeates his analysis: combined-arms structure (comprising tanks, artillery, infantry, helicopters, engineers, etc.) should be integrated at the lowest practicable level and balanced to provide the most flexibility to the commander. (In practice, this seems to occur only at the division or sometimes the brigade level.) The commander can then select various types of units to form combined-arms task forces that can address the type of operations planned. House’s discussion of the long and painful history of armies’ struggles to achieve this balance and flexibility brings to mind the equally painful attempts at jointness among services.

House inevitably addresses the issue of air support as a piece of the combined-arms puzzle. He analytically describes the objections airmen have to integrating airpower into a combined-arms ground organization, but in his conclusions he argues against separate, air-only campaigns. Although his points are otherwise well made, on this issue he seems to overreach a bit.

In summary, Jonathan House has produced a useful and readable text for anyone who wants a better understanding of how modern armies fight.

BARNEY RUBEL
Naval War College


This is not a technological history of the U.S. Navy per se but rather an exploration of how the dominant culture of the Navy’s leadership drove specific technological choices in the transition from the sailing ship of the line to the battleship and then to the aircraft carrier. McBride’s thesis centers on two points: that the organization and culture of the U.S. Navy have traditionally been defined by its capital ships; and that new technologies challenging the relevance of the current capital ship are generally resisted by senior leaders, who seek both to maintain control over change and to inhibit any developments that suggest a transfer of power to individuals with the skills, functions, and organizational relationships of a new “technological paradigm.” These themes are familiar to those who follow the academic literature on technology and culture, but McBride is undoubtedly correct in his contention that there is no widespread understanding of the specific impact of the dominant service culture on technology selection. A thorough appreciation of the full range of forces that drive technological choices would appear to be particularly
important in the post–Cold War era, in which the technological options are so numerous and specific requirements for the Navy are so uncertain.

One of McBride’s major goals in this work is to refute the idea of technological determinism and demonstrate instead the importance of culture in technological innovation. He explores in some depth the intense professional competition between the Navy’s line officers and engineers during the transition from sail to steam, and between surface officers and aviators in the transition from the battleship to the carrier. He also offers interesting historical insight into internal competition for control over the design details of capital ships during different eras, with an informative analysis of the role of naval-industrial relations in the early debate over the adoption of turbo-electric drive.

Unfortunately, McBride’s argument against technological determinism tends to the opposite extreme, ascribing almost every technological choice to single-minded efforts by the Navy’s leaders to maintain the social and cultural status quo. He characterizes the battleship “paradigm” at the end of the nineteenth century as a “pre-Copernican Ptolemaic cosmogony,” as if the battleship were not only the wrong technological choice but somehow a violation of natural law. He castigates the U.S. Navy for rejecting a cruiser-centric commerce-raiding strategy and attributes the choice to blind adherence to the “paramount status” of the battleship. Yet ultimately McBride does not refute the case that the transition from the sailing ship of the line to the battleship was essentially a deterministic outcome, nor does he objectively evaluate the failed efforts by others in the nineteenth century (most notably the French) to render the battleship obsolete.

In contrast, McBride largely admits that the adoption of the aircraft carrier was more a matter of fortuitous events than of technological determinism. As he points out, a narrow difference in timing in the appearance of radar and the proximity fuse might have doomed the aircraft carrier to irrelevance; it was not until well into World War II that a carrier could muster sufficient striking power to hold a combat-ready battleship at risk. Yet he condemns the Navy’s “battleship thought collective” as early as World War I for failing to move rapidly to a sea-based air strike force—including early adoption of torpedo bombers (which actually took another twenty-five years to achieve technological maturity). There have unquestionably been Luddites in the Navy’s senior ranks throughout its history, but there is great cost and risk in abandoning major military systems that have proven their worth. McBride is far too prone to condemn the technological caution of past decision makers, who lacked the benefit of our hindsight.

It is not clear whom the book was meant to inform. McBride’s insistence on turgid academic jargon like “intra-artifact combat” and “obdurate boundary artifact” to express fairly simple ideas suggests that he did not intend this work for the reader inside the military who might actually make the best use of it. On the other hand, an academic audience unfamiliar with naval operations might accept without question McBride’s somewhat preposterous assertions that the “blip enhance” mode of the ULQ-6 was intended as a suicide device, that an “old World War II–era destroyer” could sink a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, or that
the cruise missile has long since replaced the aircraft as the primary means of strike from the sea.

This volume does add some historical substance to the important topic of military innovation, but the prospective reader should be cautioned that it is neither a well balanced nor a comprehensive account of the impact of technological change on the U.S. Navy from the Civil War through World War II.

JAMES R. FITZSIMONDS
Naval War College


For more than two-thirds of a century, a host of diplomats, military officers, and statesmen have been entertained in their wardrooms, clubs, and drawing rooms from London to Manila by Jerry Wright’s stories and vignettes drawn from his remarkable career. After every session, the inevitable reaction would be, “Jerry, you’ve got to write a book.”

Now that book has been written by David M. Key, Jr., a nephew of the admiral. Key, making good use of his Harvard A.B. in English, does an excellent job in letting his uncle and his contemporaries tell the story, while himself providing the historical context, one that is unusually rich in drama and import. Fortunately, Key had much to draw on, and he has done a thorough and discriminating job in his research. Wright wrote copiously—leaving journals, memos, articles, and letters—all flavored with the special brand of low-key, wry wit that was characteristic of him. Wright had plenty to write about. His career was replete with one-of-a-kind assignments, from being in charge of President Calvin Coolidge’s yacht to commanding a British submarine in World War II (though he was neither British nor a submarine officer).

Born in 1898 into an Army family, Wright adored his father, and clearly the feeling was mutual. “Pop” took his son on hunting and fishing trips around the world, and the young boy relished the experience. When Wright was only thirteen, then-Major William Wright, stationed in Luzon as commander of the Philippine Scouts, took the youngster, armed with his own shotgun, on a military expedition to Mindanao to suppress an uprising by the rebellious Moros, Philippine Muslims. It was an adventure from America’s brief colonial period, more Kipling than Hemingway.

In 1914 Wright entered the Naval Academy (at sixteen) because there was no appointment available at West Point. He graduated in only three years, because of World War I. He was sent to Europe on blockade duty, which also provided the opportunity to visit his father, now Major General Wright, commanding the 89th Infantry Division on the Western Front. However, the trip became more than just a visit with “Pop” at his tented headquarters when Ensign Wright was caught in a German artillery barrage. It did not take the young naval officer long to realize that the U.S. Navy was the right place for him. He derived personal as well as professional satisfaction from his assignment as naval aide to Coolidge and from his subsequent deployment to the China Station as executive officer of a four-pipe destroyer.

Wright remained a bachelor as a junior officer, but with his special charm and tall good looks, he was much in demand
in the social whirl of Washington, D.C. There he met Phyllis Thompson, a society reporter for the thriving Washington Star. They were married within a year. Throughout the rest of his career they remained a devoted couple. Phyllis was always the exemplary Navy wife (she published a book by that title), uncomplaining about the frequent moves and long separations, and a pillar of support for her husband in all his varied endeavors and often bizarre adventures.

During World War II, Wright commanded major forces in action and served on personal liaison missions for the Allies. After the war he served in the Pentagon, where, because of his combat experience, he was assigned to develop the operating policies for the postwar Navy.

The real star in Wright’s crown, however, was his tour as Supreme Allied Commander, Atlantic, one of the two top posts in Nato. He handled that job with such distinction that he served for six years in what was normally a two-year assignment. His experiences in that critical post at the height of the Cold War should be of special interest to naval historians and students of modern history.

After retiring from active duty as a four-star admiral in 1960, he performed his final service to the country in 1963, when, at the urging of the secretary of state, President John F. Kennedy appointed Wright to serve as U.S. ambassador to Taiwan. Again Wright answered the call of his country to serve in an assignment of great responsibility and unusual sensitivity, one especially significant because of the instability of the Chinese Nationalist government and the potential threat to U.S. vital national interests.

David Key’s lack of familiarity with military jargon has allowed an occasional error to creep in, but these are few and minor, limited generally to a garbled acronym or the misspelling of a ship’s name. Otherwise the book rings with the authority of an action report.

Admiral Jerauld Wright is a delightful book, easy to pick up and hard to put down. It is a biography of a splendid individual whose service and contributions to his country constitute a significant historical record in itself. It is a story that unfolds with the candor and humor of a special person whose intellect and charm made him a “diplomat among warriors.”

J. L. HOLLOWAY
Admiral, U.S. Navy, Retired


In the heralded history of the U.S. Marine Corps, Lewis B. “Chesty” Puller occupies a unique position. Long revered as the greatest hero in the Corps, Puller is the only Marine to earn five Navy Crosses. His career spanned thirty-seven years, during which he mastered the entire spectrum of warfare, from chasing the guerrilla leader Augusto Sandino in the jungles of Nicaragua to commanding a Marine regiment in the bitter fighting near the Chosin reservoir. Most Marines are familiar with Burke Davis’s 1962 account of Puller’s life, but fellow leatherneck Jon T. Hoffman has produced what is likely to become the definitive biography of this extraordinary officer.

Hoffman is no stranger to biography. His Once a Legend: “Red Mike” Edson of the Marine Raiders earned rave reviews from a number of distinguished military historians and editors. As he did with Edson,
Hoffman uses private papers, personal military records, and recently declassified federal documents in his attempt to discover the “real” Puller, stripped of decades of mythology and near canonization. What makes this current biography so intriguing is Hoffman’s willingness to confront the more controversial aspects of Puller’s career, such as his performance at Peleliu, where his unit’s casualty rate exceeded 54 percent, as well as his alleged indifference toward junior officers and to other services.

Puller was born in the Virginia Tidewater in 1898 and enlisted in the Marine Corps on 25 July 1918, too late to fight in World War I. He first saw combat during the interwar period, when the United States frequently dispatched Marines to quell domestic disturbances throughout the Caribbean. The Puller legend was born in Haiti and Nicaragua, where he earned the sobriquet “El Tigre” and established a reputation as a brilliant small-unit leader. His aggressive leadership won two Navy Crosses. Extended foreign service in China and aboard Captain Chester Nimitz’s flagship, USS Augusta (CA 31), added new laurels to Puller’s growing reputation.

With the advent of World War II, Puller actively sought combat duty. In September 1942 his battalion deployed to Guadalcanal. One month later, he had earned his third Navy Cross, in the defense of Henderson Field. Following a short interlude, Puller won a fourth Navy Cross in the battle at Cape Gloucester, on New Britain Island. On both occasions, Puller’s spirited leadership prevented the desperate and determined enemy from penetrating his defenses. On Guadalcanal particularly, his officers and men were almost universal in their praise of his courage and leadership under fire.

It was on New Britain that Puller first attracted a great deal of criticism for allegedly using his own casualty figures as a measuring stick of how aggressively his men were fighting. This criticism reached new heights after Peleliu in September 1944, where a visibly tired Puller, now a regimental commander, sustained disproportionate casualties in eradicating the Japanese defenders. Hoffman rushes to his defense, noting that Puller’s unit did not have as much naval gunfire support available as the other regiments did, and that service doctrine dictated maintaining momentum, which Puller’s regiment had gained. Moreover, Hoffman points out, the terrain at Peleliu offered little opportunity for maneuver; frontal assault is almost always costly.

Allegations of Puller’s lack of tactical imagination resurfaced in Korea, where his regiment was instrumental in retaking Seoul in the immediate aftermath of the Inchon landing. House-to-house fighting proved slow and deadly, but Puller took justifiable pride in his regiment’s role in seizing the South Korean capital. Puller’s leadership during the fighting withdrawal from the Chosin reservoir, in contrast, attracted a great deal of favorable publicity. It was in fact nothing short of inspirational, earning him his fifth and final Navy Cross.

Unfortunately, the years following Korea brought only disillusionment to Puller. Like General George S. Patton, Chesty Puller was ill suited to the peacetime establishment. He was never politically astute; his blunt remarks about rugged training and a “soft” American public created a hailstorm of criticism from a country long tired of war. What Puller desired most was command of a Marine division, but soon after he finally achieved that lofty ideal in 1954, a stroke
felled him, and he was relieved of command. Rather than retiring gracefully, however, Puller fought the medical examiner’s board for over a year before the secretary of the Navy informed him in October 1955 that he would be retired.

For Puller, his forced retirement from active service was the ultimate betrayal by the commandant and Headquarters, Marine Corps. In his twilight years, however, Puller mellowed a bit and took personal satisfaction in seeing his family reach maturity. He volunteered for active service during the Vietnam War (his request was understandably denied). A vocal critic of government policy during the war, Puller watched his son, Lewis Puller, Jr., carry on the Puller name in combat.

As a sidelight, Hoffman provides an intimate portrayal of the relationship between father and son in the elder Puller’s last days. Lewis Jr., who later recorded his own experiences in a Pulitzer Prize-winning autobiography, Fortunate Son, was at his father’s side when Chesty Puller, the greatest Marine in history, succumbed to pneumonia and kidney infection on 11 October 1971.

The Puller who emerges from these pages is not an altogether appealing figure but one who merits the accolades that generations of Marines have bestowed upon him. The fact that his Navy Crosses were awarded for leadership during critical stages of battle as opposed to individual acts of bravery in no way diminishes what Puller accomplished during his distinguished career. An unparalleled warrior and an enlisted leatherneck at heart, Chesty Puller remains the most famous and most revered Marine. It is fitting that we finally have a biography that does justice to this extraordinary officer.

COLE C. KINGSEED
Colonel, U.S. Army, Retired


Oliver Prince Smith was not present at Belleau Wood or Chateau Thierry. Neither did he chase Sandino in Nicaragua. He never served in Shanghai with the 4th Marines. He missed the fighting on Guadalcanal and Tarawa—early 1941 saw him with the 1st Marine Brigade in Iceland, returning to the United States in May 1942 for an eighteen-month stint in the newly formed headquarters Division of Plans and Policies. Consequently, Smith’s first taste of combat did not come until early 1944—fully twenty-seven years after commissioning—at New Britain, where he served initially as chief of staff for the 1st Marine Division and shortly as commander, 5th Marines, for the Talasea Peninsula assault. Subsequently, at Peleliu he had the distinct misfortune to serve as assistant commander of the 1st Marine Division under Major General William H. Rupertus. He would finish his World War II service as Marine deputy chief of staff for the Tenth Army at Okinawa.

Smith went through the Reserve Officers Training Corps program at the University of California, Berkeley, and was commissioned a second lieutenant in 1917. He was ordered to Guam, followed by shipboard duty, then Washington, D.C., three years in Haiti, and the Army’s Field Officer School at Fort Benning in 1931. Subsequently, Smith taught at Marine Corps Schools in Quantico, following which he became the first Marine officer to matriculate at the French École de Guerre. Returning to the United States, he was again assigned as an instructor at Quantico, where, because of his obvious
intellectual power, he acquired the nicknames “the professor” and the “student general.”

Smith was not a colorful character. A practicing Christian Scientist, he did not drink (although he did smoke a pipe), and he did not use profanity. In fact, when he spoke at all he rarely raised his voice above a normal speaking level. “Taciturn” probably describes him best.

Consequently, when in spring 1950, after serving as Marine Corps assistant commandant, Smith received orders as commanding general, 1st Marine Division, there was not a little heartburn among other Marine general officers, which only intensified when that division deployed to Korea.

Yet if ever there was an officer with the right qualifications at the right place at the right time, it was Major General Oliver Prince Smith.

It was O.P. who worked closely and effectively with Rear Admiral James H. Doyle on a very short time line to plan the September 1950 landing at Inchon, with higher echelons back-dating their operation orders to conform with those produced at the lower levels. Like Doyle, O.P. was a practical-minded, hardheaded professional who cared not a whit for high-blown rhetoric or elegant maps, only for getting the job done. It was O.P. who wisely resisted great pressure from his corps commander to accelerate his division’s advance on Seoul in order to meet an artificial schedule for securing that city; urgings to make a dangerous night attack once in Seoul; and attempts to interfere in his division’s internal chain of command.

The extraordinary performance of the 1st Marine Division at Chosin is widely known. Less obvious was O.P.’s contribution to that performance. Again, he wisely resisted considerable pressure from his corps commander to quick-pace the division’s advance to the Yalu. Cognizant of the danger posed by the Chinese entry into the war, O.P. doggedly strove to keep his division concentrated. Smith developed a main supply route with defensible redoubts that made possible the division’s long fighting retreat from Chosin to Hamhung. Earlier, in the belief that the war would extend well into the bitter Korean winter, he had insisted on cold-weather gear for his Marines. He kept in continuous personal contact with his regimental commanders by means of helicopter (the first field commander to do so) and jeep, and yet he refrained from interfering with their exercise of command.

By these deeds, this reviewer is persuaded that O. P. Smith saved a great many fine men from certain capture, injury, or death. Much beloved by his men, O.P. reciprocated; in his personal log he kept handwritten daily and running casualty figures for the division. Perhaps the best-known photo of O. P. Smith is of him standing alone among graves of his men in the cemetery at Hamhung.

Smith was neither good news material nor well known outside Marine circles; he was a very private and modest person. For example, he confided to his wife his deep embarrassment on receiving a Silver Star from General Douglas MacArthur, an award he deemed inappropriate for a division commander not directly in the line of fire. Such humility and personal reserve neither attract biographers nor render their task easy (in Korea he was easily eclipsed by his 1st Marines commander, the colorful “Chesty” Puller). Thus, the absence of a biography of Smith until now is no surprise, but the lacuna has been a serious one. That there
is now such a biography is owed to the perseverance of the publisher’s executive director, who served in the 1st Marine Division after the Korean War.

Fortunately for his biographer, O.P. kept meticulous records of his professional life, comprising some three dozen boxes in the Marine Corps University Archives and, more important, a detailed, daily personal log of his Korean War service. La Bree conducted interviews with officers who had served with O.P. to help fill in the blanks.

_Gentle Warrior_ would have benefited had the author provided a broader context for the historical events in which its protagonist participated. It would also have been improved by more attention to the first decades of O.P.’s career, which are largely omitted—official records could have provided at least grist for the mill here. That O.P.’s youth and college years are absent from this account is due principally to his family’s desire for privacy, which the author respected. Thus we do not really know the father to the man—the account really starts with O.P.’s deployment to Iceland.

Nonetheless, this is a good, honest book. It is probably not the definitive account of O.P.’s life and career, but we are fortunate to have it. He emerges as a consummate, dedicated professional military officer who served his country and his Marine Corps extremely well and did so with little fanfare or expectation of public approbation. On more than one occasion, Smith risked his career to speak truth to power. In short, there is much worth emulating in the character and career of O. P. Smith. Serving officers would do well to read this book and absorb its lessons.

DONALD CHISHOLM
Naval War College

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Probert, Henry. _Bomber Harris, His Life and Times: The Biography of Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir Arthur Harris, the Wartime Chief of Bomber Command_. London: Greenhill, 2001. 432pp. $34.95

In the 1920s, early in his career, when Arthur Harris commanded 45 Squadron in Iraq, he was concerned with improving the accuracy of his unit’s bomb aiming. Can this be the same man who, twenty years later, was responsible for leading the Royal Air Force Bomber Command’s area-bombing campaign against the cities of the Third Reich, the apogee of which was the apocalyptic raid on Dresden in February 1945?

Yes and no. As Henry Probert demonstrates in his admirable biography of this most controversial Allied airman, Harris did indeed stress the need for his bombers to operate efficiently and effectively as they policed their corner of the British Empire, and he continued to emphasize these qualities for the remainder of his career. Harris cannot be made to bear personal responsibility for either the area-bombing strategy in general, or the Dresden raid in particular. Although Harris became a lightning rod for post-war criticism of the strategic air offensive, the critical decisions were made higher up the chain of command by the Chiefs of Staff, the War Cabinet, and Winston Churchill. In pointing out this simple but often overlooked fact, Probert, like Robin Neillands in his recent _The Bomber War_ (Overlook Press, 2001), seeks to debunk myths and set the record straight by putting Harris in his proper historical context.

In some respects this task is not an easy one, but Probert is well qualified to make the attempt. A retired RAF air commodore with a long record of service,
Probert is also a former head of the Air Historical Branch of the Ministry of Defence. For this biography he was given unrestricted access to Harris’s substantial collection of personal papers. Probert has made good use of this archive and of the interviews he conducted with Harris’s friends and associates. His aim, he writes, is to present a biography of the man rather than yet another history of the bombing campaign, and there is much detail here that cannot be found elsewhere, even in the authorized biography by Dudley Saward, which was written in the 1970s but not published until after Harris’s death in 1984. Probert rightly judges Saward’s book to be disappointing, not least because it leaves many questions unanswered.

Yet while the author attempts to offer a rounder picture of the man by examining Harris’s pre- and post–Bomber Command life, readers will inevitably be drawn to those chapters dealing with the war years. Despite Probert’s desire not to retell the story of Bomber Command, he feels it necessary to offer some verdict on the air campaign itself. Here he wisely follows the lead of Richard Overy (King’s College, London) in concluding that the night area offensive did much more damage to the German war effort than it has been given credit for, mainly by diverting resources to the defence of the Reich, putting a ceiling on industrial production, and generally disrupting economic and social life.

The picture of Harris that emerges is in some ways all too familiar. He was just the tonic that was needed at Bomber Command Headquarters in High Wycombe when he took up his appointment in February 1942. He was a strong-willed, opinionated, and forceful commander who promised to inject a sense of purpose into a force that was flagging, and to do his utmost to build up its striking power. In this he was spectacularly successful, but his success came at a price. Harris’s personality was a liability as well as an asset, and this was never more apparent than in his dealings with the staff officers of the Air Ministry. One of Probert’s strengths is his understanding of the decision-making machinery and the bureaucratic and institutional framework within which bombing policy was made, a dimension of the story that is too often neglected or misunderstood.

Relations between Bomber Command and the Air Ministry’s Directorate of Bomber Operations were frosty, due in no small part to Harris’s contempt for what he believed to be the Air Staff’s ill-advised criticism of, and interference in, the operation of his command. To a certain extent his views were justified, although one does not get from Probert a full sense of the deep distrust that some members of the Air Staff had of Harris’s judgment and of his readiness to obey orders. Yet it takes two to tango, and too often Harris was overeager to dance. In addition to possessing a weakness for exaggeration, he could be inflexible, intolerant, scathingly sarcastic, and narrow minded in his view of the war. The results were frequently counterproductive, introducing unnecessary friction into the business of running the bomber offensive. Sometimes he was right, as in his denunciation of the pointless attacks on the concrete-reinforced U-boat pens on the French coast. At other times, however, he was dead wrong, as in his dogmatic dismissal of oil as just another “panacea” target.

Probert is too conscientious a biographer to excuse Harris’s lapses uncritically, but he also seems a bit too willing to give his
subject the benefit of the doubt, suggesting in his concluding remarks that others might have misinterpreted or misunderstood what Harris was trying to say or do. He is surely right in judging him to be one of the great commanders of the Second World War. If that is the case, however, it is equally true to say that Bomber Command achieved as much as it did not only because of Sir Arthur Harris but in spite of him.

LORNE BREITENLOHNER
University of Toronto
FROM THE EDITORS

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our Website or contact the editorial office. An index of our book reviews in re-
cent years is available on our Website.
One of the College’s ubiquitous Canada geese
Photograph by PHC(AW) Jon H. Hockersmith, U.S. Navy
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