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Strategy in the Contemporary World: An Introduction to Strategic Studies

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in the short term, other nations can provide the human intelligence capabilities that the United States currently lacks. Finally, the authors recognize that local and state officials rather than members of the federal government are on the front lines in one major theater of operations—the homeland. Consequently, the book recommends ways of allowing decentralized coordination among federal, state, and local authorities that maintain a balance between the civil rights of the citizenry and the necessity of prosecuting a vigorous campaign.

However, one must ask why—in light of their insightful recognition for the need for an integrated command, control, and coordination of an incredibly diverse repertoire of efforts to fight the war against terrorism—the authors refused to consider any real command and control organization, process, system, or doctrine. In place of such a useful, even vital capability, *To Prevail* merely calls for more commissions, more coordination, and more openness, and information sharing among existing agencies. The authors are Washington veterans who must know how naïve their recommendations on this matter sound. They recommend *against* forming a powerful department of homeland security that would be capable of integrating the diverse and often contradictory and self-defeating efforts of a variety of federal agencies. One never really fully understands who or what the authors are suggesting will conduct the overall campaign planning and oversight of the global war on terror. The fact is that at this writing, it is still not clear which federal entity is conducting the command and control functions of much of the global campaign. This

country learned quickly in World War II that crises alone, even sneak attacks, do not overcome bureaucratic turf wars; the nation is relearning that lesson now. The authors must know this, and they should propose an organizational framework to implement the wide array of global and domestic measures advocated in their strategy.

To Prevail is for the serious strategic thinker and decision maker. It is a commendable effort to bring together in one place a comprehensive strategy that can bring success in what promises to be a long and unusual war. My only quibble is the shortage of relevant citations, which is probably due to the quickness of editing and publication. Such is the price of currency.

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Baylis, John, et al., eds. *Strategy in the Contemporary World: An Introduction to Strategic Studies*. Oxford, U.K.: Oxford Univ. Press, 2002. 356pp. \$27.95

Although not recognized as an equal academic discipline by mainstream academics, the study of strategy has a long and honorable history—the result of numerous authors who, over the centuries, have developed their ideas and placed their own imprints on the discipline. Since the beginning of the Cold War, when the threat of nuclear destruction concentrated the minds of scholars, the field shifted from traditional military concerns to the study of nuclear deterrence. But now, more than a decade beyond the end of the Cold War, strategic studies return to their

origins, though in a time rife with novel challenges. *Strategy in the Contemporary World* marks a good first step for the discipline.

The editors, strategists all, have assembled a remarkable introduction to strategic studies. Not only is it the first textbook on the subject rather than a collection of edited readings, but it is singularly helpful to the novice. The book addresses a broad array of subjects and may refresh experienced strategists on subjects outside their expertise.

The book's fourteen chapters by seventeen authors have been organized into four sections: "Enduring Issues," "Evolution of Joint Warfare," "Twentieth-Century Theories," and "Contemporary Issues." The subject of each chapter varies tremendously—an introduction to strategic studies; the causes of war; great strategists of the past; land, air, and naval power; terrorism and irregular warfare; international law; deterrence; weapons of mass destruction; technology and warfare; humanitarian intervention; nontraditional security concerns (environmental degradation, etc.); and others.

Each chapter, despite the analytical bias of its author (or authors), explores the fundamentals of its subject fairly well. For example, in "Sea Power: Theory and Practice," Captain Sam Tangredi, USN, traces the historical and theoretical lineage for sea power versus land power. He defines sea power broadly to include maritime trade and ocean resources, and he analyzes the importance of sea lines of communication. Tangredi evaluates the works of Alfred Thayer Mahan and Soviet admiral Sergei Gorshkov as they relate to the debate over naval strategy during the Cold War. He follows this by discussing

naval theory for the post–Cold War era of smaller navies, wider threats, and only one truly global naval power. That is to say, he covers the subject broadly, but with finesse.

The typical problems with multi-authored works are absent in this book. A strong editorial hand has blended the various chapters to read as if the same author had penned them. In addition, the book contains clear introductions and conclusions; key points are summarized in each section; questions are included at the end of each chapter; and further reading references are listed. Students and instructors could make good use of this book.

Only one minor inconsistency mars this otherwise good work. Strategy and strategic studies have long recognized the relationship between politics and war. Karl von Clausewitz wrote that war is a continuation of political discourse by other means. Truth be told, to understand strategy—the art of marrying military means to political ends—one must look constantly to its political origins. The worth of this idea can be seen in the want of it in some of these chapters. For example, in "Arms Control and Disarmament," John Baylis entirely divorces the subject from the politics of nations. Thus when he reports on the charges and countercharges of arms violations between the United States and the Soviet Union during the 1980s, without reference to politics and policies, the states' behaviors appear morally equivalent. In contrast, James D. Kiras emphasizes the political objectives of war in his chapter, "Terrorism and Irregular Warfare," helping the reader to make sense of how unconventional tactics may or may not accomplish certain goals.

This is a minor problem, however. It does not significantly mar an excellent work that will serve anyone desiring grounding in strategic studies or a refresher on strategy.

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Mearsheimer, John J. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2001. 448pp. \$27.95

This monumental and ambitious work sets out to provide the definitive account of the “offensive realism” school of international relations theory. Offensive realism represents a kind of synthesis of the classical realism of Hans Morgenthau and the structural or “defensive” realism of Kenneth Waltz. With Morgenthau it assumes that states (or major states) seek to accumulate as much power as possible for themselves, but it accepts Waltz’s view that the reason they do so lies in the structure of the international system rather than in the human lust for power. Mearsheimer must therefore show that Waltz and his many followers have been overly optimistic in analyzing the implications for state behavior of the anarchic character of the international system. According to Mearsheimer, they have wrongly assumed that a cautious or defensive approach to safeguarding a state’s security is the only rational approach and hence the norm for most states. Rather, he insists, aggressive or expansionist behavior is both more common in the recent history of the great powers than this would allow and more rational in the sense that it is not infrequently very successful.

Mearsheimer’s thesis is richly illustrated, from the history of the great powers from the wars of the French Revolution through the end of the Cold War. It also looks out into the future to test the theory against the common if vaguely articulated belief that great-power war has become obsolete. For these reasons, and because it is written in a clear and jargon-free style, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* holds much interest even for those with limited patience for the theological disputes of international relations theorists. At the same time, it is a formidable challenge to mainstream realism. It scores many points off an approach that somehow never comes to grips with what one is tempted to call the sheer bloody-mindedness of international politics. Particularly novel and persuasive is Mearsheimer’s analysis of “buck passing” (not “bandwagoning”) as the fundamental alternative to balancing against another power.

Yet the book has its limitations, which are largely the limitations of the realist school as such. Mearsheimer never quite convinces when he argues that the domestic regimes and leadership of, for example, Britain, the United States, Nazi Germany, and imperial Japan had no fundamental impact on their international behavior. But perhaps the weakest part of the book is its disregard of the ideological context of nineteenth-century European diplomacy. The anti-revolutionary alliance of Austria, Prussia, and Russia, and the “Concert of Europe,” were arguably at least as important in maintaining the long great-power peace through much of this period as were the abstract structural characteristics of the European state system. For that matter, the fact that many of the wars that did occur were connected in some way with