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Planning the Unthinkable: How New Powers Will Use Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Weapons,

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with . . . but not too dangerous to defeat.”

Similarly, Brad Roberts discusses regional nuclear war termination, arguing that the United States would have not only to address the immediate problems presented by the war but also to ensure that longer-term U.S. interests were served by “winning the peace” that follows. The United States has to avoid being perceived as a “nuclear bully” whose power must be counterbalanced, but neither can it come off as a “nuclear wimp,” unwilling to confront an aggressor. Instead, the course of action chosen must show the United States to be a responsible and just steward of the international good.

In the concluding chapter, Victor A. Utgoff contends that in response to a regional nuclear threat the United States would likely be far more resolute than others have suggested and would likely respond in kind to a first use of nuclear weapons by an aggressor. He concludes with a number of policy implications.

The fundamental premise of this book is that sooner or later the proliferation of nuclear weapons is going to lead to a confrontation between the United States and a nuclear-armed state. While there are many points of disagreement between the authors, all concur that such a confrontation will be a seminal event and will define not only the role of nuclear weapons but also that of the world’s only superpower in the post–Cold War era. All students of national security policy owe it to themselves to consider the policy implications of this premise. *The Coming Crisis* will be valuable to them.

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Lavoy, Peter, Scott Sagan, and James Wirtz, eds. *Planning the Unthinkable: How New Powers Will Use Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Weapons*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 2000. 270pp. \$45

The title says it all. This book is a compilation of empirical and analytical data on the strategic evolution of nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) agents and weapons in the twenty-first century. A central theme of the book is how new regional players (states and nonstate actors) are likely to convert prevalent conventional military doctrine and training into nonconventional means of warfare. The book is very ambitious in its scope; it attempts—overall, successfully—to address systematically conceptual problems in the integration of such weapons into the military infrastructure, delivery systems, command and control procedures, and war plans. More importantly, the editors and the authors of the various case studies utilize a theoretical framework to explain and predict future trends of behaviors, intentions, and capabilities among very diverse players. Realism and neorealism, organizational theory, and culture are used to flesh out these unique differences in approach as well as in the implementation of NBC programs and doctrines.

Except for the conclusion and the chapter on terrorism, the chapters are case studies, focusing on Iraq, Iran, Israel, India, Pakistan, and North Korea. The authors are specialists who devote a great deal of effort to describing the relationship between strategy and policy, on one hand, and between national security and national military strategy, on the other. The result is a complex web of relationships, behavioral manifestations, and decision-making processes involving an amalgam

of scientific, bureaucratic, and military institutions and forces. In the chapter on Iran, for example, Gregory Giles eloquently argues that Iran was reluctant on moral and religious grounds to use chemical weapons during the first few years of the Iran-Iraq War (1980–87) but that its policy changed abruptly as a result of rising Iranian casualties and fear of Iraqi chemical-warfare preponderance. Hence, realism became key to explaining the Iranian NBC doctrinal shift after 1987. Although Iran ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention within a few months of its coming into force, Iran has opted to pursue a clandestine NBC program. Such weapons are the subject of intense debate within the increasingly factionalized, institutionalized, and secularized Iranian political elite today. This has given rise to “multiple actors playing roles in a key strategic program[,] . . . [ensuring] that there will be continued bureaucratic competition for resources, missions, and influence.” More significantly, such competition has far-reaching political, economic, and military implications, associated primarily with command and control mechanisms. Israel (a chapter by Avner Cohen) and India (by Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu) also utilize NBC secrecy and ambiguity to enhance their conventional deterrence capabilities—Israel to keep its Arab adversaries off balance and to avoid American nonproliferation pressure, and India to keep China, not Pakistan, in check. Pakistan (Zafar Iqbal Cheema), however, apparently sees the development of its NBC program as a necessity—not a choice—because in the “absence of conventional security alternatives and nuclear security guarantees . . . [such] weapons were viewed as a necessary counter [to] a perceived threat from India.”

The chapter by Jessica Stern analyzes the dynamics of terrorism in the twenty-first century. She argues that the potential for nonstate actors to acquire, develop, deploy, and use NBC weapons is growing. Stern may be correct in her concern. Yet, although there is a precedent, in that terrorist groups such as the Japanese Aum Shinrikyo have used such devices, there is no hard empirical data to support a sustained argument that terrorists will be going the NBC route, at least in the near term. Terrorism has become complex indeed; acquiring, assembling, deploying, and using NBC agents does not mean that the selected device will be *workable* or *effective*. Moreover, the cost of embarking on such a program for terrorist causes will almost certainly outweigh the benefits. Terrorists, at least for now, will continue to opt for conventional weapons, albeit at more sophisticated and lethal levels. There is evidence, however, of more credible linkages between terrorism and technology, and between terrorism and international finance.

Ultimately, one cannot escape the fact that among the newly emerging NBC players there is a diversity of doctrines and command structures. This will admittedly make it harder to predict possible political and military outcomes; more significantly, it means that the NBC genie cannot be put back in the bottle. Will the current U.S. debate on the Strategic Missile Defense Initiative exacerbate this already volatile situation?

If there is one criticism to make of this book, it is that it sometimes suffers from a lack of consistency in terms of units of analysis under examination (nuclear, biological, and chemical agents vary remarkably in scale of effects, timing, etc.); some essays weigh more heavily on one agent at the expense of the others.

Comparative analysis should instead generalize, with rigor, about similarities and differences with respect to *common* phenomena. This book is, however, a valuable addition to the complex body of literature on strategy, national security, and comparative political and military dynamics.

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Mauroni, Albert J. *Chemical-Biological Defense: U.S. Military Policies and Decisions in the Gulf War*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1998. 226pp. \$59.95

Although we lived with the dangerous specter of nuclear attack for more than fifty years during the Cold War, concerns about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) have virtually exploded into our consciousness in the past decade. Since the demise of the former Soviet Union—once referred to as our “malefactor partner in the concept of mutually assured destruction”—our fears seem to focus far less on the threat of nuclear holocaust, and more on the threat of attack by chemical or biological agents. The logical point of departure for this shift in focus seems to be the Persian Gulf War, when the world learned of a rogue nation seemingly bent on proliferating these weapons of mass terror.

In this book, Albert J. Mauroni attempts a historical recounting of U.S. efforts to deal with chemical and biological warfare agents on the modern battlefield. Mauroni, a former U.S. Army Chemical Corps officer who currently works as a management consultant specializing in Department of Defense chemical and biological defense programs, provides a detailed look at what was essentially a “cold start”

go-to-war effort on behalf of the U.S. armed forces. The consistent premise throughout this work is that no one in the Department of Defense (with the exception of the Army’s Chemical Corps) was even remotely prepared for an encounter with chemical or biological agents as it readied for war with Iraq. Convinced at the onset of Operation DESERT SHIELD that Saddam Hussein would indeed use WMD against U.S. and coalition forces, the Pentagon began what Mauroni describes as a “mad scramble” to train and equip U.S. forces to operate in the presence of WMD agents. He reviews the preparation to defend against exposure to these agents, and assesses U.S. efforts to protect its forces against a highly lethal asymmetrical threat. In addition, Mauroni devotes a chapter to the issue of “Gulf War illness,” providing a fairly meticulous and forthright discussion of this controversial subject. He concludes with substantive recommendations on where the future focus of U.S. efforts to deal with the burgeoning threat of chemical and biological agents should lie. At a minimum, Mauroni’s work at dissecting the policies and decisions of the Gulf War is important if only as a lesson that the United States must never again be so fundamentally ill prepared to operate in the asymmetrical environment.

There are criticisms to be made of this book, however. At the surface level, Mauroni uses far too many acronyms for the book to be easily decipherable for the non-Army (and especially nonmilitary) reader. Although he includes a list of abbreviations at the beginning to assist with the veritable “acronym soup” of abbreviations, it becomes confusing and tiresome to refer back constantly to a