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Waging Modern War

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BOOK REVIEWS

ONE MAN'S OPINION

Clark, Wesley K. *Waging Modern War*. New York: Public Affairs, 2001. 479pp. \$30

This book is retired Army general Wesley Clark's anxiously awaited account of Nato's operations in Kosovo, dubbed ALLIED FORCE. As Clark was the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR) during Nato's first war, his account of this major operation is an important contribution to the historical record of events that led to what many consider a very controversial military endeavor.

Waging Modern War is divided into four parts. The first briefly addresses General Clark's career and his early reputation as a "fast-burner." It introduces Clark as the new Director for Strategic Plans and Policy (J-5) during the Bosnia-Herzegovina war and presents the same cast of characters that he would see again later in his career as SACEUR. The J-5 position allowed Clark to cut his diplomatic teeth while supporting Ambassador Richard C. Holbrooke's shuttle diplomacy, which eventually led to the Dayton accords. Most importantly, it was at this time that Clark began to gain his own insights into Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic and what made him tick. Though Clark discounts any patronage from his previous Arkansas connections with former President Bill Clinton, he

makes it quite clear that he was seldom the Army's favorite because of the many key positions he had held that helped position him for his selection to SACEUR. This section helps the reader to understand a bit about Clark's leadership style and attention to detail (less charitable people would label him a micromanager) and his view that the rest of the Army perceived him as an intellectual and not from the war-fighter mold. This is a key insight of a soldier never fully accepted by his own, and it establishes a thread woven through the remainder of the book.

The second section details the events and preparations that led up to Operation ALLIED FORCE. Clark lays out the planning challenges he encountered in an alliance that had been formed for an entirely different threat. At every turn he faced the need to compromise already accepted planning procedures. To complicate things, Clark discovered that his own national strategic-level leadership had little understanding of his dual-hatted role as Commander in Chief, U.S. European Command, *and* SACEUR, and of the political responsibilities attendant upon the latter position. This was further

complicated by the apparent lack of interest that was displayed by both the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the national command authorities in focusing upon the Kosovo situation.

The third part of the book, “The Air Campaign,” addresses the execution phase of ALLIED FORCE. Here Clark’s shortfalls in planning and his inability to forge a supportive relationship with the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the secretary of defense become apparent. Two days into the operation, Clark wrestled with the implications of having no defined end-state and the resulting fuzzy linkage between military and political objectives. Incredibly, he attempts to deflect criticism toward the political leadership for the fundamental flaws in the plan. The effects of this confused strategy vacuum lingered throughout the operation. In addition to the strategy challenges faced by Clark, the Washington leadership was not supportive—indeed, Clark depicts it as an impediment. His assessments of then Secretary of Defense William Cohen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Hugh Shelton, and Army Chief of Staff General Dennis Reimer are damning. Clark is unambiguous that from his perspective, all three men contributed to a lack of national strategic coherence during the operation. This section ends by depicting a slippery slope toward an inevitable ground invasion of Kosovo—something that everyone wanted to avoid.

The final section of the book, “End-game,” details the sudden change in circumstances and Milosevic’s willingness to accept a deal. Clark outlines the time-sensitive and painstaking negotiations required to ensure an executable plan for the Nato peacekeeping force. He also addresses the now famous refusal of

his subordinate, Lieutenant General Sir Michael Jackson of the British army, to send forces into Pristina airfield to block the impending arrival of Russian forces. Clark concludes with an examination of his experience and its implications for future warfare.

This is a worthwhile book for those interested in the Kosovo conflict and how the Nato alliance works in practice. Subsequent memoirs from other key participants will add balance to this historical perspective. As for contributing to the body of knowledge on military theory, as the title implies, one must be less enthusiastic. Instead of presenting new theoretical constructs applicable to modern war, in reality the book displays the pitfalls faced by a joint-force commander and his national-level superiors when they disregard the fundamental tenets of operational art.

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Watts, Barry D. *The Military Use of Space: A Diagnostic Assessment*. Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2001. 130pp.

Barry Watts, former director of the Northrop Grumman Analysis Center and now the director of the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) Program Analysis and Evaluation, has written an assessment of military competition in near-earth space and how that competition may evolve over the next twenty-five years. Aside from the importance of its subject, this book is of particular interest because it explicitly attempts a “net assessment.” Watts worked for Andrew Marshall, director of the OSD Office of