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Military Readiness: Concepts, Choices, Consequences

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and could end up costiug considerably more than the 1996 force." That is probably too expensive.

For those desiring a concise review of the international security environment, I can reconmend either volume. Both provide an extremely readable and highly informative *tour d'horizon*. However, for those desiring lots of maps, charts, diagrams, and color pictures to supplement their reading, there is only one choice—the INSS *1997 Strategic Assessment.*

BRADD HAYES
Naval War College

Betts, Richard K. *Military Readiness: Concepts, Choices, Consequences*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1995. 322pp. $42.95

When asked, any veteran of our modern armed forces will readily define what "readiness" means, both in a theoretical and practical sense. If pressed, most can probably recall how readiness affected them during various aspects of their careers. It is also likely that the veteran can also recount an instance of how an evaluation of readiness (usually by one's superior) can go bizarrely wrong. In this reviewer's case, it was the "randomly selected" readiness sortie of my destroyer in 1975 after we had removed both our SPS-40 and SPS-10 radar antennae for repair. I am sure there are numerous other tales of misconstrued and misapplied readiness criteria that continue to this day. One can begin to understand why this phenomenon occurs by carefully reading this admirable book by Richard Betts.

The author is a professor of political science at Columbia University and a former senior fellow in Foreign Policy Studies at the Brookings Institution. He has spent his career studying the more complex aspects of modern political-military affairs. In this work he explains why the United States has continued to have serious problems in understanding, planning, implementing, and measuring the many aspects of military readiness. He uses various excellent examples from recent history to illustrate how difficult it is to deal effectively with this topic, and he offers some keen insights into how we can change our national approach to this subject now that we have emerged victorious from the forty-year Cold War.

In one section, Betts takes the topic of readiness and explores aspects of it by using some historical examples from the last seventy-five years. He points out that there can be two distinct definitions of readiness: readiness for *when*, and readiness for *what*. The former entails operational readiness much like that maintained during the Cold War; it is based solely on the amount of time needed to react or respond to attack. The second type is structural readiness, which refers to how effectively an infrastructure supports mobilization.

Betts's "readiness for when" is finite in sustainment and execution, for resources can remain at such a threshold only for a limited period of time; they must be rotated regularly to permit rest, retraining, resupply, and refurbishment. If these forces are committed to battle, there are few reinforcements, and victory must be swift. Betts is speaking here of almost a "come-as-you-are war."

There are considerable economic consequences involved in the endless yet routine rotation and refreshment of these forces.

In "readiness for what," there are very different costs, but these can also be significant: industrial capacity, stockpiles, war reserves, spare parts, training cadres, and other elements such as sealift and airlift. In addition, this background readiness can result in greater personnel casualties in advance units in the early phases of a conflict while the rest of the force is in the process of mobilization in the rear. This type of readiness impacts a much broader base of society and creates a very different political and economic situation.

These disparate forms of readiness uneasily coexisted all through the Cold War. Because of the contrasting natures of the two concepts, political and military leaders had to evaluate constantly how well the system was functioning, which led to such farcical readiness-measurement exercises as the one cited above. The problem is that whatever readiness dimension one cares to employ (e.g., equipment casualties, personnel manning percentiles, competitively graded exercises), it is usually defined in such a unique manner as to be useless in any rigorous broad analysis. In my own case, the fact that the ship got underway and fired guns, antisubmarine rockets, and exercise torpedoes might make it seem as though the exercise was a success. In reality, however, the lack of surface and air search radar antennae made every part of that exercise—even the simple act of night steaming—too tensely artificial to offer any real appreciation of the ship's and crew's normal operational capabilities.

The great value of this book is that Betts makes one think about readiness in these (and a number of other) contexts. He shows how the different approaches to readiness can be contradictory and self-defeating; he cites many historical examples of how the United States mobilized, and how things went right and how things went wrong. He provides comparisons with the Soviet Union and proposes some detailed solutions to the national dilemma of post–Cold War military readiness.

The shortcomings of the book are few but worth noting. Betts tends to be "Army-centric," and his detailed analyses usually are based on Army data. When he does discuss other services in any detail, it is usually the Air Force. The Navy is mentioned little and the Marines even less. Betts does not seem to appreciate the unique nature of maritime operations, and he ignores such naval aspects as shipbuilding, repair, maintenance, and effective tactical training.

He also fails to follow up on the paramount influence that strategic intelligence has on readiness decisions. If a specific choice is made (e.g., whether readiness for *when* or for *what*), it becomes imperative that the nation's leadership have the ability to foresee accurately emergent threats and respond with timely and decisive force. While the detail related to such intelligence would be outside the scope of this book, there should have been some discussion of how, where, and when this capability would fit into the nation's readiness plan.

The book is academic in tone and should be read with a highlighter in hand, for much of it is crammed with nuggets of insight, and there are numerous topics ripe for discussion and debate among military and political professionals. In sum, this book should be required reading for all officers, policy makers, and policy shapers of our new national defense.

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Norman, Richard. *Ethics, Killing and War.* Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995. 256pp. $39.95

Richard Norman, professor of moral philosophy at the University of Kent at Canterbury, has produced a book that should be required reading for theorists and practitioners of war, and especially for political leaders. His challenge to our habitual ways of thinking about war is profound, and his arguments are powerful, subtle, and lucid.

This work is a contribution to the literature on the morality of warfare. Norman seems to have read, and here to comment on, everything in English, but he presupposes no acquaintance with the field. In fact, this book is intended "to exhibit philosophical thought at work, to introduce the reader to various ethical concepts, modes of argument and theoretical traditions with which people have tried to come to grips with the moral dilemmas of war, and to explore what can be done with those philosophical resources."

The first two chapters (of six) outline the structure of ethical thinking and the grounds for the wrongness of killing. Killing people is wrong both because it harms them and frustrates their preferences, and because it fails to respect them as beings with purposes of their own. Utilitarianism can account for the first of these reasons, but not for the second, so utilitarianism cannot be an adequate moral theory by itself. Similarly, utilitarianism cannot account for the moral difference between killing and letting die (the subject of the third chapter), an important issue in some justifications of wars or other military actions. But that is, very often, a difference of substantial moral significance. (If Sally refuses the terrorists' demands she may in some way let the hostages die, but she does not kill them. The terrorists do.) So to the requirements of beneficence and non-maleficence that utilitarianism supports must be added requirements of (at least) respect for others. I think that Norman underestimates the conceptual resources of the subtlest forms of utilitarianism, but that may matter little here.

Now to war. That aggression justifies defensive or restorative war is a principle explicitly endorsed by international covenants. To most of us, most of the time, it seems obvious. But how is it justified? An individual being attacked with deadly force may also use deadly force in defense if no alternative is present. So, by analogy, a state may defend itself. Happily reassured by the analogy, we return to our war plans. But just how does this analogical argument work? Individuals are the analogues of states, and the lives of individuals those of the sovereignty or territorial integrity of states. Neither of those analogies will