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Revolution in Warfare? Air Power in the Persian Gulf

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Indonesian military illustrate the varied degree of military influence in states characterized by single-party, authoritarian systems. The impending crisis of legitimacy inherent to each is carefully weighed against the historical circumstances that brought these military-backed regimes to power. Wisely, the editors have not given attention solely to the militaries of the proverbial "Third World." An essay by Stephen Cimbala on the United States military addresses the recent trend toward centralized civilian control and the complexities and challenges of multinational operations. Hitchens and Jacobs's survey of the United Kingdom presents the enduring dilemma of Northern Ireland and the military's role as an agent of domestic stability. George Vasquez's piece on the Peruvian military offers further comparative treatment of the impact of terrorism on a military's involvement in domestic politics. Other essays include coverage of the former Zaire, South Africa, Poland, Japan, Israel, and Denmark. They round off this handbook as a valuable tool for comparative study. Most importantly, each author provides valuable suggestions for further reading.

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Cohen, Eliot A., and Thomas A. Keaney. *Revolution in Warfare? Air Power in the Persian Gulf*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1995. 226pp. \$38.95

Even before the Gulf war had ended, it was realized that a high-level and

independent study was needed to assess the performance of U.S. airpower. The Gulf War Air Power Survey was thus chartered by Air Force Secretary Donald Rice, and the well known scholar Eliot Cohen of Johns Hopkins University was tabbed to lead it. Published in six volumes in 1993, the Survey had limited distribution. Fortunately, the immensely readable summary volume, coauthored by Cohen and Professor Tom Keaney of the National War College, has been revised and republished.

When General Norman Schwarzkopf began planning a response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, he quickly realized that all talk of AirLand Battle and ground assault was hopeless. Not only did he lack enough troops to dislodge the several hundred thousand Iraqis already digging in, but he knew such an assault would be extremely bloody. Instead, he turned to the Air Force chief of staff and asked for an offensive air option. The result was INSTANT THUNDER—a plan for the rapid and massive application of airpower at the strategic level of war. The codename was a deliberate counterpoint to the slow, painful, and ineffective policy of "gradual escalation" followed in Vietnam. That war had haunted American political and military leaders; the Gulf war would be an opportunity to expunge those ghosts.

INSTANT THUNDER was modified and expanded in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, to include hundreds of targets at the tactical and operational levels of war as well as strategic. Republican Guard divisions were singled out for special attention. For five weeks beginning the night of

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17 January 1991, the coalition air arms flew an average of 2,500 combat sorties each day. By the beginning of the ground offensive on 24 February, the Iraqi army had been devastated—nearly ninety thousand men had already deserted, and another ninety thousand would soon surrender with hardly a fight. In addition, thousands of tanks, artillery pieces, and armored vehicles had been destroyed from the air. Coalition ground troops completed the rout. It was the most lopsided victory in modern history.

Cohen and Keaney tell the story well, but dispassionately. They give air-power credit where deserved and list a number of its greatest accomplishments: total and uncontested air supremacy, the destruction of the Iraqi air force and navy, the shutdown of the electrical power grid, the complete disruption of all road and rail traffic en route to the front, and most important, the destruction of a corps-sized Iraqi attack at Khafji in late January, the first (and last) attempt by the Iraqis to launch an offensive and fight the war on their own terms.

There were also, however, serious shortcomings in the air campaign. Whereas it had been a coalition goal to destroy the Iraqi nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons capabilities, this was not done, largely because intelligence could not provide the extent of these programs or their locations. Precision weapons are only useful if you also enjoy precision intelligence—that was not the case in the Gulf. In addition, the attempt to eradicate the Scud menace was unsuccessful. Although the number of missile attacks decreased significantly,

it is questionable whether that was due to the large air effort. The authors conclude that it is unknown if *any* of the Iraqi Scuds were destroyed during the war.

To the rhetorical question posed by the book's title, the authors answer with a qualified "yes." Technologically, the Gulf war was a major leap forward in combat effectiveness: stealth, precision munitions, and near-real-time intelligence provided unprecedented success and point the way ahead. However, the authors add the caveat that the organizational structures and mindsets needed to utilize these new technologies most efficiently are not yet in place. When (if) such changes occur, a true revolution in military affairs will have been demonstrated.

Overall, this is an excellent, well written, and evenhanded book that includes dozens of maps, charts, and tables. This is by far the most useful and authoritative work to date on the air war in the Gulf. It is must reading for all students and practitioners of warfare.

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Mandeles, Mark D., Thomas C. Hone, and Sanford S. Terry. *Managing "Command and Control" in the Persian Gulf War*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1996. 170pp. \$55

Mark Mandeles, Thomas Hone, and Sanford Terry are all well qualified to analyze Gulf war command and control issues. They were the principal drafters of the command and control portions of the authoritative Gulf War Air