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The Making of Strategy: Ruler, States, and War

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Murray, Williamson; Knox, MacGregor; and Bernstein, Alvin, eds. *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States, and War*. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994. 656pp. \$34.95

Strategy has long been understood as the balancing of ends and means by rulers and states to achieve political goals. Nations that have matched military, economic, and political strategies with their vital interests have been successful, and those that have not have suffered dire consequences. In *The Making of Strategy*, the editors, Murray, Knox, and Bernstein, seek not to examine strategic theorists as much as to analyze the strategic process. The result is a superb exposition of the means by which nations and states develop national strategies.

Graduates of the Naval War College will readily identify the themes and processes outlined in this text. Indeed the project is an outgrowth of a 1985 conference convened in Newport and of a series of lectures delivered during the Strategy and Policy sub-course of the War College's curriculum. In addition to the editors, the contributors include such luminaries as Donald Kagan, Colin S. Gray, Geoffrey Parker, and the Naval War College's own Arthur Waldron and Michael Handel. Not surprisingly, the seventeen case studies range from Thucydides' description of the Peloponnesian War to American strategy in the nuclear age.

The editors' purpose is to offer readers an introduction to the wide variety of factors that influence the development and adoption of national strategies. Focusing on how geography, history, culture, economy, and

governmental systems affect strategy formulation, the editors view strategy not as an inflexible paradigm but as a process requiring constant adaptation to shifting conditions and circumstances in a world where chance, uncertainty, and ambiguity dominate. A few examples illustrate their conclusion that strategy is an evolving process.

No state so epitomized the concept of a warrior-state as Rome in the third century B.C. In the words of Machiavelli, the Roman Republic was the ideal polity. Roman strategists, states co-editor Bernstein, sought to keep the Republic and the Empire at war for six centuries in order to preserve the uniqueness of the Roman state and its martial culture. Not surprisingly then, it was Rome's ability to exact military vengeance that preserved the loyalty of its allies and ensured the survival of the commonwealth. The fear of Roman retribution was particularly evident in the Punic Wars against Carthage.

William S. Maltby, in his analysis of English strategy from the Elizabethan period to the onset of the eighteenth century, examines the development of the first global strategies. Maltby argues persuasively that English strategy derived from the tension between England's naval and imperial commitments and its periodic need to intervene with land forces on the European continent. By 1713, however, Great Britain had defeated its most powerful adversary in the War of Spanish Succession and had solved its greatest internal crisis by the revolution of 1688. National wealth, built on the foundation of imperial possessions, soon generated revenue sufficient to support both maritime

and continental commitments. Thus a unified Great Britain developed a global strategy that achieved the Elizabethan dream of dominance of the seas and a military balance of power on the continent.

The Making of Strategy also examines the strategy-making process in the United States. Peter Maslowski states that by mid-1865 the United States had achieved the essential elements required for great power status. The Civil War demonstrated conclusively that the federal government would endure as a single entity characterized by unparalleled economic strength, abundant natural resources, and a large and enlightened population. Eliot Cohen continues the examination of factors affecting American strategies by questioning the assumption that innocence and naiveté were the hallmarks of strategic thought in the interwar period. Colin Gray then concludes that the American army is a direct reflection of the society that produces it. In short, the American way of war is a direct reflection of this nation's ethos, its institutions, and its resources.

In summary, *The Making of Strategy* is a major contribution to our understanding of the relationship between strategy and policy. This excellent book is likely to be the definitive historical study of strategy making for the current generation. Though the editors and contributors view as futile any search for prescriptive theories to guide strategists, they see the study of history as useful to identify patterns from the past. The future, however, remains elusive, and the great challenge for makers of

modern strategy in war and peace is to balance the vital interests of the nations they serve with the changing conditions that affect the development of strategy.

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Weltman, John J. *World Politics and the Evolution of War*. Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1995. 263pp. \$38.50

As the title implies, this work addresses geopolitical issues from a historical perspective—and for that the author deserves some credit. Given the relative brevity of the text, Weltman has achieved at least part of his objective of linking history to geopolitical policy.

As a prelude to our understanding of history's connection to military-political grand strategy, Weltman surveys theories underpinning the causes of war, suggesting that grand strategy is merely a political instrument used to achieve political ends. To advance his point, the author depends most heavily upon the writings of eighteenth-century soldier-authors Jomini and Clausewitz, notably contrasting the relatively scientific notions of Jomini (a popularly read product of French and Russian military systems) with those of Clausewitz, who somewhat more abstractly used his Prussian background to theorize about warfare, on the basis of his observations of Napoleonic successes and failures.

Weltman begins with the question of what role war might play in the post-Cold War era. For example, will we usher in the new millennium with a