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## In My View

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# IN MY VIEW . . .

## “A Book That I Did Not Attempt to Write”

Sir:

It is not my usual practice to respond to unsympathetic book reviews, but I will make an exception for Jim George's review of my *Leverage of Sea Power* (*Naval War College Review*, Summer 1994, pp. 139–40). George is at liberty not to like my book, he is free to criticize me for not doing well what I set out to do, and he is licensed to prefer that I would have written a different book from the one that I did write. He is not, however, at liberty to review negatively a book that I did not attempt to write.

I do not understand why the book's thesis is “unfortunately also its weakness.” It is my thesis that “superior sea power generates a strategic leverage which enables wars to be won.” Honest research has persuaded me that that is likely to be so. It was necessary for me to note that “I have no brief for sea power. . .” just in case a reader might think that I had set out to make a case—which I did not. Indeed, I strove long and hard to be more than fair to land power and continental strategies.

Because I eschew a “brief for sea power in general, a particular navy, a particular naval strategy, or this or that class of naval weapon,” the reader is told by George that the value of the book to the national security community is limited. I do not take his point as a criticism.

Leaving aside George's specific charges, most of which are not valid (that I barely mention submarine warfare, for example), he levels four general criticisms which do not appear very robust when scrutinized closely. First, *Leverage* is

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compared (unfavorably) with my (and Roger Barnett's) "reader" on *Seapower and Strategy*. I am pleased that George likes the latter work, but *Leverage* is somewhat different in treatment, hugely different in purpose, and notably different in form of execution (one author).

Second, George accuses *Leverage* of not providing answers for the post-Cold War world. Quite so. George writes agreeably that it might have been interesting to have Colin Gray's opinion on the use of sea power in the new post-Cold War era. He proceeds to claim that "none is forthcoming." Not so, Dr. George! He will find my opinion on that subject in its proper place, in my new book, forthcoming in the fall of 1994, *The Navy in the Post-Cold War World: The Uses and Value of Strategic Sea Power* (Penn. State Press, 1994, \$32.50/\$14.95).

Third, *Leverage* is indicted for being British, Euro-, perhaps almost Channel-centric. Well, I am sorry, Dr. George, but the plain facts are that the Royal Navy, for all its limitations, was obliged to come of age in the late 1580s, while the U.S. Navy came of age (in major war) only after 1941. A book about the historical value of sea power in great conflicts between sea powers and land powers *has* to be Eurocentric, British-centric, and therefore Channel-centric. Control of the Channel was fundamental to British security for centuries.

Fourth, George claims that "the historical case study chapters are at times devoid of naval analysis." He is correct, but again it is not a valid criticism. George seems not quite to have grasped the point that *Leverage* is about exactly what its title claims—the leverage of sea power, and the strategic advantage of navies in war. *Leverage* is *not* about naval warfare, naval strategy, or even navies per se. Rather, *Leverage* is about what Sir Julian Corbett called "the function of the fleet in war." Most reviewers of my book have not been confused on this central point.

I do not approve of authors writing "replies" to reviews of their books and typically I find high merit in what Jim George writes, so I am doubly uncomfortable with this letter. Nonetheless, I have felt obliged to potential readers of *Leverage* to respond as I have to a review which, in my admittedly interested opinion, systematically and fundamentally misrepresents the work at issue.

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The University of Hull

### The Drug War and Vietnam

Sir:

The article "The Drug War: Applying the Lessons of Vietnam" (*Naval War College Review*, Summer 1994) by Lt. Cdr. Wayne G. Shear, Jr., CEC, USN, is

a mixture of old and inaccurate data applied to out-of-date strategies and policies to produce current, invalid recommendations for revising strategies and policies. The author asks the reader to accept his thesis that “the best contribution the military can make to the strategic objective—which is to reduce drug use in the United States—is to stop interdicting drugs.” The author cites the Vietnam War as the correct model against which to judge current U.S. military failures in the war on drugs. In effect, we are failing, and are doomed to fail, because we are making errors similar to those which were made in Vietnam.

The Vietnam comparison will work if it can be demonstrated that the U.S. military is the *primary* instrument of national policy at work in the war on drugs in the same manner in which the U.S. military was the primary instrument of national policy in the Vietnam War. This is clearly not the case.

The author fails to lay out completely the National Drug Control Strategy with its many parts, including the international strategy. The author further fails to tell the reader the difference between the objectives in the international strategy and in the domestic. Further, the author fails to distinguish tactical objectives from strategic and assumes they are one and the same—to interdict drugs—in spite of the stated objective of the international strategy to strengthen the democratic institutions of the host nations we support.

The author asserts that the U.S. military *insistence on the use of force* against the drug cartels is the *cause* of a rise in the production and diversification of the drug industry in Latin America. He asserts a cause-and-effect relationship between the involvement of the U.S. military and the rise in violence, increase in the production of cocaine, and the introduction of heroin, and he makes the U.S. the main threat to the livelihood of hundreds of thousands of farmers in Latin America. He fails to prove how this is done when the U.S. military is *proscribed* from using force in Latin America. Nor does he recommend how the democracies of Latin America should defend themselves except to fight, with or without our help. This notion is simplistic and based on circumstantial and anecdotal information. He establishes that Bolivia receives \$800 million per year from the U.S. and other sources as incentive to stop growing drugs. This figure is quoted from a newspaper story and is some \$500–600 million too high.

Most difficult of the author’s assertions to accept, however, is that cocaine will go down in price if interdiction ceases. No proof of this assertion is provided except the author’s belief that the price would never have gone up without the interdiction efforts of the U.S. military and our encouragement of Latin American democracies to fight. While dramatic, it is simply not supported by the facts presented. This particular argument demonstrates the internal inconsistency of the article, e.g., price of cocaine has gone down (p. 110), price has gone up (p. 121), and is unchanged (p. 114).

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The article is emotional but does state bluntly what we know to be true—we are not having much effect in stopping the movement of cocaine to the United States. However, while the author states that this is an inappropriate measure of effectiveness, it is the measure by which he judges the U.S. military effort. His cause-and-effect relationships are too broad and are unsupported by a trail of evidence and logic to lead the reader to accept his conclusion. In short, the article offers little to the debate. His thesis is not proven by the assertions offered; therefore his conclusion must be rejected as neither logical nor helpful in the difficult task of supporting our Latin American allies in their fight against narco-trafficking.

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The U.S. Postal Service requires us every two years to validate our circulation—that is, to ask subscribers to let us know in writing that they wish to continue to receive the *Naval War College Review*. We have just completed the validation of our institutional subscribers (libraries, firms, institutes, etc.), by means of a mailer. In the next (i.e., Spring 1995) issue, we will begin the process for subscriptions of individual persons.

Therefore, if your subscription is in your name, watch for a tear-out card in the Spring issue; please remove it, fill it out, put a stamp on it, and mail it to us by 30 September 1995. We'll be able then to keep sending your *Review* to you.

(None of this, incidentally, applies to operating forces, staffs, and shore establishment commands of the Navy, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard, which should receive the journal automatically. If yours does not, or at the wrong address, please let us know.)