

1995

The Persian Gulf after the Cold War

Steven Hecker

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

Recommended Citation

Hecker, Steven (1995) "The Persian Gulf after the Cold War," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 48 : No. 3 , Article 14.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol48/iss3/14>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu.

116 Naval War College Review

failure (nuclear-biological-chemical targets and Scud missiles); gradations between leadership and C3 (i.e., command, control, and communications); and the high degree of success of attacks on Iraqi surface forces.

A Navy or Marine airman (neither of whose services have yet sponsored or authored a book on the subject) may be disappointed with some parts of the survey due to the scant coverage of carrier and Marine air wing operations. While Air Force basing, logistical, communications, and other support elements receive thorough treatment, Navy and Marine counterparts receive almost none, and that lack, although unavoidable, will probably result in the loss of acceptance among many of those services' personnel, who may also express reservations about the tactical and aviation systems. For instance, most will take exception to the emphasis given to USAF F-4G Wild Weasels compared to the major contribution provided by the EA-6s of the sea services. While the Weasels were the principal agent of lethal suppression, the EA-6s were to become an indispensable element of almost every strike package launched from the Gulf airfields and nearby carrier decks.

Regardless, this summary is possibly the best technical analysis of the air war available. This reviewer found it refreshingly devoid of bias, cant, and invidious comparisons of land and sea-based air power. Although other books on the air war have better coverage of some parts of the campaign, none contains more details and backup data.

What is still needed, however, is an analogous Navy-Marine air book that is as solid analytically and as unbiased in judgment as the Keaney-Cohen summary.

JAMES A. WINNEFELD
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy, Ret.
Washington, D.C.

Ahrari, M.E. and Noyes, James H., eds.
The Persian Gulf after the Cold War.
Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1993.
264pp. \$57.95

Helms, Robert F., II and Dorff,
Robert H., eds. *The Persian Gulf
Crisis: Power in the Post-Cold War
World*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger,
1993. 216pp. \$45

Both books under review include "Persian Gulf" in their titles, and both are edited collections of short articles written by numerous contributors. The similarities, however, mostly end there.

While Ahrari and Noyes examine key contemporary economic, political, and security issues facing the Persian Gulf, Helms and Dorff largely deal with the broader issues of international security and world order in the post-Cold War environment, with analyses drawn from lessons learned during the Gulf war.

Readers interested in Persian Gulf issues should enjoy *The Persian Gulf after the Cold War*. The final three chapters, which examine the regional arms race, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and oil issues, are most worthwhile. Ahrari, formerly a professor at the Air War College, now at the Armed Forces Staff College, has written extensively on

the Middle East and argues convincingly in his chapter on the arms race that the stockpiling of ever more deadly weapons in the region is ultimately destabilizing. While seemingly obvious, this conclusion contradicts that of some authors, who naively predict that mega-armed Middle Eastern dictators are capable of exercising the rational judgment necessary to sustain a workable system of deterrence.

Kenneth Katzman's chapter on the GCC is well written and effectively covers the divisive political and military issues within the GCC. He demonstrates that these differences will prevent any significant levels of military integration, meaning that the GCC will continue to rely on the United States to counter major external threats. David Winterford and Robert E. Looney, both then of the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California, make a convincing argument in their chapter on oil that prices are likely to remain stable for the next several years. They also conclude that the Gulf war deepened the political rift within the oil cartel.

Also worth reading are the chapters on Iran, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia, as well as that on U.S. and Russian perspectives on the Gulf. The latter is written by Noyes, who has vast professional experience in the U.S. government on Middle Eastern affairs. He argues that the cessation of the Cold War is not likely to stabilize the Persian Gulf, a point repeated by other authors in the book. Noyes also concludes that Moscow, which has a history of involvement in the Middle East, will

attempt to reassert its influence in the region.

The book would have benefitted from a chapter on another important issue, Islamic resurgence. In fact, the introduction points out that Shi'ite and Sunni movements continue to "exhibit strong appeal in the Gulf"; yet this subject is largely ignored. Nonetheless, the work does enhance our understanding of the region's strategic issues, an important task for policy makers given that the Persian Gulf remains vital to U.S. interests.

The Persian Gulf Crisis, edited by Helms and Dorff, is intended to examine events that led up to the Persian Gulf War and to explore the post-Cold War international security system. Readers interested in the former subject will be only marginally satisfied. The book's real strength lies in its insightfulness regarding the latter subject.

Two particular articles about the emerging international security environment are quite worthwhile. Inis Claude, an international affairs professor at the University of Virginia, has written an outstanding article that points out the inadequacies of collective security and demonstrates that it is unacceptable as a method of promoting world order. Robert Dorff's article is an equally insightful examination of future sources of conflict and their implications for international security. He argues eloquently that ethnic and nationalistic conflicts are inevitable, a fact with which the international system will have to live. He adds, however, that the United States and other powers should

act to prevent the violence from spreading.

Other articles worth reading include defense expert James Blackwell's analysis of the U.S. military in Desert Storm and Robert Helms's examination of the imperatives now placed on the U.S. military in the wake of the Gulf war—"win big, win quickly, and win without casualties." Another is Alan Taylor's article, which notes the continuing problems in the Middle East that preclude long-term stability; and Kimberly Ann Elliott's piece on the utility of sanctions as an instrument of economic statecraft.

The key points are skillfully consolidated in Helms's conclusion. His, along with the other articles mentioned, contribute to the understanding of the still emerging international security system and of the U.S. role in it.

STEVEN HECKER
Department of Defense
Arlington, Virginia

Reisman, W. Michael and Antoniou, Chris T. *The Laws of War: A Comprehensive Collection of Primary Documents on International Law Governing Armed Conflict*. New York: Vintage, 1994. 448pp. \$13

Michael Reisman and Chris Antoniou, a professor and former student, respectively at the Yale Law School, provide a concise description and insightful analysis of a broad range of law of war issues of interest to the national security community. Topics range from attempts by the international community to regulate the right of

nations to use military force to resolve their differences under the League of Nations, Kellogg-Briand Pact, and the UN Charter, through the rules regulating the use of force under a variety of law of war treaties, to the law of neutrality, war crimes, and terrorism.

The authors begin with an interesting history of the law of war and its development through treaties and customary international law, and with a candid discussion of its strengths and weaknesses. Reisman and Antoniou clearly understand the military perspective, recognizing that the uncertain content of some aspects of the law of war—particularly where it derives from customary law—makes decisions difficult for the commander. They also remind us that those who attempt to regulate the violence of war through international treaties must take into account that "the law will be influenced decisively by the concerns of military specialists to protect their own personnel and assets and to use them effectively."

Each chapter consists of commentary and extracts from applicable law of war treaties, judicial decisions, and other relevant documents; since much of the law of war is embodied in treaties approved in the early 1900s, many of the materials are quite old. However, the authors have included such topical materials as the investigation into war crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia, and the Statute of the International Tribunal, established by the UN to prosecute the individuals responsible for those atrocities.

It is the discussion of war crimes that the military reader will find the