Naval War College Review

Volume 47
Number 2 *Spring*

Article 15

1994

Arms and the Man: Dr. Gerald Bull, Iraq and the Supergun

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not been matched by the course of events.

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Lowther, William. *Arms and the Man: Dr. Gerald Bull, Iraq and the Supergun.* Novato, Calif.: Presidio, 1991. 298pp. $24.95

Some observers were concerned after the collapse of the former Soviet Union that newly unemployed or financially desperate weapons scientists might put their talents to work for disreputable regimes. *Arms and the Man* is about a weapons designer and ballistics expert who did just that. Gerald Bull, however, was not a Russian but a Canadian, who had worked on highly classified projects for the Pentagon. William Lowther describes Dr. Bull's brilliant but controversial career.

During the 1950s and 1960s Gerald Bull won an international reputation for his research on supersonic wind tunnels, ballistics, high-altitude rocketry, and especially for his work with very large guns. He did considerable work for the U.S. Army and indeed was involved with such highly classified Pentagon projects that, to avoid breaking security regulations, he was granted U.S. citizenship by special act of Congress in 1972. His lifelong dream was to develop guns large enough to use for launching satellites and for antiballistic missile defense. To his intense frustration, however, he was never able to convince the Pentagon of the superiority of gun-launched satellite systems over rocket-based ones.

The drastic reductions in defense spending after Vietnam ended funding for his large-gun projects and led him to form his own company in the early 1970s. Although he achieved notable technical successes, eventually working on projects for more than thirty countries, he and his firm were perennially in financial trouble. Eventually Bull was implicated in illegal transfers of arms to South Africa and served four months and seventeen days in prison in 1980.

Embittered, he shifted his company's base of operations from North America to Belgium, where he survived by working on artillery for the Chinese Army and maintained his interest in very large guns. By the mid-1980s the Chinese projects were coming to an end, and again Bull was in financial trouble. It was then that he was approached by representatives from Iraq's large arms-buying network and invited to Baghdad by senior officials in early 1988. He was soon involved with several Iraqi weapons projects, including the nascent space program. He also sold the Iraqis on his pet gun-launched satellite program, claiming that the project "would bring with it enormous scientific prestige, publicity and praise for Iraq." It eventually became the monster gun that attracted such lurid headlines in 1990.

Lowther suggests that Bull was an exceptionally naive man who typically became so absorbed in the technical beauty of his designs that he deliberately made himself oblivious to their possible offensive applications. Indeed, he was apparently so convinced of (or self-deluded about) Iraq's peaceful objectives for his work that he secretly briefed British and

Israeli agents to assure them that his big gun had no offensive potential. Initially the British and Israelis were uninterested in the large-gun project, believing it was a dead end. They became more concerned when Bull involved himself in more dangerous projects, including the Iraqi three-stage rocket launched in December 1989. By early 1990 Bull was receiving definite warnings to stop working for the Hussein regime, but "Iraqi contracts were keeping his company alive, and without them he would go bankrupt." In March 1990 Gerald Bull was gunned down in Brussels by unknown killers, his big gun still unfired. Ironically, in mid-1992 a gun-launched satellite of the type Bull had been trying also to build in Iraq was nearly ready to test in Livermore, California.

The author is a journalist who was the Washington bureau chief for *MacLean's* (the Canadian equivalent of *Time* magazine) during the investigation into Bull's South African arms dealings. Drawing on numerous interviews with Bull's family and former colleagues, Lowther has written a sympathetic account of a technically gifted man who, by virtue of his knowledge and abilities but also his personal flaws, became a dangerous man as well. *Arms and the Man* is a readable account of the danger a frustrated weapons scientist can pose in today's world, one that is full of technically illiterate but wealthy and hostile regimes.

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Denton, Robert E., Jr., ed. *The Media and the Persian Gulf War.* Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1993. 344pp. $55

This essay collection examines the news media's role and impact during the Persian Gulf War. Robert Denton deals with issues that have been largely ignored until now, ranging from a content analysis by Jannett Kenner Muir of C-Span coverage, and an assessment by Dan Nimmo and Mark Hovind of radio and television talk shows, to a perceptive examination by Matthew P. McAllister of how advertising has used Gulf War images. In some cases, the conclusions might be surprising. For example, and in contrast to the much-touted "Global Village" argument that the world's electronic media are increasingly homogenized, David Swanson shows that television coverage of the war varied by country even though all the newsmen used the same sources of information and the same video footage.

On the other hand, readers might find some chapters more challenging than rewarding. The authors of "News Viewing, Authoritarianism, and Attitudes" try to find positive links between authoritarianism and support for the war and between news viewing and a supportive attitude. The detailed discussion of the regression analysis involved, however, will leave many readers unconvinced about the conclusions; not only do I have some unease with regression analysis itself, but some of the conclusions are not clearly tied to that analysis (or by footnotes to others' work). For instance, the authors conclude that news viewing creates positive attitudes; they then add