

1994

America's Military Revolution: Strategy and Structure after the Cold War

Alan L. Brown

William E. Odom

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

Recommended Citation

Brown, Alan L. and Odom, William E. (1994) "America's Military Revolution: Strategy and Structure after the Cold War," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 47 : No. 4 , Article 12.

Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol47/iss4/12>

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.

to its ultimate benefit arose partly from its organizational inferiority complex, and partly from Britain's own highly effective information-warfare campaign of cryptanalysis.

In terms of understanding organizational influences, Castex was well ahead of his time. His work shows a remarkable sensitivity to the ways in which military institutional interests may distort political policy at the highest levels. For example, he pointed out that German naval leaders in 1914 devoted considerable effort to rationalizations for avoiding direct confrontations with the Royal Navy. Citing primary sources, he noted the general agreement among the naval hierarchy that the High Seas Fleet must remain "in being," which really meant "in port," so that it would have sufficient bargaining power in the inevitable peace negotiations.

For all his merits, however, Castex does suffer from a few flaws, one of them what Kiesling describes as "exaggeratedly scientific" claims. For example, in describing the ability of regionally hegemonic powers to absorb their smaller neighbors, Castex holds in pseudo-Newtonian fashion that "the attractive force is, as in physics, proportional to the mass of the larger power and the reciprocal of the square of the distance."

Other problems arise from Castex's apparent inability to think about tactical matters or their interaction with strategy. Thus, he seems askew in labeling commerce raiding as essentially a defensive doctrine rather than as tactically offensive, even in strategically defensive circumstances. His self-limitation to a strategic level

of analysis also seems responsible for his too-gloomy predictions about the future of amphibious warfare. His conclusions might have been more accurate had he undertaken a tactics-oriented appraisal, sensitive to the need for fire support and appropriate landing craft, as the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps did during the interwar period.

Despite such limitations, Castex presents a broad, intellectually engaging and persuasive perspective on strategy, both general and naval. Notwithstanding Ropp's notion that he merely synthesized the competing views of his time, there is a wealth here of genuinely original insights that will likely have implications for policy in areas as diverse as joint warfare, civil-military relations, strategy, and information dominance. Eugenia Kiesling, for her part, has presented Castex's work in a fashion truly worthy of inclusion among the *Classics of Sea Power*, rendering it with clarity, verve, and more than a modicum of literary elegance.

JOHN ARQUILLA
Naval Postgraduate School
Monterey, California

Odom, William E. *America's Military Revolution: Strategy and Structure after the Cold War*. Washington, D.C.: The American Univ. Press, 1993. 186pp. \$22.95

In this work, Lieutenant General William E. Odom has set out to explore military strategy in the larger context of grand strategy and to examine the impact of the Cold War's end. He begins by saying that he wants to broaden the

118 Naval War College Review

defense debate rather than deepen it, and that he will be didactic at times. In doing so, he sums up the strengths and weaknesses of his book.

Odom is at his best when discussing national security management and what he calls the new strategic environment. In Part One, there is a discussion of the newly emerging international system, economic trends, and current treaties and alliances, and also a review of potential strategies for the United States and of the forces needed to support them. The first of these strategies, "Pax Americana," posits a U.S. that maintains a strong military and dominates the international community. The second, "America First," envisions preoccupation with domestic issues and retreat from the international arena. In the third strategy, "Economy of Force and Comparative Advantage," U.S. military power is used sparingly, with a heavy reliance on cooperative action. Odom himself recommends this view, but he seems to ignore the likelihood that without a clear threat the United States will not develop any coherent international strategy at all.

Odom discusses different world regions and the possible threat of each to the United States and to world peace. He pegs the success of future U.S. strategy on maintaining close alliances with two key nations, Germany and Japan, and argues cogently in support of this assertion. He then looks at technological developments that will shape future conflicts, in an analysis that draws many of its arguments from lessons of the Gulf War.

The book's fifth chapter, "Implications for Future Force Structure," is

almost guaranteed to raise the ire of the seagoing officer. The author falls into the old Army stereotype of believing that the Navy's primary role is safely transporting troops and their stores. After a fairly mild review of the other services, Odom finds that the Navy's fleet can be cut "perhaps by half." He concludes that land-based aviation is far superior to sea-based aviation, that the former can be deployed "in most parts of the world," and that the carrier force should be cut to provide funds for "restructuring." He identifies the Navy's future functions as "limited actions, support to land operations, and show-the-flag missions"—a sweeping reduction of the Navy's role to a secondary one. He saves his most draconian criticism, however, for the "obsolescent" Marines, stating that amphibious assault is increasingly irrelevant; he therefore recommends a reduction of the Marine Corps from four divisions to one. (Odom is not a proponent of ". . . From the Sea.") The Coast Guard (perhaps fortunately, given the trend here) escapes any mention at all.

Part Two covers national security management and returns to the topics on which Odom is most effective. He presents a balanced look at coalition diplomacy and military actions, and, although his analysis of the intelligence community is clear, his recommendations are controversial. There is a nice discussion of our military space efforts; however, there is no mention of the prototype DCX single-stage-to-orbit rocket, which might make attainable the reusable launch system Odom recommends.

The author recommends drastic changes to Pentagon organization, significantly reducing civilian defense agencies and turning the Joint Chiefs into a general staff. This reviewer, for one, remains unconvinced that this is necessary and fears the impact that Odom's recommendations would have on civilian control of the military. Also, his discussion of the industrial base is rather cursory; he is more successful at identifying problems than solutions.

This work is most effective in broadening the defense debate and putting military issues in a larger context. In this respect it is a welcome addition to the literature. For the Navy and the other sea services, however, it should be a call to action. It is a sign that we still have not done enough to educate and convince the defense community about the real and lasting role of naval forces in both peace and war, of the importance of freedom of the seas, and of the significant role naval forces will have in shaping the world's future.

ALAN L. BROWN
Commander (Sel.),
U.S. Coast Guard Reserve

Miller, Paul David. *Both Swords and Plowshares: Military Roles in the 1990s*. Cambridge, Mass.: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, 1992. 58pp. \$7.50

Peters, John E. *The U.S. Military: Ready for the New World Order?* Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1993. 176pp. \$49.95

Both Swords and Plowshares was derived from Admiral Paul David Miller's

presentation at the "Naval Forward Presence and the National Military Strategy" conference organized by the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, and The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. The title page reminds us that Paul Miller is Commander in Chief, U.S. Atlantic Command and, in the Nato structure, Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic, and it contains no disclaimer. The book is a high-level vision of the future.

Miller's major messages are that America's basic national interests, objectives, and leadership role have not changed; that elements of our national power, including military, can be used to shape the future; that in building a consensus on a new national security strategy, the military must be proactive and involve all interested parties, including the American public; that core competencies, deterrence, crisis response, and war fighting should form the basis for programming American general forces; and that "jointness is the name of the game." Free from service parochialism, the book is evidence that Goldwater-Nichols is working at the higher levels of military leadership.

This work is a welcome addition to the professional's bookshelf. As more serving naval officers make such public contributions, the debate over the emerging national security, military strategy, and naval doctrine will be strengthened. This reviewer wholeheartedly agrees with the author that "we now have the rare chance—a window of opportunity that opens only once in two or three generations—to