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## Triumph Without Victory: The Unreported History of the Persian Gulf War

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This work should be required reading for any professional in the military and the media. They may learn how to work together and understand why cooperation on behalf of the American public is a worthwhile objective, before the next balloon goes up.

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Zukerman, Mortimer B. et al. *Triumph Without Victory: The Unreported History of the Persian Gulf War*. New York: Random House (Times Books), 1992. 477pp. \$25  
Mortimer B. Zuckerman, editor in chief of *U.S. News and World Report*, credits his entire staff with group authorship of this comprehensive, short-term history of the Gulf War. While authors are not individually named, sources are.

This work examines the classic political-economic-military decision triad through five stages: (1) the August 1990 decision to reinforce Saudi Arabia as a United Nations endeavor; (2) the October 1990 decision to increase the coalition force to an offensive level; (3) the January 1991 decision to start the air war; (4) the February 1991 decision to initiate ground operations; and (5), the February decision to terminate. The U.S. aspects of the land and air wars are covered in detail through the eyes of both on-site journalists and military officers. Unusual for a short-term military history is the coverage of

United Nations political activity and its linkage to actual military decisions in the field.

This work is proof that an honest and objective appraisal of a limited war is possible, leading to the conclusion that civil-military relations in the Western world just may be in pretty good shape. Thus, Bob Woodward's flashy volume *The Commanders* (Simon & Schuster, 1991), full of speculative "villain" theories and "inside source" revelations, is exposed by comparison as a mixture of polemicism, journalism, and creative fiction. By contrast, *Triumph Without Victory* takes no leaps beyond the evidence yet fully explores possible errors and hidden agendas.

However, this work does have three weaknesses. First, the title was apparently designed to boost sales, for the allied coalition's stated objectives were accomplished, as one sees if one really reads the full text. Second, allied operations do not get much attention; command-and-control issues involving any multinational force must be appraised in analysis of future conflicts. Third, naval contributions are not fully evaluated. That the Navy-Marine fake amphibious-landing threat worked well is all the more reason to assess the total seapower dimension, including logistics, future positioning, force configuration, allied contributions, and offshore command and control, at the least.

The book opens with a brief account of an alleged unsuccessful effort by U.S. forces to eliminate Saddam Hussein with a precision missile system.

Whether or not this event really happened, and whether or not it just appears up-front to grab reader interest, the incident opens doors into big agendas in national security affairs. While the United States has fore-sworn assassination of tyrants as a matter of foreign policy, conflict once initiated opens the door to legitimate high-tech "bozo busting" that the world may applaud morally because it looks like a shortcut to peace. But "bozo busters" are available to perhaps thirty-five nations. What happens when, say, the government of Iraq, Libya, North Korea, or Cuba, or a breakaway group in a crumbling nation-state buys one and defines the occupant of the White House, or of Number 10 Downing Street, as a "bozo"? International relations might return to an era when Trojan horses were in season, when Asian and European monarchs eliminated their foreign rivals by planting assassins within their diplomatic units at the enemy king's court. Might war-weary cultures demand a return to the practice of Pacific islanders, as portrayed by anthropologist Ruth Benedict, where one warrior paddled seaward in a canoe to become the token victim? Or to the Roman Empire's policy of sending a general to fall upon his own sword in the opponent's capital as a token of capitulation? The idea of specifically targeting leaders, even stripped of its high-tech glamour and factors of moral hubris, invites careful thinking by national security leaders; *Triumph Without Victory* does well to open the topic for discussion.

This is the volume of choice for those who seek a critical, objective, and balanced view of this war.

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Sheppard, Donald. *Riverine: A Brown Water Sailor in the Delta, 1967*. Novato, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1992. 326pp. \$22.95

Commander Don Sheppard has presented an engaging and, for this reviewer, evocative account of riverine warfare in the Mekong Delta just prior to the North Vietnamese Tet offensive of 1968. Sheppard grips his reader with alternate feelings of frustration, bravado, and tragedy that maintain the story's intensity from beginning to end.

However engaging Sheppard's story is, categorizing the genre is a more difficult task. The initial impression, that of a good sea story, is underscored by Sheppard's reluctance to identify those "characters" of questionable dedication or integrity he encountered during his year-long command of River Division 51. Yet dismissing this work as simply a good yarn would be a mistake, for like Mark Baker's *Nam*, Sheppard's experiences and observations constitute a valuable historical record for this most enigmatic of American wars. Traditional historical practice might regret the lack of documentation or the absence of an index, but modern oral history does provide strengths that easily