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Newsmen and National Defense: Is Conflict Inevitable?

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Matthews, Lloyd J., ed. *Newsmen and National Defense: Is Conflict Inevitable?* McLean, Va.: Brassey's (US), 1991. 146pp. \$11.95

This is a collection of essays most of which appeared during recent years in the professional journal *Parameters*, published by the Army War College.

Except for the first two chapters dealing with some historical background, these well-written articles provide views of the military-media relationship that are based on the experiences of each author. The subjects include: the activities of the media in El Salvador, the media and its responsibilities in reporting about terrorism, the success and failure of the Department of Defense press pool inspired by the Sidle Panel, how backgrounds and motivations differ between journalists and military officers, and some media relations guidelines.

There are numerous illustrations of the mutual distrust and ignorance that permeate, and help to exacerbate, the long and discordant history of military-media relations in the United States. The complexity of the problem and the extent of basic disagreement even as to how much of a problem exists today are illustrated by the following two examples from the book: "Military-media relations are as good as they have been since World War II" (Lieutenant Colonel Barry E. Willey, U.S. Army), and "Military relations with the press . . . are probably worse now than at any period in the history of the Republic" (retired Marine Lieutenant General Bernard E. Trainor).

Indeed, any well-selected collection of essays should contain such divergent opinions as these. The main point is that this issue has deep roots in American history and society and deeply affects the way in which officers and journalists view their functions.

Before discussing the strengths of the book, some mention must be made of two, but nonfatal, weaknesses. The first deals with the selection of the title.

Given the enormous attention that has been paid over the last several years to the issue of gender use in print, it is disappointing that *any* book, but particularly one dealing with mass communication, would bear such an insensitive title. "Newsmen" are not alone in covering America's military activities, at least not since the late Marguerite Higgins of the *New York Herald Tribune* filed copy from the front lines in Korea. Somewhere along the route to publication, someone should have changed the title.

The second weakness is the lack of historical background, at least from the Civil War to the present, that would have enabled most readers to consider more fully the American military-media relationship. The application of the Constitution to that history could also have received more attention. In a democracy, it is almost certain that the media and other major power centers (big business, the courts, the police and, of course, the military) will collide. In a democracy with a First Amendment, the collision is guaranteed.

The question of whether conflict is inevitable is thus almost always answered in the affirmative. Although the military-media problem is fraught with mutual (sometimes overt, always latent) hostility, distrust, and misunderstanding of motive and function, the key to its resolution is found in constant examination and education, coupled with intelligent planning, management, and continuing dialogue. Neither side will ever be completely happy with whatever arrangement emerges from such well-intended efforts, but the nation will be best served when, in the crucible of armed conflict, flexible attitudes are maintained by both the military and the media. These are the important statements made by the authors.

This collection is excellent reading and a worthwhile addition to the personal libraries of all officers and working journalists.

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Caldwell, Nathaniel French. *Arctic Leverage: Canadian Sovereignty and Security*. New York: Praeger, 1990. 123pp. \$37.95

Canada's 1987 defence White Paper, *Challenge and Commitment: A Defense Policy for Canada*, announced the plan to bring a better balance to Canadian naval capabilities through the acquisition of a fleet of nuclear attack submarines (SSNs). These submarines were both to allow the resupply of Nato forces in Europe and meet the

threat of the Soviet navy to North America directly. The unique ability of nuclear submarines to patrol the ice-covered waters off Canada's Arctic Ocean coastline also led many in and outside the Canadian government to champion the SSN programme as a means to enhance Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic.

Nathaniel Caldwell, however, has gone further still. He was prompted to undertake the study of Canadian Arctic sovereignty and security by the possibility that the nuclear attack submarine program was inspired by a desire of the Canadian government to gain leverage in North American defence "out of proportion to its monetary contribution." He asserts that Canada would be able to gain "leverage" in Nato and with the United States if it were to establish effective control over the Northwest Passage. The author poses a number of historical questions on the relationship between Canada and the United States and how the nuclear submarine program related to the issue of Canadian sovereignty.

Caldwell surveys the history of the development of Canadian northern sovereignty, the history of Arctic navigation, the Canada-United States defence relationship, and a geopolitical analysis of Canadian and Soviet strategy in the Arctic. This is far more than the slim ninety-seven page essay (including notes) can bear.

The author provides a useful outline of the Canadian assertion of sovereignty over the Arctic archipelago, but he fails to carry the