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## Dirty Little Secrets: Military Information You're Not Supposed to Know

Chris Staszak

James F. Dunnigan

Albert A. Nofi

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military operations and the “flight to dollars” (typical during crises) put immediate pressure on the pound and reduced British currency reserves to dangerously low levels. As a senior U.S. Treasury official noted, “the British had no sooner invaded than they recognized immediately that they couldn’t carry on a war of this scale without financial help; and in view of the U.S. position, taken promptly at the United Nations, we were not prepared to finance their war effort.” Independent British action against American wishes was simply no longer possible. By early December, the British and French formally agreed to withdraw all their forces and so surrendered their centuries-old role as great powers.

Diane Kunz is well situated to treat this subject. A former corporate lawyer specializing until 1983 in international financial transactions, she is now an assistant professor of history at Yale and has written a book on the British financial crisis of 1931.

This work is copiously documented; indeed, nearly one-third of it is reserved for notes and a bibliography. It is an interesting case study of what can happen when a nation loses its political freedom of maneuver because of economic dependence on other powers. While America in 1992 is currently nowhere near the financially parlous condition of Britain in 1956, it may be instructive to recall the recent furor over Japanese politician Shintaro Ishihara’s *The Japan That Can Say No*, as well as the controversy over the Bush visit to

Japan. Economics may also be politics by other means.

JAN VAN TOL

Lieutenant Commander, U.S. Navy  
USS *Gallant* (MSO 489)

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Dunnigan, James F. and Nofi, Albert A. *Dirty Little Secrets: Military Information You're Not Supposed to Know*. William Morrow, 1990. 464pp. \$19.95

This book is a disappointment. While occasionally raising some interesting points, it falls short of its stated purpose, to be “an unusual, entertaining, and thought provoking look at the myths, mysteries, arcana, and boondoggles unknown to the rest of us.” Perhaps it does meet this goal for the enthusiastic amateur; however, for the average reader of the *Naval War College Review*, with some background in military affairs, little new material is presented. This shortcoming is aggravated by an invariably negative and antimilitary tone.

The wording of virtually every entry is derogatory toward the military, be it American or Soviet, allied or neutral. (An early indication of this is the “advance praise” found on the bookjacket from retired Rear Admiral La Rocque, who compliments this book as a “superb, unusual, interesting collection of really important facts.”) Typifying this tendency is the titling of sections within the text. A section on the procurement of flight simulators is named “Video Games.” Other examples include “More Gas” (or U.S. Coast Guard aerostats for

antidrug surveillance) and "Lost in the Clouds" (the Hellfire missile).

A negative tone would be excusable if *Dirty Little Secrets* lived up to its promise to offer new and interesting information. Many books critical of the military have been valuable for this reason. In this case, however, the "meat" is lacking. The promised "secrets" are, rather than "startling," mostly bland or previously disclosed. For example, the naval section reveals such "mysterious" items such as that "the Russian submarine fleet consists of over 300 boats, but most are old"; that "U.S. carriers do not have sufficient space in the hangar to store all the aircraft they carry"; and that the nickname for an SSBN is a "boomer."

The book is a reference work composed entirely of anecdotal passages ranging in length from one sentence to a page and a half. Material is organized by subject and is divided into six parts: ground, air, naval, "high-tech," the human factor, and logistics.

There are certain interesting tidbits that do appear—the Sukhomlinov effect, for one (a theory that the loser of a war is likely to be the side whose generals have the fanciest uniforms, named after a well-dressed but tactically deficient World War I Russian general who lost several major battles to the Germans). To its credit, *Dirty Little Secrets* does explain that the famous C-5 transport aircraft's \$7,000 coffee pot was not much more expensive than such specially engineered appliances on commercial aircraft. Some entries do discuss valid issues, such as the history of Soviet naval

cruise missiles, stealth aircraft, and fighter development. But there are no "startling" new facts, and the discussion is sophomoric.

*Dirty Little Secrets* is worth a quick skim. These are interesting items, but its less than evenhanded treatment of material and its lack of substance do not justify spending \$19.95.

CHRIS STASZAK  
Portsmouth, Rhode Island

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Shafritz, Jay M., ed. *Words on War: Military Quotations from Ancient Times to the Present*. New York: Prentice Hall, 1990. 559pp. \$29.95  
Wintle, Justin, ed. *The Dictionary of War Quotations*. New York: The Free Press, 1989. 506pp. \$29.95

The right quotation can often add the finishing touch to a piece of writing or the perfect opening to a seminar. Because I enjoy using them in my writing and teaching, I am always looking for good quotations that relate to almost any aspect of warfare. Having nearly worn out my old standby, Heintz's *Dictionary of Military and Naval Quotations*, I was delighted to have the opportunity to review two possible replacements.

However, reviewing books of quotations proved to be more challenging than I had anticipated. After thinking about exactly what I would be reviewing, I decided on a "road test" approach. Over the course of a year of teaching at the Naval War College, I used the two books reviewed along with Heintz's to