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## Surprise Attack: A Victim's Perspective

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● The conspiracy of silence in discussing the war.

The text is illustrated with excellent and unexpected diagrams, such as the "Flow Chart of Aggressive Strategies" by which to apply Shalit's "Laws of Escalation of Aggression." Tables appear, such as "Attitudes Toward the Enemy Shown by Israeli Combat and Support Troops on Three Fronts" to demonstrate Shalit's conclusion that there does exist a consistent order of fear and hate of the enemy ranks: support troops in all cases have significantly greater hate and lower fear and respect of the enemy, than do combat troops!

The book has a complete index, an even better bibliography. Ben Shalit is now affiliated with the Karoliska Institute and the National Defense Research Institute in Karlstad, Sweden.

CAROL FORD BENSON  
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Kam, Ephraim. *Surprise Attack: A Victim's Perspective*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1988. 266pp. \$25

Many books have been written attempting to analyze the success of the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, and the American failure to prevent it. (Such an event had been predicted since the 1920s. Moreover, heightened tensions between the United States and Japan had even resulted in alerts at Pearl Harbor in July and October 1941.) The current

American nuclear deterrence strategy is affected by a concern for a possible surprise attack, and the Israeli experience has also been conditioned by a concern for surprise attack, that was realized in the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War of 1973.

Ephraim Kam, an instructor at the Israeli National Defense College and the author of *Surprise Attack*, has combined a sense of immediacy with a cogent blend of managerial psychology, military history, and human nature to analyze victim behaviors that permit a nation, a government, or a military force to fall victim to surprise attack.

The structure of this book bespeaks a systematic approach to the problem of surprise attack. While it may seem obvious that a researcher would do this, my experience with other books indicates that they all too often get lost in the emotionalism connected with a particular event. However, Kam begins at a reasonable starting point and defines the problem as one of perception and reaction by an organization. He has divided it into three parts: the components of the phenomenon itself as borne out by historical examples of surprise attack victims; the operations of the individual (victim) analyst who misperceives indicators of the attack to come; and the dysfunctional operations of groups of analysts who collectively misinterpret warning indicators. Kam does not address a particular surprise attack per se rather, he uses material from eleven representative

cases to support his explanation as a process of perceptual and organizational dysfunction.

One could say that there is nothing new here. After all, certain aspects of managerial psychology, such as groupthink and persistence of hypotheses, are well-known to anyone who has taken a short course in the subject or who has had to deal with people. But this book combines the material in a fashion that produces new insights. In one particularly telling section, "Group Risk Taking," Kam discusses why it is actually easier for a team of analysts to accept the risk of attack rather than risk being wrong. The author presents a credible argument that, far from being an aberrational system failure, vulnerability to surprise attack is actually encouraged by bureaucratic systems.

As the world enters a new state of flux in the post-Warsaw-Pact era, contributions like *Surprise Attack* are relevant. As Kam argues, "Since views are not likely to change easily, people tend to fit incoming information into preexisting images and to perceive what they expect to see." The future that the United States faces is likely to be unforgiving of such perceptual blind spots. *Surprise Attack* is a "must-read" for military planners and, indeed, for anyone for whom survival and success depend on anticipating what the other side may do, or who the other side is!

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Hardaway, Robert M. *Care of the Wounded in Vietnam*. Manhattan, Kansas: Sunflower Univ. Press, 1988. 244pp. \$15

At least up till the time of Desert Storm, the medical care given to U.S. combat casualties in Vietnam was unquestionably the finest in the history of military medicine. How did this occur? Because the tactical environment in the Vietnam war was unique; the medical support system that evolved in support of combat operations bore similar distinctive characteristics. General Hardaway's book provides some clues toward understanding, within this setting, the basis for what some have described as military medicine's "finest hour."

With only occasional exceptions, such as military actions at Khe San, and at Hue during the Tet offensive, there were few prolonged battles in the Vietnam conflict. The volume of casualties, low compared to most other wars, was generated in relatively brief "fire fights." Following resumption of control over combat areas, evacuation helicopters were called in, and the casualties were flown to hospitals in a fashion similar to that provided by urban emergency services in peacetime.

A static support base existed in Vietnam, characterized by logistics largesse, with adequate numbers of replacements, sufficient time, an abundance of medical units, and a continuing and ample supply of whole blood. Virtually immediate (often within one hour) evacuation of the combat casualty was common-