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## Red Army: A Novel of Tomorrow's War

Adam B. Siegel

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and an appendix containing Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, Lee's Farewell to the Army of Northern Virginia, and Washington's resignation of his commission.

This is a book which should be read by all who follow the profession of arms.

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Peters, Ralph. *Red Army: A Novel of Tomorrow's War*. New York: Pocket Books, 1989. 403pp. \$5.95

It is difficult to find reasons to regret the liberalization of Eastern Europe and the coming withdrawal of Soviet forces from the Warsaw Pact countries. One reason stems from the fact that with every day, the novel *Red Army* moves further from plausible fiction into fantasy. Subtitled "A Novel of Tomorrow's War," *Red Army* provides a U.S. Army intelligence officer's best estimate of the Soviet view of the next war in Europe. Peters' effort succeeds admirably; the reader is exposed to the thinking of a large number of Soviets: each with his unique view of the battlefield.

For those addicted to the genre of alternative or potential military scenarios, this work is one of the best of its kind. It skillfully blends the characters and smoothly flows from one to another—from the Soviet front commander to a terrified private—while providing a gripping account of the Soviet assault on West Germany. One does not find a story based on exaggerated accounts of technological

wizardry or other improbable gimmickry but rather a reliable description of the equipment that one may find in Europe and an introduction to the type of SNAFUs that one would expect (as Clausewitz would put it, the "fog of war"). The book has a plausible set of events leading to a believable, if not very satisfying, conclusion.

Because Peters sensibly restricted himself to areas he specialized in, the scope of the book is limited. While this is mainly an advantage (the writing is uniformly excellent), the potential audience of *Red Army* is reduced by the limitations Peters placed on his own efforts. One will not find in *Red Army* the political machinations that give works such as *Red Phoenix* their flavor, nor any consideration of the strategic dimension of the war. Nor, importantly for these pages, is there any consideration of the naval aspect of a Nato-Warsaw Pact war. Peters' focus is entirely on the actions of one Soviet front and of its soldiers.

In addition to the diminishing credibility, due to current events, of Peters' scenario, the tensions between Soviet nationalities are clearly understated in light of present unrest in the Soviet Republics. Despite these qualifications, if you are interested in an incisive account of the increasingly unlikely ground war in Western Europe, then *Red Army* is likely to be as gripping for you as it was for me.

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