

1990

## Moral Obligation and the Military: Collected Essays

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### Recommended Citation

Winters, Francis X. and University, National Defense (1990) "Moral Obligation and the Military: Collected Essays," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 43 : No. 2 , Article 34.

Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol43/iss2/34>

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and why Cuba is even a player in the Middle Eastern cauldron. After all, Cuba needs Middle Eastern petroleum but is financially bankrupt, totally beholden to Soviet largesse for significant purchases. The Middle East hardly lacks for glinty-eyed revolutionists who know the fine points of the AK-47 or the radio-detonated car bomb. Yet Fidel Castro has indeed multi-regionalized Middle Eastern turbulence with his presence, despite an overwhelming lack of assets and logical reasons.

Professor Fernández relies strongly on Foreign Broadcast Information Service bulletins for Cuban actions; more credibility would be attained through analysis of what Middle Eastern leaders think of Cuba. Michael Stührenberg wrote recently in the liberal weekly *Die Zeit* of Hamburg that "Cuba is considered by many of the poorest nations to be an international superpower. . . . They view Castro not as Moscow's representative but as its successor." Professor Fernández does not go quite so far.

Pointing to the glittering opportunities which first attracted Castro to interpose his country in Middle Eastern affairs, Fernández concludes that the region is tough for any outsider to manipulate and that, even if he is not simply a stooge of the Kremlin, Castro still has to accept Soviet guidelines.

"The Middle East might well be Fidel Castro's, and revolutionary Cuba's last international frontier," he says. Yet the chart on page 56 shows an impressive array of

regional penetrations by a regime ruling a small country that U.S. patriots used to tell me, in 1960, could be "cleaned out by a squad of well-trained Marines with baseball bats."

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*Moral Obligation and the Military: Collected Essays.* Washington, D.C.: National Defense Univ. Press, 1988. 245pp. \$7

The good news about this volume is its publication. The bad news is its brevity.

Publication of a biennial report of successive conferences of the Joint Services Conference on Professional Responsibility (1985 and 1986), held at the National Defense University, records the admirable effort of the military services to encourage reflection among their personnel on the ethical standards of their profession.

This volume presents the most significant papers presented at these conferences. Oddly, though, it is silent, or nearly so, on the two political-military topics most salient in public and professional discussions of foreign policy during those years (1985 and 1986): the U.S. intervention in the Nicaraguan civil war and the sudden reassessment of the moral legitimacy of nuclear deterrence.

Likewise, the book omits the newsworthy statements by leading former defense officials, such as

Robert McNamara, who recently revealed his own long-standing moral ambivalence about deterrent strategies. Equally striking is the omission of the uproar provoked by the U.S. Roman Catholic Bishops' 1983 pastoral letter (condemning on traditional moral grounds the present U.S. strategy for deterrence), which has been widely and closely studied at several of the senior war colleges.

For all the volume's shortcomings, however, several essays, make it useful. For example, John Yoder, a pacifist theologian, points incisively to the universality of often unacknowledged moral commitments in all major political-military choices. Yoder pleads for more candid admission of the ethical premises of policy decisions than is normally recognized by popular theories of "Realism" in foreign policy. Another piece seems to suggest that the application of Clausewitz' theory to present doctrines of nuclear war would reveal that the latter are open to serious questioning.

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Mearsheimer, John J. *Liddell Hart and the Weight of History*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell Univ., 1988. 234pp. \$24.95

Captain Sir Basil Liddell Hart was a prolific military writer until his death in 1970. He also, supposedly, significantly influenced the German generals in World War II and, later,

the Israeli military leaders. One writes "supposedly" since this book, *Liddell Hart and the Weight of History*, by Professor John J. Mearsheimer challenges these views.

Mearsheimer disputes the conventional idea that the Germans obtained the blitzkrieg concept from Liddell Hart's works: "I find no basis for the widespread claim that Liddell Hart had marked influence on the development of the thinking about the blitzkrieg in Germany during the interwar years and that the German offensive of May 1940 was essentially a case of his disciples putting his theories into practice."

Mearsheimer makes much of a short passage of praise to Liddell Hart in General Heinz Guderian's *Panzer Leader* and produces evidence that Liddell Hart wrote the paragraph with the approval of Guderian for the English edition. It was undoubtedly wrong for Liddell Hart to have done so, but this in itself does not blemish the idea that Liddell Hart actually *did* influence Guderian. Mearsheimer unconvincingly suggests that each had much to gain by praising the other.

There is one important point overlooked by Mearsheimer. Guderian, dismissed in the winter of 1941 and later reinstated as Inspector-General of Armored Troops, flew to Hitler's headquarters for a conference on 9 March 1943. In *Panzer Leader*, under the heading "Conference Notes," is the sentence, "Read out article by Liddell Hart—on organization of armored forces, past and present."