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Zones of Conflict

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forces and teaching Vietnam a lesson. While China's actions did not force a change in Vietnam's position on Kampuchea or its treatment of ethnic Chinese, Chen points out that the war must have raised doubts in Hanoi about the utility of the Soviet Union as an ally against China. We may be seeing a resurgence of these doubts today as the Soviets attempt to improve relations with Beijing, possibly at the expense of their Vietnamese ally.

The remainder of this book concerns itself with the "lessons learned" by both belligerents and the consequences of the war for the international community. It is evident that the Chinese were not pleased with the performance of their fighting units. Chen makes the case that "Beijing's military authorities must have reached the conclusion that the PLA is incapable of fighting a modern war before it is modernized in both weaponry and strategy."

Chen contends that even though the war was over by April 1979, the problems that led to the war have not yet been resolved, and China did not achieve its major political objectives. Many of these issues are no longer simply bilateral concerns between China and Vietnam. The refugees, the continued Vietnamese occupation of Kampuchea, and Soviet military, particularly naval, developments in Vietnam are regional concerns being addressed by international organizations such as ASEAN and the United Nations. Whether

these problems can be solved remains to be seen.

Chen concludes with his assessment that the Chinese war against Vietnam has established the pattern for future Chinese military actions: low risk operations at low cost. It will be interesting to watch the current Spratly Islands interaction with that assessment in mind. In many respects, a Chinese military option to destroy Vietnamese naval forces and force the withdrawal of the Vietnamese garrisons in the Spratlys can be considered a soft, inexpensive venture since the PRC's navy is vastly superior to that of Vietnam, and the Soviet Union probably would not want to be involved directly.

This is an interesting and timely work that concisely summarizes and clarifies the complex issues involving China and Vietnam. The next episode of the story is currently being acted out in the South China Sea. It is vitally important that we in the United States understand the historic ties and conflicts between these two communist nations if we are to remain a maritime power in the region. Professor Chen's book is an excellent source for this.

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Keegan, John and Wheatcroft, Andrew. *Zones of Conflict: An Atlas of Future Wars*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986. 158pp. \$10.95

Keegan and Wheatcroft have created a superb compendium of contemporary geopolitical fact. This is not a fanciful exposition on the future shock of warfare, nor is it intended to predict the scenario or outcome of the next war. Instead, it is a thoughtful discussion of those aspects of the world that tend to remain relatively constant, such as geography, population distribution, and natural resources.

The authors believe the "where" of wars can be predicted and have divided the world into six major regions of probable future wars: Europe, Africa, the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia, the Far East, and the Americas. As support for their arguments, they discuss climatology, physical geography, vegetation and resource maps, population maps, and transportation network maps. Their premise is that people fight wars and despite modern technology it is still roads and railways that carry them to each other for battle.

This is a simple and very effective approach, yet the authors readily admit that there are other factors that must be examined to ensure a reasonable analysis. These factors are political stability, military capability, and objective discontent. The first two are easily understood. It is the authors' opinion that some countries are so large (the United States, the Soviet Union, Canada) that their interiors can be considered essentially non-military regions. They also contend that it is highly

unlikely that Nepal would invade China.

Their third factor merits some discussion. Ideology, religion, race or language, envy of resources (oil), and historical reflex (the areas of Iraq and what is presently Iran have been at each others throats for about 3,500 years) can be the fuels that fan a spark of discontent into the flames of war.

The book contains many very useful and informative charts and maps that detail the military and geopolitical conditions present when the book was written (1985) and reflect quite accurately today's trouble spots around the world.

Each regional chapter gives the reader a comprehensive yet concise analysis of the area and the key points of contention among the players. Such things as the antagonisms the Kurds have felt for millennia towards outsiders in their lands, be they Turk, Armenian, Russian, or Arab (especially Arab) are well explained.

Considerable attention is paid to South and Southeastern Africa. An excellent explanation of the many factions involved in the guerrilla movements of Zimbabwe, Angola, and Mozambique provides the sort of background which, when coupled with the maps, enables the reader to better comprehend deeper research in areas of interest or simply to gain a greater understanding of daily news reports. The authors even provide several paragraphs on the potential for war in Antarctica or in space, neither of which they think is

a very likely arena for the start of a war.

The final section discusses what Keegan and Wheatcroft call the ligaments of strategy. By this term they mean the strategic flow of oil, potential choke points, submarine defiles, and major U.S. and U.S.S.R. military units located abroad. They close with a map of geographic constants which locates mountains, forests, polar regions, and so on. While that is nothing new, the authors present their material in a refreshingly clear manner.

It is true that a picture is worth a thousand words. By effective use of maps and resource graphics, the authors have succeeded in leaving the reader with an exceptionally clear view of those areas of human interaction that are most likely to result in conflict. In doing this, Keegan and Wheatcroft have also managed to avoid conveying that they have the "school house answers" to the world's problems. This book is highly recommended as an addition to the library of anyone truly interested in world events. It is a good focus or refresher for experts, and a good "Cook's tour" for the novice.

The final sentence of the book aptly sums up its content and thrust: "It is where real assets, political instability, and lack of secure borders meet that trouble, present and future, will occur and recur."

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Klare, Michael T. and Kornbluh, Peter, eds. *Low Intensity Warfare: Counterinsurgency, Proinsurgency, and Antiterrorism in the Eighties*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1988. 250pp. \$19.95

"Yankee Go Home" might have been a better title for this book given its premise that our government's response to the threat of low-intensity conflict (LIC) is nothing more than resurgent Yankee imperialism.

Today, one out of every four countries around the world is engaged in some form of conflict; there are nine active insurgencies in our own hemisphere. Terrorism continues to take a grisly toll in lives and property (including American lives and property), and drug traffickers simultaneously tear at our social fabric while contributing to instability and corruption in Third World countries. It does not take much imagination to see the collective, cumulative impact if all of this is allowed to fester: isolation from allies and trading partners, weakened Free World political and economic institutions, loss of bases, accommodation with adversaries and, perhaps most importantly, erosion of the rule of law and respect for human rights. The authors do not seem to find all this particularly troubling. They essentially argue against any U.S. attempt to defend its national interests against these threats without offering an alternative beyond letting the "progressive" forces of the world do their thing.