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Creating Strategic Vision

James J. Tritten

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Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative; and his proposals that not only both America and the Soviet Union drastically reduce the number of their strategic nuclear weapons, but also that NATO base its defense of Western Europe primarily on conventional forces certainly are highly interesting and important matters. So what is the book's problem? It is the way McNamara deals with his material.

Nearly all of the information presented is already familiar to the readers of journals such as *International Security*, so this relatively knowledgeable audience is not the one for whom this book is either suitable or intended. Instead, it was written for the general public with its major goal being, unmistakably, one that will generate support for McNamara's record. In order to achieve his objective, he has oversimplified his treatment of opposing views, which he presents as merely "strawmen" to be cut down in a paragraph or two, and ignores much that is not supportive of his position.

Some illustrations: first, he does not discuss the deterrent values of conventional defense and tactical nuclear weapons in severe crisis situations in Western Europe; second, McNamara conveniently "overlooks" the fact that a conventional war between the superpowers, should it occur, would be an unmitigated disaster for tens of millions of people; third, he gives no credible reason to believe that the NATO countries will ever spend the amount

of money he has determined as requisite for strengthening their conventional defenses; fourth, he all but disregards the British, French, and Chinese nuclear forces; and fifth, he "ignores" the reality of nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism as a serious long-term danger to American society. For our former Defense Secretary, the only nuclear danger worth his attention in this work is the one dealing with the rivalry between the superpowers.

Blundering into Disaster may be excellent propaganda, but, unfortunately it is a weak book. This is regrettable for two reasons: the author is capable of doing better and the American people deserve better.

JOSEPH M. SCOLNICK, JR.
Wise, Virginia

Smith, Perry M. et al. *Creating Strategic Vision: Long-Range Planning for National Security*. Washington, D.C.: National Defense Univ. Press, 1987. 133pp. Approx. \$6

Creating Strategic Vision is a collection of four essays by the former commandant of the National War College and three 1985 graduates. Unlike many edited works, the articles complement each other and form a coherent whole. The result of a year-long National Defense University research seminar, clearly it has made a major contribution to the literature.

The problem addressed by the authors is the lack of good, long-range planning throughout the U.S.

140 Naval War College Review

Government. Recommendations are found up front rather than in a conclusions chapter; hence, the book is biased in its advocacy for better and institutionalized long-range (10 to 25-year) planning. The authors define such planning as the forecasting of, and projecting of, the impact of strategies upon alternate futures.

The creation of alternate futures is the first step recommended by the authors. Of six possible methodologies to create alternate futures, building scenarios based upon expert judgment and genius forecasting are the preferred two. I am not sure if I would so thoroughly discredit the use of seminar and other gaming techniques since they too can help with scenario-building. Having created such alternate futures, the authors then recommend a plan to: (1) define core values and create a strategy to defend/attain them; (2) define basic objectives and create strategies to strengthen opportunities to attain them (vice the attempt to weaken an opponent); and (3) identify unpredictable elements and hedging strategies to adapt to changing circumstances.

The final chapter applies this system to two possible alternate Soviet futures and strategies, leading to the better of the two alternates. The results of the two example alternative futures and possible strategies certainly can be debated, but their primary purpose is merely to flesh out the prescribed methodology.

Other topics covered in the book are General Smith's 15 "Laws" of

long-range planning (or at least principles to consider), his suggestions on how to pick strategic planners, and why managers do not do long-range planning. Varying case studies are offered as positive examples (NASA and the Air Force), negative examples (Department of State and FEMA), and the Navy (a special case).

As the authors readily admit, theirs is a first step; a situation that this reviewer agrees is long overdue. Certainly there are other case studies that could have been used (the Navy General Board) and an extremely rich field of business strategic management and planning which is given only passing reference. The whole question of business' dissatisfaction with strategic planning and former Secretary of the Navy John Lehman's successes in achieving his force level goals without comprehensive systems analysis and supporting documentation should be considered.

This book is *not* for the average reader. The general strategic planner in the Pentagon probably will be frustrated by its methodological basis. The reader experienced with business methods may see only limited value in the effort. Yet the book is important for the few of us involved with improving long-range planning. It is a valuable first step as is any that attempts to introduce rationality to decision making through the allocation of scarce resources to competing entities. General strategic planning is on the rise within Government but, lest

future authors get sidetracked into perfecting techniques (like the systems analysts), planners may be in a better position to recognize that allocation and planning decisions are essentially political, and political decisions may often be made for extremely important, but not necessarily "rational" reasons. The book is highly recommended for the Government strategic planner.

JAMES J. TRITTEN
Naval Postgraduate School

Moss, Armand. *Disinformation, Misinformation, and the "Conspiracy" to Kill JFK Exposed*. Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1987. 219pp. \$22.50

One's initial reaction to this title is difficulty in believing that any new light could be shed on this subject. Happily, Armand Moss does provide some. In general, he effectively destroys the "conspiracy myth." In particular, he even more effectively establishes why Lee Harvey Oswald killed the President.

Regarding the conspiracy, he painstakingly shows, through extensive quotes, that Oswald was the only assassin involved on that fateful day of 22 November 1963. He also shows that the myth of the conspiracy was nurtured through: disinformation provided by the Soviets and "fellow travelers"; misinformation supplied by "authors hoping for a best-seller, and . . . serious writers who relied on chapter 7 [which is entitled 'Lee Harvey Oswald: Back-

ground and Possible Motives'] of the *Warren Report*."

The only criticism I have of Moss's disinformation theme is that he tends to overkill his argument. For instance, while he shows that writers of numerous essays and books may, or are, of the fellow traveler type (among others, he includes Thomas Buchanan, Mark Lane, and Joachim Joesten); and explains how the Soviets, through the use of their publications (e.g., *Novoe Vremia* [New Times], from which he quotes heavily) spread disinformation, and in some cases actually create it by clandestinely printing books abroad (e.g., *L'Amerique brule* [American Burns]); he tends to carry it too far when he makes such sweeping statements as "America began to lose its prestige immediately after President Kennedy's death [fully debatable!]," and "those who believe that the investigation . . . was scandalous do not know themselves what convinced them of the existence of a conspiracy [hardly!]"

However, as I alluded to earlier, where Moss really shines is in his explanation of why Oswald killed President Kennedy. The answer is alarmingly simple. Essentially, Kennedy's fate was sealed "by a frustrated, insignificant individual who believed that his wife had just decided to leave him."

His frustration, caused not only by his "wife's moods," but because of: an unhappy childhood; difficulty in coping with "a reading disability [dyslexia]" that was aggravated by an above average I.Q.; "disappoint-