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U.S. Defense Planning: a Critique

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ity on defense organization and planning, presents an insightful discussion of "The System" stripping away the irrelevant veneer which suffocates much of this book. Korb sympathizes with Luttwak's condemnation of the cost analyst, concluding that such a dehydrated approach to national security planning can interfere with the formulation of effective policy, particularly in the long-term. Korb adopts a refreshingly realistic (and in this volume, unique) perspective on operating within the enormous bureaucratic and organizational constraints of the US Government. Korb supports the thesis that some change in the current system of defense planning is warranted, but advises against radical reorganization, both because there is a cyclical character to many of the current problems identified and because dramatic changes in organization may so shock the system as to have a detrimental effect.

With the exception of the Luttwak and Korb chapters, there is little else in this volume which the reader will find insightful. Kronenberg has labored long but produced, unfortunately, a book which contributes marginally to the professional literature.

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Collins, John M. *U.S. Defense Planning: a Critique*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1983. 337pp. \$30.00 paper \$11.95
Proper defense planning is essen-

tial to national security. This planning should be based on a concept or principle of how military, foreign policy, and economic resources are combined to support US national interest. John Collins' new book, *U.S. Defense Planning: a Critique*, begins with the above thesis, then describes in remarkable detail all the forces which affect theoretical defense planning in the "real world."

Collins opens with a severe criticism of the National Security Council's efforts to fulfill its stated mission: "coordinating national security matters," stating that NSC is preoccupied with operations to the exclusion of comprehensive long-range planning. He uses charts, graphs, diagrams, and extensive footnotes throughout the book which "document" his assessment. These are useful to the extent they provide another method of visualizing Collins' judgments, although often the charts or graphs are subjective, rather than objective, in their makeup.

Collins follows with a "wiring diagram" of the Executive and Defense Department and then the Legislative Branch, describing agency by agency their function, makeup, and shortcomings. He does this in detail, chronicling the performance of many of these agencies since World War II as to the degree of their effectiveness. Usually it is not high. He favors George C. Marshall, Henry Kissinger, General Maxwell Taylor, and to some degree Frank Carlucci. Few others receive praise.

An ends/means mismatch is identified and highlighted by Collins as characterizing defense planning over most of the last three decades. Quoting former Defense Secretary Harold Brown, "the aura of U.S. power has substituted for its substance," Collins states that Soviet force modernization and adventurism make the ability to use aura in lieu of real power much more difficult than it once was. With this it is hard to disagree.

Collins takes on and systematically "critiques" the intelligence community, he finds them guilty of excessive compartmenting and "prioritizing," and for a lack of impartiality. But the mania for "covering all bets" is the biggest fault of agencies that are supposed to provide information to a large number of users.

Strategic Education is a major focus of the Collins study. Not only does he give a full chapter to the subject but, correctly, he pays it respect throughout the book. Unfortunately, Collins does the Naval War College a major disservice by lumping all service colleges together in his assessment. The Naval War College, like the Rooseveltian view of the Navy, is *different*. Collins' assessment of Strategic Education—Chapter 12—is characterized by this quote: "Many U.S. graduates . . . are well grounded in the fundamentals of management. It is difficult to find any who acquired a firm foundation for defense strategy formulation from any kind of academic institution." He touches briefly on the service academies, civilian colleges,

and the command and staff courses but he reserves his major treatment of service education for the senior service colleges. "The logical place to expect extensive study of strategic concept formulation is in senior service colleges That is not the case."

The author does pick his "evidence" selectively, fails to take account of the entire syllabi, and focuses on areas where some of the service colleges may be vulnerable, but he does highlight a concern of all service colleges: proper focus and the difficult choices necessary to accomplish their goals in the available time. The proper balance between theory, conceptualization, and contemporary strategic problems is difficult to achieve. The Naval War College is convinced it has the proper balance and realizes that careful, continuous course evaluation is essential to ensure the proper perspective.

Collins' major thesis, which runs throughout the book, is with reservation a legitimate one. We do have a government and military which are handicapped by rapid turnover, insufficient preparation, interdepartment rivalry, and finite resources for which the competition is fierce.

This book is useful in that it highlights problems of defense planning, which is its stated objective. It is also reflective of an author who states his thesis up front and then spends a great deal of time and effort supporting it.

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