

1982

## Evolving Strategic Realities: Implications for U.S. Policymakers

Stephen M. Meyer

Franklin D. Margiotta

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

---

### Recommended Citation

Meyer, Stephen M. and Margiotta, Franklin D. (1982) "Evolving Strategic Realities: Implications for U.S. Policymakers," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 35 : No. 4 , Article 19.  
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol35/iss4/19>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu](mailto:repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu).

effective when he challenges the conventional wisdom that we should despair of operating in the Persian Gulf because the oilfields will inevitably be destroyed. What value, he asks, would the remnants of those fields be to any potential black-mailer of the West?

More controversial, and not necessarily compelling, is his case that "where Central American governments are not placed at a serious disadvantage by outside intervention, we should stand aside from internal strife. If by doing so further radical regimes should come to power, we would accept the outcome" as long as they did not become proxies of the Soviet Union. The problem is that we cannot become assured that they will *not* be proxies. Even Cuba did not become a proxy immediately after Castro's takeover. While direct US intervention in every Central American contingency is a dubious proposition to uphold, studied indifference is probably equally as questionable.

Whatever the merits of Tucker's case on Central America, however, the fact that he puts it forward as part of a larger blueprint for reasserting US power worldwide points to the sophistication of his overall approach, which he labels "moderate containment." Any student of international politics seeking to understand the complexities of the world environment of the 1980s would indeed benefit greatly from this well-written, stimulating book.

DOV S. ZAKHEIM

OASD (International Security Policy)

Margiotta, Franklin D., ed. *Evolving Strategic Realities: Implications for U.S. Policymakers*. Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1980. 217pp. \$5.50

This book is a collection of papers that were originally presented at the National

Security Affairs Institute Dinner Seminar Series. A broad range of topics is covered in the book's seven main chapters: from Soviet perceptions of the global situation to images of the citizen-soldier in contemporary society.

Vladimir Petrov tries to simulate a Soviet view of the world today, while bringing to light what he sees as new dimensions in Soviet foreign policy. Petrov argues that the underlying basis of current Soviet foreign policy is the quest for "equal status" with the United States, and a general recognition of the Soviet Union's global role. His deliberately one-sided presentation of "the facts" is interesting and thought provoking.

Harry Harding reviews the history of the US-PRC normalization since the mid-1970s. He specifically questions the wisdom and value of extensive military relations between the two countries, while raising more general doubts about the overall strategic significance of relations with the PRC for US foreign policy.

Melvin Conant examines the strategic importance of oil to US security. Among the issues he highlights: the competition for oil resources among the Western allies, the lack of strategic reserves, and, of course, the concentration of oil resources in the volatile and vulnerable Persian Gulf region. Conant argues that a strategic petroleum reserve should be one of the most critical elements of US national security.

James Oliver and James Nathan examine the role of possible use of economic levers in achieving foreign policy goals. They argue that the coercive use of economic power requires multilateral efforts (i.e., cooperation among key suppliers) to be successful. And even then, there are doubts as to whether the decentralized structure of the US

## 112 Naval War College Review

economy would enable any US government to manage economic diplomacy effectively.

Franklin Margiotta turns the discussion to a "domestic threat" to US national security: the inability to provide adequate manpower for the armed forces. He offers two factors to account for the manpower problem—defined in terms of both recruitment and retention: a declining sense of legitimacy of military services in American society and an identity crisis within the military services. Analyzing the effects of technological, social, and environmental changes on military institutions, Margiotta sees much trouble ahead for the all-volunteer force concept.

Morris Janowitz continues the discussion of manpower problems in the US armed forces with an analysis of the changing concept of the citizen-soldier in an all-volunteer force. He examines such things as motives for enlistment, and the effects of high turnover rates, concluding that the military does continue to mirror American society. Janowitz proceeds to raise the possibility of moving toward some form of universal national service, involving civilian and military alternatives.

Earl Ravenal discusses the relationship between force and power and the implications for US foreign and defense policy. Concentrating on the distinction between US capabilities and will to employ these capabilities on the one hand, and foreign perceptions of US capabilities and will on the other, Ravenal analyzes the contemporary problems and paradoxes of deterrence and defense.

The final chapter, written by the editor, is an interesting summary of the major comments and criticisms raised by the seminar participants during discussions of the individual papers. By

focusing on implications for US policy, the last chapter enhances the value of the chapters that precede it, and helps the reader to understand the difficulty of transforming interesting ideas into policy.

STEPHEN M. MEYER  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Prados, John. *The Soviet Estimate: U.S. Intelligence Analysis and Russian Military Strength*. New York: Dial Press, 1982. 367pp. \$17.95

The title of John Prados' book *The Soviet Estimate: U.S. Intelligence Analysis and Russian Military Strength* leads the reader to expect a full discussion on all aspects of Soviet military forces. The title promises more than the book delivers. There is virtually no treatment of Soviet conventional forces—ground, air, naval. However, this is the only instance in which this book fails to deliver; in every other respect more is given than is promised or expected. *The Soviet Estimate* is a remarkably fine work.

The Introduction limits more precisely the major emphasis of this carefully and thoroughly researched volume. In the author's words, "Basically . . . this book is a study of the effectiveness of US intelligence [in] one substantive area, Soviet strategic nuclear forces." The period covered is from the late 1940s, although a few earlier references are made, through the 1970s.

*The Soviet Estimate* is objective, comprehensive, and balanced in its judgments. I believe it will serve as a valuable reference resource for the professional intelligence officer, military or civilian, and for scholars interested in the workings of the intelligence community.

The careful reader will find in this book a brief sketch of the development of the Intelligence Community; a description of the intelligence process, from the