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The Boer War

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that would end this stalemate; an increase in external assistance to UNITA, by contrast, would appear likely to prolong the guerrilla war.

Space limitations preclude further discussion in this review of the many points and issues raised by these case studies. It is worth noting, however, that most of the insurgencies studied in this book have not yet ended—or at the least may break out again. The authors of these studies conclude that the nature of the government response was the single most important variable in determining the success or failure of the insurgencies. Lessons drawn from these studies may help government decision-makers to select appropriate responses to a form of conflict that is likely to be with us for a long time to come.

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Pakenham, Thomas. *The Boer War*. New York: Random House, 1979. 718pp.

"I thought it very sporting of the Boers to take on the whole British Empire," Winston Churchill wrote of the outbreak of the Boer War in October 1899. In fact, since 1896 England's policy, as orchestrated by Sir Alfred Milner, her colonial High Commissioner in Cape Town, had pressed the two neighboring Boer republics towards war. The British public greeted the war with enthusiasm, and when Gen. Sir Redvers Buller's 47,000-man relief expedition sailed from England for South Africa they worried that the Boers might already have surrendered by the time they arrived. They need not have worried. The war lasted almost 3 years, required nearly half a million British troops, and cost over 100,000 British casualties, including at least 22,000 dead. It is a chastening war to read about, especially for those who—even today—like to think about the easy use of mobile expeditionary forces in

short sharp limited wars. The Boer War demonstrated once again that war almost always brings unexpected and unwelcome results for the victor as well as for the vanquished.

Thomas Pakenham has given us a splendid new account of this last and greatest of Britain's 19th-century imperial wars. It is a long, important, and enormously readable book. Eight years in the making, it reflects impressive research in both British and Afrikaner sources. Although writing mainly from the British point of view, Pakenham treats the Boers' conduct of the war with understanding and admiration.

The author divides the war into four phases, beginning with its origins. After revealing Milner's role in provoking the war, he explains the British reverses, mainly under General Buller, in the war's opening months. In the third phase, the greatly reinforced British forces, now under Field Marshal Lord Roberts, relieved the besieged British garrisons at Kimberley, Ladysmith and Mafeking, and captured the mines, towns and main lines of communication in both Boer republics by June of 1900. Having won the decisive setpiece battles, the British thought the war virtually over. Lord Roberts returned to England, leaving his Chief of Staff, General Lord Kitchener, to mop up. But the Boer commandos (the commando was the principal Boer tactical unit, normally of 500 to 2,000 mounted men) moved into guerrilla warfare. This fourth phase of the war lasted for 2 years. It was only after the construction of some 3,700 miles of barbed wire barriers, fortified by over 8,000 blockhouses, that Kitchener's vastly superior numbers finally brought the commandos to surrender in June of 1902.

Pakenham gives superb depictions of the main personalities. While persuasively rehabilitating the military reputation of the much-maligned Buller, Pakenham is hard on Roberts and devastating

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on Kitchener. Lord Kitchener of Khar-toum—"K. of K."—faced formidable opponents in the brilliant Boer generals, Botha, Smuts, De Wet and De la Rey. But it was his own military obtuseness, mindless brutality, and logistic incompetence that earned Kitchener the nickname "K. of Chaos." Whatever the military value of Kitchener's policies of farm-burning and concentration camps (where over 20,000 Boer civilians died), Pakenham shows that these ruthless methods were a colossal political blunder. By them Kitchener only succeeded in undermining support for the war in England, and in increasing Boer bitterness and defiance.

The British Army learned many lessons from the Boer War, and the post-war Esher and Haldane reforms were invaluable preparation for the First World War. Unfortunately, the most important lesson—the enormous advantage repeating rifles give to a well dug-in defense—had to be learned all over again, at a dreadful cost, in the trenches of Flanders.

Although Great Britain eventually won militarily, the war forged a nation of the Boers. The Afrikaners, not the English, have dominated South African politics since the Union of South Africa was formed in 1911. In 1961 the Union became a republic and left the British Commonwealth, thus formally reversing the military decision of the Boer War.

Today the successors to the Boers who defied the whole British Empire at the turn of the century are at odds with most of the rest of the world, as well as with the black majority of their own population. In 1910 a British general found it doubtful that British regimental officers would be interested in "a funny little country like Belgium, although most of them may be buried there before they are much older." If there are officers today professionally curious about the explosive southern part of Africa, they will learn a lot from

Thomas Pakenham's admirable history of the war that created modern South Africa.

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Papp, Daniel S. *Vietnam: The View from Moscow, Peking, Washington*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1981. 257pp.

This book provides a thorough account of American, Soviet, and Chinese foreign policy toward the Vietnam conflict from its beginning at the end of World War II to the fall of Saigon in 1975. The main criticism to be made is that it does not contribute much that is new to our knowledge of the Vietnam war, but primarily resurfaces that which is already known, particularly regarding the United States. The author's discussion of Soviet foreign policy, though, is extremely good as he was able to draw upon original Soviet sources.

What is valuable about this book is the author's balanced, scholarly presentation. He points out fairly both the successes and the failures of American involvement in Vietnam. The absence of a polemical tone either in favor of or against U.S. actions is most welcome. Papp's conclusions are also clear and reasonable. Particularly important is the point that in order for American foreign policy toward the Third World to be successful, the United States must develop a greater understanding of the history and politics of other nations.

This book provides a useful, balanced, and concise account of the conflict in Vietnam and the foreign policy of the United States, the U.S.S.R., and China toward it.

MARK N. KATZ

Rights and Responsibilities: International, Social, and Individual Dimensions. Los Angeles: University of Southern California, Center for the Study of the American Experience, 1980. 293pp.