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Crisis in Command: Mismanagement in the Army

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external event then that is a reflection on his capabilities rather than the nature of the world." Making things even more difficult is the fact that the intelligence estimator's world is the world of the future, and that a "... judgment on what the Soviet Union will most likely build, by way of military equipment, requires some judgment on Soviet military objectives." As Freedman describes it, the estimator's response to this challenge is to approach an analysis with a "set of expectations" about the target country, or what he aptly names an "adversary image," through which capabilities and intentions are seen as interdependent. This is markedly different from the popular image of the cold-blooded, facts-only, watchdog of enemy behavior. A major theme of the book is that this concept of adversary image has played a key role in the continuing controversy in the United States over precisely what the Russians are up to and why.

About halfway through the book, the author presents what appears to be a central thesis: that the intelligence community was not really at fault in the consistent failures to assess accurately the Soviet strategic arms buildup of the sixties. Instead, he argues, the inaccurate estimates were caused by the Soviets continual modification and alteration of the program. He then embarks on a highly speculative assessment of Soviet thinking through a series of crises (U.S. ICBM buildup under Kennedy, Cuba, Vietnam, and the Dominican Republic, U.S. ABM and MIRV development), each impelling them to make shifts in their program. Thus, the intelligence analysts were not to blame as they based projections on current capabilities that were always changing. This unnecessary defense of the intelligence community with a totally unsupported argument reflects a major weakness of the book, namely that a great deal of Freedman's analysis is highly speculative, or based upon

unexplained sources. One explanation for this is offered at the beginning of the book, where the author advises that the "about 50" interviews he conducted in 1973 were confidential, that the information thus acquired was incorporated in the text without reference, and that the reader must accordingly "... take a certain amount on trust ..."

Notwithstanding this criticism, the book is well worth reading for novices as well as old hands and specialists, first for its informed description of the strategic intelligence process, but more important because it grapples with the confusing, often esoteric world of modern weapons and the interaction of people and institutions that underlies U.S. strategic arms policy decisions.

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Gabriel, Richard A. and Savage, Paul L.
Crisis in Command: Mismanagement in the Army. New York: Hill and Wang, 1978. 242pp.

This is a flawed book, one that many will discount because it falls short of fulfilling its academic and scholarly pretensions. Supporting data, frequently referred to, often fail to materialize; much opinion is advanced as fact; and there is a sometimes confusing melange of description, diagnosis and highly prescriptive assertion.

But to dismiss the book on these grounds would be to miss the point. The authors have something important to say, and it has relevance for all the services in the post-Vietnam, post-Watergate, post-McNamara era. There is something terribly wrong with the leadership and the professional climate in the Army today, they believe. These two, now academicians but each with some military service to draw upon, try to explain what has caused the problems and what can be done about them. In the process they are wrong about as

often as they are right, but they nevertheless provide a wealth of provocative and useful insights. The root cause of current problems is, as they see it, the harmful adoption of a managerial or entrepreneurial ethos by the officer corps in place of the traditional ethic of service. The resultant managerial careerism led in turn to distortion and fabrication of reports, self-interest instead of concern for the troops, the frenzied rotation of leaders, the tyranny of statistics, and eventually the loss of unit coherence. It was not the stress of combat in Vietnam, they hold, that caused the Army to disintegrate. Rather it was what the Army did to itself.

What, then, should be done about it? Gabriel and Savage have many suggestions, some of which come too late; we can't go back and pattern our units in Vietnam on the French *Groupes Mobiles*, for example. But they are essentially correct when they argue that "the case for reform was never made from within the officer corps itself and has yet to be made." (With the significant exception of the Army War College Study on *Military Professionalism*.) So their suggestions that "alternatives to resignation consistent with moral protest must be developed," that we could do with fewer officers and especially far fewer senior officers, that the frantic pace of moves and reassignments must be drastically reduced, that an autonomous Inspector General's organization paralleling the chain of command and a system of ad hoc honor boards at unit level could be useful, and most fundamentally that the managerial ethos must be rooted out and specifically rejected are of real interest. And they tackle the hard problem of how an existing organization, led by those who have prospered under the existing climate, may be persuaded to adopt and implement reformed values. They outline an interesting model for effecting value change in an organization, in effect a strategy

for change, that seems to have applicability far beyond the particular problems they address. Thus they have gone beyond just articulating the problems and their causes, providing ideas on how to reform "an officer corps which has lost both its ethical bearings and the ability to develop and lead cohesive combat units." These are badly needed for, as they point out, so far "virtually no institutional changes have been undertaken."

But the authors are so determined to make their point that in some cases they go beyond the facts to advance arguments they should know are not correct. It was not, for example, "personal connections, educational background (the West Point Protective Association), and the ticket-punching calculus of career advancement" that resulted in numerous reserve officers being discharged during successive reductions in force, while sometimes less able regular officers continued to serve, but rather the statutory tenure that regular officers were accorded by law. The Army sought legislative relief from this dilemma for years, finally obtaining it, but not before much damage had been done. In contrasting the drop in ROTC enrollment and the increase in size of the officer corps during a given period, they neglect to mention that the Military Academy doubled in size during that time. And while they are critical of West Point in many respects, perhaps justifiably so, they base a number of their points on incorrect characterizations of the pedagogical practices there. This list could be extended.

But taken for what it is, an extended impressionistic essay, this book has value for anyone willing to entertain the notion that Chicken Little may have been right and interested in doing something about it.

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