

1979

Soldiers, Statesmen, and Cold War Crises

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Recommended Citation

Bonds, John B. (1979) "Soldiers, Statesmen, and Cold War Crises," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 32 : No. 1 , Article 15.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol32/iss1/15>

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traditional instruments of force employed by the Soviets. In this Brookings study, Robert P. Berman examines the tremendous growth of Soviet airpower and the threat that this poses for the United States, especially in Europe. Fundamental to Berman's thesis is the idea that the Soviets would be inclined more to use conventional forces than nuclear ones in a European war (at least initially), and so the need to pay close attention to Soviet air capability is urgent.

Until the mid-1960s, the primary mission of Soviet air forces was to provide defense against NATO airpower. The air defense mission, though, has been increasingly transferred to Soviet ground forces with the development of large numbers of highly accurate surface-to-air missiles. Berman believes that Soviet air forces are not now targeted against their NATO equivalent but against Allied ground forces. Instead of trying to gain air supremacy over the West, the role of Soviet airpower is to prevent an effective ground defense by NATO against a Soviet attack.

One shortcoming of the book is that while the author mentions briefly that he feels the *Backfire* bomber is primarily a threat to Western Europe and not at all to the United States, he does not discuss this controversial point in depth. To be more convincing, he should have discussed why he feels *Backfire* is not a threat to the United States and also should have stated what particular defensive measures are needed to counter this new bomber in Europe.

The author also examines the growing potential wartime uses and the rising actual "political" peacetime uses of Soviet airpower. While he outlines what the United States and NATO must do to counter the former, nothing is said about how to deal with the latter. Particularly disturbing are Soviet overflights of our allies' airspace to deliver weapons to Soviet clients in the Horn of Africa and elsewhere. This reviewer

believes that the United States must act firmly to persuade our friends to halt such overflights by forcing Soviet airplanes down if necessary. This can hardly be considered an extreme measure; it is exactly what the Soviets themselves do when Korean airliners accidentally wander over Soviet territory.

All in all, *Soviet Air Power in Transition* is a valuable work that escapes certain needless constraints in thinking that have been all too common. Instead of seeing future conflict in Europe as a series of compartmentalized battles of armies fighting armies alone while, separately, air forces are fighting air forces alone, Berman stresses the threat that Soviet air forces pose to NATO ground forces as well as to Allied sea and airpower. The book thus merits reading by all those concerned with the defense of Europe on land, sea, and air.

MARK N. KATZ
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Betts, Richard K. *Soldiers, Statesmen, and Cold War Crises*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1977. 292pp.

Most military officers will find this an interesting book, despite its probable origins as a doctoral dissertation. Mr. Betts has taken the period since World War Two to study the effect of advice offered by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the President in times of crisis. What makes his effort different is his use of sources. In addition to the usual published accounts and memoirs, he has employed interviews of the principal participants and their subordinates, mostly from the military side of the Potomoc. Actually, there is not much choice in this as the records of the proceedings at issue remain highly classified. And because of classification and other sensitivities, the interviews themselves are not always attributed directly either, but credit an anonymous "Military Interview" in the notes. So, this is

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not definitive history, but then it is not intended as such. Rather Mr. Betts undertook the test of some commonly held assumptions about the effect of the professional military community on the formulation of national policy. In so doing, he debunks many of the popular New-Left articles of faith.

Betts concludes that in most cases the Joint Chiefs were neither more nor less aggressive than their civilian counterparts in the State Department when considering the military option in policy formulation. However, once conflict was joined, he notes a sharp difference between the two groups: The professional military men favored an intense application of available force, while the civilian advisors tended to advocate a gradualism abhorred by the JCS.

The book would be worthwhile solely for the examination of these salient crises in such terms, but Betts then probes into the relationship between the civil and military branches to seek reasons for these similarities and differences. The greatest value of the book may be found in these subsequent chapters, which explore virtually every independent variable in the literature of decisionmaking and bureaucratic/organizational politics in this frame of reference.

With the models of Samuel Huntington, Betts explores the crises from the perspectives of the two modes of influence by which the military can affect policy decisions. *Objective Influence* is the narrowly professional approach of Huntington's preference. In this mode, the military leader is an apolitical advisor, concerned solely with the means of implementing policy conceived by his civilian masters. In contrast, *Subjective Influence* occurs when the political and military roles are combined, in a "soldier-statesman" fusion. Predictably, neither model is found to be an adequate description of historical reality, but Betts adds an interesting twist to a familiar story when he compounds the

plot with the interjection of the other side of civil-military relations—that between the Pentagon and the Congress. He points out that it is not only possible but likely that the JCS might play an "objective" role in relations with the President and his men, while being nearly totally "subjective" in their congressional dealings, as logrollers and negotiators. The opposite could be as easily true, of course. The essential recognition is that roles change with circumstances, personalities and the particular game or games being played.

The method of selecting the Joint Chiefs is also examined as a possible explanatory variable. Betts categorizes each Chief since Admiral Leahy, but is unable to draw any conclusions as the great majority of selections appear to have been made by a logic he terms "routine professional"—drawn from the most likely or senior candidate in line for the job.

Betts then views policy formulation from two intrinsic perspectives: necessities and capabilities. He concludes that these are not independent variables either, but that policy is susceptible to change from either or both. He illustrates the point with concrete examples, some of which are very revealing. In this section, he brings under attack the common contention that capability predisposes the use of military force options. There is some support for the theory, but it is found to be unconvincing.

There is more of interest here to the professional, as the author looks at organizational imperatives, personality variances, and the effects of careerism. It is all written with the familiarity of an insider at the Pentagon rather than from the isolation of some scholarship. Betts has produced a workmanlike product that simply destroys a great deal of academic conventional wisdom about recent policy. It is not the last word on the subject by any means, and skeptics will fault its inability to cite

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critical sources, as replication of the study will be difficult if not impossible. But the data will ring true to most Washington veterans, who have heard similar accounts at the bars of Officers' Clubs, or in the E ring itself. And the deft manipulation of the most popular models in organizational theory is a thought-provoking bonus for the reader.

JOHN B. BONDS
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Blainey, Geoffrey. *The Causes of War*. New York: Macmillan, 1973. 278pp.

Professor Blainey has given lay and professional readers alike a stimulating critique of traditional theories of war's causation and provided a provocative alternative interpretation of his own. In this literate essay, the author dissects conventional explanations of modern warfare (since 1700), discrediting in the process most of the popular myths concerning causal forces. When it comes to presenting his own thesis, however, he is little more convincing than his predecessors, identifying what might be called "symptoms of bellicosity," but indulging in truisms when he attempts a more definitive diagnosis of basic causes.

Considering war and peace a continuum, the author begins his analysis with an inquiry into one end—the causal forces of peace. Herein, he systematically refutes arguments that peace has been attributable to either political stability, economic prosperity, commercial intercourse, expanded communications, common culture, disarmament, power balances, international associations or international law. He further finds that neither war weariness nor magnanimous treaty terms guarantee tranquility. And just as these conditions reveal no clues to the sources of peace, so, according to Blainey, their absence is no certain precursor of war. Domestic strife, depression, nationalism, arms races, ideological differences,

power imbalances, legal and institutional deficiencies are all shown to be equally unreliable indices of war.

Are there then no identifiable or universal causes of war? For Blainey, only one: disagreement over measurement of power. "War is [always] a dispute about the measurement of power," he asserts. It begins when two nations disagree on their relative strength and ends when agreement on this subject is reached. It is thus most likely to occur when there is a relative parity of power between competing states, and least likely in situations of great power disparity.

Beyond this, Blainey claims that there exist "recurrent clues" to this phenomenon, clues which determine the probability of conflict. The foremost of these is "optimism" and the expectation of speedy victory. This optimism is in turn the function of calculations concerning: size and availability of military force, probability of third-party intervention, prospect of internal strife at home or within one's opponent, present and anticipated state of economic health, and seasonal conditions. Favorable assessment of these factors encourages the optimism preliminary to war.

As corollary to this concept, the author claims that war occurs only when two or more powers agree that they have more to gain by fighting than by negotiating; therefore, war constitutes a form of convention between consenting states. According to this model, war is the deliberate act of all participants, never accidental or the consequences of rigid alliances, arms races, misunderstandings, or blundering diplomacy; it is not even the product of unilateral ambitions of nations or statesmen.

This reviewer, perhaps because of his suspicion of universal theories, found Blainey most rewarding in his demolition of the foundations of causation theory; the book is worth reading for