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A Game of Titans

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those of his predecessors. According to the study: "Neither the scope of the individual policies nor the magnitude of the expected benefits offers a great deal of encouragement."

Third, the report concludes that the new energy program would add to the general inflationary pressures and would worsen rather than relieve the shortage of natural gas. According to the study, "... these energy proposals will not eliminate the gas shortage; they will partially disguise it and extend it to the markets that are now uncontrolled."

Fourth, the study argues that zero-based budgeting (ZBB) at the federal level has more drawbacks than merits. Theoretically, zero-based budgeting is supposed to eliminate the preference given to old programs in their competition for funds with new ones because all parts of the budget are treated comprehensively and equally. In practice, ZBB diverts large amounts of scarce managerial time for limited results and forces policymakers to focus on the upcoming year rather than multiyear budgeting. Moreover, ZBB is inappropriate for that large portion of the budget which is spent on indirect operations, such as grants and transfer payments.

Fifth, the study concludes that government reorganization will not lead to increased efficiency as the report notes: "... the real payoffs are not in efficiency but in redistributing political influence, altering public policies, and signalling the administration's intentions to the rest of the government and to the country."

Discussion of the defense budget is comparatively small. It consumes only 14 percent of the book. The analysis, written by Barry Blechman and others, is at once excellent and somewhat disappointing. The chapter is excellent because it contains a useful overview of nearly all of the major defense issues, but disappointing because it contains very little that is new or innovative. Most of the proposals put forth by

Blechman and his colleagues have been presented in previous editions or in the Institution's "Studies in Defense Policy."

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Ruse, Gary Alan. *A Game of Titans*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1976. 283pp.

The serious professional will sometimes disdain the novel as not being realistic and thus not worth his time. This shows a lack of appreciation for the unique place and role of the serious novel in literature as a stimulator for and vehicle of critical thinking about issues. *A Game of Titans*, ostensibly a story of a confrontation at sea between the Soviet air-capable cruiser, *Kiev*, and a hypothetical U.S. LTA rigid airship, *Grand Eagle*, touches on much of today's strategic thinking and serves up several conceivable future situations.

The author, a young former military journalist, has an important idea to convey: that the United States would be well-advised to redevelop and deploy the lighter-than-air dirigibles of a bygone era. Ruse makes large airships sound quite plausible. They have their limitations, but their strengths are more compelling. Perhaps he is right. Ruse's *Grand Eagle* is four times the size of *Macon* and *Akron* and is armed with defensive and offensive weapons (including the ubiquitous laser gun). It is nuclear-powered and equipped with multisensor and communications systems. Remotely piloted aircraft, eight V/STOL light fighters (advanced Harriers), and helicopters round out the combat/reconnaissance suite carried in *Grand Eagle*. Interestingly, the airship is built and operated by the U.S. Air Force and its latter-day antagonist is the Soviet Navy's princely capital ship, the sometime aircraft carrier *Kiev*.

The story takes place over the mid-Pacific and involves secret agents, a

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defector, two love stories, Polynesian legends and a SAR subtheme. Curiously, there is no submarine or antisubmarine action.

In the battle, *Grand Eagle* wins over *Kiev*, though not without paying a price. Importantly, their contest is one for limited objectives, and World War Three does not erupt as a result of the actions of these two contemporary titans and their masters. With all of *Grand Eagle's* combat, communications and reconnaissance capabilities and her grand size and potential, it appears that Ruse's airship might be procured for an outlay significantly less than that for a 60,000-90,000-ton aircraft carrier. With her realistic weaponry, *Grand Eagle* probably is no less nor more vulnerable, nor costly to operate than an aircraft carrier. President Carter has said that what we need is new faith in old ideas. Is this one?

A Game of Titans is entertaining and informative. Instruction is perhaps best conveyed by a medium that is entertaining. The book's underlying theme is sea control and the novel creates a plausible fiction to argue for sea control through the use of large airships.

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Schandler, Herbert Y. *The Unmaking of a President (Lyndon Johnson and Vietnam)*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977. 350pp.

For one who was even a minor participant in the Vietnam war years, this is likely to be a difficult book to read carefully. Any good work on this painful era would be, for it is a story whose end we know too well for enjoyment. *The Unmaking of a President* chronicles the succession of events and decisions of the second phase of that war, from 1965 to 1969; from the decisions to make it an American war to the agonizing reassessment which followed the recognition that it could

not be. For his account, Schandler draws on the *Pentagon Papers*, command histories, memoirs and on his own reflections as a staff member of OASD/ISA in the central period of the study, 1968-69. Indeed he was the principal author of the two sections in the *Pentagon Papers* which deal with Tet, hence the primary focus of the book an outgrowth of a Ph.D. dissertation at Harvard under Samuel Huntington and Graham Allison. Readers who expect an analytical treatment of the subject matter will be disappointed, however. The style is strictly historical, largely chronological; and therein lies its chief shortcoming. Although there is a final chapter which pays token homage to the theoretical questions so clearly raised by the period, one looks in vain for an Allison-like application of alternative models to explain the differing perspectives involved. Further, Schandler's examination of the decisionmaking process is almost completely confined to the post-Tet 1968 reassessment period, which was previously illuminated by another insider, Townsend Hoopes (*The Limits of Intervention*). Schandler offers few new insights here, and his account lacks the flavor of personal anguish which made Hoopes' memoir so intriguing to potential participants in future policy debates. This is better history, but it lacks the human despair of Hoopes.

The political side of the reassessment is presented quite fully, and Schandler's account will make an adequate single-source document for that explanation. However, the military side of the decisions is not well presented, undoubtedly due the classification of source material. There is no military equivalent to LBJ's *The Vantage Point*. Most frequently, the JCS are presented as hopeless optimists on the one hand (just a few more troops . . .), and hopeless pessimists on the other (without full application of airpower . . .). They are condemned for failing to examine the ends being sought