

1973

## The Military in American Politics

Lawrence W. Jackley

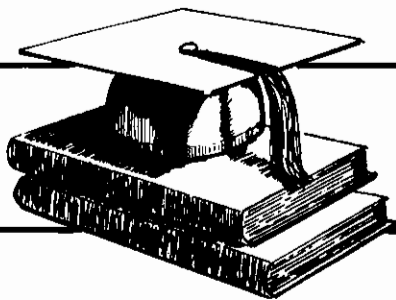
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## PROFESSIONAL READING

Clotfelter, James. *The Military in American Politics*. New York: Harper & Row, 1973. 244p.

Today one must carry Diogenes' lamp with considerably greater patience than the old man if one earnestly seeks an honest (objective, balanced, fair) contemporary book on the American Military Establishment. The available works, even those demonstrating a degree of insight (*Ward Just--Military Men*) can be reduced to expressions of personal bias, with or without research. Now the lamp may be extinguished—James Clotfelter has produced a serious, low-key, scholarly analysis of the American military's relationships with the major sectors of its society that should be applauded by academicians and military professionals alike.

The author's stated objective is to "describe and analyze behavioral patterns which involve the military and civilian groups." He has succeeded admirably in his effort to provide a non-polemic and balanced look at the Military Establishment in America and its interaction with Congress, industry, the media, academia, and the public at large.

The book covers a wide range of subtopics for examination, including the "military-industrial-administrative complex." He asks such questions as: "Has the military spiraled out of control?"; "Have ties to the military corrupted the scientific and academic communities?"; and "Has pervasive militarism of American culture affected the mass media, schools, and public attitude?"

Mr. Clotfelter answers these questions by examining the background of each subtopic, bringing into focus the major encompassing issues. Balance is the most apparent characteristic of the book. Each viewpoint is represented by reputable and articulate spokesmen preceded by a well documented background.

The book opens with a concise, interesting history of the American Military Establishment's problems with its society. The "Military-Industrial Complex" is analyzed in terms of identifiable group behavior, but the actual influence on defense contracts is later shown to originate in the Congress, with the real power in the House. Mr. Clotfelter points out early, and reemphasizes throughout the book, that the one major charge that can be substantiated against the Defense Establishment is its size—"The production and distribution system managed by the Pentagon is the largest planned economy outside of the Soviet Union." His treatment of the military and media is interesting but not as extensive as that provided to other topics, and he concludes in this part that, "The military may have come to perceive the mass media generally as its major institutional enemy." Public opinion in response to the military and national security is shown to be fickle and possessed of a short attention span—"The public reacts to [foreign threats] with irrational aggression or demands withdrawal if this is not possible." Some public responses are surprising as well as expectedly contra-

dictory. For example, the Gallup Poll found in 1969 that 79 percent of the population favored Universal Military Service, while during the same period 52 percent said that too much money was being spent on the military.

The chapters on Defense Department control of the military and DOD involvement in foreign policy concentrate again on the behavioral patterns of the groups involved and include two excellent chronological tables of major defense issues and their outcomes from 1945 to 1970. There also is a readable, concise history of military influence on major foreign policy decisions concerning Korea, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Vietnam.

The book is very quotable (by either side) and is thoroughly documented. The principal criticism of this excellent work is the disconnected format. The chapters indeed provide answers to the hard questions posed in the introduction, but one must work patiently to organize the main points into some meaningful pattern of thought. The book lacks an underlying theme, although the individual chapters approach each issue with essentially the same balanced structure—which is undoubtedly advantageous to the researcher. The concluding chapter does little more than to highlight what Mr. Clotfelter considers to have been his principal conclusions stated in earlier parts of the book. Notwithstanding these minor criticisms, *The Military in American Politics* is a serious, scholarly, and balanced analysis of the American military profession in the 1970's and is highly recommended for every professional military bookshelf.

LAWRENCE W. JACKLEY  
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Farwell, Byron. *Queen Victoria's Little Wars*. New York: Harper & Row, 1972. 394p.

Throughout Queen Victoria's long reign from 1837 to 1901, her soldiers

were engaged every year somewhere in the world defending or extending her empire. Asia, Africa, America, and particularly India were the scenes of some remembered, many unreported, but mostly ignored, small imperial wars. In an easy and a readable style, Byron Farwell has chronicled some of the better known and some of the unknown little wars of this remarkable era.

If many of the military achievements are now forgotten, they are nonetheless impressive. For example, Maj. Gen. Sir George Pollock and his army in 1842 were the first to force the Khyber Pass. Even Tamberlaine had to bribe the Afridis, who controlled the pass, to let him through. Following rioting in Alexandria in 1882, the British mounted an expedition to bring order to Egypt (really to make her subservient to British wishes). At Tel-el kebir, General Wolsey conducted a night march, involving more than 17,000 men and 61 guns, through the desert with the aid of Royal Navy Navigators. This flanking movement was successful in routing the Egyptian and Sudanese forces. The expedition was completed within 2 months from the time the decision was made in London to conduct it.

The use of the British Armies in the 19th century was a reflection of an exceptionally vigorous, dynamic, and self-confident society. Aside from understandable reasons such as the protection of British citizens or the maintenance of British prestige, however perceived or defined, much of the motivation behind the extension of British authority was the firm belief that British rule, or at least influence, would bring the benefits and blessings of British civilization to the natives who, at times, were perversely ungrateful. Also, the extension of the Queen's empire was necessary in many cases to prevent the Tsar from extending his empire. Add to these reasons the general lack of interest in most instances of the British public and politicians and slowness of com-