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Mafeking: a Victorian Legend

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"Systems analysis," "management," "defense planning," and "economics" are terms which have acquired special significance in the Department of Defense since Robert S. McNamara assumed the position of Secretary of Defense. Dean John J. Clark has written a succinct, interesting, and informative book on many aspects of the new developments and applications in defense economics. Except for his treatment of game theory, the author has prepared his account in layman's language which is quite readable and easy to comprehend. His primary emphasis is devoted to how the conceptual framework of problems in microeconomics as applicable to the private sector has been extended into military problems. He presents logical, relevant arguments for the "systems analysis" approach as being definitely superior to the older methods. Dean Clark does not trap himself into selling this as the only answer to the problems. He feels that an economist is a staff man who should not have the final word on defense planning and that dollars and cents should never dictate military strategy or policy. He does believe that the new economic approach to defense problems is useful and that we are on the threshold of a more comprehensive theory of military economics. As a matter of interest, the author gives a brief historical account of war gaming at the Naval War College and uses the Strategic War Game of the Strategic Planning Study as a case study. This book should be on the mandatory reading list for all military officers.

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Gardner, Brian. *Mafeking: a Victorian Legend*. London: Cassell, 1966. 246 p.

Brian Gardner is a respected author who has written extensively and readably in the field of military history.

Here he tells the story of an incident in the Boer War — the siege, or investment, of Mafeking in South Africa from October 1899 until its relief in May of 1900. The subtitle of the book, *A Victorian Legend*, is well chosen, reflecting both the historical fact and the emotional fantasy of the events, for, in the words of the author, "the facts did not always support the legend." The work is also, to a large extent, the story of Col. Robert Baden-Powell, who was Commander of the Mafeking garrison. He too was a legend in his own time variously portrayed as endowed with typical, nonchalant British courage; plucky and gay. The author's factual account of what actually happened in those 7 months is extremely interesting reading and provides insights into, and lessons to be drawn from, the strategy and tactics of the day, at least in an isolated case in a remote part of the world. It could also be said that it exposes Baden-Powell as more of a legend than a great commander. Narrated in detail is one of two actions initiated by British forces, wherein, unsuccessfully attempting to storm an impregnable Boer position, two-thirds of their troops became casualties. With bland aplomb, Baden-Powell in his report of the engagement said that the action had been satisfactory in that the enemy would have noted "the fatal results of storming a position." After the relief of Mafeking, Baden-Powell promptly rose to the rank of Major General — the youngest in the British Army. He was also described as the greatest English hero since Wellington and the most popular since Nelson. This book is an outstanding example of one of the values of historical study, and that is the process of sorting out the truth from the tradition.

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