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The Day After: Why America Wins the War but Loses the Peace

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undeniably will have become a blue-water naval power. The book rounds out its analysis of China's coercive maritime power with appendices written by experts on the China Coast Guard and the country's maritime militia.

Although not all the details of China's vision of a "world-class navy" are clear, McDevitt projects that the PLAN will outnumber the U.S. Navy in ships by 2035. As the American advantage gradually erodes, a deliberate assessment of the strategic situation will become even more imperative. With that in mind, the present work, which consolidates and updates the advances made in Chinese maritime-strategic studies, will serve well any professional within the field. It provides an incisive complement to Toshi Yoshihara and James Holmes's tour de force, *Red Star over the Pacific* (2010). McDevitt has delivered a work both scholarly and enduring, one that will provide a theoretical foothold for understanding China's naval development for years to come.

FRANCIS MIYATA



The Day After: Why America Wins the War but Loses the Peace, by Brendan R. Gallagher. Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 2019. 308 pages. \$32.95.

Brendan Gallagher has written what will be the best book on this topic for at least the next several years, and probably for many more. It should be required reading for every person within the U.S. national-security enterprise, as well as anyone with an interest in security, postconflict actions, and nation building. *The Day After* is excellently written, academically rigorous, and convincing. It is a must-read.

Gallagher is a serving lieutenant colonel (infantry) in the U.S. Army and stands tall among the rare breed known as warrior-scholars. He has served seven tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, including multiple deployments with the 75th Ranger Regiment, and currently is a battalion commander; so much for establishing his warrior credentials. His academic bona fides include winning the General George C. Marshall Award as the top graduate in his class at the Army's Command and General Staff College and completing a PhD in public and international affairs at Princeton.

Put simply, Gallagher wants to know why the United States has dominated the battlefield in many conflicts, only to watch subsequent efforts to secure the peace fail—often dramatically. A single failure might be brushed off as a one-of-a-kind event, but when failures become repetitive, something is wrong. Clearly the old adage about the burned hand teaching best does not apply; rather than learning from a hand singed by the hot stove, the United States keeps grabbing for the burner. It should be pointed out that *The Day After* was published before the American withdrawal from Afghanistan, which gives an air of prescience to the work.

Gallagher's introduction lays out his research with both precision and passion. Why does the United States win massive battlefield victories and seemingly create conditions to achieve long-lasting, positive change, only to watch the moment pass, opportunities dwindle, and failure eventually result? He also makes it clear that while his approach is grounded in strong scholarship and academic rigor, his involvement is not that of a distant inhabitant of the ivory tower. In his own words: "Most

of my adult life I have dealt with the unintended consequences of these wars and the life-and-death impacts they have generated. I have invested years of my life, led infantry units on the front lines, conducted countless patrols and combat operations, been in multiple convoys hit by roadside bombs, and lost valorous young soldiers under my command. I feel driven to explore this compelling topic and to pursue the answers that have eluded us for too long” (p. 8).

Rather than detracting from his analysis, Gallagher’s passion to find answers and get them right improves the product.

Gallagher argues that when it comes to winning the peace, the United States suffers from inherent tensions. The American culture wants to win quickly and decisively, and U.S. leaders attempt to deliver. Then we all want to go home and allow those who survived to live happily ever after. Planning for postcombat operations is weak and overly optimistic. This flies in the face of both common sense and experience.

The Day After examines four major case studies: Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya. From these studies Gallagher identifies three pathologies that contribute to U.S. failure (although he deems Kosovo a partial success): wishful thinking, deficient learning, and the underuse of the National Security Council (NSC). Wishful thinking is present in all the cases, from an assumption that the Kosovo conflict would be over in a matter of days to the belief that, having defeated Saddam Hussein, it would be a simple matter for the victors to hand over postwar matters to a new Iraqi government and the United Nations. As the cases accumulate, it becomes ever more clear that rather than recognizing the mistakes and errors committed in

past efforts and truly learning from them, even when those efforts were successes, it became easier for American leaders to assume they knew better than their predecessors and therefore would perform better. This led to repeated mistakes, such as failing to take full advantage of State Department expertise.

Gallagher’s concluding chapter is excellent. Some of his recommendations relate directly to his identified pathologies. The NSC should be used as an arena for refining ideas, and sharp-edged disagreements may be required to identify realistic goals and objectives. The commonly experienced high levels of initial optimism should be guarded against, if not mistrusted. More than lip service must be given to the concept of the “whole of government.” Above all, the question of “What happens next?” when military victory has been won or regimes are being changed must be answered fully. To fail to do so is all too likely to result in all-too-familiar patterns of failure.

RICHARD NORTON



Fighting the Fleet: Operational Art and Modern Fleet Combat, by Jeffrey R. Cares and Anthony Cowden. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2021. 184 pages. \$24.95.

Sun-tzu often is credited with the following: “Victorious warriors win first and then go to war.” In *Fighting the Fleet*, the authors Jeffrey Cares and Anthony Cowden—retired Navy captains and defense-industry thought leaders—make a compelling case for reenergizing and refocusing the development of naval war-fighting strategy and reinvigorating naval combat training