
Reviewed by Jeffrey W. Knopf, Naval Postgraduate School

During the Cold War, strategic theory focused on two situations in which states would rely on deterrence: direct deterrence, in which a country seeks to prevent an attack on its homeland; and extended deterrence, in which a country seeks to prevent an adversary from attacking a third party. In this highly original and valuable study, Timothy Crawford points out that states might also have an interest in relying on deterrence in a third situation: when they seek to deter two adversaries from attacking each other. Crawford describes the deterrent in this scenario as a “pivot” between the other parties, leading to the label “pivotal deterrence.”

Crawford points out that this concept is contrary to conventional wisdom. Mainstream strategic thought holds that states must clearly take a side in a dispute if they want to be effective in influencing its outcome. Hence, part of the contribution made by *Pivotal Deterrence* is in showing that in some situations a state is likely to have a clear interest in this type of deterrence and that efforts at pivotal deterrence can in fact succeed. The United States, for example, has sought to deter conflicts between Greece and Turkey, India and Pakistan, and China and Taiwan. Having a label to attach to such efforts will make it easier for policymakers to think of it as an option in their toolkit. It also creates a category of similar cases, which analysts can then compare to develop a general understanding of pivotal deterrence.

Crawford explains the logic of pivotal deterrence clearly and persuasively. For pivotal deterrence to be feasible, the pivot state must have enough power to affect the outcome of a military conflict between the two other parties, and those two parties must fear each other more than they fear the pivot so that each would be willing to cooperate with the pivot. The pivot can then exert leverage by threatening to alter its alignment. The pivot’s reliance on threats is what makes this strategy a form of deterrence and distinguishes it from other conflict-prevention tools, such as mediation. In practice, two different threats might be employed. If one of the states in a potential conflict (State A) wants the pivot’s active support before starting a war, the pivot’s threat to stay neutral can dissuade State A from using force. But if State A is willing to go to war in the expectation that the pivot will remain neutral, deterrence requires the pivot to threaten to back State B. The tricky aspect of pivotal deterrence is that the
pivot must give one or the other of these deterrent threats to both parties while ensuring that the signal to one party does not undermine the message being given to the other.

Crawford argues that making both messages credible requires ambiguity. Pivotal deterrence works if the pivot creates sufficient uncertainty in the minds of both State A and State B about what the pivot will actually do if one of them starts a war. This again challenges conventional wisdom, which suggests that clarity of commitments is a key to deterrence success. *Pivotal Deterrence* emphasizes instead that sometimes strategic ambiguity is preferable to a clear, firm commitment. Determining the conditions under which clarity or ambiguity is better will require further research, but Crawford is right to see this as still an open question.

The book contains four detailed case studies—two that are deemed successes and two that are deemed failures. Crawford convincingly demonstrates that pivotal deterrence worked in the two successes: Bismarck’s efforts to prevent war between Austria and Russia in the 1870s, and U.S. efforts to prevent war between Greece and Turkey as a result of crises over Cyprus in the 1960s. The most interesting case study, however, is one of the failures: Britain’s efforts to keep France and Germany from going to war in 1914. Sir Edward Grey has been widely criticized for not making a firmer deterrent commitment to aid France. Crawford, however, interprets Grey’s ambiguity as an effort at pivotal deterrence, and he shows that Grey’s actions did have some restraining influence on France and Germany in the final days of the July crisis, albeit not enough to overcome the other forces working to produce World War I.

Because pivotal deterrence can either succeed or fail, Crawford seeks to specify the conditions that favor one or the other outcome. He contends that alignment options are the key. When one or both of the parties in conflict can identify plausible, useful allies other than the pivot, pivotal deterrence is likely to fail. To have deterrent leverage, the pivot must be the only game in town. The importance of the pivot and other potential allies, Crawford notes, raises doubts about many dyadic theories of war, which do not take into account how the anticipated reactions of third parties influence decisions about whether to go to war. The case studies reveal that pivotal deterrence can also be counterproductive at times because it encourages a “blame game” in which each side tries to maneuver the other side into escalating. State A does so in the hope that the pivot will blame State B for the war and will refrain from supporting State B.

In the final two chapters, Crawford discusses how unipolarity creates many situations in which the United States, as the dominant power in the world, may wish to attempt pivotal deterrence. Yet here he turns strangely reticent, emphasizing that “preponderance is no panacea” (p. 214) and that pivotal deterrence might still fail. Because Crawford’s theory is so structural—pivotal deterrence succeeds or fails based entirely on the distribution of power and availability of potential allies—the book ultimately has much less policy relevance than it could have. Manipulating the alignment options available to other states is difficult in the short run. In urgent situations requiring deterrence—as a crisis threatens to escalate to war—the theory provides no advice to policymakers about how to practice pivotal deterrence if the underlying conditions...
are not already favorable. Follow-up research on steps that leaders could take in the short run to bolster pivotal deterrence would thus be especially useful. However, this does not detract from the significant contributions Crawford makes in this study. *Pivotal Deterrence* is a must read for anyone seriously interested in questions of strategy and statecraft.


Reviewed by Patrick Glynn

Those of us who lived through the fierce anti-nuclear debates of the 1980s—whether as proponents or opponents of the anti-nuclear position—cannot but have vivid memories of that turbulent era. Doubtless some remember those years as a period tinged with fear. I certainly recall the evening in November 1983 when the ABC network treated us all to a made-for-television movie, *The Day After*, depicting the town of Lawrence, Kansas, being obliterated in a nuclear war. The film left even Ronald Reagan feeling depressed, as he recalled in his memoir. Yet by and large the debate over nuclear weapons in the 1980s was marked by a high-mindedness and seriousness of moral purpose—I would argue on both sides—that is rare in democratic dialogue. (The debate certainly compares favorably with the kinds of issues that dominated public debate during the final years of the Clinton presidency.) Although it may seem strange to say so, the challenge of nuclear weapons—the dilemmas of disarmament and deterrence—in many ways brought the best out of American democracy in that era.

The value of Lawrence S. Wittner’s *Toward Nuclear Abolition*—the third and final volume in his history of the nuclear disarmament movement—is to capture and preserve some of the spirit of that time. Reading Wittner’s account, one is almost astonished at the true scope of the 1980s anti-nuclear movement, which spanned the globe. Western Europe, Asia, North America, Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union itself—almost no country, it seems, was untouched by the welling up of popular protest against the specter of nuclear annihilation. Wittner writes as a partisan of the movement, and probably no one but a partisan would have had the patience to chronicle such a sprawling international phenomenon in such detail. Wittner draws on memoirs, archival records, and, perhaps most valuably, personal interviews with activists and government officials of the era.

In most accounts, the anti-nuclear movement forms a mere backdrop to superpower diplomacy. Here Wittner brings the tragic chorus to center stage. However, the risk of such an approach is that it introduces a measure of distortion into the historical drama. In Wittner’s account, the anti-nuclear movement becomes the main historical actor in the period—not to say its hero. For Wittner, it was not Reagan or the United
States but quite literally the anti-nuclear movement that was the true victor in the Cold War. In his analysis, the movement caused hawkish leaders, especially Reagan, to abandon arms race policies, thus averting nuclear annihilation. Wittner’s goal is to refute the “triumphalist” view of conservatives, who attribute the Cold War victory to Reagan’s arms buildup and the Strategic Defense Initiative.

To be sure, the end of the Cold War has by now become a kind of political Rorschach test. Everybody reads into it his or her own pet theory of international affairs. Conservatives cite Reagan’s hawkish policies; liberals discount them; Wittner credits the anti-nuclearists. Yet after the memoirs and discussions and opening of archives, a measure of mystery remains, and probably always will remain, about how and why this strange sequence of events unfolded.

Nonetheless, I find myself compelled both to quibble and to quarrel with Wittner’s more categorical conclusions. My quibble: Wittner lays too much emphasis on the street protests. The protests were important, but the larger problem confronting Reagan was an establishment (read: liberal Democratic) consensus that saw arms concessions to the Soviet Union as the only path to peace—a consensus often embraced by the media. As speechwriter and media adviser for Reagan’s arms-control director in the mid-1980s, I worried less about the protesters than about the arms-control reporters for The New York Times and The Washington Post.

As for my quarrel: Although we probably lack the definitive evidence to clinch anybody’s all-purpose explanation for the end of the Cold War, Wittner fails to do justice to one key piece of available evidence; namely, Reagan’s explanation for what occurred. Wittner writes: “Although, in his memoirs, Reagan claimed that on entering the White House, he was deeply uneasy about the nuclear arms race and even began to dream of a ‘world free of nuclear weapons,’ there is no evidence to sustain this contention” (p. 119). No evidence? Only a few pages earlier, Wittner himself quotes Reagan’s anti-nuclear remarks from the 1976 address to the Republican National Convention. In recent years, biographers and historians have amply documented Reagan’s sincere and radical anti-nuclear views—once regarded as a kind of “family secret” when I served in his administration. Martin Anderson makes clear, in his compilations of Reagan’s radio addresses, that Reagan’s feelings had crystallized by the late 1970s.

All this poses a real problem for Wittner’s case. Wittner depicts Reagan as a super-hawk bending to the will of street protesters. Reagan insists, with the weight of evidence behind him, that negotiations were in his plan all along (he actually hand-penned an earnest personal note to Leonid Brezhnev as early as 1981). But he, like Dean Acheson, also believed in negotiating from strength. When Reagan put out strong feelers to the Soviet Union in early 1984, National Security Adviser Robert MacFarlane told Soviet Ambassador Anatolii Dobrynin that the president was now finally confident that he would be negotiating from a position of strength. Indeed, the U.S. defense budget had grown by nearly 50 percent over the previous four years. Reagan sought to avoid the errors of his predecessor, Jimmy Carter, who projected an air of weakness as he sought to accommodate the Soviet Union, only to be rewarded with the invasion of Afghanistan. While the Left and the Right dealt in either/or catego-
eries—either arms control or a buildup, either anti-Communism or peace—Reagan believed in both anti-nuclear and anti-Communist goals, both negotiating from strength and sincerely working for a change in relations and in the very nature of the Soviet state. Until we begin to recognize that Reagan, in his way, was as unorthodox and original a “conservative” as Mikhail Gorbachev was an unorthodox and original Communist, satisfying explanations for the end of the Cold War are likely to elude us.


Reviewed by Mark M. Lowenthal, Columbia University

John Prados’s biography of William Colby is aptly titled. Colby comes across, especially in the years before he became the director of central intelligence (DCI), as a crusader or, perhaps more aptly, a true believer. Colby, in Prados’s view, not only believed deeply in the causes for which he fought in both World War II (when he worked for the Office of Strategic Services) and the Cold War, but also believed that, whatever the odds or the setbacks, he could set things right by determination and hard work. At times, Colby seems more a Boy Scout than a crusader.

For those interested in the annals of the Cold War and especially the Vietnam War, Prados’s book will be useful. Colby became involved in Vietnam early on and remained so through almost the whole of the American involvement in the conflict, at increasingly senior levels. Here, more than anywhere else, Colby’s belief in his own ability to succeed is most pronounced, although he was not alone in his views about Southeast Asia. The shortcoming of the book is that it is overly detailed, especially regarding Vietnam, to the point of sometimes reading like a quotidian retelling of the war. No new character can be introduced without a full biography; no reference to even tangential issues can be made without a long digression about their complete history. Some judicious editing would have produced a sharper volume without losing the main thrust.

Few of the eighteen men who have been DCI have left that office without some controversy attached to their tenure. Colby’s two-and-a-half years in the job were stormier than most. For Colby, however, the controversies preceded his becoming DCI, starting perhaps with the Phoenix program in Vietnam. Phoenix was widely viewed as an assassination program aimed at eliminating the Viet Cong infrastructure. Colby insisted it was largely a pacification program, a point that Prados finds difficult to support.

Colby became DCI in 1973 because of the politics of Watergate, which shifted Defense Secretary Elliott Richardson to attorney general and DCI James Schlesinger...
to defense secretary after only six months as DCI. Most of Colby’s tenure was taken up with revelations of the “Family Jewels,” instances in which the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had exceeded or violated its legal charter, and the ensuing investigations, primarily those of the Church and Pike committees in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. Colby came to believe that the only way the intelligence community—and especially the CIA—could survive this political firestorm was to come clean and cooperate with the investigations. Many of his colleagues in the CIA and certainly his political masters in the Ford administration disagreed. Vice President Nelson Rockefeller and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger both chided Colby for his approach, which remains controversial to this day. Prados is successful in capturing the pressures Colby faced, although Prados probably overstates Colby’s goals. Prados believes that Colby had a vision of a more open CIA. In reality, there is little to suggest that Colby’s decisions went beyond a desire to save the institutions to which he had devoted his entire postwar career and that he sought a new legal basis for U.S. intelligence that would garner it more public support.

Two other major controversies of Colby’s tenure come across a little less successfully, largely because these chapters tend to be highly bureaucratic in nature. One is Colby’s difficult relationship with James Angleton, the CIA’s long-time head of counterintelligence. Colby and Angleton had clashed with one another for years, and Colby had sought Angleton’s removal when Schlesinger was DCI and Colby was the CIA’s executive director. Angleton survived until Colby became DCI. Colby fired him just after the first revelations of the CIA’s activities appeared in The New York Times in December 1974. CIA veterans remained strongly divided between Colby and Angleton adherents. As would be expected, Prados sides with Colby. But what Prados misses in the retelling of Angleton’s firing is that the timing, whether coincidental or not, appeared to some to make Angleton the scapegoat for most of the wrongdoings uncovered by journalists and Congress. This, as much as the firing itself, became a major source of controversy.

The other major controversy was the handling of Richard Helms’s testimony before a Senate committee that held hearings on the CIA’s efforts to destabilize the government of Salvador Allende in Chile. Helms, for a variety of reasons, did not answer a question in open session with complete honesty and was later prosecuted and convicted for giving false testimony to Congress. Colby’s decision to provide some of the information about Helms’s testimony to the Justice Department caused further antagonism with a number of CIA veterans. Prados again sees this as part of Colby’s desire for a more open CIA, but in fact Colby’s action comes across more as a man caught in a legal and bureaucratic web. Prados did not have the advantage of being able to use Richard Helms’s memoirs, A Look over My Shoulder: A Life in the Central Intelligence Agency (New York: Random House, 2003), which came out after Lost Crusader was completed. Readers are advised to look at both books before coming to conclusions about these issues or about Colby’s career.

Lost Crusader ends on an odd note, arguing that there was little raison d’être for the CIA in the period from the end of the Cold War until the terrorist attacks of September 2001. Prados contends that the intelligence agencies still lack public support
or a sense of legitimacy because Colby never finished his last crusade. Current controversies notwithstanding, there is not much evidence to support this last point.

Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones’s thesis in *Cloak and Dollar* may be simply stated: the confidence man (or con man) is a “pervasive character” in all aspects of American life—political, social, literary, and economic. The ethos of this unscrupulous character, he argues, has been central to the working of U.S. intelligence. Much of Jeffreys-Jones’s thesis hinges on his argument that Allen Pinkerton, Abraham Lincoln’s intelligence adviser for the first two years of the American Civil War, has had an enduring influence on U.S. intelligence. The strain of defending this idiosyncratic and historically unfounded view unfortunately leads to circular arguments, anachronisms, and tautologies. It is curious to read a history of U.S. intelligence in which Pinkerton has more index citations than William Donovan, J. Edgar Hoover, or every DCI except Allen Dulles.

Mercifully, readers interested in the Cold War can skip the first half of *Cloak and Dollar*, which largely rests on the elevation of minor persons and actions to provide some continuity to Jeffreys-Jones’s thesis for the years from 1776 to 1940—Jeffreys-Jones is so eager to show continuity where none exists that he has little choice. The chapters on the Cold War, for which the requisite material is more abundant, are actually somewhat better written and less strident, although the “con man” thesis remains a problem. Contrary to what Jeffreys-Jones implies, Colby’s motive in compiling the “Family Jewels” report was not that he had a guilty conscience (p. 212). He did it because DCI Schlesinger ordered him to.

Sloppy editing and numerous factual errors, both major and minor, mar *Cloak and Dagger*. The House Intelligence Committee was created in 1977, not 1976; Robert McNamara’s middle initial is S (for Strange), not M; Krushchev (sic) is misspelled several times on pp. 194–195 and in the index; the military historian Walter Millis is erroneously cited as the source of a quotation (p. 278) that was actually uttered by John Millis, who was the House committee’s staff director, not its chairman.

In the end, *Cloak and Dagger* has little to recommend it for anyone with a genuine interest in U.S. intelligence, whether in the Cold War or for other periods.


Review by James F. Siekmeier, Office of the Historian, U.S. Department of State

Robert O. Kirkland’s book, *Observing Our Hermanos de Armas*, provides an excellent history of U.S. military attachés posted to Latin America at the height of the Cold War. Although Kirkland primarily focuses on Guatemala, Cuba, and Bolivia, he also offers a comprehensive overview of the history, training, and duties of military attachés. His analysis is especially important given the dearth of literature on the topic.
Kirkland cogently and succinctly outlines the history of military attachés during three of the most important episodes of U.S. responses to revolution in Latin America. Previously, most histories of U.S.–Latin American relations have simply omitted the attachés. In contrast, Kirkland highlights the role of the military attaché in the policy process.

Important as Kirkland’s book is in providing a corrective to the historical record, he might have included additional information to round out what is otherwise a good presentation. For instance, he could have better explained the attachés’ relationships with the intelligence community. On p. 72, he tells the reader that the attachés were not supposed to “gather intelligence,” but in the first chapters of the book he makes clear that the attachés were charged with gathering a variety of types of information, some of which could fall into the area of intelligence. Perhaps the bilateral military assistance agreements circumscribed the activities of the attachés—but this needs to be clearly put before the reader. One way of better situating the attachés in the intelligence community would be for Kirkland to describe how other policymakers perceived the attachés.

More broadly, Kirkland could have situated the role of the attachés into a wider policy context. For instance, one wonders how Dwight Eisenhower’s “New Look” changed the role of the U.S. military overseas and the job of the attachés in particular. More significantly, the book contains little about the impact of major changes in U.S.–Latin American relations on the role of the attachés. Scholars have already noted the implications of such changes to U.S. foreign policy. For example, Bryce Wood demonstrated in his *The Dismantling of the Good Neighbor Policy* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985) that the new U.S. interventionist thrust in the early Cold War period, driven by fears of Communist expansion, caused U.S. leaders to dismantle the Good Neighbor policy, the mainstay of U.S. relations with Latin America for a generation. How did this dramatic shift change the role of the attachés? In a more recent work, *Beneath the United States: A History of U.S. Policy toward Latin America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), Lars Schoultz perceptively outlined two conflicting strains in U.S. policy toward Latin America during the early Cold War—“Attacking Dictatorships” and “Combating Communism with Friendly Dictators.” It would have been useful to situate the attachés—and the U.S. military’s role in Latin America—within this broader framework.

Despite these minor shortcomings, Kirkland’s book is an important contribution to the history of U.S.–Latin American relations. By clearly explaining the attachés’ role, Kirkland sheds valuable light on a critical yet often overlooked part of the intelligence and policymaking process. His book will be of particular interest to graduate students seeking to understand the rich complexity of U.S. policy toward Latin America.

**Disclaimer**

The views expressed here are the reviewer’s own and do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Department of State.

Reviewed by Norman Polmar, U.S. Naval Institute

U.S. and Soviet submarines had important roles during the forty-five years of the Cold War. *Rising Tide*, written by a U.S. Navy Department historian, Gary E. Weir, and a well-known aviation writer, Walter J. Boyne, claims that “the bulk of what emerges from this book either appears here in public for the very first time or corrects mistakes or partial accounts appearing in other, earlier works that could not benefit from the access *Rising Tide* had to the men who actually carried out these deeds.” (p. xiii) Unfortunately, the work under review does not fulfill that claim.

The most useful and significant aspect of this book is the interviews with several former Soviet submarine commanders, conducted in Moscow by Weir. These are the men who commanded Soviet undersea craft in their encounters with U.S. submarines, who stood ready to launch ballistic missiles against American cities, and who confronted U.S. warships during the Cuban missile crisis—apparently with nuclear-armed torpedoes on board.

The interviews, however, raise the question of whether the authors of such a book owe it to readers to qualify or correct erroneous statements, either in the text or in footnotes. For example, the authors cite Vladimir Borisov, of the nuclear submarine K-181, telling how he sighted the U.S. cruiser *Cleveland* on a 1966 patrol and how his submarine bypassed the Azores, “avoiding U.S. territorial waters” (p. 117). The cruiser *Cleveland* was retired in 1947 (and the last of its sister ships in 1956), and the Azores are thousands of miles from the nearest U.S. territorial waters.

Beyond the interviews, the book contains little that is new. Indeed, the authors rely almost entirely on secondary sources, mostly books and articles written by Americans. This is particularly disappointing in view of the vast number of official records and official and unofficial publications that have become available in both Russia and the United States since the demise of the Soviet Union fifteen years ago, and in view of the ready availability of Cold War participants beyond the handful of Soviet submarine commanders who were interviewed.

Even more frustrating are the factual errors that permeate the book. Some are of major significance. For example, the authors contend that in June 1962 Raúl Castro—Fidel’s brother who was then (and still is) the Cuban defense minister and senior vice president—suggested that the Soviet Union move missiles into Cuba to deter further U.S. invasion attempts (p. 81). This is incorrect. The origins of that proposal—the cause of the Cuban missile crisis—have been well documented by Soviet participants, including Nikita Khrushchev himself in *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament*, trans. by Strobe Talbott (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974) and his son Sergei in *Nikita Khrushchev and the Creation of a Superpower*, trans. by Shirley Benson (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000). Key documents in the Russian Presidential Archive pertaining to the decision were quoted and discussed nearly a decade ago by Aleksandr Fursenko, a well-connected Russian historian who was given...

Technical errors are found on almost every page of Rising Tide. The reader is told that:

- the giant Soviet T-15 nuclear torpedo weighed 400 tons (p. 35); the actual weight was 40 tons;
- the U.S. nuclear submarine Nautilus had four backup diesel engines (p. 62); it in fact had only one;
- the USS Nautilus got under way on nuclear power on 17 January 1954 and was launched four days later (p. 63); it actually got under way for the first time on 17 January 1955;
- the Soviet Union built six Hotel-class ballistic missile submarines (p. 64); actually, eight were built;
- reactor problems were so great with the early Soviet nuclear submarines (HEN series) that all were retired by 1989 (i.e., thirty-one years after the first entered service) (p. 65); the last of the first-generation U.S. nuclear submarines were also retired in 1989—thirty-four years after the Nautilus was completed—reflecting a generally similar retirement policy for the two navies); and
- the submarine Leninskii Komsomol experienced a minor accident in 1960 (p. 67); the submarine was not in fact given that name until 1962.

Similarly, details of Soviet submarines—now provided in open Russian publications—are badly flawed. The reader is told several times that the advanced Alfa-class submarine is a “deep diver,” capable of operating at 2,460 feet (p. 130) and nearly 3,000 feet (p. 136). The submarine’s actual operating (test) depth was 1,300 feet. Similarly, we are told several times that the Mike-class submarine entered serial production (p. 139), whereas in fact only one such submarine—the ill-fated Komsomolets—was ever built.

Even the simple appendix of basic characteristics of U.S. and Soviet submarines provides incorrect “introduced into service” dates for the Soviet Whiskey, Juliett, Zulu, Golf, Delta II, Delta III, Delta IV, and Typhoon; and the U.S. Nautilus, Skipjack, Ethan Allen, and Lafayette. Numerous other errors arise in this appendix. Submarines in the largest Soviet submarine class, the Typhoon, do not displace an estimated 30,000 tons; they displace roughly 48,000 tons—a 40 percent error. Similarly, in describing the largest U.S. submarine class—the Ohio—the appendix cites “10+” as having been built. In reality, the eighteenth (and final) submarine of this class was completed in 1997, six years before publication of this book. The list of mistakes could go on and on.

In summary, other than the interviews with a half-dozen Soviet submarine officers—interviews that should be read with care—this volume cannot be recommended to either the casual or the professional reader.

Reviewed by Mitchell Lerner, Ohio State University

In December 1968, eighty-two American sailors from the USS *Pueblo* returned to the United States after almost a year of brutal captivity in North Korean prison camps. The men, who had been captured by the North Korean navy while conducting an intelligence collection mission in the Sea of Japan, were quickly flown to San Diego for debriefing. During the debriefing, Seaman Stu Russell relayed a message his captors had given him the night before his release. “The Sea of Japan is the Sea of Korea,” they told him. Any American ships or planes entering would be destroyed. When Russell repeated the warning to the intelligence officers who interviewed him, they laughingly dismissed the threat. Three months later, North Korea shot down an EC-121 reconnaissance plane that had been conducting missions over the Sea of Japan, with thirty-one Americans on board. The similarities were eerie: Both the ship and the plane had been nearly defenseless; both reported to the Naval Security Group in Kamiseya, Japan; both suffered from serious communications problems; and both lacked the protection of any support forces. There was one major difference, however—the EC-121 left no survivors.

These two events form the basis for Richard A. Mobley’s new book, *Flash Point North Korea*. Mobley does not aspire to provide a comprehensive account of either crisis; instead, he focuses on the military and intelligence aspects of the two attacks in order to draw some general conclusions about the intelligence-gathering operations as a whole, as well as some specific lessons regarding the conduct of them against North Korea. The result is a book that is both thoughtful and interesting, although Mobley is more successful with his first goal than with his second.

Mobley is a retired U.S. Navy commander, and his book, not surprisingly, is strongest in its military analysis, especially with regard to the Pueblo seizure. *Flashpoint* leaves no stone unturned in examining both the military’s response to the crisis and the interaction between the military, intelligence, and political communities throughout the year-long incident. Of particular interest is his detailed study of how military leaders sorted through various policy options until finally choosing a largely diplomatic path. Mobley also does a good job of integrating the demands of the Vietnam War into the story and of providing an extensive glimpse into the risk-assessment processes for both missions. His criticism of those who oversaw the assessments, largely for failing to consider North Korea an independent country with its own imperatives and values and instead evaluating them from within the perspective of Western standards of behavior, is both well-supported and consistent with the emerging scholarship in the field.

Nonetheless, Mobley’s account, despite its thoroughness, has some weaknesses. Although he offers some criticisms of the military, his overall assessment of its perfor-
formance is far too generous. He fails, for example, to examine the ship’s conversion from a dilapidated cargo carrier into an intelligence collector, a task in which the Navy leadership failed miserably. Among other things, the ship’s steering engine, internal communications network, and electrical system consistently failed, yet authorities refused to act on the captain’s many pleas for repairs. Board of Inspection and Survey tests done three months before the *Pueblo*’s departure noted 462 deficiencies, most of which still existed when the ship finally left port. Mobley’s focus on the military dimension also detracts from the whole of the story. His description of the diplomacy of the events is particularly skimpy, and he pays almost no attention to the domestic response inside the United States. The book is also much stronger on the *Pueblo* than on the EC-121 incident, which is covered in no more than sixty pages. Although these problems are not fatal, they render the book much more suitable for readers who are already familiar with the two crises. Anyone searching for a complete picture of either of these events would do best to look elsewhere.

Mobley also is not particularly successful when he attempts to draw lessons specific to U.S. operations against North Korea. His frequently stated conclusion is that North Korea is unpredictable and thus a difficult target for such intelligence missions. “Most of all,” he writes in the book’s final passage, “the two incidents confirm the continuing challenge posed in analyzing and deterring North Korea. The nation remains a complex and obscure entity. It will almost certainly continue to provide foreign policy surprises for the United States and the Republic of Korea” (p. 167). Few would dispute such findings, but they contribute little to a larger understanding of U.S. policy regarding North Korea. A few paragraphs at the end of the EC-121 analysis hint that a desire for domestic propaganda may have been Kim Il Sung’s motivation, but Mobley does not pursue this promising line of inquiry. Instead, he concludes that the reasons for North Korean behavior were “a mystery” (p. 116). So it is throughout the book, as Mobley seems content merely to dismiss North Korea as unpredictable and hence incomprehensible rather than try to understand the forces that underlay Pyongyang’s behavior. Newly available documents from the archives of former Communist-bloc states obtained by the Cold War International History Project have finally opened a window into North Korean policymaking that allows us to gain a better sense of the motivations for North Korea’s actions in the international arena. Mobley’s failure to integrate this material, or to dig more deeply into North Korean policymaking in any way, reduces the value of the book to anyone interested in the larger Cold War framework surrounding these crises.

These quibbles, however, are more about what the book could have been than about what it is. What Mobley has done, he has done very well. His book is thoroughly documented, well written, and convincingly argued; it is notable both for its depth of analysis and for the resonance it has for contemporary events. As a work of military history, *Flashpoint North Korea* will no doubt stand for many years as the best study of these two significant Cold War crises.

Reviewed by Dan Caldwell, Pepperdine University

More books have been written about Henry Kissinger than about any other figure in American foreign policy aside from a handful of U.S. presidents. Scholars and journalists who have written about Kissinger have focused on five principal topics: his biography, character and personality; his academic writings; the substantive policies that he helped develop and implement; his decision-making process; and the morality of his actions. In the first major analysis of Kissinger to be published in over a decade, Jussi Hahnimäki, currently a professor of international history and politics at the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva, addresses each of these topics. This broad coverage is both the major strength and the major weakness of Hahnimäki’s ambitious book.

Of the twenty-one chapters in the book, eighteen deal with the eight years in which Kissinger served as national security adviser and secretary of state. An early chapter briefly recounts Kissinger’s youth and academic career; the penultimate chapter focuses on the controversy he faced after leaving the government; and the concluding chapter is an overall assessment. Readers interested in the biography and personality of Kissinger should consult other books such as Walter Isaacson’s *Kissinger: A Biography* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992). But readers who want to understand the process and substance of the policies that Kissinger helped to develop while serving in government will find Hanhimäki’s book a very good source. Hanhimäki has drawn extensively on materials that have become available in the past decade, including declassified telephone conversations and archival documents.

As the title of the book indicates, Hanhimäki believes that Kissinger was the “architect” of American foreign policy in the 1969–1976 period. Is this really the correct metaphor? When edifices are constructed, three main parties are usually involved: the owner, the architect, and the contractor. Historians have debated the roles that were played by President Richard Nixon, Kissinger and, importantly, the American public. Hanhimäki portrays Kissinger as the “architect” or ultimate designer, whereas others contend that Nixon himself was the architect and Kissinger was the contractor, that is, the chief implementer of Nixon’s grand design and grand strategy. Both Nixon and Kissinger seemed to forget that the American public was the “owner” of U.S. foreign policy—a disregard that ultimately contributed to the failure of the Nixon-Kissinger policies. This is ironic because the historical figures whom Kissinger had studied most closely—Lord Castelreagh, Klemens von Metternich and Otto von Bismarck—made similar mistakes.

It is often forgotten, even by leaders of the world’s most powerful country, that there are two constituencies of American foreign policy—members of the public and foreign leaders. When Nixon and Kissinger entered office, the leaders of foreign governments, even those hostile to the United States such as Leonid Brezhnev and Mao
Zedong, were pleased that American foreign policy would be guided by its national interests rather than morality and ideology. The American public, however, became concerned about this amoral (as opposed to what Hanhimäki characterizes as an “immoral realpolitik”) approach. This discontent enabled a previously unknown Southern governor, Jimmy Carter, to base his presidential campaign in 1976 on morality and human rights.

Hanhimäki makes a number of strong points about Kissinger’s policies. For example, in many of the early articles and books about the Nixon-Kissinger approach to international relations, analysts contended that Nixon and Kissinger were attempting to implement a five-country balance of power in the international system. More recent analysts, including Hanhimäki, correctly note that the structure of the Nixon-Kissinger grand design was in fact tripolar rather than pentagonal, involving the United States, the Soviet Union, and the People’s Republic of China. Hanhimäki’s analysis of Sino-American relations is particularly detailed and comprehensive and incorporates much newly available information from recently declassified sources.

Hanhimäki’s analysis, however, does contain some shortcomings. He rightly describes Kissinger as one of the most influential realists in the annals of American academic life and foreign policymaking, but he does not adequately note the dramatic change in Kissinger’s outlook following the Arab-Israeli War of October 1973. During this conflict, the Arab members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries embargoed oil shipments to states that supported Israel—one of the first and most effective uses of the “oil weapon.” In almost every public speech or interview that Kissinger gave after the oil embargo, he mentioned the reality of “international interdependence”; the archetypal realist had moderated his views.

There are some other minor annoyances in The Flawed Architect. Throughout the book, Hanhimäki refers to Kissinger as “Super K,” something that detracts from the seriousness of the analysis. In addition, Hanhimäki repeatedly refers to Nelson Rockefeller as “Rocky,” again detracting from the book’s otherwise solid, academic approach. Other small and inconsequential details are presented; for example, on p. 280 the reader learns that Brezhnev kissed Kissinger only once. Who cares?

In the penultimate chapter, Hanhimäki presents and evaluates the charge leveled by Seymour Hersh and Christopher Hitchens that Kissinger is a war criminal. Hanhimäki concludes that Kissinger’s actions in Cambodia, Chile, and East Timor “do not make him a war criminal” (p. 492) and that if Kissinger is guilty of war crimes, so are many other American policymakers.

The Flawed Architect is a valuable addition to the literature on Kissinger’s thinking and actions while in government. It is also a valuable source for those interested in Kissinger’s post-government career and the criticisms of him.

Reviewed by Johanna Bockman, George Mason University

In *Mandarins of the Future*, Nils Gilman examines the rise and fall of modernization theory in Cold War America. After World War II, new government resources, increasing East-West tensions, and widespread decolonization prompted social scientists to develop plans for the modernization of entire societies to move them along a universal path from “tradition” to “modernity.” The post–Cold War era has witnessed a proliferation of histories of modernization theory and the Cold War social sciences more generally. Gilman makes a welcome contribution with his rich and detailed focus on the scholarly terrain, illuminating the academic ideas, institutional networks, and personalities behind modernization theory.

Gilman’s three case studies—Harvard University’s Department of Social Relations, the Committee on Comparative Politics of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), and the Center for International Studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)—draw the reader into the deeply insular world of the modernization theorists. Not only does Gilman discuss these three institutions as a network, but he also shows the increasingly coercive and conservative nature of modernization theory over time. In the early days, modernization theorists argued that economic development would bring political and social liberation, but they later changed their tune and supported the funding of authoritarian governments and military regimes to enforce stability in the supposedly childlike Third World. Gilman proposes several explanations for the hegemony of modernization theory: that the modernization theorists’ shared assumptions about American society “made [these] scholars believe that they were onto something” (p. 16); that the deep insularity of the group caused them to ignore other, countervailing intellectual trends; and that the status of modernization theory as the dominant paradigm induced its adherents to continue working within this paradigm and to ignore criticisms and anomalies until a paradigm shift occurred in the late 1960s. Although Gilman could have developed these explanations further, they contribute to our understanding of the hegemony of modernization theory.

Gilman’s first case study focuses on the work of Talcott Parsons and the Department of Social Relations (DSR) at Harvard. Reflecting the ideas and concerns of the 1930s and 1940s, Parsons and later the rest of the DSR developed the idea of a “social system,” an approach that reinterpreted Max Weber as an anti-Marxist culturalist, depicted modernization as a benign, homogenizing process of convergence, and emphasized the need for elites to carry out the modernization process. Gilman explains Parsons’s ideas in such a lucid and fascinating way that this in itself is an exciting contribution. The Parsonian categories and assumptions were then applied to the political realm by the SSRC’s Committee on Comparative Politics (CCP), which is Gilman’s second case study. The CCP highlighted the need for an interventionist state, along with a scientific elite, to oversee the modernization process. Although this
scholarly coterie was insular, modernization theory had a profound and sometimes deadly impact on people around the globe because some modernization theorists worked in the Kennedy administration and used their ever-more-authoritarian ideas as rationales and strategies for foreign development aid and military action. This increasingly coercive and conservative influence is seen most clearly in the third case study, which examines the MIT Center for International Studies. After reading about the suffocatingly insular world at the MIT Center, one is relieved to turn to the collapse of modernization theory in the sixth chapter, where Gilman examines the wide-ranging criticisms of modernization theory.

Gilman’s introduction and substantive chapters are all solid, and his “Essay on Sources” is fascinating, but unfortunately his concluding chapter is disappointing. Gilman discusses the return of modernization theory in the 1990s and begins to examine the intriguing continuities between modernization theory, the neoliberal “Washington Consensus” that influenced the East European transitions from socialism, and globalization theory. Yet, the discussion cannot be fully explored because Gilman sets up a strawmanish dichotomy between modernity and “the cultural despair of postmodernism” (p. 273). He includes in the postmodernist camp a mishmash of critics: postmodernists, critics of development programs, the globalization movement, and those who call for any alternative form of knowledge and authority. Dismissing the globalization movement as a form of postmodern cynicism provides little understanding of the movement. Few of those involved are really intent on rolling back modernity. Most of them are merely seeking to reform globalization for social justice and democratic ends, much in the spirit of the Enlightenment. (See, for example, Robin Broad, Global Backlash: Citizen Initiatives for a Just World Economy, Boulder, CO: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002.) At the same time, Gilman’s exploration of the continuities between modernization theory, the Washington Consensus, and globalization theory is greatly welcomed. His detailed examination of academic modernization theory in the 1950s and 1960s, as well as its critics, provokes much thought and many questions about more recent forms of modernization theory in development and democratization programs. The detailed analysis and broad-ranging explorations in Mandarins of the Future will interest scholars and graduate students in a variety of areas, including Cold War history, the history of social science disciplines, social science theory, and studies of the connections between colonialism, modernization, and globalization.


Reviewed by Nils Gilman, Independent Scholar

In April 1999, I visited the University of Texas at Austin to interview Walt W. Rostow, the development economist and former national security adviser to Lyndon B. John-
son who is perhaps best remembered today as a leading architect of the Vietnam War. When the conversation turned to his activities in the three decades since he had left the White House, Rostow informed me that one of his ongoing passions had been working to improve conditions in the East Austin slums. This work, he told me, was “a direct extension” of his activities in the 1950s and 1960s. For some weeks I found myself imagining terrorized African-Americans scurrying to their basements to avoid Rostow’s pinpoint napalm strikes.

Nevertheless, as Jennifer Light’s book From Warfare to Welfare reveals, Rostow’s twin embrace of military theory and domestic urban planning was far from unusual for American intellectuals of his generation. Light shows that urban planners of the 1950s and 1960s borrowed extensively from the techniques and discourse of “defense intellectuals” at universities such as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, think-tanks such as RAND, and private-sector military contractors. Even as the defense industry competed with cities for federal dollars, several factors worked to bring military practices and urban planning together. On the “push” side was the defense industry’s search for new markets. For aerospace firms such as Lockheed and McDonnell Douglas, “city planning and management quickly emerged as targets of opportunity” (p. 3). Light’s story thus illuminates how the military-industrial complex systematically worked to embed itself more deeply into various aspect of the country’s postwar political and economic fabric. On the “pull” side, several aspects of military technology attracted urban planners. First, military computer simulations promised state-of-the-art techniques for a profession long enthralled by modeling. Second, from the early 1950s, military theorists had been busy creating newfangled programs based on “cybernetics,” a theory of communication and control that emphasized the similarities between organic and mechanical systems. A few years later, in the early 1960s, urban theorists and architects adopted cybernetics to conceive urban space in informational terms as a nexus between media space and physical space—a notion that eventually led to the description of urban spaces dense in information networks as “cybercities.” Urban planners seeking a concrete basis for these theories turned to defense intellectuals who were pioneering the practical application of cybernetics.

Light’s narrative highlights the changing nature of the urban “problem” that military specialists were brought in to help fix. The initial applications, in the early 1950s, addressed the external threat of nuclear attack, which was invoked to justify the “defensive dispersal” of populations and industry away from city centers and into the suburbs. By the early 1960s, however (perhaps in part because the hydrogen bomb had rendered defense hopeless), the target of defense intellectuals became “urban blight”—a deliberately sterile term with racial and political implications that Light fails to highlight. Finally, in the late 1960s, as race riots flared across the country, military techniques found favor as a way to combat the “urban crisis.” Increasingly, technocrats viewed the American inner city as analogous to the post-colonial world. Because military approaches to dealing with the Third World had gained favor, this naturally spilled over into urban management. Although Mike Davis’s controversial City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles (New York: Verso, 1990) explored the militarization of urban life in Los Angeles in the 1980s, Light’s book pushes this
story back several decades and shows that a militarized approach, far from being limited to Los Angeles, was also characteristic of planning in New York and smaller cities such as Pittsburgh and Dayton, Ohio.

Other than the recommendation about urban dispersal, however, the book reveals little of the substance of military theorists’ advice to city planners. Although Light claims that these intellectuals “shaped . . . urban management practices . . . at an organizational level” (p. 240), we never learn how the management practices were reshaped, much less that military specialists were the ones who did the reshaping. It is never clear, in other words, what substantive “welfare” programs or practices emerged from the “warfare” techniques and technologies. (Light discusses only one example in depth, the diffusion of cable television, but it does not seem to buttress her argument.) Although Light presents evidence about the intent to import military technologies, she acknowledges that “the effects of these technologies on the average urban dweller’s existence were negligible” (p. 240). The project statements of overpriced, military-trained management consultants, Light admits, may have been used only to offer “additional political backing and a rhetoric of urgency” (p. 18) or “a good public relations tool” (p. 26) to support the preexisting agendas of urban planners and business leaders. Management techniques being pioneered by large corporations likely had greater impact on urban management practices than did military techniques.

Light states that “when it came time to demonstrate not just rationalizations but concrete results,” the new techniques and technologies “did not deliver on [their] promises” (p. 84). Because we never learn the specifics of the defense intellectuals’ policy recommendations, it is difficult to assess why their techniques began to fall out of favor among urban planners in the early 1970s. One possibility is that conceiving of cities in cybernetic terms reinforced the tendency of postwar urban planners to seek out “scientific” solutions to what were, at bottom, political problems. What attracted city-planners to military approaches was precisely the hope of rendering policy the sole province of technocrats, removing “at least some of the politics from the decision-making process” (p. 149) by sidelining popular participation in urban policymaking. As Light puts it, the goal was “to fasten the ideal of technocratic rationality onto the messiness of city management” (p. 156). Even if statistical decision-making models were helpful in hierarchical organizations such as the military or business, these sorts of models made less sense when applied to public institutions. Light is uncritical of her subjects’ “equating technology with democracy” (p. 266) and thus does not show how the technological approach to city planning was itself partly responsible for the ongoing urban crises of the 1960s and 1970s. If market forces motivated the penetration of defense intellectual into the urban planning business, then a failure to deliver the goods caused their sales model to lose favor. The role of these experts in producing a military disaster in Southeast Asia may also have hampered the marketing push.

What emerged in the 1970s in reaction to the failures of these rationalist-modernist urban models was postmodernism. Light argues that the emergence of cybercities is better understood “in the context of military war games at RAND and MIT than in the context of theories of postmodernity from Jean Baudrillard” (p. 8). But this ignores how postmodernism with its anti-rationalism, absurdism, and em-
phasis on “play” was in part a reaction to the failure of hypertrophied rationalism and technology fetishism to address the urban crisis. Whereas Light’s subjects hoped during the 1960s that applying military techniques could overcome “urban blight,” by the 1970s the postmodernists were arguing that the only solution to blight was to tear it down and start over, as famously symbolized by the 1972 demolition of the “blighted” Pruitt-Igoe public housing complex in St. Louis, Missouri. Light has made an important contribution by showing how defense intellectuals contributed to the creation and promotion of cybercities, but the primary legacy of these intellectuals within the urban planning domain is the continued failure to overcome the political problems of urban life.


Reviewed by Tao Peng, Minnesota State University, Mankato

The approach Shu Guang Zhang adopts in Economic Cold War is the same one he used in his Deterrence and Strategic Culture: Chinese-American Confrontations, 1949–1958 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992). In the earlier book he adapted deterrence theory to analyze Sino-American political and military conflicts in the 1950s, whereas in this book he applies embargo theory to trace the Sino-American economic confrontation of the 1950s and early 1960s and its impact on Sino-Soviet relations.

Drawing on rich archival sources and statistics from the United States, the People’s Republic of China (PRC), Russia, and Great Britain, Zhang explores the evolution of the U.S. economic embargo against China and the PRC’s subsequent responses. He argues that although the embargo originally stemmed mainly from Washington’s frustration with the “loss” of China, the United States—the sender country—intensified its embargo in the 1950s and 1960s largely because of China’s military threat and aggression in East Asia, particularly its intervention in the Korean War, its military operations in the Taiwan Strait area, and its continued aid to the North Vietnamese as well as its border conflicts with India. To foil the U.S. embargo, China—the target country—had to seek help from the Soviet “Elder Brother.” As a result, China’s economic recovery and reconstruction depended heavily on Moscow’s economic aid.

In addition to analyzing the bilateral Sino-American confrontation, Zhang examines the “alliance relationship” (p. 267) of each side. He argues that both the U.S. embargo and China’s anti-embargo efforts were disturbed by the two countries’ respective allies and could not be implemented smoothly. U.S. allies such as Great Britain and Japan had major economic interests in China, and they constantly urged the United States to loosen its embargo. China’s alliance with the Soviet Union partly offset the adverse impact of the embargo, but the Sino-Soviet relationship was not always
The large quantity of economic and military aid from the Soviet Union did not mitigate Beijing's dismay and anger when the Soviet Union displayed "haughtiness and rudeness" (p. 235) and a lack of enthusiasm for China's industrialization plans.

The most intriguing part of the book is Zhang's assessment of the effectiveness of U.S. economic sanctions. Although scholars continue to debate whether economic embargoes in general are ever likely to be successful, Zhang draws convincing conclusions in this specific case. On the one hand, he admits that the U.S.-led embargo, despite inflicting considerable damage on China's economy, was unsuccessful in stopping China's military operations or undermining the Chinese Communist regime. The main effect was to arouse greater hostility in Beijing against the United States. Part of the reason the embargo foundered is that the United States was unable to obtain wholehearted cooperation from its allies, especially the ones that were tempted by China's huge market. Because of strong allied opposition and Beijing's vigorous anti-embargo efforts and inducements, the West's collective embargo broke up in the late 1950s. Although the United States persisted with a unilateral embargo, other countries relaxed their controls.

On the other hand, Zhang contends that the "indirect" influence of the embargo (p. 268) was far-reaching. To meet the challenge of the U.S. sanctions, Zhang argues, Beijing was forced to centralize its political system and economy, emulating the Soviet model. He also avers that the embargo contributed to China's radical political and economic campaigns, which plunged the country into disasters. He makes a convincing case that the Great Leap Forward movement was partly inspired by the embargo. The sanctions, he writes, fostered Chinese leaders' determination to "exceed" the British and "overtake" the Americans within a decade and to smash "blind faith" in foreign powers by drastically increasing the output of heavy industry (p. 218).

More important, Zhang demonstrates that the embargo played an important role in the Sino-Soviet split in the early 1960s. Although numerous factors helped to precipitate the collapse of the Beijing-Moscow alliance, Zhang pointedly emphasizes the economic factor. The prolonged U.S. embargo, he argues, led to Beijing's overdependence on Moscow's support and assistance. This reliance on Soviet aid not only caused China's growing discontent with the USSR's heavy-handedness in the alliance relationship but also placed an ever greater burden on the Soviet Union's overtaxed resources. Conflicts gradually replaced cooperation, and the alliance finally collapsed under the strain. In this sense, Washington's "wedge strategy" through the embargo proved successful in the long run.

Perhaps the only slight limitation of the book is Zhang's discussion of the impact of the U.S. embargo in the 1960s. He points out that the continued hostility of the Kennedy administration prompted China to conduct a more radical foreign policy, but he does not explain how the embargo influenced China's domestic policies during this period and later. Actually, the U.S. embargo remained in place after the Kennedy administration until the early 1970s, almost another decade. Also, despite a slump in Sino-Soviet trade, China's trade with other countries, especially Western countries, increased enough by 1965 to lift the country's total trade volume back to its earlier high
point. Under these new circumstances, did the embargo still have much influence on Chinese politics and economy? In particular, did it continue to promote China's radical campaigns as before? Or did the increase in China's total trade volume indicate that Beijing not only had ended its dependence on Moscow but had also surmounted the difficulties caused by the embargo? If Zhang had addressed these questions fully, he could have provided us with a better understanding of the effectiveness of the U.S. embargo and the complexity of the Sino-American confrontation. This omission, however, is only a minor weakness.

*Economic Cold War* not only is Zhang’s best book so far, but is also the most important and comprehensive study of Sino-American economic warfare in the 1950s and 1960s. By combining thoughtful analysis, the extensive use of rich archival materials and data, and clear writing, this volume is an indispensable addition to the literature on postwar Sino-U.S. relations.

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*Reviewed by Milt Bearden, U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (retired)*

If there is room for just one book on Afghanistan in the rucksacks and sea bags of the tens of thousands of Americans who will be rotating through that unruly land over the next decade or so, it should probably be Tom Lansford’s *Bitter Harvest: U.S. Foreign Policy and Afghanistan*. Bigger and better books exist on Afghanistan, but most have dealt with an exotic place long on Kiplingesque history and short on relevance for most Americans.

All that changed in October 2001, when U.S. forces joined a long line of foreign armies venturing into or through one of the most dangerous and contested pieces of real estate on earth. None of these earlier armies had come out the better for it. The United States now owns a growing stake in Afghanistan, and knowing something about the new property is no longer a trivia game; it is essential. Hence, the timeliness and relevance of Lansford’s little book on Afghanistan.

Lansford takes his readers on a journey through the martial history of a country that has figured in all of the great movements of armies, ideas, and trade between China, India, Persia, and the lands north of the Oxus River, from Alexander the Great’s dangerous traverse of the region in 327 B.C. to Operation Enduring Freedom in 2001. He walks the reader through the British catastrophes of the nineteenth-century Great Game, when Imperial Russia and other great powers struggled for domination of Central Asia. In the process, Lansford explains in eminently readable form why foreign armies have always fared so poorly when venturing into the tortured geography between the Oxus and the Indus. The British lost an army on the road from Kabul to Jalalabad in the nineteenth century; the Soviet Union lost an empire along
those same roads a century-and-a-half later. Americans, Lansford points out, need to be aware of this historical context.

In dealing with the decade of U.S. support for the Afghan resistance to the Soviet occupation from 1979 to 1989, Lansford avoids recycling the trendy but shallow assessment that all the terror in our dangerous world is “blowback” from earlier, misguided American policy adventures in Afghanistan. He does, however, quite correctly characterize U.S. policy toward Afghanistan since World War II as having been reactive and easily distracted. Indeed, if there was a serious policy failure connected with U.S. support for the Afghan resistance during the Soviet occupation, it was that the United States lost interest in Afghanistan after the Soviet Union pulled out, leaving the country to its own devices. That observation drives home the fact that during foreign invasions of Afghanistan over the millennia—the Great Game or the Soviet occupation or Operation Enduring Freedom—the Afghans themselves were always secondary to the interventions. Lansford warns dryly that this time around the United States “must not only stay in Afghanistan, but it must deepen its presence” (p. 185).

Lansford treats the question of Pakistan’s national interests in Afghanistan with the eye of the historian and political analyst, explaining the complex relationship between Pakistan’s view of its own national security imperatives and the historical tensions that have been a constant in eastern Afghanistan and Pakistan’s western provinces ever since roughly 25 million Pashtuns were decreed by colonial British surveyors to live on one side or the other of an artificial national boundary drawn at the end of the nineteenth century. Although many contemporary writers treat Pakistan as a meddlesome interloper in Afghan affairs, Lansford highlights the complexities of the so-called Pushtunistan problem that has always been the driver of Pakistan’s policy toward Afghanistan.

Lansford’s discussion of the ethnic divides of Afghanistan, and their relevance to earlier foreign adventures and disasters, is concise and instructive. Without preaching, Lansford points out the ethnic traps that always seem to lure foreign armies onto the shoals. He leaves open the question of whether the United States will succeed in its own tricky ethnic game—toppling the Pashtun Taliban with the Tajik Northern Alliance and then putting a Pashtun, Hamid Karzai, in charge of Kabul in an uneasy alliance with a handful of Tajiks from the Panjshir Valley.

Much has happened in Afghanistan since Bitter Harvest was published two years after the U.S. military intervention, very little of it good. The ethnic card, as played by the United States, now seems to be at risk of settling into a replay of the errors of the past. Foremost among those has always been the attempt to place an unpopular emir on the Afghan throne, whether it was the British installing Shah Shuja a century-and-a-half ago, or the Soviet Union elevating Babrak Karmal some twenty-five years ago. In the case of America’s turn in Afghanistan, it is not the Pashtun Hamid Karzai who may be viewed as the “unpopular emir” but the Tajik Mohammed Fahim, who served as defense minister in Karzai’s government until October 2004 and earlier led the Northern Alliance. Despite now being out of the government, Fahim remains a constant thorn in the side of the majority Pashtuns.
A Bitter Harvest should not only be tucked into the sea bags and rucksacks of Americans setting off on their uncertain missions in a troubled Afghanistan; it should also be on the shelves of those who send them there, serving as a reminder of the single constant of all foreign interventions in Afghanistan—it is always easy going in, but never going out.

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Reviewed by John Earl Haynes, Library of Congress

Elizabeth Bentley’s decision to visit the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in the fall of 1945 and recount her several years as liaison between Soviet intelligence agencies and scores of sources within the U.S. government ignited an internal security firestorm. Until her defection, the FBI had relegated Soviet spying to the back burner and had devoted most of its attention to the more pressing business of German and Japanese espionage. Although the FBI had concluded that Soviet espionage was under way, the bureau’s understanding of the nature of these operations was limited, and it lacked sources within any of the major Soviet espionage networks. Bentley’s defection changed all of this.

Bentley’s testimony was a disaster for Soviet espionage, particularly the foreign intelligence service. Two of the Soviet agency’s largest Washington networks (the Silvermaster and Perlo groups) were totally disrupted, and contact with dozens of major and minor sources who had had contact with Bentley or might be known to her was halted. Additionally, skilled and experienced Soviet intelligence officers who were known to Bentley, including those under diplomatic cover and others who were operating illegally, had to be hastily withdrawn from the United States. Their replacements took months, or in some cases years, to arrive, by which time they faced a far more hostile environment. In large part on the basis of Bentley’s information, the FBI launched a vigorous campaign against the Communist Party of the USA (CPUSA), and the bureau’s extensive penetration of the party all but destroyed the once great value of the CPUSA for Soviet espionage. Moreover, the tainting of the CPUSA with espionage undermined the party’s domestic political influence.

Bentley’s information along with other matters convinced the Truman administration, which in 1945 and 1946 had been complacent about Soviet espionage and Communist subversion, to shift in 1947 and 1948 to a much more active stance, including the creation of a massive loyalty and security system for federal employees that removed most Communists from government service, a legal offensive against the CPUSA that led to the criminal indictment of the party’s leaders under the Smith Act,
and a political offensive that destroyed the once influential Popular Front wing of the New Deal coalition.

Bentley by any reasonable measure was far more important than Whittaker Chambers in bringing about the crackdown on Soviet spying and on domestic Communism. Chambers had provided authorities some information on covert Communist activities, but his information was confined to events prior to mid-1938, and he declined to provide any information about espionage until late 1948. Indeed, the case of Alger Hiss might never have happened if Chambers had not been called in mid-1948 as a witness to corroborate part of Bentley’s testimony to the U.S. House Committee on Un-American Activities. Yet, as Kathryn Olmsted notes, eleven prominent college textbooks on American history discuss Whittaker Chambers but do not mention Bentley. Bentley was the target of relentless vilification by the pro-Communist left and their allies, a campaign that gradually took its toll. By the mid-1960s, the historian Earl Latham, in his *The Communist Controversy in Washington: From the New Deal to McCarthy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 160, referred to a consensus that Bentley’s charges were the “imaginings of a neurotic spinster.” During the first fifty years after Bentley turned herself in to the FBI, no published scholarly or even journalistic biographies of her appeared, and no graduate students wrote their doctoral dissertations or even master’s theses about Bentley despite her key role in the early domestic Cold War.

Two key developments in the 1990s—the partial opening of some of the former Soviet archives and the release of the decrypted Venona messages—showed that the earlier dismissal of Bentley as a fraud and a figure of ridicule was deeply misguided. It is thus not surprising that after decades of silence, we now have not one but two full-scale Bentley biographies: Kathryn Olmsted’s *Red Spy Queen* and Lauren Kessler’s *Clever Girl*. Both Olmsted and Kessler judge that aside from minor details and self-serving claims of motivation, Bentley’s statements to the FBI in 1945 and her congressional testimony in 1948 were accurate and are abundantly supported by newly available documentation. Both agree that by 1950 she was dramatizing and embellishing her story but that even then her departures from fact were few. Because the documentary evidence corroborating Bentley’s 1945 statements to the FBI is so ample, neither author takes great pains to refute the proposition that Bentley was a fraud who made it all up. As these books make clear, the disparaging view of Bentley that was prevalent in the academic world for so many decades can no longer be taken seriously.

Olmsted’s *Red Spy Queen* is a scholarly book with a full academic apparatus and is based on extensive original archival research. Kessler’s *Clever Girl* also uses archival material, particularly FBI files, but contains less original material than Olmsted’s book, has abbreviated and limited citations, and is intended for a non-academic audience. The two books differ as well in their temperament and treatment of Bentley as a person. Olmsted finds that Bentley was not a fraud, but one gets the impression that Olmsted is disappointed by this finding. Her portrait of Bentley is negative and often hostile. She accepts malevolent reports about Bentley from sources with axes to grind that Kessler treats with more circumspection. Olmsted also depicts those who betrayed the United States and spied for the Soviet Union as admirable but mis-
guided idealists. Yet Olmsted does not see Bentley in that light because Bentley stopped spying and cooperated with the U.S. government, thus becoming a deserving despised informer. Kessler’s Bentley is not an admirable heroine, but neither is she despicable. Altogether, Kessler’s portrait of Bentley’s personality is more complex and convincing.

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*Reviewed by Carl Storm, Independent Scholar*

For “artists on the left,” political art was no laughing matter; it was a grim, serious business, a vital contribution to the struggle for world socialism. This, after all, was class war. Vladimir Lenin himself had articulated the principle of *partiinost* (submission to the Party) and sent a note to his colleague Nikolai Bukharin in 1920 with the stark equation “proletarian culture = communism,” setting a guidepost for all leftist art.

*Artists on the Left* is a handsome volume, well written, and rich in detail, but it makes for exhausting reading. Poring through it, we can understand why the average member of the Communist Party USA (CPUSA) remained in the party for only eighteen months—the nagging was unbearable. For many leftist artists, arguing over how to implement the party line was their great passion, and the paperwork mattered more than the artwork. Essays, reviews, and counterreviews raged over the proper rendering of a picket line, or which modernist forms were “inherently” progressive, or the true nature of the formalist threat. At one point, the CPUSA even got into a fight with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People over the proper artistic treatment of lynching.

This was essentially a religious art—a secular religion, but a religion nonetheless. True believers engaged in terrible fights over details, like Catholics who agree on dogma but come to blows over the proper shade of a cardinal’s zucchetto. As with other religious art, the similarity of the output becomes numbing (even with all the variation in style and skill). If you ignore the text and look at the pictures in this book, you will be amazed that these works generated so much heated debate. When “the masses” (whose consciousness all this effort was meant to raise) failed to respond with sufficient enthusiasm, some artists actually expressed disdain. Elizabeth Olds, a “radicalized” artist, accused most Americans of being “culturally illiterate persons to whom ‘the language of art is a closed book’” (p. 183). The proletariat, she implied, needed the proper kind of education to appreciate the proper kind of art. But what did Olds really expect? There are only so many obese capitalists, muscle-bound laborers, and starving workers you can look at before fatigue sets in.

Although this book deals exclusively with the American scene, you might find yourself wondering about artists on the left who lived and worked in the Soviet
Union, where socialism was already victorious. They, too, loved disputation, but in the Soviet Union an artist’s stylistic preferences could result in far more than a bad notice in *New Masses*. Osip Beskin, the editor of a prominent art journal, was partial to impressionism and was therefore expelled from the artists’ union in 1948. Lev Vyzamenskii, a monumental painter, ran afoul of the Soviet Communist Party in 1938 and was shot. The critic Nikolai Punin had been the head of the art history department at Leningrad State University, but his artistic views branded him an “enemy of the people,” and he was sent to Siberia, where he died in 1953. This kind of thing was still going on years after Stalin died. As late as 1974, an open-air display of politically incorrect art in Moscow was plowed under by bulldozers.

This book will also make you wonder how artists—who live for free expression, after all—in the United States could have supported one of the most repressive systems in recorded history. Information about what was really going on in the Soviet Union, with starvation and mass killing and repression, had leaked out by the 1930s. Yet many American Communist artists remained staunch defenders of the Soviet system. Even those who ultimately distanced themselves from the CPUSA tended not to alter their fundamental devotion. Socialism remained the “beloved” goal, their *idée fixe*. They were nineteenth-century romanticists who had convinced themselves they were the vanguard of a new era.

Andrew Hemingway’s goal in this book is not to answer the question “Why the Artists?” His purpose is much broader. He sets out to provide a fuller and “better history [so] we can at least have more grounded and fruitful dialogues” (p. 282). *Artists on the Left* is a solid contribution in that direction. Hemingway presents a sweeping overview of the territory, laid out in three main sections: Third Period art; Popular Front art; and organizational demise, “From the Grand Alliance to Oblivion.”

Well, not exactly *oblivion*. The attitudes and beliefs embraced by these artists can still be found on many American college campuses. Hemingway wants to show us the living specimen in its natural habitat, before it became fossilized in the universities. He does this by taking much of his research directly from the Communist press of the day. Although this is hardly an unbiased source, it provides a sense of what it was like to be part of the group of far-left artists who thought of themselves as proletarian soldiers.

Why did the offensive fail? These artists were committed; they had boundless energy, ambition, and a clear goal—a socialist America. They were not lacking in talent. Isabel Bishop’s streetscapes, Louis Lozowick’s lithographs, and Jack Levine’s acerbic group portraits were, by any standard, “fine art.” But it was art in the service of a cause and a system that was fatally flawed. As a result, the goals and aspirations of the “artists on the left” were, as Hemingway notes, simply “unrealisable” (p. 280). Yet on the next page, he adds that it is necessary to keep striving for these goals—a sign that political romanticism dies hard.

Reviewed by Arnold Aronson, Columbia University

Almost inevitably, theater functions either to reinforce cultural, economic, and political norms or to subvert them. It does the former by re-inscribing social codes through actions that lead to a celebration of the status quo. The weddings, banquets, and dances at the end of classical comedies, and the reestablishment of sociopolitical order at the conclusion of tragedies, are the most obvious examples, but this function is also reflected in many popular dramas and comedies. Subversive theater undermines societal codes by presenting alternatives to cultural norms in its dramatic content or structure. This can be found in the darker comedies of Molière, the work of Anton Chekhov, and much of the experimental and avant-garde theater of the twentieth century.

Yet, despite the quantity of literary and theatrical analyses of postwar American drama, few scholars have examined this topic in the context of the Cold War. Did the plays of Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams, and William Inge, or the musicals of Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein, for instance, reflect or question the values that were being shaped by political and economic developments in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s?

Bruce McConachie, a professor of theater at the University of Pittsburgh who has previously written about nineteenth-century American theater, comes up with a novel slant on the subject. Rejecting formalistic approaches found in semiotics and phenomenology and the postmodernist tropes derived from Jacques Lacan that dominated much literary scholarship through the 1990s, McConachie turns to cognitive psychology. In particular, he draws on the work of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, who posit a theory of “containment” to explain how human beings tend to categorize experience. As McConachie notes, this process “involves necessary relations among an inside, an outside, and [a] boundary between them” (p. 10). McConachie then adapts historian George Lipsitz’s term “corporate liberalism” to produce his own notion of “containment liberalism.” Although such categorizations seem almost instinctive in the context of Cold War history, McConachie’s insight is to find these patterns in the Broadway fare of the era.

The primary plays that he chooses are a surprisingly disparate lot: *A Hatful of Rain, The Seven Year Itch, Dark at the Top of the Stairs, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, A Raisin in the Sun,* and *The Crucible,* among others. Although some of these seem obvious candidates for Cold War analyses, the most surprising, and perhaps the most successful in terms of applying the containment theory, is the 1951 musical *The King and I,* forever associated with the actor Yul Brynner. In retrospect it is easy to see the cultural stereotyping and condescension that suffused the production, particularly in the casting of Siamese characters who were drawn from a broad spectrum of ethnic and racial groups—as if to suggest a universality to the idea of “other.” The result was that the actors’ physiognomy provided no clue about the cultural identity of the character, and
the actors’ makeup and costume became essential semiotic tools. “In effect,” McConachie explains,
spectators were induced to understand “Siamese” as a performance in itself, a matter of external role-playing involving a darker or lighter shade of grease paint and other theatrical trappings. With Western characters, however, the audience could presume that the “inside” matched the “outside”; the actor underneath the role always looked the part. Since essentialism in casting was the norm for Western characters, Rodgers and Hammerstein’s characters from other cultures appeared to lack an essence, an “inside.” Following the cognitive logic of containment in characterization, when any performer can play Siamese, the “inside” of any Siamese character can be anything at all. Hence, the lack of discernible casting conventions contributed to the audience’s belief that Siamese people already were or could easily become just like “us,” like white Americans. (p. 159)

In addition, McConachie cleverly shows how capitalism became associated with nature in the production (in contrast to “unnatural” Communism), and how the play-within-a-play presentation of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* demonstrated the superiority of contract law to tyranny.

Despite such insights, thematic and traditional psychological analyses of the various productions under consideration ultimately win out over the stated goal of placing the plays in the context of containment theory. Much of the penultimate chapter, in fact, is devoted to a Freudian study of Elia Kazan, the director associated with many of the most notable productions of the era. Although certain aspects of the culture are explored in greater detail than in most comparable theater histories, others are surprisingly ignored. On the positive side, McConachie constantly returns to the greatly overlooked influence of radio on postwar dramaturgy (though he annoyingly insists on calling it “radiophony”—a misappropriation of an irrelevant technical term in an apparent attempt to suggest the totality of the aesthetic and cognitive effect of radio on its listeners). Some analysts have attributed the breakdown of barriers between the subconscious and objective reality in postwar drama to cinematic influences, but the much more likely inspiration for this trend was radio’s disembodied voices and imaginative stimuli. McConachie also devotes much space to film, particularly the Hollywood adaptations of many of the productions discussed in the book. He emphasizes the relationship of actor to character, but he does not address the question of the film image versus the stage. Although he spends some time on the well-trodden ground of 1950s situation comedies and their relation to Cold War culture, he largely ignores the effects of television technique. The baby boom generation was shaped not just by the content of TV shows but by the hyperkinetic and disjunctive structure of each half-hour of television programming, which reshaped consciousness. Rock and roll rates not a single mention. The rise of off- and off-off-Broadway productions is largely ignored, although much of the underlying motivation for the move away from Broadway, as well as the content and, more importantly, the structure of the works presented in these new venues, would seem to be an ideal demonstration of the notion of con-
tainment and the attempts to subvert conventional restraints. The inclusion of Martha Graham’s Night Journey, though fascinating for what it reveals, is so different from everything else discussed in the book that it seems like an intrusion from a different study. If Graham’s work is to be included, then modern dance as a whole has to be considered as well as the notion of how modern art was shifted into the mainstream and the artists turned into Cold War heroes.

These problems aside, McConachie’s book offers new insights into an important chapter in American theater history and augurs well for a fruitful dialogue among theatrical and cultural historians as well as social scientists.


Reviewed by Deborah Kisatsky, Assumption College

This memoir by a veteran of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) who in 1949–1955 oversaw the notorious “Gehlen Organization” (or “the Org,” as it came to be known) details the turbulent bureaucratic history of that agency throughout the U.S. occupation. The Gehlen Organization, founded by General Reinhard Gehlen, former Nazi German intelligence chief on the Eastern Front, was sponsored by the U.S. Army’s G-2 (military intelligence) division beginning in 1945 and then taken over by the CIA in 1949. Shortly after Germany’s defeat, Gehlen provided the U.S. Army Counterintelligence Corps (CIC) with extensive secret data on Soviet military strength. He did so not merely to ingratiate himself with the victors but to lay the groundwork for an eventual independent German intelligence service under civilian control. Gehlen achieved this goal with the founding of the Federal Intelligence Service (Bundesnachrichtendienst) in 1956, soon after the newly sovereign West Germany’s entry into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. James Critchfield shows how Gehlen’s espionage outfit overlapped with the remilitarization plans of key advisors to West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer such as Adolf Heusinger, who allegedly used information gained through his elite membership on Gehlen’s staff to bolster the case for West German rearmament. Heusinger later headed the Federal Republic’s new Bundeswehr.

The book on the whole does not bear out allegations made by Christopher Simpson and others that Gehlen was a war criminal whose information about the Soviet Union was extracted through torture of Soviet prisoners of war, and that the United States purposefully disguised Gehlen’s background in order to exploit his expertise. Critchfield does fault Gehlen for “recruiting politically tainted persons” into his organization (p. 207). The organization’s reliance on untrustworthy former Nazi Sicherheitsdienst (SD) members to gain knowledge about Soviet actions in the eastern
zone of Germany facilitated Soviet infiltration of the Org and led to the damaging Heinz Felfe affair of the 1950s. But Critchfield claims that the highest ranks of the Service did not include any “immediately definable Nazis” or “any member of the ‘General Staff and High Command’” identified at Nuremberg (p. 84). The picture he paints is that of a determined Gehlen doggedly pursuing U.S. aid and attention in the face of an initial lack of interest (displayed by the first CIC agents he encountered); internal disorganization (especially in 1945–1946, when competing German factions jostled to control the nascent service); distrust (CIA Director Roscoe Hillenkoetter, U.S. Military Governor Lucius Clay, and Chancellor Adenauer all had misgivings about Gehlen and his methods); and financial weakness (particularly in 1945–1948, when the organization relied chiefly on black market sales of American provisions to stay afloat).

Much of this story has been known since 1971, when Heinz Höhne and Herman Zolling first detailed Gehlen’s life and work for Der Spiegel magazine. What is new is Critchfield’s contention that the Gehlen Organization, through Heusinger, played a crucial and heretofore unappreciated role in shaping Adenauer’s security policy. Although a preponderance of scholarship in English and German shows that Adenauer began promoting West German rearmament as early as 1949, Critchfield argues that “nothing was lower on [Adenauer’s] list” than building a new German army (p. 123). Not until the Korean War began and far-sighted advisers like Heusinger persuaded the “parochial” chancellor (p. 123) that the Soviet threat to West Germany was imminent—information that “clearly rested on the knowledge” Heusinger had gained as head of Gehlen’s evaluations staff (pp. 138–139)—did Adenauer adopt an Atlanticist defense strategy. Corroboration for this claim comes in the form of a complicated narrative chronicling back-channel maneuvers of Heusinger and other generals on matters related to rearmament. But those activities occurred mainly in Bonn, far from Critchfield’s daily operations at the Gehlen compound in Pullach (Bavaria), and Critchfield was not a witness to such talks. The account offers few specifics regarding any intelligence gathered by the Org, so it is difficult to assess the direct effects of Gehlen’s information on West German (or, for that matter, U.S.) decision-making.

In general, Critchfield’s account is most reliable and informative when he deals with events related to his own experiences at Pullach. Critchfield recalls persuading an allegedly hesitant CIA to take over Gehlen’s operation and provide adequate funding. He explores the U.S.-German culture of “Nikolaus” (the nickname for the compound), where “children . . . used the working aliases of their parents” and where friendly U.S.-German relations flourished amid joint Alpine skiing and trekking ventures (p. 94). He assesses Gehlen personally, describing him as a man who “without question . . . [was] intelligent” but was “no intellectual” and who had a “deeply suspicious . . . [and] almost paranoic” outlook and a penchant for “suspecting people of communist connections” (pp. 109–110). Critchfield praises Gehlen’s “vision,” “determination,” and “practical political skill,” but claims that the Org leader displayed a troubling “aversion to . . . difficult management problems” (pp. 109, 111). Critchfield’s own relations with Gehlen were “civil, correct, and impersonal. Neither
of us ever raised our voices, used profanity, or walked out of a meeting.” But “the word ‘friend,’” Critchfield adds, “was not a part of [Gehlen’s] vocabulary” when dealing with associates (p. 110).

Critchfield further reveals how turf battles among various U.S. intelligence agencies in Germany spawned a three-way “adversarial relationship” between the Org, G-2, and the CIC. The CIC infiltrated Gehlen’s outfit in search of moles; G-2 allegedly plotted to destroy Gehlen’s organization in order to concentrate espionage in the hands of the U.S. military (and eventually the German military as well) and to displace the CIA as the agency chiefly responsible for spying in Germany. Critchfield’s sober assessment of the U.S. intelligence effort distinguishes the book from earlier analyses. “It is obvious,” he writes, “that a U.S. intelligence community never was functional in Germany.” Although the National Security Act of July 1947 authorized the new CIA to cooperate with other civilian and military intelligence programs, service rivalries always impeded the sharing of data. Had closer cooperation been achieved, he argues, “most of the intelligence problems discussed in this book,” including the Org’s infiltration by Soviet agents, “could have been avoided” (p. 198). That lesson is timely in light of the failures of U.S. domestic and foreign intelligence coordination prior to September 2001.


Reviewed by Mark Clodfelter, National War College

Soon after the German attack on Poland began in September 1939, President Franklin D. Roosevelt called on the major belligerents to avoid the ruthless bombing of innocent civilians from the air. Adolf Hitler endorsed Roosevelt’s appeal, and the governments of Britain and France concurred. A year later Hitler proclaimed that he would use bombing to “erase” British cities, and in 1942 the Royal Air Force (RAF) unleashed an area bombing offensive that ultimately destroyed most German metropolitan districts. “We were wondering,” observes Hermann Knell, who was a teenager in Wurzburg during the war, “whether the British did not have the better eraser” (p. 187).

Knell is one of the survivors of the devastating RAF attack on Wurzburg on the night of 16 March 1945, a raid that obliterated 90 percent of the medieval city while killing 5,000 civilians and rendering 90,000 homeless. The impact of the attack has spurred him to write an analysis of World War II area bombing, with the destruction of Wurzburg as its centerpiece. Knell states that the goal of his analysis is not to judge or condemn those responsible for the area raids, but simply to explain why the raids occurred and, in particular, to determine why Allied air commanders chose to destroy his native city. The rationale, he contends, was the desire by Allied political and military leaders to erode German morale to such a degree that it would trigger Hitler’s
overthrow and hence produce surrender. Yet German morale was too resilient for bombs to break it, and Allied leaders failed to realize this. The raid on Wurzburg thus became symptomatic of what Knell sees as the Allies’ failure to understand the limits of area bombing. “Wurzburg was bombed because the bombing offensive had long ago become an end in itself, with its own momentum, its own purpose, devoid of tactical or strategic value, indifferent to the suffering and destruction that it caused” (p. 334).

Calling himself a “civilian amateur historian” (p. 264), Knell bases his analysis on three different types of sources: archival records in Germany, Great Britain, and the United States; numerous secondary accounts; and personal experience. He is most comfortable when he relates events from his own memory. His recollections of the 1945 air attacks against Wurzburg, highlighted by the horrific raid on 16 March, are sobering. He devotes considerable attention to the major area attacks that occurred in both World Wars, as well as to the political decision-making that led to both conflicts. In that regard, his work is a solid capsule history of strategic bombing, especially the bombing that occurred in the European theater of World War II.

Knell regards British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, his wartime advisers, and the “bomber practitioners” as the men most responsible for the area bombing of Germany in the Second World War. Churchill’s scientific adviser, Frederick Linemann—known as Lord Cherwall—receives much of the blame for spurring the British area raids. In contrast, Lord Solly Zuckerman emerges as a voice of reason with his emphasis on attacking oil and transportation targets. Churchill himself, who argued against area bombing when serving as minister of munitions during World War I, “underwent several metamorphoses during his political career, very much to the detriment of civilian populations” (p. 111). Still, Churchill does not emerge as the main proponent of area bombardment. Nor does Air Marshal Arthur Harris, who commanded RAF Bomber Command from February 1942 until the end of the war and launched the massive raids that destroyed Hamburg, Dresden, and Berlin as well as Wurzburg. Knell reserves that distinction for Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Portal, the RAF Chief of Staff.

Knell makes his case against Portal by citing a 22 September 1942 RAF report that advocated the destruction of forty-two German cities with 100,000 or more inhabitants. The report argued that as a result of such bombing, “Germany will cease to function both militarily and on a civilian level. The people will rebel” (p. 213). Portal, who had bombed insurgent villages in Yemen in 1934 to quell uprisings there, strongly endorsed the air staff report and a similar study two months later calling for area attacks that would kill up to 900,000 German civilians, wound a million, and render 25 million homeless. Regarding the first report, Knell remarks that it “proves many historians incorrect who blame Harris for the ensuing slaughter. It was the air staff headed by its chief of staff Sir Charles Portal who issued the blueprint” (p. 214). Portal’s endorsement of the second study increases his degree of responsibility.

Although Knell professes that he does not want to condemn the perpetrators of area bombing, his tone throughout the book is often judgmental. The British area bombing defied rationality, he asserts, particularly after the effort escalated without
causing German civilian morale to plummet. Knell acknowledges that heavy losses in daylight raids compelled the British to begin bombing at night and that British bombers initially were not able to hit targets accurately in darkness. As the war progressed, the RAF developed more accurate methods of attack by using speedy Mosquito fighter-bombers. Yet even after the Mosquitoes came on line, Portal and Harris continued to stress four-engine bomber assaults on the Third Reich’s cities. Even the Americans, who flew during daylight, forsook their vaunted notion of precision bombing and resorted to area attacks during the final stages of the European war.

The toll of the area bombing offensive was gruesome; it steadily mounted until an estimated 500,000 German civilians had died, as well as thousands of civilians in other parts of occupied Europe. Observes Knell: “The bombers had persisted far beyond the point of necessity, long after any advantage could be gained. . . . They persisted simply for the sake of destruction for its own sake” (p. 258). He reserves his greatest wrath for the Allied fighter attacks on urban areas, such as those of Operation Clarion in 1945 when fighters roamed over Germany attacking any moving target. “Bombing, and, particularly, strafing civilians, irrespective of the interpretations of international law, is a crime,” he concludes (pp. 315–316).

Knell contends that if the Germans had won the war, Allied air commanders like Harris would probably have faced the gallows following a Nuremberg-type tribunal. The Nuremberg court did not levy war crimes charges against Luftwaffe commanders who conducted area bombing because “convicting the German bomber practitioners would have cast a shadow on the Allied bomber practitioners” (p. 328). Knell’s assertion rings true, and it raises serious questions for the reader in an age that has seen a consistent targeting of civilian populations in an effort to break their will. The Germans were the first to use a strategy of area bombardment in World War I, and they did so in response to the British “Hunger Blockade” that ultimately starved 700,000 German civilians. That blockade, combined with German military setbacks, finally did—as Knell points out—break the German will to resist in the First World War, but it took four gory years to achieve that result.

The British began their wholesale bombing attacks on German urban areas in early 1942, and the Americans joined them in a combined bomber offensive a year later. The intensity of this offensive steadily increased until the final six months of the war, when 60 percent of all bombs dropped on Germany struck home. In the meantime, the Germans launched the Battle of the Bulge in December 1944, an engagement that by late January 1945 had claimed 75,000 American casualties—the largest total for any American battle in any war. Given that the Allies waged World War II to achieve “unconditional surrender”—the total destruction of the Nazi regime and its way of life—and that the British blockade during World War I indicated that the will of a populace might indeed crack after a prolonged period of pressure against it, what was the proper Allied approach to ending the conflict? None of the choices that Allied political and military leaders faced could be deemed “good”; all had serious consequences for the civilians at the mercy of the Allied onslaught.

The German military theorist Karl von Clausewitz would answer that war assumes its own momentum. The larger the scale of the war, the more ghastly the
ramifications for the civilians in war’s path. The famed American Civil War general William T. Sherman—no stranger to waging total war against civilian populations—would answer that “war is cruelty and you cannot refine it.” Such sentiments provide small comfort to a man who has had his home demolished and close acquaintances killed. Knell’s account of World War II area bombing is not emotionless, and rightly so—areal bombing is not an emotionless topic. The agonizing choices faced by men wielding awesome destructive power, and the uncertain ethics of their decisions, provide a hallmark of twentieth-century warfare that is likely to persist for many years to come.


Reviewed by Christian Nuenlist, Center for Security Studies, ETH Zurich

Drawing on documents from twelve archives in the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany, Christof Münger uses a multilateral approach in his meticulous, 400-page analysis of one of the major Cold War–era crises within the Western bloc. The book’s strength lies in Münger’s in-depth knowledge of the four national perspectives. This is the first book we have had that looks at the Berlin crisis of 1961–1963 from a truly multilateral angle.

Münger concludes that for all four countries national interests took priority over forging a common Western policy (pp. 376–379). To illustrate Washington’s “selective” and “manipulative” consultations with its allies, he lists the debriefings in Europe after John F. Kennedy’s summit with Nikita Khrushchev in Vienna in June 1961. Describing the meetings that U.S. officials held with West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and French President Charles de Gaulle, Münger argues that Washington concealed the Soviet ultimatum on Berlin and thus played down the outbreak of a renewed crisis (pp. 81–84). Yet, the charge of U.S. non-consultation seems harsh, considering that U.S. Secretary of State Dean Rusk visited the Council of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Paris on 5 June 1961 and informed U.S. allies in detail about the Kennedy-Khrushchev exchanges on the Berlin question.

Münger characterizes Kennedy’s famous Berlin speech of 25 July 1961 not as a “declaration of war” (as Khrushchev described it) but as a fallback position limiting possible U.S. military means to the defense of three “Essentials.” Kennedy also clearly signaled the Western countries’ readiness to enter negotiations with the Soviet Union and to recognize legitimate Soviet security interests in Central Europe (p. 92). Münger’s complex analysis of the evolving U.S.-Soviet exploratory talks offers fascinating details confirming his main thesis that the Berlin crisis deepened the split of the West into two camps, an Anglo-Saxon duo favoring a détente with Moscow versus a Franco-German bloc strongly opposed to negotiations with the Soviet Union. The
Kennedy administration sent copies of the records of Rusk's September 1961 talks with Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko only to the British, not to the French or the Germans (p. 119).

When bilateral Anglo-American efforts to bring Bonn and Paris into line collapsed because of de Gaulle's obstinacy, Adenauer cleverly used the growing tensions between Washington and Paris for his own purposes. His efforts were facilitated by de Gaulle's proposal to equip West Germany with nuclear weapons, a proposal that antagonized Washington because it depicted France rather than the United States as the main security guarantor to West Germany (pp. 136ff.).

Münger also looks in detail at the new U.S. negotiating position in early 1962, which both London and Moscow interpreted as a major step toward détente. He convincingly argues that U.S. concessions in April 1962 led to the end of previous Soviet disruptive action in Western air corridors (p. 151). Although Bonn had previously given Washington a green light to alter the bargaining position, Adenauer sabotaged movement toward U.S.-Soviet accommodation by deliberately leaking the U.S. proposal to the press, a disclosure that provoked tension between Washington and Bonn.

The increasingly troubled relationship between Washington and Paris, and the growing friction between Washington and Bonn, gave rise to a Franco-German bloc in 1962, a process that Münger analyzes in detail (pp. 180–190). When examining the Cuban missile crisis, he shows that the Kennedy administration's lack of consultation with Bonn and Paris stood in marked contrast to its efforts to keep Great Britain closely apprised of developments via the British ambassador to Washington and the “Mac-Jack line”—a direct telephone line between Kennedy's and Macmillan's offices that had been installed in September 1961.

The formalization of the nuclear dimension of the U.S.-British special relationship at a bilateral summit in Nassau in early 1963, de Gaulle's double non to British membership in the European Economic Community, and the French-German Elysée Treaty led to even greater tension among the Western allies. The French and the Germans wanted to apply the seemingly tough U.S. policy during the crisis to the Berlin and German questions, whereas the United States and Britain favored a policy of détente to prevent another such crisis in Europe.

Münger's analysis of the July 1963 Limited Test Ban Treaty (LTBT) between Washington, London, and Moscow suggests that the treaty served as a “hidden Berlin agreement” (p. 309). He argues that Khrushchev agreed in late April 1963 to conclude a test ban treaty if the United States would accept the territorial status quo in Central Europe (p. 295). Münger concludes his study with the remark that in the fall of 1963 a new era of détente began—an era made possible only after tensions within the Western alliance had finally been settled (p. 361).

Münger arrives at this conclusion because he ends his well-researched narrative with the French rejection of the LTBT and the West German accession to it. Unfortunately, he does not include Western tensions that arose in the aftermath of the LTBT in August and September 1963 when the West had to decide whether to follow up the LTBT with additional steps toward a détente. NATO discussions of the prospect of concluding a non-aggression treaty or a ground observation posts agreement to pre-
vent a surprise attack in Central Europe demonstrated all too clearly that France and West Germany were still blocking any progress toward a settlement in Central Europe. As a result, the bilateral détente of 1963 was not expanded into a multilateral détente. After Kennedy struck an informal deal with Khrushchev in July 1963, Berlin was not as much of a flashpoint as it had been from 1958 to 1962, but formal multilateral agreements with the Soviet Union on Berlin and Germany had to wait for another decade.

Münger’s brilliantly written book is an outstanding example of how multilateral and multiarchival history should be written. His weaving of four different national perspectives into a readable and fascinating narrative will no doubt set a standard for future international Cold War history.

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Reviewed by Oliver Bange, Mannheim University

Francis Bator, assistant national security adviser to Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson, recently commented, “There were very few people in the German government who had a feeling for American politics. The problem with the British was that they thought they knew too well.” One might argue that successive U.S. administrations had to focus on the European Economic Community (EEC), particularly on the (West) Germans, when dealing with economic issues in Europe. The French and the West Germans also figured prominently in discussions of European military issues. But there was only one government with which U.S. presidents could debate the whole range of global problems; namely, the British. Ever since Winston Churchill published his memoirs, a debate has raged both in public and in academic circles about the (changing) role played by the British in this partnership of obvious unequals. Was it, as Churchill once put it, the eternal bond of people linked by blood, culture, and language; or was it the role of wise Greeks advising the rather uncivilized Romans, a role Harold Macmillan cast for himself; or was it the case of “poodles” and their masters, as Tony Blair’s transatlantic policies have recently been portrayed by his political opponents?

A proper evaluation of this often personal bilateral relationship must involve a comparison with Washington’s relationships with other allies. This, however, is not Nigel Ashton’s intention. His book is about the way the British and U.S. administrations and above all their heads of government, Kennedy and Macmillan, perceived and handled global affairs from 1961 to 1963. Ashton writes from a decidedly British perspective; so much so in fact that other people’s roles and perspectives hardly matter at all. Ashton’s discussion of the Berlin crisis of 1961 must be the first academic piece on the subject that fails even once to mention Willy Brandt, then the governing mayor of the city. One could easily prolong this into a list drawn from the other case
studies in the book, including Cuba, the EEC, and the Middle East. In this, the bilateral concept of the book prefigures its results, leaving the reader with a distinct impression of an Anglo-American approach to world government in the early 1960s. Such a notion of co-ruling would of course be a gross overestimation of Britain’s real influence on the course of events, but Ashton's determination to focus exclusively on the relationship between two actors, Kennedy and Macmillan, is what gives his book its particular spice.

*Kennedy, Macmillan and the Cold War* consists of eight eminently readable, evenly weighted case studies. Ashton makes excellent use of recently published research on each of the international problems and also draws extensively on his own research in British and American archives. Ashton's aim is to use these cases to track down and illuminate the specific nature of Anglo-American relations at the highest level in what could rightly be called a crucial period. But he ends up with a dichotomy that seems to contradict any straightforward interpretation of this personal or national “special relationship.” In 1961 a common Anglo-American outlook on world affairs, or at least a sense of common priorities in London and Washington, seems to have prevailed. On a personal level, however, the relationship was more fractious. In 1961, Macmillan was unsure of his relationship with the new U.S. administration and was quite willing to be dragged by the Americans into a war over Laos similar to the one that soon followed in Vietnam. In this case the irony to which Ashton often refers would have been a bitter one, particularly given the innocent civilian population involved. Ashton concludes that it was only the Bay of Pigs fiasco that saved Macmillan from a terrible but foregone decision.

Ashton’s interpretation of the Berlin crisis is completely in line with his research focus. The most important conclusion he extracts from the ruins of the West’s roll-back strategy is that the underlying Anglo-American harmony was a “good way to control tensions over Berlin.” He ignores the recent plethora of highly stimulating academic research that has generated controversy about the role of Walter Ulbricht in the decision-making process in the East. Ashton’s next case study—in strict chronological order—is the Cuban missile crisis, but his (and Macmillan’s) retrospective claim of a special British role in the crisis is undermined by Macmillan’s lack of knowledge about the crucial deal between Robert Kennedy and Soviet Ambassador Anatolii Dobrynin over the Jupiter missiles stationed in Turkey. The crisis in the Middle East in September 1962, triggered by a coup in Yemen, shows the United States and Britain on two different sides, with a strong U.S. inclination against colonialism and in favor of cooperating with Gamal Abdel Nasser, whom Macmillan considered to be another Adolf Hitler.

Ashton’s story of the Congo crisis two months later runs along similar lines: the British wanting to maintain order for the sake of their own decolonization and the Kennedy administration merely using it as a “sop” for blacks and liberals at home. Ashton’s account of Britain’s EEC application follows conventional lines, emphasizing Macmillan’s search for a new power base and ending with the French veto in the Brussels negotiations. This standard framework is unfortunate because the common Anglo-American objective—redirecting the EEC’s development into an outward
looking, transatlantic community—becomes even clearer in the months following the Brussels talks. The Kennedy-Macmillan meeting in Nassau in December 1962 and the Polaris deal for Britain that came out of it are presented as the case study for interdependence. Uncertainty about the impact of this deal on de Gaulle’s EEC veto three weeks later has long existed. Ashton plays up the role of the so-called Europeanists in the U.S. State Department under George Ball, who supposedly offended Charles de Gaulle’s feelings, but he concedes that de Gaulle had probably made up his mind already. At the same time, Ashton plays down the role of Macmillan himself, who had heard only days before the Nassau meeting from de Gaulle that Britain would not be allowed into the EEC. Macmillan’s behavior in Nassau was nothing short of double-crossing his friend from the White House, arguing for Britain’s pro-Atlantic role once inside the EEC in return for a prolonged nuclear status with U.S. aid. Ashton acknowledges that Richard Neustadt, who was asked by Kennedy to conduct a post-crisis review, did not have the full picture.

The final case study describes the Test Ban Treaty of August 1963. In this instance, both Kennedy and Macmillan sought a place in history and publicly congratulated one another. Thus, by the summer of 1963, the situation seems almost to have been reversed. The priority attached to bilateral relations had faded significantly (as shown by the anti-British course over nuclear proliferation advocated by the “Europeanists” in Washington and the search for a new power basis in the EEC conducted by the “Europeans” in London), whereas the personal relationship between Kennedy and Macmillan was probably as close as it could possibly be between two heads of government. True, as Ashton rightly points out, the personal relationship could not prevent crises either inside or outside Anglo-American relations, but it could and did help to overcome them.

Ashton’s book is a fitting addition to the contemporary history series published by Palgrave Macmillan, which, under the general-editorship of Peter Catterall, has developed into a formidable outlet for research on Harold Macmillan and his times. Ashton’s book also constitutes an excellent overview of much of the research published in the series so far. One question remains, however, about the book’s subtitle: After all the ambiguities and cynicism displayed and described, where is the “irony”?


Reviewed by Martin Ceadel, New College, Oxford University

To this reviewer at least, the title of Louise Grace Shaw’s book raised expectations of a structural analysis of the British political establishment that would indicate how different attributes (such as departmental affiliation, geopolitical assumptions, and religious beliefs) affected attitudes toward the Soviet Union. These expectations are only partly fulfilled. Shaw defines “political elite” narrowly to mean decision-makers and
foreign-policy critics who expressed views about the Soviet Union. Essentially, her book is a counterrevisionist study of British appeasement policy, for which a more accurate title would have been *How Chamberlain’s Anti-Communism Thwarted the Formation of an Anglo-Soviet Alliance*.

Taken on these terms, the book is generally well researched and cogently argued. The most telling points in support of its thesis are Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain’s concealment from his cabinet of a favorable judgment by the chiefs of staff of the military value of the Soviet Union, the misrepresentation by Admiral of the Fleet Lord Chatfield to the foreign policy committee of the same advice, and a number of excessively confident remarks by Chamberlain to colleagues and to his sister Ida. Even so, Shaw’s concentration on a single variable—namely, Chamberlain’s ideological aversion to the Soviet regime—causes her to attach insufficient weight to another, more important, factor: Chamberlain’s desire to avoid a war that was likely to involve a paralyzing air attack on his country.

Shaw does not dispose of the possibility that Chamberlain’s main reason for avoiding a commitment to the Soviet Union was that it would definitively kill the hope, to which he still clung deep down, of a settlement with Germany. Shaw argues that if Chamberlain still hoped for a settlement with Germany, he would not have entered into serious negotiations with the Soviet Union in the first place. But one could argue in response that Chamberlain was compelled to negotiate with the USSR in order to propitiate public opinion and to pressure Adolf Hitler to come to terms with him. In addition, Shaw’s assumption that Soviet policymakers were “sincere” in their desire for collective security and, later on, for a military alliance against Hitler (until late July 1939) can be questioned. If they were sincere, why did they not instruct the Communist Party of Great Britain to support British rearmament in the 1930s, so that Britain could more effectively contain Germany?

With more space, Shaw might have been able to deal with these reservations. In any case, her book is impressive and augurs well for a career in academic international history.


Reviewed by Manfred Jonas, Union College

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), America’s first overtly “entangling alliance” since the eighteenth century, was established in April 1949 to contain the Soviet Union and prevent the new Germany then under construction from once more becoming a threat to its neighbors. At the end of the 1980s, when dramatic changes in Europe suggested that NATO might outlive the Soviet Union and provide safe anchorage even for a reunited Germany, the Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt (Ger-
many’s main research institute for military history) undertook a multivolume study of the formative years of the alliance, hoping to discover the reasons for its apparent success. The institute took that task upon itself even though Germany had not been a NATO member during most of those years and even though the alliance at that point had little military substance. Its only real muscle lay in bombers stationed near Omaha, Nebraska. Few European troops were fully committed, and military activity consisted almost entirely of contingency planning. NATO’s first actual military operation, the pacification of Bosnia-Hercegovina, came fully four decades after the organization’s founding.

The author of this book, Winfried Heinemann, is a historian who has worked at the institute and edited its journal Militärgeschichte. He has also served as a lieutenant-colonel in the German army and has seen service in Mons at the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE). He discusses all of this in a volume that traces the political and, to some degree, administrative history of NATO from the establishment of the North Atlantic Council and the appointment of the first secretary-general in 1949 to the formation of the Committee of Three. He has examined diplomatic archives in France, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Canada, and the United States, consulted the relevant secondary literature, mostly in English and German, and produced an informative book that describes what he sees as the largely successful integration, over time and with varying degrees of success, of the security policies of the member-states. Without bemoaning what have been called the Venus de Milo characteristics of the alliance (all SHAPE and no arms) or seriously examining the nature of the military buildup actually undertaken after the Korean War, he shows how dangerous and uncertain the world was in the early 1950s, particularly for the smaller members of the alliance, how precarious peace and order seemed to be, and how NATO came to provide both opportunity and incentive for collective security arrangements that might offer a solution.

The crises to which the title of the book alludes are selected from areas of controversy that highlight the differences among NATO members. The future of Cyprus was basically an issue on which three of them had divergent and seemingly irreconcilable interests. The question of the admission of Ireland and Spain or of Yugoslavia, and Portugal’s attempt to involve NATO in the defense of Macao and Goa, highlighted divisions about the alliance’s purpose. Iceland’s admission of Communists to its government, combined with its expressed desire to withdraw from membership, threatened both the unity and the efficacy of the alliance. Only the Suez Crisis was of a magnitude that might conceivably have triggered war, but it, too, is considered here primarily for its effect on NATO. Heinemann, of course, might have included many other crises. The one surrounding the admission of the Federal Republic of Germany is particularly conspicuous by its absence.

Given the focus of the book, Heinemann reaches a series of persuasive but predictable conclusions. He attributes NATO’s success and longevity largely to the fact that, from the beginning, the “founding fathers”—such as Lester Pearson, the first secretary-general; Lord Ismay; and representatives from the smaller states, such as Belgium’s Paul-Henri Spaak—insisted on the importance of Articles 2 and 4 of the North
Atlantic Treaty, thereby moving the alliance as much as possible into a collective security mode. The implementation of this concept, no matter how imperfect, and the development of an organization to promote it rather than being limited to mutual assistance, are what allowed NATO—unlike the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization, the Central Treaty Organization, the Baghdad Pact, or even the Rio Pact that had originally served as its model—not only to survive but to grow stronger (despite the partial withdrawal of France) even as the specific threats it was designed to counter decreased in immediacy. Heinemann makes a good case, and he is fulsome in his praise of NATO’s role in keeping the peace in Europe for half a century. Serious discussion of its role as an instrument of American foreign policy, or of its relationship to what the U.S. State Department’s Foreign Relations of the United States volumes were wont to lump together as Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, or even of its effectiveness in Cold War management, Heinemann leaves to others.

The book includes a good bibliography and a Personenregister, which, alas, is an inadequate substitute for a fuller index.


Reviewed by Patrick Salmon, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (UK)

Juhana Aunesluoma has written a succinct, fluent study of British-Swedish relations during the first phase of the Cold War. Based on extensive research in British, Swedish, and Finnish archives, his book highlights Sweden’s importance to Western security in the Nordic region, as well as the dilemmas posed by Sweden’s continued commitment to neutrality. Aunesluoma’s central argument is that British policy was instrumental in enabling Sweden to reconcile its formal neutrality with a de facto orientation toward the West. Britain’s efforts began with the attempt in 1948–1949 to find a middle way between Sweden’s desire for a neutral Scandinavian alliance and Norwegian-Danish membership in what became the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The attempt failed, but the British did not stop talking to the Swedes. From 1949 onward, secret military contacts, tacitly approved by the governments in both countries, enabled defense plans to be coordinated, and Britain continued to sell arms to Sweden at a time when the United States refused to do so.

Britain’s pragmatic attitude toward Swedish neutrality mitigated the crude anti-neutralism of the United States in the early Cold War years. Nevertheless, a decline in British influence was evident by the early 1950s, in part for economic reasons: Britain’s early postwar commercial ascendancy in Scandinavia was undermined by competition from West Germany. The outbreak of the Korean War accelerated moves toward West German rearmament and thereby mitigated Sweden’s strategic importance for Western defense. The transition of the United States to a more balanced view of
Swedish neutrality after 1952 reduced and eventually eliminated Britain’s role as intermediary between Sweden and the West.

Aunesluoma is thoroughly conversant with the scholarly debate on Scandinavia and the Cold War, and he takes it further in a number of respects. Previous research has tended to focus more on Norway and Denmark than on Sweden and has been preoccupied with the dramatic events of 1948–1949, when the rival solutions to Scandinavia’s strategic dilemma—Sweden’s non-aligned Scandinavian bloc and Norway and Denmark’s Atlantic orientation—were most starkly juxtaposed. Aunesluoma joins a number of scholars, including Wilhelm Agrell, Karl Molin, and the late Mikael af Malmborg, who have asked more searching questions about Sweden’s role, and he takes the story well beyond 1949. In doing so he not only does justice to Britain as a Cold War player but also makes clear the extent to which Sweden remained central to Western perceptions of the strategic situation in the northern sphere.

Aunesluoma provides a broader and more complex picture of British policymaking than one finds in many previous accounts, which have tended to focus disproportionately on the Foreign Office (and especially the Northern Department). Aunesluoma gives other ministries, notably the Treasury and Board of Trade as well as the Bank of England, their due share of attention. He displays a sophisticated understanding of the relationship between economic policy and foreign policy, as in the failure of “Uniscan” (a British-Scandinavian economic forum) to provide a credible basis for political cooperation, let alone fulfill British hopes that it might become a regional economic bloc. He also credits the 1945–1951 Labour government with a degree of autonomy and initiative that contrasts with earlier accounts stressing the continuity of British Cold War policy from one government to another. Aunesluoma demonstrates the importance of ideological affinities between leading British politicians such as Sir Stafford Cripps and Herbert Morrison and their Swedish counterparts. The Tory election victory in 1951 produced a government less interested in Scandinavia and more interested in Western Europe, thus contributing to the declining importance of the British-Swedish relationship.

The book also offers a nuanced interpretation of Swedish neutrality. Although the Swedish military was firmly pro-Western, government ministers’ leanings varied widely, from the doctrinaire realism of Foreign Minister Östen Undén (the chief bête noire of British diplomats), to the more pragmatic, Western-oriented Defense Minister Allan Vougt, with Prime Minister Tage Erlander somewhere in the middle. Aunesluoma shows how the Swedes managed to conduct an array of seemingly contradictory policies. Doublethink was certainly part of the story, but so was deliberate obfuscation. Erlander’s recently published diaries show that he understood perfectly well the advantages of appearing less dogmatic than his foreign minister. Erlander noted in October 1952, “Undén probably needs the support of someone whom the public sees as less doctrinal.”

Aunesluoma thus confirms the main findings of the Neutrality Policy Commission—the official inquiry into Sweden’s security contacts with the West in the period 1949–1969, whose report was published in 1994—but he gives them a more critical slant. He agrees that Sweden was not a “covert member” of NATO, but he argues that
this is because Sweden did not need to be. Neither British nor Swedish military planners doubted that if the Soviet Union attacked Norway or Denmark, Sweden would be attacked too. If, in the absence of such an attack, Sweden wished to retain its ultimate freedom of action by declaring itself neutral, that was quite acceptable to everyone involved. “But as long as Sweden’s participation alongside NATO forces in a future war was considered more likely than its neutrality, no definite pledge or agreement was necessarily even needed from a strategic viewpoint” (p. 158). Such an outcome tacitly vindicated the pragmatic, conciliatory policy toward Sweden that had been pursued by British officials from the late 1940s onward. One of the key exponents of that policy, Robin Hankey, summed up the British view of Sweden when he retired as ambassador to Stockholm in 1960. Sweden, he wrote, was “a barnacle on the bottom of the NATO ship,” but it was “only too apparent from a glance at the map that we must want it to have the roughest, toughest and most abrasive shell possible” (p. 153).


Reviewed by George Ross, Brandeis University

*The Uniting of Europe* is a short introduction to European integration. Stanley Henig stresses the importance of the international context and then reviews the history of European integration against the background of changes in world politics. He sees this background in three periods: the coming of the Cold War, the “ossification” of the Cold War after the mid-1960s, and finally the period following the demise of Communism. This felicitous way of organizing things makes *Uniting of Europe* an excellent book whose point of departure provides readers with useful analytical distance from the discussions of institutional design that predominate in the specialist literature.

Surveying the first period, Henig emphasizes that in the absence of the international political changes of the early Cold War years, European integration would never have moved ahead. Jean Monnet’s “functionalist” promotion of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) through the Schuman Plan in 1950 was an innovative approach to confronting the Franco-German problem that was the key to Europe’s future, but Henig convincingly argues that the ECSC could not have materialized without American pressure to rehabilitate West Germany for broader Cold War purposes. During this phase of the Cold War, as Alan Milward has argued, the “rescue” of European nation-states within a broader Western alliance had top priority. In practice this ruled out ambitious Euro-federalist approaches, as the failure of Monnet’s subsequent proposal for a European Defense Community illustrated. A narrower “functionalist” strategy, which anticipated that “spillover” would promote further integration “by stealth,” was the only real alternative.

The six-member European Economic Community (EEC) that came from the
1957 Rome Treaty was a compromise between inter-governmentalism and federalism, structured around a “functionalist” customs union and common policies, particularly in agriculture. “Common Market” institutions were modeled on the ECSC. The “community method” of governance (often called the “Monnet method”) meant that integration could move ahead only when the member-states agreed about their general goals, hence the importance of reading the history of the European Union (EU) in part as a sequence of “grand bargains.” But even when general agreement was reached, the European institutions, particularly the European Commission, generated detailed projects to achieve new goals. Integration thus often moved forward by stealth. Electorates in the individual countries were rarely consulted about this endeavor and in fact were largely unaware of it. The murkiness of the integration process generated what came to be called the “democratic deficit.”

The multiple initiatives that made the EU what it is today occurred against the background of Henig’s second international phase, the “ossification” of the Cold War in the 1960s, when threats of actual war in Europe receded. These momentous years—which brought enlargement of the EEC to include former members of the European Free Trade Association (including the reluctant United Kingdom) and ex-authoritarian and underdeveloped Mediterranean countries, the European Monetary System (EMS), the 1986 Single European Act providing for a unified market by 1992, and vigorous efforts to “deepen” integration—culminated in the Maastricht Treaty negotiations and the commitment to economic and monetary union in 1991. Parallel to the new grand bargains were incremental but important institutional changes, including summits of the European Council, the invigoration of the European Parliament, and the emergence of the European Court of Justice as a powerful force through its establishment of the supremacy of European law. When describing these and other innovations, Henig concisely touches on all the high points.

At this stage of the book, however, Henig’s “central thesis . . . that external events have always been a critical determinant of the process of integration” (p. 85) runs into problems. Henig thinks of “external events” in terms of the traditional interstate balance of power, resulting in misconceptions. In particular, relationships between an “ossified” Cold War and events in the 1970s and 1980s are much more tenuous than he implies. Change in the Cold War balance of power was much less significant for European integration than was international economic upheaval, including the ending of Bretton Woods, oil shocks, exchange-rate volatility, and endemic inflation tied to domestic European corporatism. These pressures forced new departures, beginning with the EMS in the late 1970s, and propelled Europe toward the multiple innovations that led to the pivotal Maastricht negotiations in 1991. Henig deserves credit for showing that changes in the international system did affect European integration. But in overemphasizing these changes, he downplays the most important feature of the New Europe, namely, that it is at heart a market-building and economic business. His solid, readable review of the road toward Maastricht never fully explains why this road was taken.

This second edition of The Uniting of Europe (the original was published in 1997) obliges Henig to try to make sense of the EU in its third international phase,
following the end of the Soviet bloc. We know the huge issues that emerged—the German question again, enlargement to Central and Eastern Europe, thorny issues of institutional and budgetary reconfiguration, difficulties implementing Maastricht (Justice and Home Affairs, foreign and defense policy, and, not least, the European Monetary Union), public disaffection connected to declining EU competitiveness and high unemployment, the Yugoslav imbroglio, deepening divisions between key member-states accentuated by U.S. foreign policy, and the EU’s relations with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, to list but a few. That the EU has been in a multidimensional crisis since 1991 is evident today. The very complexity of the crisis has induced many EU academic observers to flee into details away from the big picture. Henig does not follow this trend and provides a concise review of key events and processes, including a good section on New Labour and Europe. That said, he has little to add in clarifying the big picture except an implicit plea to keep one’s eyes on the international context. Alas, this plea is more useful ex post than ex ante. In short, this is a good little book built on a flawed but important analytical framework.


 Reviewed by Alan S. Milward, Cabinet Office (UK)

An analysis of the “American Century” in Europe has the inherent difficulty that to be convincing it requires some comparisons with the reactions of other parts of the world to the military, economic, political, and cultural dominance of the United States since the 1890s. The effectiveness of such comparisons, furthermore, depends on whether the author persuasively defines and characterizes American dominance and accurately depicts the United States itself as a society. In these areas the line between conviction and mere opinion is a thin one indeed. The fourteen authors of *The American Century in Europe* try to walk on the academic side of this divide, but some of them do not manage to stay there.

All the authors more or less agree that the political essence of U.S. dominance is based on an idea or set of ideas called “democracy,” which the United States defines in its own particular way. Hence, the American century, they all agree, rests on something more fundamental than the relationship between gross national product and weapons. The American definition of democracy, some authors argue, is embedded in America’s own history as an immigrant country. The same political ideas that built a centralized nation-state from so many different peoples provided a philosophy for empire, world-power, “regime change,” proselytization of political and religious practice, and unilateralism.

The great exemplar of this is President Woodrow Wilson, who, as Walter LaFeber reminds us, in 1917–1918 advocated a peace settlement based on American principles and values to reorder a world he thought had been ruined by European principles and
values. The convoluted links between moral assertiveness and the extension of American power are pursued by several contributors, notably Alan Brinkley, whose interesting discussion of Henry Luce and his magazines implies that Luce came close to believing that American democracy could be summed up in one word—“freedom.” Brinkley’s essay allows other contributors to imply that one characteristic of the European response to the American Century has been to persist with a more philosophically and politically complex understanding of freedom. Some authors artfully hint at a continuity of language, and thus of over-simplification, in the speeches of Wilson and George W. Bush, implying that the European response to the invasion of Iraq was more complex and hostile. Leaving aside the fact that the European response was far from unified, the more important point is made by Federico Romero—namely, that when U.S. power was directly challenged by Germany and Japan, Franklin Roosevelt used the same Wilsonian language and concepts to reassert American power on a framework of political interdependence, which was reinforced in 1947 by the Marshall Plan. Romero’s chapter shows that the origins of ideas and words weigh less in historical analysis than do the later historical circumstances in which they are used. The American concept of an international order, still uttered in Wilsonian vocabulary, would dissolve if a self-reliant Europe were able to defend itself and its nearby periphery. Readers might be well advised, in view of Woodrow Wilson’s importance to the whole subject, to begin by reading the thorough analysis of his thought, speech, and actions in the chapter by Massimo Salvadori.

In addition to the essays on European reactions to a century of U.S. foreign policy, the chapters of greatest interest are those on religion, the welfare state, and human rights. Proselytizing Christianity as an aspect of freedom, of democracy, and thus of foreign policy—a recurrent American habit—has not been regarded as helpful in Europe. To borrow the phrase of Laurence Moore, it is seen as “the cultural equivalent of genetically engineered food.” Of course, Europe is no more united about genetically modified crops than about Iraq, but when Moore discusses the religious dimension of American exceptionalism he scores some good points that are relevant to the book’s purpose. These points also help explain transatlantic differences in attitudes to human rights. On that subject the United States has been and remains more morally prescriptive than Europe is. In Western Europe, at least, human rights exist for bad, perhaps even for evil, people, and the domestic and foreign issues they raise are generally resolved in a wholly secular context in which religious proselytization is regarded as an infringement of human rights rather than a milestone on the road to “freedom” and “democracy.” Many people in Western Europe still characterize welfare as a “right.” As both James Kloppenberg and Maurizio Vaudagna show in essays that get to the heart of the matter, American society democratically rejected such a concept on the grounds that the capacity of welfare programs to boost the power of the central state was a threat to freedom. Kloppenberg’s contribution is excellent, specifying the long-lasting and historically conditioned differences between American and European liberalism. Yet it is topped in one delightful moment of abandonment of editorial neutrality by Vaudagna. After readily conceding and supplementing the argument that some Europeans agreed with Roosevelt’s opponents in perceiving a link between the welfare state
and excessive government power, he can go no further before remarking “that if, among so many pathologies, twentieth-century Europe has left any decent legacy to the future, the ‘mixed system’ and the welfare state are certainly the more humane and compassionate of them” (p. 237). Quite so. It made me reflect that what is most notably absent in this lively book is a study of the proselytization of an American economic philosophy designed to exalt a particular model of American society and to beatify its preachers. In bringing simpletons to power in the Soviet Union, this served the interests of the United States and perhaps the “West” much more successfully than did any form of the Christian religion, but its tendency to increase the influence of similar simpletons throughout Europe may not serve either side of the Atlantic so well.


Reviewed by Daniel Moran, Naval Postgraduate School

In 1957, French soldiers tortured approximately 40 percent of the male population of the Muslim quarter of Algiers to try to root out the terrorist network of the Algerian National Liberation Front (known to history as the FLN). This campaign, although shadowy and shrouded in euphemism, was not, strictly speaking, secret. Systematic torture in Algeria was the subject of widespread public comment at the time—one French general was relieved of his command after condemning it in the press—and it has attracted a good deal of scholarly investigation since. Several major participants, including the commanding officer in Algiers, General Jacques Massu, have written about it, for the most part unapologetically. Their frankness has been facilitated by the blanket amnesty issued by the French government in 1968, absolving all those who served in Algeria of whatever crimes they may have committed there.

Among professional scholars, the notion that widespread torture occurred during the Algerian War is no more controversial than the notion that Japanese troops brutally occupied China in the 1930s and 1940s or that Turks massacred Armenians during and immediately after World War I. But in the same way that the “rape of Nan-king” and the slaughter of Armenians are still glossed over in current-day Japan and Turkey, so public consciousness in France of this dark passage in the nation’s history has been distorted by systematic obfuscation and denial on the part of the government, with the perhaps predictable result, in the French case, that whenever the officially applied bandage is torn off the wound the bleeding and weeping are profuse.

How else can one explain the extraordinary indignation that has greeted the appearance of Paul Aussaresses’s memoir *The Battle of the Casbah*? By any reckoning it tells a familiar story, albeit from an unusual point of view. Aussaresses, an intelligence
officer on General Massu’s staff, was personally responsible for the torture and execution of dozens of suspects, including several senior figures whose deaths have long been officially ascribed to suicide. Aussaresses’s book is undoubtedly the most hands-on account of the so-called “Battle of Algiers” to have made it into mainstream print, and its effect on French opinion has been galvanic. Amid much uproar, Aussaresses, his publisher, and his editor have all been tried, convicted, and fined on charges of complicity in justifying war crimes—evidently a crime in France, even if having perpetrated them is not. Aussaresses, who retired as a general, has also been forbidden to wear his uniform and was suspended from membership in the Legion d’Honneur at the demand of President Jacques Chirac (who, like Aussaresses, served in Algeria as a captain). But Chirac’s government has rejected demands from human rights organizations that Aussaresses be tried under international law for crimes against humanity, on the grounds that such a proceeding would abridge French sovereignty.

The most disconcerting feature of Aussaresses’s account is undoubtedly its tone, which not only is unabashed but incorporates a fine shading of Gallic sangfroid that does get under the skin, even if you know what lies ahead. This is the story of a fit, intelligent young man doing hard but important work in interesting places, a young man who parachutes for relaxation on the weekends. The story is replete with invented dialogue and unconvincing scenes in which the hero shouts down his commanding officers, slaps and humiliates underlings, and generally behaves like a character in the novels of Jean Lartéguy. Aussaresses’s most sensational factual claim—that the notorious Casbah bomber Ali-la-Pointe was betrayed to the French by the leader of the Algiers rebellion, Saadi Yacef—has (unsurprisingly) been denied by Yacef himself. Absent some sort of corroborating evidence, the issue must remain unresolved. The book’s value as a source on the Algerian war is therefore limited, though it is worth the attention of those who study how torture and atrocity are remembered by the perpetrators. The Battle of the Casbah has the merit of emphasizing that French torture was indeed terrible. Jacques Massu famously declared in his memoirs, La vraie bataille d’Alger (Paris: Plon, 1971), that on one occasion he had had the electrodes attached to himself to verify that what was being done to his prisoners did not exceed the bounds of humanity. Aussaresses observes that if he had been working the generator that day, his commandant would have come to a different conclusion.

The interest that Aussaresses’s story holds for most English-speaking readers will presumably have less to do with Algeria than with the light it purports to shine on the moral calculus of the “war on terror.” Aussaresses, appearing on the CBS television program Sixty Minutes, was asked whether, in the framework of a “ticking bomb” scenario, he would torture a suspected terrorist for information. Aussaresses replied that he believed the answer was obvious, and perhaps so, but then he makes the question too easy. If a cause is worth the torture of the guilty, why not the innocent? After all, other forms of military operation accept the baleful necessity of “collateral damage.” Not the least interesting feature of Aussaresses’s account is his insistence that all of those he tormented had blood on their hands.

Whatever else one might make of it, this is not the argument of a soldier who suf-
fers and inflicts injury and death without reference to the personal qualities of his foe. Aussaresses’s outlook is that of the renegade cop or vigilante, who takes the law into his own hands because he believes the courts or the “system” will betray him. Aussaresses does not consider the extent to which the sometimes atrocious conduct of the French army in Algeria was intended to intimidate the general population, which French authorities always judged, on scant evidence, to be on the verge of mass upheaval. After the war the French would claim to have inflicted 140,000 casualties on the FLN. Charles de Gaulle, speaking off the cuff, once referred to 200,000 dead, whereas French intelligence during the war never estimated FLN strength to be higher than 25,000. The FLN finally won because they calculated, correctly, that their own appalling conduct would inspire a disproportionate and indiscriminate response, the effect of which on opinion in France and internationally would make the French position untenable. Aussaresses ended up on the losing side because he and others like him agreed to inhabit the moral universe their adversary created. Their conduct, to recall the words of another smart and devious Frenchman, was worse than a crime. It was a mistake.


Reviewed by Renate Holub, University of California at Berkeley 

Many publications in recent decades have focused on the traditions and institutions of modernity in Europe and North America, but few of these have taken account of Italy’s experiences of modernity. A book that focuses on an important strand of modernity’s complex trajectory in Italy, in this case on the Marxist revolutionary tradition, is therefore bound to enrich a relatively neglected chapter of modern European history. The task Richard Drake sets for himself is clear: Through a historical examination of the writings and careers of major Italian Marxist thinkers and activists, he seeks to retrace the development of Italy’s Marxist revolutionary tradition. In the eight chapters of the book, Drake combines biographical data with an analysis of the revolutionary theories of political activists such as Karl Marx, Carlo Cañiero, Antonio Labriola, Arturo Labriola, Benito Mussolini, Amadeo Bordiga, Antonio Gramsci, and Palmiro Togliatti. The last three are linked to the development of the Italian Communist Party (PCI), whereas Mussolini embodies Italian fascism, both philosophically and institutionally. Carlo Cañiero represents the link with the theory of anarchism in late nineteenth-century Italy, and the two Labriotlas were standard-bearers of Italian socialism before the advent of Communism. What links these various figures with Marx is not so much Marx’s economic analysis and theory of capitalism but a particular aspect of his political theory, namely, the need for a “dictatorship of the proletariat,” a principle that inspired the political theories of the revolutionary activists discussed in the book.
By placing Mussolini into the ranks of leading Italian Marxist activists, Drake reminds the reader that Mussolini’s promotion of fascist violence must be viewed in relation to socialist and Marxist principles of violence.

The preface and coda of the book indicate that what matters most to Drake theoretically is the relationship between left-wing violence, as it emerged from the violent practices of the Red Brigades, and a left-wing tradition that upheld revolution. Such a relationship can be seen in Italy. But to ensure historical accuracy, we must emphasize that we are not dealing with “Italian Marxism” or Italy’s left-wing tradition tout court. Instead, Drake is considering ideas and concepts of violence that the Red Brigades elaborated by adapting Marx’s concept of the “dictatorship of the proletariat” and by drawing on anarchist critiques of the state. The subtitle of Drake’s book seems to acknowledge that a number of revolutionary traditions exist in Italy, as do a number of Marxist traditions. But because Drake seeks to discuss only one of them, he does not refer to the many other revolutionary traditions in Italy, among them the Neapolitan revolution of the 1790s that was inspired by Gaetano Filangieri, a leading Enlightenment constitutional philosopher and activist whose famous work on the Science of Legislation was highly esteemed by none other than that quintessential American revolutionary activist Thomas Jefferson. If Drake had referred to the diverse Marxist traditions in Italy, he could have highlighted the profound lack of appeal of Marx’s concept of the “dictatorship of the proletariat,” which is roughly synonymous in this volume with a “Marxist principle of violence.”

By the third decade of the twentieth century, Marx’s political theory had already been questioned and rejected by leading Marxist intellectuals everywhere—both despite and because of the advent of the Soviet regime. The complexity of the financial, industrial, technological, and geopolitical expansion of capitalism required new conceptual instruments to reassess the institutional implementation of freedom, justice, and equality. The assertion of the need for greater rights predates Marx’s philosophy, as Italian legal theorists remember when they refer to Giordano Bruno and Tommaso Campanella. Part of the significance of Drake’s valuable book is that it reminds us that Marxism, in whatever form—institutional, intellectual, or ethical—remains a phenomenon of modernity. As such, it is inseparable from its interaction with the organizational forces that govern the economies, polities, and financial systems of industrial capitalism on a national and international level. Only by relating Marxist institutions and intellectual traditions to an empirical study of the organizational forces of capitalism on the level of state elites, industrial elites, technological elites, and international relations can a comprehensive history of modern Italy emerge. Such a project cannot be accomplished by a single scholar, but Drake helps move us toward this larger and overdue goal.

Reviewed by Peter Dennis, University of New South Wales at the Australian Defence Force Academy

This book operates on a number of levels. At its simplest it attempts to explain the circumstances leading to the No Gun Ri incident during the early stages of the Korean War in July 1950, when American soldiers from the 2nd Battalion of the 7th Cavalry Regiment were alleged to have opened fire on and killed several hundred Korean civilians. When Robert Bateman was investigating this story as part of a wider study of the regiment (George C. Custer was perhaps its most famous commanding officer, and his celebrated “last stand” has recently been subjected to similar probing), he encountered frequent examples of puzzling and, he eventually concluded, conflicting evidence that brought him to question whether the incident had even taken place. His growing doubts were crystallized when the Associated Press (AP) published a major exposé of the alleged incident, claiming that this “war crime” had been concealed for the better part of fifty years. The AP journalists who “broke” the story were awarded a Pulitzer Prize for their efforts. Bateman ultimately concluded that no massacre of Korean civilians had actually occurred and that the AP journalists had failed to treat their sources with the circumspection and skepticism that should be the hallmark of quality investigative journalism. Had they done so, they would have come to understand that their star eyewitnesses had never been at No Gun Ri at the time of the supposed incident and that one witness in particular was a spectacular case of the self-created heroic veteran whose type has recurred frequently in the context of the Vietnam War.

Along the way, Bateman discusses the nature of military history, gives a potted history of post–World War II developments as they affected the U.S. Army, and describes in some detail the chaotic situation that preceded the purported massacre at No Gun Ri. Although none of these parts of the book offers anything particularly new to specialists in the area, each contributes to a wider understanding of the context, which Bateman claims characterizes the third model of military history he identifies; namely, “political-military history” (p. xv). Throughout the book Bateman, who began his inquiry while serving as an officer in the 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry, inserts himself into the narrative and into his explanations of how such a false account—deriving in no small part from false and deliberately manufactured memory—came to be accepted as truth. What might at first appear to be an irritating personalization of the investigation and a self-centeredness akin to that of the “witnesses” he has unmasked is in fact an essential part of this fascinating story. Bateman is remarkably frank about his own early naïveté and willingness to believe what he was told; he describes his own mistakes even as his doubts grew; and he makes no damning moral judgments about those who he came to realize were central to the manufacturing of the story. The only exception is the journalists—print and television—whom he roundly (and justifiably) criticizes for their slovenly research and, even worse, for their unwillingness to admit their mistakes when the error of their ways was exposed.
When Bateman began his inquiry, he was a serving officer. As the mass experience of military service fades into the background of American life, fewer and fewer of those who write on military matters will do so on the basis of first-hand experience. That experience by itself, of course, is no guarantee of accuracy, let alone impartiality, but in this case it does give the author insights into military procedures and records that might well escape the civilian writer. Bateman’s forensic explanation of what can be gleaned from various records, and his almost obsessive interrogation of those records—and, by implication, of those who failed to understand what the records could tell—is one of the most interesting parts of his book.

The other recurrent theme that deserves further investigation across multi-war experience is that of the fake veterans or those who have embellished their record. Bateman points out that “wannabes” have emerged after every war, but the phenomenon has yet to be studied widely. In Bateman’s case his investigations coincided in part with the publication of B. G. Burkett’s Stolen Valor: How the Vietnam Generation Was Robbed of Its Heroes and Its History (Dallas: Verity Press Publishing, 1998), which uncovered hundreds of Vietnam-era fakes, some of whom had profited handsomely from their deceit. In the case of No Gun Ri, Bateman came to conclude that the much-decorated Edward Daily (who claimed a Distinguished Service Cross, several Silver Stars, a clutch of Purple Hearts, a battlefield commission, and an escape from North Korean imprisonment) was a fake, that he was not at No Gun Ri when the supposed massacre took place, that his claimed post-traumatic stress disorder (for which he receives a tax-free pension of $2,300 a month) was based on a lie, and that he had built a postwar career within the veteran community, especially that of the 7th Cavalry, almost entirely on deception. What drives these men to embark on this sort of deceit and to maintain and even embellish it once the tissue of lies has been exposed? Bateman can offer only tentative answers at this stage; I hope that he will pursue the matter.

This book is less a contribution to Cold War history than a commentary on more contemporary phenomena. The reporting of war, the manufacture of “news,” and the manipulation of the media and hence of the public mind are all matters of concern. A free and vigorous press, as Bateman reminds us, is an essential part of a healthy democratic system. When it fails, as it demonstrably did over the No Gun Ri “incident,” it remains for dedicated historians to set the record straight. Bateman has done that brilliantly in this book.


Reviewed by Carl Thayer, University of New South Wales

Western, and more particularly American, views of the nature of Vietnam’s Communist revolution have been shaped by the writings of Paul Mus, Nguyen Khac Vien, and Frances FitzGerald. These three scholars have been influential in promoting the argu-
ment that the Communists triumphed largely by tapping Vietnamese traditions. Mus, for example, argued that the Communists had assumed the Confucian mandate of heaven. Vien, in an influential essay published in English in 1974, argued that Confucianism and Marxism were essentially similar in their moral outlook. As for Fitzgerald, Kim Ninh writes that her “overarching use of the concept of the mandate of heaven [in her best-selling book Fire in the Lake] essentially embalmed modern Vietnamese nationalism” (p. 5). Le Duan, the first secretary (and later general secretary) of the Vietnamese Workers’ Party popularized the slogan that “the nation and socialism are one,” thus setting the seal of party orthodoxy on this issue.

Ninh terms these views the “continuity thesis,” by which she means “the tendency to attribute Vietnamese success in repelling foreign domination largely to the traditional strengths of a country that possessed an ancient civilization and a strong sense of national identity” (p. 238). A World Transformed challenges the “continuity thesis” by exhaustively examining the politics of culture and state-intellectual relations in the two decades following Vietnam’s declaration of independence. Ninh argues that the “continuity thesis” ignores major transformations during the colonial period. “My concern,” she writes, “is that the pervasiveness of the continuity thesis has unwillingly engendered a static view of revolutionary politics in Vietnam, ignoring its radical and modern dimensions” (p. 6).

Ninh’s conception of revolutionary politics includes the interaction of both ideology and structure in the creation of Vietnam’s post-revolutionary state. A World Transformed is divided into two parts, each focusing on a distinct historical period. Part one covers the 1945–1954 period, when the politics of culture was conducted at the same time that protracted armed resistance was under way against French colonialism. Part two considers developments from 1955 to 1965, the early years of Vietnamese Communist attempts to construct Southeast Asia’s first socialist state.

During the War of Resistance (1946–1954), Vietnam’s Communist leaders sought to shape cultural policy along Marxist lines and win over the intellectual class to their anti-French united front. A key role was played by the party ideologue Truong Chinh, who penned the “Theses on Culture” in 1943 and “Marxism and the Issue of Vietnamese Culture” in 1948. Both of these tracts borrowed from earlier writings by Mao Zedong. Ninh argues that the “Theses on Culture” negatively defined Vietnamese culture “as being against the nation, against science, and against the people” (p. 34).

Truong Chinh’s 1948 report, delivered at the Second National Conference on Culture, had a decisive impact on later events. He argued that culture (including literature and art) could not be neutral or objective in a society undergoing class struggle. Culture, in his view, was a tool held by the party to advance its ideological objectives, and Vietnam’s intellectuals were expected to accept this principle. Responsibility for winning over Vietnam’s intellectuals was left to the Cultural Association for National Salvation, a component of the united front. Once again Vietnam’s popular cultural heritage and traditions were attacked as backward.

Vietnamese intellectuals, who widely supported the goal of gaining national independence, were uneasy about the party’s heavy-handed views on culture. A well-
known painter, To Ngoc Van, was one of those who dissented, arguing that not all art should be considered propaganda. The party responded by pressing its class struggle line and tightening its grip over intellectual activities.

A turning point was reached at the Conference of Debate convened by the Association of Art and Literature in the remote Viet Bac area in September 1949. Thereafter, the party took a commanding role in determining the ideological content, literary and cultural forms, and structure of intellectual activities. Free-form poetry was proscribed, cai luong theater was banned for its romantic and sentimental content, and only lacquer painting was approved. The party also moved to “rectify” not only the education system but intellectuals themselves through a system of political education.

In the second part of the book, Ninh deftly traces the role of cultural politics in the construction of a Vietnamese socialist state. She reviews the land-reform campaign of 1953–1956, the Rectification of Errors campaign that followed, and the emergence of widespread dissent among intellectuals who were opposed to the tightening of ideological controls over their means of expression. Remarkably, not until 1958 did the Vietnamese authorities shut down all privately owned publishing houses and take repressive action against intellectual dissenters. Ninh’s account of the Nhan Van giai Pham affair provides new insights into this important period.

Ninh concludes her account of the politics of culture by discussing the foundation, structure, and mission of the Ministry of Culture and the subsequent reform of the educational system. Her account reveals the difficulties in molding a new stratum of intellectuals to serve the state’s objective of building a socialist state. One interesting finding is that the strict application of the party’s class background criterion was relaxed to take into account a person’s past activities in service to the revolution.

* A World Transformed is based on solid research conducted in the National Archives in Hanoi in 1991–1993. Ninh gained access to government documents from the National Assembly, the office of the prime minister, and the ministries of education and culture (later merged). These sources are supplemented by a wide range of Vietnamese-language material—fiction and non-fiction—including newspapers and journals published during the period covered by this study as well as subsequently. Ninh’s book is highly recommended for Vietnam specialists and for those studying the role of culture in political transformation.