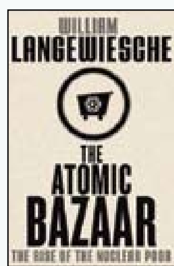
Off the Shelf

Although North Korea's recent partial declaration of its nuclear activity and destruction of a cooling tower at a nuclear facility in June allowed resumption of the Six-Party Talks, it would be premature to celebrate these actions as a victory for counterproliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Iran's bold missile tests in July raised tensions in the Middle East as Tehran continued to develop its nuclear capability while calling for the destruction of Israel. The West rightly remains concerned about North Korean and Iranian uranium enrichment activities and suspected sales of nuclear technology to other countries. The proliferation of nuclear and other WMD and the potential terrorist use of such weapons remain ominous threats that the strategy and policy communities must address and the general public should try to understand. The following titles take steps in the right direction to help both audiences.



The Atomic Bazaar: The Rise of the Nuclear Poor
by William Langewiesche
New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007
179 pp. $22.00
ISBN: 978–0–374–10678–2

Anyone associated with the formulation and execution of U.S. national security policy should read *The Atomic Bazaar* to gain insight into the real and potential problems of nuclear proliferation. William Langewiesche wrote this while reporting for *The Atlantic Monthly*, and the book, a loosely confederated group of related articles from that journal, is a quick read that clearly frames today's nuclear proliferation challenges against the backdrop of terrorists and weak states seeking to obtain nuclear material through illicit means.

Noting that there are many people in the world today who, given the required material, could assemble a Hiroshima-type nuclear bomb in their garage (p. 3), Langewiesche devotes the first part of the book to demonstrating the potential ways such individuals could obtain the material required to construct one. He also does a good job of debunking myths and rumors about "loose nukes" and "briefcase nukes" missing from the former Soviet arsenal but unfortunately skews his work with blatant, opinionated criticisms of the G.W. Bush and Clinton administrations' policies. He describes how one could, with enough highly enriched uranium (HEU), set off a significant nuclear explosion simply by dropping one lump of HEU onto another (p. 67). Langewiesche balances these alarming examples by noting that the challenges associated with obtaining and successfully assembling the required material likely explain why such an attack has not yet occurred (p. 69), but he decidedly points out that it is possible. The second part of the book is dedicated to explaining how Pakistan's A.Q. Khan successfully obtained the technology for Pakistan to develop its nuclear arsenal and subsequently set up an illicit international trade in material required to construct nuclear weapons.

Langewiesche concludes that nuclear war between the great powers is far less likely than an exchange of nuclear weapons between or among poor states or nonstate actors that seek to instill terror or to be "respected, feared, or to intimidate" (p. 16)—and there is "nothing like nuking civilians to achieve that effect" (p. 6).

On Nuclear Terrorism
by Michael Levi
Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007
224 pp. $24.95
ISBN: 978–0–674–02649

Levi, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations and an expert on the role of science and technology in U.S. foreign policy, has written an excellent and challenging book on the problem of nuclear terrorism that is being read and debated in all corners of the WMD community. Levi's purpose in writing this book was three-fold: to educate the reader about the science and technology of nuclear weapons, to improve strategies to protect against a terrorist nuclear attack, and to avoid providing any information that could help potential terrorists—a tall order for such a short book. Levi's writing style should appeal to technophobes as well as technophiles since he restricts mathematical and technical notation to footnotes and appendices. Levi describes this book as being "about understanding how to see the big picture of nuclear terrorism, and how to use that understanding to defeat it" (p. 3).

Through a systemic analysis of all aspects of handling nuclear weapons and their associated material ranging from production through delivery, Levi painstakingly constructs a framework that seeks to disrupt a terrorist plot at any of one or more levels. Levi's premise is that defense against nuclear terrorism cannot be aimed at one facet of the problem and, by constructing a multilayered defense strategy, that the United States will increase the probability of intercepting a terrorist plot at least at one point though it may successfully get through others. A discussion of various scenarios for proliferation of nuclear material and weapons to terrorist groups precedes the concluding chapter, which offers several suggestions for the U.S. defense establishment to consider.

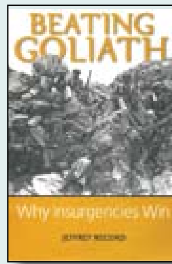
Levi certainly achieves all three of his objectives and continues to receive much acclaim, but the book is a challenging read for the layperson. That said, it is well worth working one's way through it to gain the benefit of a well researched and dispassionate discussion of a critical threat to our national security. Levi's comprehensive solution set may not be considered practical by policymakers as it includes a wide range of costly measures that must be constantly exercised and tested. Finally, after all the careful analysis and explanation, the reader may be dismayed to see the words "luck" and "Murphy's Law" in the final paragraphs. In the closing sentences, Levi equivocates and concludes that "no defense can eliminate nuclear terrorism . . . but the right strategy can tilt the odds in our favor." In the end, this book is a must read for anyone involved in the problem of

protecting our nation from nuclear terrorism.

Other recently published titles recommended for reading:

- Cirincione, Joseph. *Bomb Scare: The History and Future of Nuclear Weapons*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007. 224 pp. $27.95
- Preston, Thomas. *From Lambs to Lions: Future Security Relationships in a World of Biological and Nuclear Weapons*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007. 448 pp. $95.00
- Venter, Al J. *Allah's Bomb: The Islamic Quest for Nuclear Weapons*. Guilford, CT: Lyons, 2007. 336 pp. $24.95 (Hardcover)

—R.E. Henstrand



Beating Goliath: Why Insurgencies Win
by Jeffrey Record
Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2007
192 pp. $24.95
ISBN–13: 978–1–59797–090–7

Reviewed by
DAVID J. LYLE

A useful critique of *Beating Goliath: Why Insurgencies Win* might best start by describing what the book is *not*. At 144 pages of text, it is *not* an exhaustive treatment of the history and theories of counterinsurgency (COIN). It does *not* argue, as some reviewers have suggested, that Davids usually defeat Goliaths. It does *not* suggest that the United States should forgo its conventional strength to concentrate on counterinsurgency. *Beating Goliath* is a concise, insightful, and thoroughly researched work that uses historical case studies to propose that there are certain conditions that, in the right combinations, can dramaticallyenhance the chances for the weak to overcome the strong in war. Record demonstrates that an understanding of these aspects, whether from the perspective of David or Goliath, will dispel any misconception that a mighty giant can fall to rock-throwing peasants only if the shot is lucky or if the giant's hands are bound.

Record assumes reader familiarity with the classic theorists of insurgency and irregular warfare but does due diligence to modern COIN theorists. He adopts the arguments of Ivan Arreguin-Toft (superior strategy prevails in asymmetric matchups) and Gil Gerom (democracies are inherently disadvantaged in irregular warfare because their populations reject the methods and timelines required to win), and then adds a third approach for predicting the weaker side's chances for success. Using historical examples—including an outstanding analysis of how an American David won the War of Independence against the British Goliath—Record makes a compelling argument for the importance of outside assistance in successful insurgencies, a factor often marginalized or ignored in most treatments of irregular warfare in favor of ideological and political factors.

Record concludes that "the combination of a stronger political will, a superior strategy, and external assistance can be a potent formula for insurgent success" (p. 67), though not a guarantor of it. He also makes the excellent point, echoing Andrew Mack, that many mistakenly judge a Goliath's relative strength by his total military capability rather than the strength available where the counterinsurgency is being conducted (pp. 9–10). Record's argument is validated in the American Revolution case study and perhaps is best illustrated in modern times by the current North Atlantic Treaty Organization experience in Afghanistan.

Thus, Record presents, in converse, three criteria by which the stronger side's planners should be able to win—a combination of strategy, local staying power, and ability to isolate the insurgents—and avoids the mostly irrelevant comparisons of total economic power, superior numbers, and overall military strength typically used to judge Goliath's chances for success. His subsequent application of these criteria to the U.S. experiences in Vietnam and Iraq (including an insightful comparison of the conflicts) highlights how the American Goliath has not always accounted for these factors in how it organizes, trains, and equips its forces (a point made in John Nagl's *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, which Record cites). He also argues that U.S. planners have traditionally confused military success with political victory during war termination planning, and tend to blame U.S. COIN losses on restrictions and limitations on the application of force—as Record phrases it, "because it was not sufficiently *conventional* in fighting the war" (p. 124). Record echoes Colin Gray in arguing that the United States often mistakenly sees the warfighting and political sides of conflict as separate, sequential actions rather than inseparable aspects of what should be a singular, mutually dependent effort between politicians and the military, a view that is inherently detrimental to successful counterinsurgency.

Record's commentary on the traditional U.S. difficulty with irregular warfare is valid and well documented. While the majority of the book is convincing, it becomes problematic in its conclusion when Record proposes that the United States "should avoid direct military involvement in foreign internal wars" (p. 137) because its political system, culture, and skills are inherently unsuited to the requirements for successful foreign counterinsurgency. This view seemingly fails to account for the fact that the combination of the enemy's "vote" and the corresponding political necessity for action in the face of attacks may not allow U.S. policymakers the luxury of choosing whether to engage in counterinsurgency. This comment is especially curious as it comes after Record's own well-crafted argument that the Weinberger Doctrine incorrectly divorced politics from war, creating "a recipe for military inaction" by instituting an "all-or-nothing approach" (p. 127) that resulted in the U.S. neglect of counterinsurgency after Vietnam. By his own arguments, avoiding military participation in COIN altogether would be a similar form of "absolutism" that does not recognize the Clausewitzian admonition that force is an arm of diplomacy, not something merely "to be used only when diplomacy failed" (p. 127).

Additionally, this "pre-surge" view assumes that the United States cannot adapt to the challenges of irregular warfare, discounts examples of successful U.S. military limited involvement in COIN (such as the effort in El Salvador from 1980–1992), and fails to consider the possibility that even imperfectly executed COIN operations may have a positive strategic effect in the long run. While Record is indeed realistic, only time will tell if he is overly pessimistic.

Beating Goliath is a significant addition to the irregular warfare discussion that concisely summarizes the challenges of waging counterinsurgency and asymmetric warfare. Record provides a useful intellectual construct for the development of "strong against weak" (or vice versa) strategies. His most useful contribution is to remind us that military success can be, as a North Vietnamese officer famously stated, "irrelevant" to achieving victory. Unless sound counterinsurgency strategies combining military and political elements are chosen and specifically designed to simultaneously maintain

domestic support (both in the partner nation and at home) and isolate the insurgent from the same, Goliath will be on shaky ground before the first stone is slung. Using Record's criteria for analysis, future U.S. planners are less likely to commit their traditional "Goliath" mistake in warfare—as Fred Charles Ikle described it in *Every War Must End*, "choosing a plan without an ending." **JFQ**

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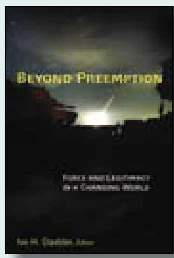


Beyond Preemption: Force and Legitimacy in a Changing World
Edited by Ivo H. Daalder
Washington, DC: Brookings, 2007
190 pp. $19.95
ISBN–13: 978–0–8157–1685–3

Reviewed by
MATTHEW J. MORGAN

Beyond Preemption provides a timely assessment of changing understandings of the use of force through a cross-national sample of politicians, strategists, diplomats, and international lawyers that the Brookings Institution conducted over 3 years. The book focuses on the impact of the Iraq War on the dynamics of the international community and on the ability to mobilize collective action in the future.

The contributors share the opinion that collective action in places such as Darfur, where the international community seems embarrassingly ineffective, has become more difficult because of Iraq. This argument seems to ignore earlier examples such as Kosovo or Rwanda, where United Nations (UN) Security Council authorization to prevent ethnic fighting was equally elusive. Even during the early days of the United Nations, its authorization for force after North Korea's invasion of the South occurred only because the Soviet boycott of the Security Council prevented a Soviet veto. Iraq hardly seems to change the dynamics of a collective body riven by the divergent national interests of its great power members.

Beyond Preemption, however, views the Iraq war as a significant paradigm shift that has altered the dynamics of international opinion on the use of force. The contributing authors discuss the use of force respectively to prevent the proliferation and use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), to fight terrorism, and to conduct humanitarian intervention. Changing notions of state sovereignty norms are addressed in all of these chapters. A summary chapter, "What the World Thinks," covers these themes as well as sharing the outcome of the Brookings cross-national survey. Finally, appendices include two recent landmark U.S. National Security Strategies and three UN reports such as *The Responsibility to Protect*. Absent is any biographical information on chapter authors that would be expected in an edited volume, only a list of their names and institutional affiliations.

In the foreword, scholar and diplomat Strobe Talbott makes several unsupported assertions that made this reviewer question where the book would lead. In two sentences, Talbott argues that American intervention in Afghanistan has been unsuccessful because of a diversion of attention to Iraq and that Iraq has been unsuccessful because of its illegitimacy in world opinion. While both of these arguments are plausible, they are rather controversial to make without further development. Setbacks in both Afghanistan and Iraq could be due to the committed and canny Islamist insurgencies in those countries, the monumental size of the task that could not be accomplished even with more attention or allied support, or flawed execution (which the author mentions but dismisses as not the primary factor).

Talbott claims a few paragraphs later that "since 1945, most states have generally lived up to these rules"—"these rules" being the UN Charter's prohibition of "the use of force in interstate relations [that] recognizes only two exceptions . . . defend[ing] themselves and . . . authorization of the UN Security Council." A historical review may not suggest that there has been such minimal use of interstate force since 1945. Examples that come readily to mind include Afghanistan in the 1980s, Korea, Vietnam, the Falklands, Israel, Kashmir, and numerous small-scale wars in the developing world.

An introduction by editor Ivo Daalder sets up the book and provides a coherent case against the preemption doctrine articulated by the Bush administration after September 11. James Steinberg then addresses the difficult problem of using force to combat the spread of weapons of mass destruction. He is sympathetic to the need for force, even preemptive force, to prevent the destabilizing and risky consequences of the spread of WMD, but he also recognizes the difficulties of its use for this purpose.

Bruce Jentleson's chapter on the use of force against terrorism provides a more skeptical assessment of both the legitimacy and efficacy of using force. He also raises the issue of international opinion, citing in particular countries that might find themselves the site of counterterrorist intervention (such as Sudan, Iran, and Libya) as highly critical of both its efficacy and legitimacy.

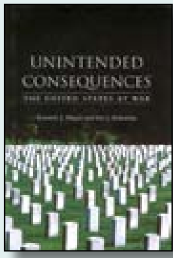
Susan Rice and Andrew Loomis discuss the tensions between sovereignty and intervention and the evolution of this dynamic throughout the 1990s. Much of their chapter is a review of ideas circulated in the scholarly field in the early part of this decade. However, they include discussion on Iraq and Darfur in particular and conclude with an impassioned call for international involvement in Darfur.

The final chapter, by Anne Kramer, provides an overview of the various concepts discussed in the book with a focus on how respondents to the Brookings survey reacted. This chapter is the least compelling of the main chapters of the book for two reasons. First, references to the respondents seemed inconsistent, sometimes using terminology such as "Russians and Middle Eastern participants expressed" (p. 129) and other times "India, Pakistan, and Israel agreed" (p. 111). The latter characterization is problematic because the survey of these midlevel functionaries could not really merit the metonymy used to suggest a state position. (This could be a merely stylistic issue.)

The second concern presents a more fundamental difficulty. The chapter meandered and was hard to follow. It was difficult to determine the author's goal, and only after 36 pages did she present the framework synthesizing her findings. The chapter would have been much more cogent and readable had this framework been introduced at its outset.

Altogether, *Beyond Preemption* was an interesting read that provides a timely assessment of an important topic. As the United States is preparing for a new administration, this contribution to the literature in international relations will help inform scholars and policymakers as new ideas are developed to deal with the difficult realities that confront the world in Iraq and beyond. **JFQ**

Matthew J. Morgan is an Associate at McKinsey and Company.



Unintended Consequences: The United States at War
by Kenneth J. Hagan and Ian J. Bickerton
London: Reaktion Books, 2007
224 pp. $29.95
ISBN–13: 978–186189–310–9

Reviewed by
CARL L. REED II

War is folly, war is futile—at least that is what historians Kenneth Hagan and Ian Bickerton conclude in this intentionally provocative version of history. They argue that the major wars fought by the United States always result in malignant "unintended consequences" on an order of magnitude far greater than the intended outcomes, or even the positive unintended outcomes, of war. Unfortunately, the authors' decision to disregard any positive aftermath of war has produced a book that is far too simplistic in its approach and transparently agenda-driven in its conclusions.

The authors limit their definition of unintended consequences to "those events that could only have occurred as the result of war: that is, without the war the events would not have occurred" and exclude events in which war is merely a precondition or "unwanted events that it was known would occur as the result of war (for example, casualties)" (p. 10). Moreover, they ignore any positive results of war and deliberately focus their essay on the undesirable unintended outcomes of war, which, in their opinion, "are most quickly overlooked and forgotten in the retelling of America's wars and in describing the lessons allegedly learned from past wars" (p. 12).

Hagan and Bickerton conclude that Carl von Clausewitz's maxim that "war is the continuation of policy by other means" is invalid and therefore not a useful guideline for policymakers. On examination of the wars in which the United States has been involved, the authors decide war is not a continuation of existing policy at all; rather, war historically either results in a fundamental transformation of existing policy or creates entirely new policy. In this regard, Hagan and Bickerton surmise that the ongoing war in Iraq, and the U.S. inability to achieve its policy objectives there, is merely following historical precedent in producing a variety of malignant "unintended consequences." In their view, "[g]oing to war did not solve problems, it [merely] created new ones" (p. 188).

The authors limit their analysis to the 11 major wars the United States has been involved in: the War for Independence, War of 1812, war against Mexico, Civil War, Spanish-American War, World War I, World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War, and the two wars against Iraq. To structure their analysis, they methodically examine each war and the reasons that the Presidents gave to Congress for embarking on them and then compare the circumstances ending the conflicts to determine the extent to which the stated objectives were achieved. The authors persuasively argue that the outcomes of these major wars were vastly different from the stated objectives at their outset.

However, Hagan and Bickerton confound the outcome variances as necessarily tainted despite anecdotal evidence to the contrary. For instance, they point out that American independence was not an initial objective of the colonists in the War for Independence. Likewise, at the conclusion of the War of 1812, the Treaty of Ghent failed to address President James Madison's objectives that the British cease the practices of naval blockades and impressment against the United States and its citizens. After the war, however, the British never again used these practices against the United States. Moreover, the emancipation of slaves and the eventual 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments to the Constitution were also "unintended consequences" of the Civil War. The authors' implication that these outcomes are inferior because they varied from the stated objectives of war is unquestionably faulty.

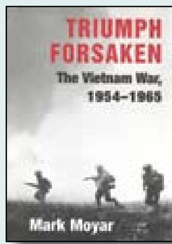
Hagan and Bickerton do their best work setting the stage for each of the major U.S. wars by meticulously referencing the publicly stated objectives of each war and then tracing the transformation, or complete change, of those objectives throughout the conduct of the war. Each chapter is usefully partitioned to discuss the event leading up to the war, its conduct, and ultimately its "unintended consequences."

As historians, the authors are quite deliberate and provide a convincing set of facts for the reader to consume. Unfortunately, they fail to present their argument objectively and tend to contort facts to satisfy a political and social agenda. For example, they cite the Spanish-American War as the conflict most closely resembling the current war in Iraq because both involve regime change and mass cruelty to citizens. As a result, Hagan and Bickerton gratuitously discuss the lease agreement the United States has with Cuba and state that "[m]ore than one hundred years after signing the lease, as part of the 'Global War on Terrorism', the United States set up an internment camp at Guantanamo that made the Spanish look like amateurs in the practices of cruelty and barbarity" (pp. 100–101). Multiple unsubstantiated comments of this type infiltrate each chapter of the book.

Disappointingly, Hagan and Bickerton conclude the book with a diatribe: war is obsolescent, the Bush administration is run by religious fanatics, the rule of law is currently ignored, and the United States needs to submit to the International Criminal Court and the United Nations. Moreover, they discuss how without war, the United States could focus on conserving energy, fighting global warming, and promoting education. The authors' fervor in making these arguments tremendously undermines their credibility as experts in the field.

Setting aside the political and social agenda, *Unintended Consequences* is a must-read for senior leadership and policymakers. This quick read underscores the importance of clear policy objectives and goals at the outset of war. Additionally, it buttresses the importance of branches and sequels to a campaign. The utility of this book is to equip the reader with an awareness of unintended consequences of war, and the authors competently succeed in that regard. Whether war is folly or war is futile is left for the reader to decide. **JFQ**

Lieutenant Colonel Carl L. Reed II, USAFR, is a Reserve Military Judge and an attorney in private practice.



Triumph Forsaken:
The Vietnam War, 1954–1965
by Mark Moyar
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006
512 pp. $32.00
ISBN: 0–521–86911–0

Reviewed by
LEWIS SORLEY

"Ripeness is all," wrote Shakespeare. Mark Moyar has demonstrated the enduring truth of this observation by publishing, at the exact moment when U.S. policy in Iraq was undergoing intensive and very public review and reevaluation, a brilliant analysis, amounting to a cautionary tale of American policy during the early years of the war in Vietnam. This account not only extends and corrects our understanding of Vietnam in many dimensions but also provides multiple useful insights applicable to similar foreign involvements, actual or contemplated.

Moyar, a young stalwart in the forefront of the revisionist legions, set out about 7 years ago to produce a one-volume treatment of the Vietnam War. So productive was his research, however, that he was obliged to publish the results on the early years in this volume, with the remainder to follow in a forthcoming volume. His impressive work introduces an authoritative new voice into what is left of the debate about the nature, conduct, responsibility for, and outcome of the Vietnam War. His views, and their unassailable base, will have to be taken into account in future works on the topic.

Moyar acknowledges at the outset the academic battles that for years have mirrored the military battles of the war itself. The bulk of the literature comes from "the orthodox school, which generally sees America's involvement in the war as wrongheaded and unjust. The revisionist school, which sees the war as a noble but improperly executed enterprise, has published much less, primarily because it has few adherents in the academic world" (p. xi). For those whose knowledge of the Vietnam War derives primarily from secondary sources and what has come to be accepted as the orthodox view, Moyar's assessment of what might have been will come as a great surprise. But his thoroughgoing scholarship demands attention and respect. His catalogue of American officialdom's misjudgments and misconduct in the early years is itself enough to commend this work as required reading.

Moyar's central thesis is that great progress was made in South Vietnam's conduct of the war under Ngo Dinh Diem and that, had not certain Americans colluded in pulling Diem down, the war could have been satisfactorily resolved and—it is implied—without the introduction of large numbers of U.S. ground forces and extensive losses on both sides, and with an outcome favorable to the allied coalition rather than to the communists. Although it is impossible to know whether the Diem regime, supported rather than undermined by its sometime ally, could have sustained itself and fashioned an enduring counter to communist aggression, Moyar offers much evidence worthy of consideration.

Diem was a man of extraordinary ability, determination, and probity. This was widely known, and appreciated, during his initial years in office. Ambassador J. Lawton Collins reported that "Diem's integrity, strong nationalism, tenacity, and spiritual qualities render him the best available Prime Minister to lead Vietnam in its struggle against Communism" (p. 45). Diem took control of the army, subdued dissident sects and criminal warlords, and countered the communists. He promoted economic gains, education, and health care. He brought genuine land reform to the Mekong Delta. He governed authoritatively but austerely and with integrity. Without Diem, there would have been no independent or viable South Vietnam.

Journalist David Halberstam decided otherwise and set out to bring Diem down. In a campaign played out primarily in the pages of the *New York Times*, Halberstam systematically disparaged Diem and his government, then later misrepresented his own reportorial record. Moyar has painstakingly analyzed Halberstam's dispatches and compared them with his later books, finding that Halberstam claimed in 1972 to have opposed the war as early as 1963 when in fact he strongly supported it in 1965. Halberstam and others "presented grossly inaccurate information on the Buddhist protest movement and South Vietnamese politics, much of which they unwittingly received from secret Communist agents" (p. xvi). Then, having helped to bring down Diem, Halberstam and other journalists "disparaged Diem with falsehoods so as to claim that South Vietnam was already weak beyond hope before the coup" (p. xvii). Of Halberstam's stint in Saigon, Moyar concludes, "Before he left . . . he would do more harm to the interests of the United States than any other journalist in American history."

Eventually, a small group of American officials concluded that Diem had to go and conspired to facilitate his ouster. Moyar writes, "Twice in Vietnam the Americans would forsake the successes that they had attained at a heavy cost in men and dollars. The first took place on November 1, 1963" (p. 287), the day Diem was murdered. Those who saw bringing down Diem as in America's interests had apparently given little thought to who might succeed him and, presumably, do better. As a consequence, a series of inept, self-serving, and disputatious "leaders" followed over the next several years. In Moyar's view, "Supporting the coup of November 1963 was by far the worst American mistake of the Vietnam War" (p. xvii).

Lyndon Johnson inherited a war that he neither wanted nor had much stomach for. His lack of candor in dealing with the American people would "prove a disastrous error in the long run, for the people ultimately were to recognize his deceitfulness and his failure to inspire the people for war" (p. 355). Johnson had some stupendously inept advisors, chief among them Robert McNamara and General Earle Wheeler, but the errors in such a scheme of deception were entirely his own.

Another important theme running through Moyar's account is the lack of facts on the state and progress of the war. Johnson did not level with the public about his plans for deployment of U.S. troops. The press neither told the public much about the true nature of communist aggression in South Vietnam, nor presented a fair and balanced picture of South Vietnam's own government and its conduct of the war. Many in our own government, to include the Congress, knew little about the nature of the war or its progress. Among the many deficiencies of successive administrations in Washington, the persistent failure to mount an effective counter to monopolization of the debate by antiwar elements was one of the most disabling.

Misperceptions of the war extended to the White House itself. President Johnson's approach to conduct of the war, shaped as it was by "misplaced fears and faulty intelligence and unwarranted confidence in brainy civilians, forfeited opportunities to deny the Communists the great strategic advantages that they were to enjoy for the next ten years" (p. 416).

Ultimately, Johnson acquiesced to repeated requests for more troops from his field commander, General William C. Westmoreland, resulting in well over a half-million American troops on the ground at the high water mark. How that played out under Johnson and then, as those same forces were progressively withdrawn, under his successor Richard Nixon will be the subject of Moyar's next book. It promises to be every bit as fascinating and instructive as this work. **JFQ**

Lewis Sorley is the author of *A Better War: The Unexamined Victories and Final Tragedy of America's Last Years in Vietnam*.