

Book Reviews

From Omaha Beach to Dawson's Ridge: The Combat Journal of Captain Joe Dawson. By Cole C. Kingseed. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2005. 272 pages. \$29.95. **Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Robert Bateman**, a strategist assigned to the Office of Net Assessment, Office of the Secretary of Defense.

First-person contemporary accounts of war are the bread and butter of the military historian. They sustain us. Such records are among those known as "primary sources," and they are vital to our understanding of the past. More than the staid accounts one finds in the log-books of ships, or the wealth of information one may pull from a regimental operations map overlay stored in the National Archives, both of which are also "primary sources," because they are contemporaneous, it is the archetypical "letters found in an attic" which excites the historian's heart. Such a find is the sort of material which can breathe the humanity back into a larger account of the past. The collected letters of Captain Joe Dawson are a perfect example of just this sort of material, and in this book Cole Kingseed does a masterful job in arranging the letters and placing them in their proper context.

Joe Dawson was the product of the same central Texas towns which produced Ernie Pyle's most famous subject, the beloved Captain Waskow. Raised in a minister's home in Waco, Texas, Dawson was a middle child in a fairly large family. He attended Baylor University. Like many young men with engineering or geology degrees in that state, Dawson went into the oil business upon graduation. He enlisted in 1941, in a bid to control his own destiny in those days of a "peacetime" emergency and draft. By 1942 Dawson was commissioned as a lieutenant of infantry and assigned to the First Infantry Division.

This book is a well-woven synthesis of Dawson's letters home with explanatory narrative from Kingseed. Dawson was writing deliberately with an eye towards posterity. He had even gone so far as to ask that his family keep his letters so that they might form just such a de facto journal in later years. Throughout his service he was a diligent correspondent and wrote home on a great number of topics. Starting out on regimental and division staffs, he served through the North African and Sicilian campaigns as an aide to Major General Terry Allen and Brigadier Teddy Roosevelt. This unique position, and the character of those two particular officers (both of whom regularly spent time under fire at the front with their troops) gave Dawson a grand view of the progress of operations through both campaigns.

Just after the Sicilian campaign, Dawson was assigned to company command of G Company, 2d Battalion, 16th Infantry. Although the account of Dawson's leadership as one of the first company commanders to lead his men off the beach and onto the commanding heights overlooking Omaha Beach at Normandy does not begin until page 145, it is apt that the book's title highlights this element of Dawson's story. Dawson was an awe-inspiring, heroic leader. In an era when awards and deco-

rations were difficult to win, Dawson won the Distinguished Service Cross for his actions on his first day in combat as a company commander. It is also a measure of how well he commanded the unit to note that not only was the regiment awarded a Presidential Unit Citation (for its role on D-Day), but while under his command this company won the Presidential Unit Citation of its own.

Cole Kingseed, is well suited to the task of bringing Dawson's account back to life. While this reviewer rejects the notion that a historian must have served in the military to write well about the military, he does note that sometimes it certainly helps. In interviewing Dawson some months before his death, (Dawson died in 1998.) Kingseed spoke to Dawson infantryman to infantryman. This shines through, and it also leads to one of the more engaging aspects of the book.

As previously mentioned, Dawson was aware that he was writing what amounted to a memoir in each of his letters, yet he did not spare himself. If there is an intrinsic value here, beyond that of the purely voyeuristic, it is in watching the gradual disintegration of Dawson himself under the strain of combat. In letter after letter sent from the brutal combat of the bocage, across France, and at the gates of Germany, it appears that Dawson knew what was happening to his mind and morale, even as it occurred. Yet instead of concealing it, he self-consciously wrote about the process of mental, physical, and emotional disintegration. Ultimately, after 37 days of holding his unit together during a sustained series of attacks by elements of two different German divisions outside of the Germany city of Aachen, Dawson collapsed. At every level he was spent, but his mission was accomplished and the unit's position retained. In this too, even now, years after his death, Captain Joe Dawson had a lesson to teach Americans about war.

I strongly recommend this book.

The Making of a Terrorist: Recruitment, Training and Root Causes (3 volume set). Edited by James J. F. Forest. Westport, Conn.: Praeger Security International, 2006. 1,280 pages. \$300.00. **Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Matthew W. Markel**, a strategist at the Army Capabilities Integration Center.

With *The Making of a Terrorist*, editor James J. F. Forest of West Point's Combating Terrorism Center and his contributors have created a useful and practical reference for commanders, planners, and analysts. As its title suggests, the three-volume set aims to provide an understanding of terrorist phenomena, focusing on the actual mechanics of terrorism. Even the volume on *Root Causes*, whose title suggests a fruitless search for a single, grand strategic solution, actually provides useful insight about where we can anticipate the emergence of terrorism. This volume derives particular strength from its case studies of actual terrorist organizations, an unpleasantly diverse and multitudinous group that includes Islamic extremist organizations, Marxists, nationalists, and racists, just to name a few. What emerges from these studies is a collage of terrorist practices as they are, and not a neat, coherent, and artificial portrait of causes and cures for terrorism. *The Making of a Terrorist*, therefore, provides essential and accessible background reading for the military practitioner in the War on Terrorism. At \$300, I would not recommend it to the individual with a passing interest, but

I would recommend its inclusion in operations and intelligence libraries at the division-level and above, and for the whole array of combat developers.

Operational Patterns and Opportunities: Recruitment and Training

While serving in the Directorate of Strategic Plans and Policy at Combined Forces Command – Afghanistan, we constantly found ourselves attempting to define our role in counterterrorism. The understanding of basic terrorist methods and inherent vulnerabilities provided by *The Making of a Terrorist* would have expedited our efforts. The volumes on recruitment and training depict case studies of particular terrorist systems in various contexts that relate to lines of operation for campaign planning. The key insight that emerges from these volumes, however, is how vital and fragile sanctuary is to the development of an effective terrorist.

Successful counterterrorism begins with intelligence, of course, and *The Making of a Terrorist* indicates several remunerative areas of concentration in intelligence operations. Those areas of concentration include networks of fundamentalist religious schools (madrassas), prisons, and the Internet. Intelligence professionals may not need a book to tell them to focus on these areas, but intelligence professionals and operational planners should read the essays to fully comprehend their dynamics.

We have long understood that Islamic terrorists rely on a network of radical madrassas to inspire, identify, and recruit potential terrorists. In “Political Islam: Violence and the Wahhabi Commission,” contributor Maha Azzam presents a disturbing portrait of a pervasive, radical, and intolerant strain of Islam that is the result of this aggressive proselytization. Zachary Abuza, however, presents a more sophisticated analysis of this aspect of terrorism, noting that most of the 25,000 to 35,000 madrassas in South Asia are relatively benign, if not exactly helpful in preparing their students for the modern world. According to Abuza, the schools to watch are those led by Imams with kinship ties to Abu Bakar Ba’asyr and other leaders of Jemaah Islamiyah in Indonesia. Maintaining surveillance on 30,000 madrassas is simply infeasible, but the type of analysis suggested by Abuza would allow for the effective prioritization of intelligence resources.

At the other end of the spectrum from religious indoctrination are prisons, another important venue for recruiting and training terrorists. J. Michael Waller describes the historical role of prisons as incubators for terrorism and revolution, and goes on to depict the startling degree of Islamacist penetration in US prisons. To be sure, such penetration lies outside of military jurisdiction, but the examples Waller cites should encourage close surveillance of prisons in areas where US forces operate. Musab Al-Zarqawi was recruited in prison, and Adolf Hitler wrote *Mein Kampf* while incarcerated. Yet, while felons’ propensity for sociopathic violence makes them promising terrorist recruits, their general lack of self-discipline and generally poor coping skills make their employment problematic, as the fortuitously inept performances of shoe-bomber Richard Reid and aspiring dirty-bomber Jose Padilla demonstrate. Those faults also present structural weaknesses that US forces are already exploiting.

Opportunities for intelligence collection and operational exploitation merge on the Internet. Madeline Gruen describes how various types of extremists,

from al Qaeda to the Aryan Nation, use “Video Games, Hip Hop, and the World Wide Web” to identify potential recruits. Gabriel Weiman extends this theme in “Terrorist Dot Com.” Both portray the likely recruit and the filters through which they must pass before being recruited. It is important for the reader to remember that terrorists use the Internet to screen potential recruits, but still rely on personal contact to complete the recruitment process. Understanding the terrorist accessions process will, hopefully, lead to more effective surveillance and response.

Information operations become even more important when responding to terrorist’s use of the media. In two essays, Brigitte Nacos reminds the reader that terrorism is “propaganda by deed,” whose greatest effect is to convey an impression. That impression could be one of insecurity and horror, directed at the terrorists’ adversaries, or one of strength and capability, directed at supporters and potential recruits. Bin Laden’s “strong horse” and “weak horse” analogies are examples of the second. Nacos laments the mass media’s susceptibility to manipulation, a susceptibility she finds borders on collaboration. Still, she gives inadequate due to the adage “the truth will out.” Terrorist acts create facts that the terrorist organization will try to fit into its narrative, but dead children are hard to “spin” in any culture. Indeed, the brutality of al Qaeda in Iraq has certainly limited its attractiveness to Iraqis; there are even reports that other insurgent groups are fighting it. Nacos’ key point for US information operators is that they must whenever possible contest the terrorist narrative.

Moving into the physical realm, terrorists require a certain amount of training to be effective. While nothing may seem simpler than self-detonating an explosive device, to get to the point of detonation, a terrorist must evade significant security precautions, such as profiling, access control, and physical inspection, and still be able to navigate their way to the intended target. Obviously, terrorists have more tactics at their disposal than suicide bombing, and it is the teaching of these that grows progressively more difficult. This practical training requires both time and space. In “Training for Urban Resistance,” Brian Jackson illustrates how constraints on both these factors limited the capabilities of the Provisional IRA.

Terrorist training camps serve as both recruiting and training centers. Rohan Guaratna and Arabinda Acharya explain that al Qaeda’s training camps generally trained recruits in basic combat techniques and ideology, allowing leaders to identify those with potential to be successful terrorist operatives requiring further training. Their article and Magnus Ranstorp’s “The Hizballah Training Camps of Lebanon” provide templates for how these camps function, and, implicitly, how they are arrayed, knowledge that might be useful in designing operational and strategic reconnaissance plans.

At an even more elemental level, the authors point out, it is difficult to get one human being to kill another, and even more difficult are attempts to get the individual to efficiently and effectively kill a large number of non-combatants. Albert Bandura describes how terrorists accomplish this in “Training for Terrorism through Selective Moral Disengagement.” The author outlines a variety of well-known techniques including “euphemistic language,” “displacement of responsibility,” and “dehumanization.” His key observation, however, is that such disengagement must take place over time in a “communal setting of intense interpersonal influences insulated from mainstream social life.” Throwing suicide into the equation intensifies the re-

quirement for isolation, as Adam Dolnik demonstrates in “Learning to Die: Suicide Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century.” In an excellent essay, backed by scores of interviews with incarcerated Palestinian terrorists, Jerrold M. Post describes how an entire society can provide the context for such actions.

Surprising to this reviewer is the fact that, even after extensive conditioning, how fragile reinforcement actually is. In “The Making of Suicide Bombers,” Ami Pedahzur and Arie Perliger report that suicide bombers are accompanied right up to the point of release to preclude the intrusion of “second thoughts.” Obviously, not all suicide bombers, or other terrorists for that matter, undergo such intensive preparation. A few of the less intensively prepared bombers go awry, compromising not only the actual operation, but also the terrorist organization. Ergo, understanding the complex and apparently fragile conditioning process by which a person becomes an effective terrorist may allow military leaders to disrupt organizations, with cascading effects.

Root Causes as Strategic Indicators

The Making of a Terrorist provides fair assessment of the type of activity that US and allied forces should be looking for within a particular society in an effort to identify and disrupt terrorist organizations. In the *Root Causes* volume, contributors also identify factors whose intersection may predict the emergence of terrorist activity. To be certain, some essays in the volume also indulge in the customary speculation on how poverty, globalization, deprivation, or other social melees, real and imagined, may drive people to slaughter innocents. There are even a few essays postulating grandiose as a strategic solution to the problem of terrorism. For the most part, however, the essays’ authors maintain a more practical tone, acknowledging that they are focused on aspects of the problem rather than grappling with the whole. The word “correlate” is used far more frequently than “cause.” The correlations, however, seem useful as predictors of terrorist activity.

In “Terrorism and Export Economies: The Dark Side of Free Trade,” Michael Mousseau correlates the emergence of terrorism in societies where there is dependence on an economy of reciprocal exchange. In such societies, security and survival are determined by an adherence to clan and family networks. Clan leaders distribute goods, to include wealth, status and even protection in return for loyalty; competing groups are viewed as the enemy, against which any act, including indiscriminate slaughter, is permissible. The alignment of such value systems with terrorism seems obvious. The essay is oddly named, however, because it seems to blame export economies for the creation of terrorism. Mousseau actually argues that it is the inability of societies based on reciprocal exchange to compete with modern, western economies and it is that inability that creates murderous resentment. An economy based on the extraction of a single commodity, such as oil or diamonds, can sustain these societies in the modern world.

A number of the contributors conclude that the pool of potential terrorists will grow exponentially over the next several decades. In “Socioeconomic and Demographic Roots of Terrorism,” Paul Ehrlich and Jianguo Liu remind us of the coming “youth bulge” will result in a growing pool of unemployed or underemployed young

men coming of age in poorly governed, economically dysfunctional countries. It is this demographic, young males between 20 and 34 years of age, that correlates heavily with violence, whether criminal, martial, or terroristic. One need not subscribe to the theory that poverty and oppression cause or legitimate terrorism to suspect that someone, somewhere will manufacture an excuse for such men to turn to violence.

Geography provides another key indicator. In "Digging Deep: Environment and Geography as Root Influences for Terrorism," P. H. Liotta and James F. Miskel are careful to note that geography, per se, does not cause terrorism, but rather it can create favorable conditions for the growth and operational capabilities of terrorist groups. As already noted regarding the "youth bulge" described by Ehrlich and Liu. Liotta and Miskel postulate that much of this growth will occur in the emerging megacities within the developing world, whose sheer size combine with physical and social squalor to confound effective policing and control. Moreover, because these megacities remain connected to the globalized world through their physical and informational infrastructures, they provide ideal bases for transnational terrorism.

One of the primary indicators of terrorist activity is state strength, as illustrated by Erica Chenoweth in her chapter on "Instability and Opportunity: The Origins of Terrorism in Weak and Failed States." Chenoweth's purpose is to question the Bush administration's strategy of diminishing support for terrorism by promoting democracy. She notes that the transition from authoritarian rule to democracy created opportunities for terrorism to emerge in Indonesia, Afghanistan, and the Philippines, leaving unanswered the question of what other constitutional arrangements besides democracy might produce the enduring economic strength and political legitimacy essential to developing strong and effective institutions. Yet, whether one agrees with Chenoweth that democratization is not necessarily the answer to terrorism, state weakness certainly permits terrorism to emerge.

The Limitations of Understanding

Readers should bear in mind the structural limitations of *The Making of a Terrorist*. Editor James J. F. Forest intended "to provide readers with a centralized and authoritative information source of the most essential topics of terrorist recruitment, training, and root causes," an endeavor in which he admirably succeeded. The series derives considerable strength from the variety of perspectives it offers, from which the practitioner can select those applicable to a particular situation. The result amply justifies the light editorial touch. The appendices, which include profiles of terrorist organizations, examples of training manuals for terrorism and guerilla warfare, and other resources for study, help make this three-volume set a valuable resource.

Yet, the variety of perspectives and the tendency to editorialize means there is much that may not apply in a given context. The essays in *The Making of a Terrorist* do not adhere to a single definition of terrorist. In fact, some explicitly conflate insurgency with terrorism, operationalizing the adage that "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter." Objectively, this may be true, but US joint doctrine distinguishes the two functionally. Joint Publication 1-02 defines an insurgent as a member of "An organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government

through use of subversion and armed conflict,” while a terrorist perpetrates “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents.” Differentiated by doctrine, terrorists and insurgents employ different strategies, and possess different strengths and vulnerabilities. Undoubtedly, terrorists and insurgents may share similar objectives and employ some of the same tactics, techniques and procedures. The reader cannot simply assume, however, that the terms and implications are interchangeable, and should read the essays with a critical eye toward what actually applies in a particular situation.

Most importantly, the volumes do not pretend to offer a comprehensive solution to the problem of terrorism. Individual essayists do exercise that claim, but their proposals lack the analytical rigor and narrow focus related to studies of “recruitment, training, and root causes.” The editor’s intent in these three volumes was not to offer a “simple, elegant, and wrong” solution to a complex problem that will continue into the future. Rather, *The Making of a Terrorist* provides practitioners with increments of understanding on which they can base a variety of solutions to a myriad of threats. Based on that understanding, we can then begin to formulate a response. *The Making of a Terrorist* is not the answer, but it helps to frame the question.

The Chinese Army Today: Tradition and Transformation for the 21st Century. By Dennis J. Blasko. London and New York: Routledge, 2006. 228 pages. \$125.00 (\$34.95 paper). **Reviewed by Richard Halloran**, onetime lieutenant of airborne infantry, foreign correspondent in Asia, military correspondent in Washington, DC, and now a free-lance writer in Honolulu.

The author of this work on the People’s Liberation Army (PLA), an experienced China hand, says in his introduction: “I have tried to write the type of book I would have liked to have read before becoming a US army attaché to China in 1992.”

Dennis J. Blasko, a retired Army lieutenant colonel, succeeds admirably. His topic does not lend itself to scintillating writing, but if you want to know how many “trigger pullers” there are in a rifle squad or how the teachings of Sun Tzu some 2,500 years ago are applied in the PLA today, this clearly written primer belongs on your professional bookshelf.

The author, a foreign area officer, is direct about what his book is not. “It is not a net assessment,” he says, “of military capabilities across the Taiwan Strait, nor is it a comparative study of the combat power of the PLA versus US forces or other militaries in Asia.” The author, wisely, does not attempt to predict “red lines” that, if crossed, could lead to military action.

Instead, Blasko draws primarily from Chinese sources to focus on the modernization of the PLA, mainly the ground forces, since 1999. The author contends that year was when China’s leaders decided that their “military power needed to be perceived as more credible to prevent further steps toward Taiwan independence.” The next year, a leading advocate of that independence, Chen Shui-bian, was elected president of Taiwan.

It is sometimes difficult for Americans to understand how pervasive the Taiwan issue is among Chinese leaders and how obsessed the PLA is with capturing the island off the southeastern coast of China. In 1949, after a long civil war, the PLA drove Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists from the Chinese mainland; and the Nationalists took refuge in what had been a Japanese colony since 1895.

The PLA, lacking the air and sea forces to go after the Chang's followers, skidded to a halt on the shores of the Taiwan Strait. There the PLA has remained, fuming, while Taiwan evolved from a dictatorship under Chiang to a budding democracy and thriving market economy under his successors. The threads of the PLA's preparation for war over Taiwan run throughout this book.

Blasko covers the organization and deployment of the PLA, its people and equipment, its training and role in society. He recalls that the PLA turned its rifles on its own people to kill hundreds of pro-democracy demonstrators in Tiananmen in 1989. Until that stain has been erased, the author contends, "the PLA will continue to be haunted both inside and outside of China by the ghosts of Tiananmen."

The author pulls no punches in explaining the role of the PLA in China's internal politics, stating succinctly: "Steeped in its traditions, the PLA remains the ultimate guarantor of the CCP," the Chinese Communist Party. As the late Mao Zedong wrote long ago: "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun."

"The party-army relationship in the PLA," Blasko writes, "is unlike the civil-military relationships found in most professional military organizations in other countries (where military personnel express loyalty to the state or constitution, not to a particular political party)." An American officer swears allegiance to the Constitution, a Chinese officer to the Communist Party.

That loyalty has paid off for the military. Blasko writes: "PLA generals have seen defense budgets increase significantly over the past decade as the Chinese economy continued to grow." Recent official figures put the budget at \$30 billion but no one outside of Beijing believes that number. Most estimates have it about three times that amount. In rival Taiwan, many believe the corresponding figure has hit \$100 billion.

Thus, China's defense spending is most likely second only to that of the United States, higher than Russia's and more than twice Japan's. "Whatever the true numbers may be," the author contends, "the Chinese military has a much bigger pot of cash to spend on fewer troops than it did ten years ago." Moreover, most of China's costs, especially for personnel, are far lower than those of the United States or Japan.

Blasko points out another Chinese military characteristic, which is "guanxi," or connections—blood, hometown, schoolmates, and shared experience. He postulates that, "guanxi is a reality in the PLA, just as it is in all of Chinese society." As an example, "The personal connections among members of the field armies influenced the PLA for decades, causing both cooperation and conflict."

After China was defeated in Vietnam in 1979, Chinese military leaders fell back to reexamine their warfighting doctrine. "By the end of the twentieth century," Blasko says, "the PLA had developed a new doctrine to fight local wars under modern high technology conditions on China's periphery."

"At the same time," he goes on, "Chinese military planners continued to study traditional Chinese sources," such as *The Art of War* by Sun Tzu and Mao

Zedong's concept of "People's War." The PLA is thus "integrating old ideas and unavoidable realities with new concepts and technologies to prepare to fight in a manner it has never attempted in its recent history."

Summing up, Blasko believes "it is reasonable to conclude that many of the PLA's new capabilities remain in the rudimentary stage and Chinese estimates of another 10-20 years of development are not unwarranted." Even so, Chinese leaders, military officers, and defense scholars have adamantly asserted that China will go to war if Taiwan declares formal independence. In that case, Blasko asserts, "large scale, ground force-dominated operations are likely to be a last resort following the execution of other options, including missile, air, and naval strikes or blockades." Interestingly, but perhaps not surprisingly, the PLA's potential adversaries in Taiwan say much the same thing.

Thieves of Baghdad: One Marine's Passion for Ancient Civilizations and the Journey to Recover the World's Greatest Stolen Treasures. By Matthew Bogdanos with William Patrick. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2006. 302 pages. \$25.95. **Reviewed by Major Charles P. Moore**, ARCENT/CFLCC Plans and Policy Officer and veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

It is often said that truth is the first casualty of war. That maxim is exemplified in the reports surrounding the looting of one of the world's great museums, the Iraq Museum in Baghdad. During April and May of 2003 reports surfaced about an emerging humanitarian crisis: the potential loss of hundreds of thousands of priceless artifacts from the Iraq Museum, the result of vandalism, looting, and organized crime. Reports that would later turn out to be grossly exaggerated. *Thieves of Baghdad* provides the most detailed accounting of that loss to date. It also tells the story of how the remaining treasures were secured and of ongoing recovery operations.

Colonel Matthew Bogdanos, United States Marine Corps, arrived at the Iraq Museum on 20 April 2003 as head of the US Central Command's Joint Inter-agency Coordination Group (JIACG) for counterterrorism. The original mission of the team was to assist weapons inspectors in identifying and seizing weapons of mass destruction and other related materials. While enroute to Baghdad, the team began to hear conflicting reports surrounding events at the museum. Colonel Bogdanos requested permission to investigate the reports and arrived to begin his investigation with a party of 14 and a narrowly defined charter.

The team discovered the scope of the problem was much broader than anticipated and immediately set about developing a multi-pronged approach: securing and cataloging the remaining treasures; establishing an improvised amnesty program; and the interviewing of staff members, locals, and anyone with information that might lead to the recovery of missing artifacts.

The author discovered the museum suffered from a myriad of problems both before and during the war. Years of unorthodox cataloging, compartmentalized storage facilities, and occasional seizures of treasure by the Hussein family followed by periodic looting and thefts that left the museum a convoluted crime scene.

With respectful treatment and gentle tenacity, Colonel Bogdanos earned the confidence of key museum employees, a key factor in his ability to conduct a detailed survey of the loss and to refute many of the exaggerated and inaccurate claims.

The team used heightened media attention to emphasize its amnesty program. Thousands of items were recovered through the artful employment of amnesty and community outreach programs. Members of Bogdanos' team manned a drop area in front of the museum, met with local Imams, and visited untold numbers of suspected treasure holders to encourage their cooperation. Additionally, the team worked with influential Iraqi leaders to encourage enhanced border control and seizure of artifacts. These actions resulted in a number of successful recoveries. The team photographed and documented multiple crime scenes in an effort to support future investigations.

Through the employment of sound investigative techniques, and with assistance from the Iraqi museum staff in the completion of numerous inventories, the team was able to discover that approximately 14,000 to 15,000 items were actually missing. Of those, some 5,000 items were later recovered. The loss of 10,000 artifacts, although substantially less than initially reported, was still significant.

It is likely that the author was the single most qualified officer in the theater to be put in charge of this challenging task. With an education in the classics from Bucknell University, a law degree and a master's in Classical Studies from Columbia, combined with 13 years experience as an assistant district attorney in Manhattan, left him uniquely qualified. This background, combined with a reputation for professional excellence provided Bogdanos with the latitude and credibility within USCENTCOM to pursue the investigation. Unfortunately, despite its authoritative narration of an entertaining tale, the book does have detractors.

The book is the story of the recovery of classic art and artifacts interwoven with illuminating quotes and stories. Illustrative at first, the vacillation between modern problem solving and historic resolution tends to become a bit distracting for the reader. The author establishes his unique expertise early on and really does not need to continually reemphasize the point. Unfortunately, the author touts his qualifications while providing little insight into the broader dynamics of relationships with Baghdad officials and the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA). The reader is left to wonder what more this talented Marine and his interagency team might have accomplished in those early days of the occupation.

Speculation aside, what we know is that Bogdanos and his team skillfully oversaw the protection and recovery of artifacts that form the centerpiece of the human story. They were also responsible for one of the first "good news stories" out of Iraq during the early days of the occupation. The book is entertaining and may be of great interest to art enthusiasts or those studying the media in time of war. However, it is too narrowly focused on actions at the museum to provide insight into the broader issues related to the post-conflict environment. Much of the text is dedicated to explaining rudimentary elements of military service and life in a combat zone which seasoned professionals will find mundane and superfluous. The book chronicles a valiant effort by an extraordinary individual, but lacks the explanatory power to better prepare tomorrow's leaders and planners.

The Market for Force: The Consequences of Privatizing Security.

By Deborah D. Avant. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. 264 pages. \$75.00 (\$29.99 paper). **Reviewed by Major Richard M. Wrona, Jr.**, Assistant Professor, Department of Social Sciences, US Military Academy.

Warfare in the twenty-first century is thought to have assumed a new face. States, rather than competing against each other, now face an ominous threat from networked non-state actors. Tomes are filled with new and revisited ideas about guerrilla warfare, insurgency and counterinsurgency, and the “Clash of Civilizations.” Until recently, however, little attention has been paid to the growing importance of (and reliance upon) private entities joining the fray for pecuniary gain. Now Deborah Avant, an associate professor at George Washington University well-versed in both international security and civil-military relations, contributes an important and thoroughly researched text examining the strategic ramifications of these not-so-new actors.

Whether one chooses “private security company” or “mercenary,” the idea of organizations engaging in battle exclusively for pay is as old as warfare itself. From antiquity and the Greek mercenaries of Xenophon’s *Anabasis* to the German mercenaries of the American Revolution, contracted combatants garnered no special interest or sanction. The Peace of Westphalia in 1648, however, broke the contractors’ battlefield dominance of previous eras and ushered in a three-century period in which war was thought to be the exclusive domain of the state. In the wake of the Cold War, a variety of factors led to the resurgence of the private security company (PSC). Whether because of western bloc desires to enjoy a peace dividend, or because of Third World dictators seeking new options for security after the loss of patronage by the major powers, PSCs enjoyed an exploding market—a market characterized by little regulation, little oversight, and a glut in the supply of combatants.

In the modern-day, PSCs are hired by states, by multinational corporations, and even by intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations. Their importance in the Global War on Terrorism is demonstrated in Iraq, where the numbers employed by PSCs are second only to American forces, in effect making private companies the second largest “partner” in the American-led coalition. Avant notes the difficulty in defining and tracking the contemporary PSC. First, most of these companies have very little infrastructure or overhead, relying instead on sub-contracting and extensive databases of potential employees. Second, the variety of services that PSCs provide range from simple logistical support (like the support of Kellogg, Brown, and Root to Americans in almost every theater of engagement) to the provision of actual combatants for offensive operations (as Executive Outcomes did in Sierra Leone in the 1990s). Modern PSCs tend to be ephemeral and always adjusting to market demands. As a result, Avant smartly chooses to define her subject by the companies’ contracts, since attempting to delineate between different categories of PSCs would be both difficult and arbitrary.

Rather than a simple historical survey, Avant approaches the question of PSCs from political, sociological, and economic viewpoints. In a well-organized work, she clarifies the scope and depth of the topic. PSCs are distinguished from the more notorious (but less effective) “solders of fortune” of the 1960s and 1970s.

PSCs are then investigated, in an attempt to convey the variety of services offered and levels of competence within the community. After setting these basic parameters of what is to be presented, Avant defines the “how” of her study. Since Westphalia, the control of force has often been one of the defining characteristics of the sovereign state. Therefore, changes to this “monopoly of legitimate physical violence” may hallmark the changing importance of different international actors. Purposely avoiding normative good or bad arguments concerning the rise of contractors, she concentrates on the questions of functional, political, and social control of force. A change in any one of these factors, or in the interrelationship between factors, the author argues, denotes the affect of PSCs on the control of force. Avant hypothesizes that these changes may have a variety of impacts on the political control enjoyed by different states, and that any such change brought about by the resurgence of PSCs will present a challenge to the state-centric monopoly of violence.

Although the theoretical tone of Avant’s first two chapters may be daunting to some readers, her application of theory and hypotheses to nine case studies highlights the increasing importance of private security companies. She uses wide-ranging cases to investigate three considerations: first, how has state financing of PSCs affected the latter’s performance, influence, and professionalization; second, how successful have states been in regulating PSCs originating from within their borders; and third, what has been the effect of PSCs’ employment by non-state actors? In each section, Avant’s choice of case studies and her meticulous research provide credible support to the notion that PSCs are not only affecting how wars are fought in the post-Cold War era, but also that PSCs play a major role in the increasing amount of competition that states face from other actors in the international arena.

The Market for Force should not be taken lightly. It is not a catalog of PSCs or a historical survey of contracted force, and it is not meant to fill either of these roles. Nor is it a guide that will provide tactical and operational leaders insight on how to best meet the mandates of the most recent QDR, which requires “integrating contractors into the Total Force.” Instead, Avant’s work provides two overarching benefits. First and foremost, it should be studied by the nation’s strategic and political leaders. As the United States has taken the lead role in fostering the supply of and demand for PSCs, it would behoove these decision-makers to better comprehend the domestic and international ramifications of such actions. Second, for those interested in further study of PSCs at any level, *The Market for Force* acts as an outstanding repository of research for every aspect of the topic.

Cradle of Conflict: Iraq and the Birth of the Modern U.S. Military.

By Michael Knights. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2005. 396 pages. \$39.95. **Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Robert M. Cassidy,** Battalion Commander, 3d US Army/CFLCC, Special Troops Battalion.

Cradle of Conflict examines the United States military’s long-term struggle with Iraq, beginning with Desert Storm and concluding with key insight about the insurgency that emerged after the fall of the regime in 2003. The first portion of

the book analyzes Desert Shield, Desert Storm, and the lessons that the American military derived from these conflicts. The second part of the book examines the post-Desert Storm decade of American and allied military efforts to contain Iraq through the use of air power and Tomahawk missiles. While the entire book is unique, in that, it is an inclusive perspective on both wars, as well as the interwar period, the work suffers some weaknesses. The first part of the book includes material covered in greater detail in other works. The second portion of the book focuses almost exclusively on the US Air Force's effort in Iraq. The third and final part of this work is probably the most relevant to this journal's readership as it provides a perspicacious account of the 2003 invasion and subsequent insurgency. This review will focus on the latter. The author possesses a doctorate from King's College in London and since 2003 has been an associate at the Institute for Near East Policy in Washington, D.C. *Cradle of Conflict* is a salient read for military and defense professionals because it captures key lessons from the Iraq war, concluding with recommendations of how the US military might adapt to adversaries that increasingly use asymmetric approaches to undermine America's military superiority.

The final portion of the book, "Ending Resistance," examines the planning for Operation Iraqi Freedom, the march on Baghdad, and the resulting insurgency. It also includes a short epilogue detailing future implications for America's military and its adversaries. Knights begins this portion of the book by explaining that in planning to replace Saddam's regime, the elder President Bush and President Clinton were unwilling to seek a military solution in Iraq. The author attributes this to the lack of resolve on the part of allied countries for such an invasion. Likewise, Knights points out that the American public would not support such a military undertaking. The author's view is that the one factor that seemed to change following 9/11 was that the American public supported a more aggressive military policy. The author briefly addresses the US civilian leadership's influence on the timing and the number of troops for the initial invasion. He also provides the reader with descriptions of the role of special operations forces in western and northern Iraq during the early stages of the war. The chapter on the march to Baghdad is full of insights and details regarding irregular Iraqi forces' attacks on US troops during the latter's move toward Baghdad. In summarizing the drive on Baghdad, the author notes, "speed and the use of minimum force were thus the defining and essential elements of the military formula in Operation Iraqi Freedom." Knights also notes that even though such a strategy enabled a rapid movement to Baghdad, it carried a strategic cost. "Neither the US Army nor the US Marine Corps went to war with up-to-date or exercised counterinsurgency doctrine—a shortfall that would not be recognized until eighteen months into the insurgency."

The penultimate chapter is the source of the above quotation and its focus is the insurgency and the coalition's response. This is the most valuable chapter in the book as it includes a description of the Baathist senior leadership's "Challenge Project," a two-stage guerrilla campaign that included a first stage, intended to supplement the conventional defense of Baghdad, and a second stage, intended to begin subsequent to the fall of Baghdad. Knights argues that the Coalition Provisional Authority's twin directives: to disband the Iraqi military and to de-Baathify the country were factors that exacerbated latent insurgent tendencies in the Sunni heartland. This portion of the book also

examines the first six months of the 2003 insurgency, when the military preferences of the American heavy divisions in Iraq inclined toward aggressive big-unit sweeps. A direct result of the US military's lack of doctrine, training, or experience in counterinsurgency operations. The author's description is evocative of the big unit search-and-destroy operations during Vietnam: "the proliferation of multi-divisional operations through-out the Sunni triangle, complete with armor, artillery, and air support" had soldiers searching hundreds of houses and detaining thousands of Iraqis. The result was operations "which engendered greater resentment and fear among local communities."

A key observation in the epilogue is that the Iraqis exhibited three characteristics that could serve as a model for the asymmetrically inclined adversaries challenging the United States in this century. The Iraqi forces, according to Knights, were adaptive; maintaining a semblance of intelligence superiority and forces that were useful for resistance. The author provides the reader with one final inference, that the technologically driven revolution in military affairs will not be sufficient to ensure American military dominance in the future. *Cradle of Conflict* is a very good study of contemporary military history, but it does have two shortcomings. First, for a study of warfare that was intensive in the number of ground forces, Knights work and his sources are somewhat skewed toward the Air Force. Second, this book contains three minor factual errors: Knights misstates the Third Infantry Division's Third Squadron, Seventh Cavalry to be the Seventh Armored Cavalry Regiment; he mistakes the doctrinal term "stability and support operations" as "stabilization and support operations;" and he identifies the 4th Infantry Division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team (BCT) as the unit which conducted Operation "Planet X" during May 2003, when in fact it was the 1st BCT of the 4th ID. However, this reviewer heartily recommends this book to military and defense professionals and all students of national security affairs. The book provides a topical and timely account of a critical period in American military operations that has direct implications for current and future conflicts.

House of War: The Pentagon and the Disastrous Rise of American Power. By James Carroll. Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2006. 657 pages. \$30.00. **Reviewed by Jeffrey Record,** Professor of Strategy and International Security, Air War College.

The publisher's flyer announces: "Carroll proves a controversial thesis: the Pentagon has, since its founding, operated beyond the control of any force in government or society. It is the biggest, loosest cannon in American history, and no institution has changed this country more." Indeed, according to Carroll, amateur psychiatrist, author of the 2001 bestseller *Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews, A History*, and son of an Air Force general who served as the first director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, American foreign policy has been contrived ever since the 1940s strategic hysterics for whom "imagined enemies become real by virtue of having been imagined." Thus an unnecessary Cold War was engineered by such Red-scared and psychologically insecure civilians as President Harry Truman, James Forrestal, and George Kennan and fueled by such nuclear war fetishist as generals Curtis Lemay and Thomas Powers. The Pentagon continued to manufacture deadly enemies even after

the Soviet non-threat disappeared, when Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait rescued the "Pentagon's perpetual motion machine made for war." Thus, in Iraq in 2003, the Defense Department finally obtained the cake it had always wanted, albeit absent its preferred nuclear topping: a preventive war.

You get the picture. America + preponderant military power = disaster. *House of War* is a polemic against American might and those who have served it, but it is hardly a surprise coming as it does from a one-time Georgetown University "ROTC Cadet of the Year" turned leftist "peacenik priest" (his words) who remains profoundly troubled as the son of an influential if obscure cold warrior. *House of War* is essentially a sequel to Carroll's 1997 book *An American Requiem: God, My Father, and the War That Came Between Us*; it is as much about Joseph F. Carroll and his estranged son as it is about war and US foreign policy.

There is no question that such alarmists as Forrestal, Paul Nitze, Albert Wohlstetter, and Richard Perle (though hardly the sober realist Kennan) exaggerated the nature and urgency of the Soviet threat and in so doing contributed to the Pentagon's excessive influence on US foreign policy. Nor is there any doubt that the nuclear arms race was overkill, wasteful, and dangerous. It is also true that an indiscriminate anti-Communism which mistook Third World nationalist insurrections for Soviet ventriloquy propelled the United States into the disaster of Vietnam. And in succumbing to the temptation of preventive war against an already deterred and contained Iraq a 9/11-unnerved United States unwittingly stumbled into a protracted irregular war that advertised the limits of America's conventional military supremacy. Great powers make mistakes and the United States has been no exception.

For Carroll, however, the calamity is not America's occasional misuse of power but rather its very possession. Nowhere in *House of War* is there even a hint that, notwithstanding the considerable imperfections of American statecraft since Pearl Harbor, the rise of American power was anything other than, to cite the book's subtitle, "disastrous." Really? Was it a mistake to wage total war against Hitler and Imperial Japan and to contain the postwar expansion of Soviet power? Was the Cold War simply an American misunderstanding of Soviet power? Should the United States have accepted a Soviet-sponsored North Korean conquest of South Korea? Was American power irrelevant to the demise of Soviet totalitarianism and to Europe's unprecedented pacification and democratization? Did American power have nothing to do with the conversion of the Axis dictatorships into free societies? And did not the very presence of large nuclear arsenals contribute to the demise of catastrophic warfare among the great powers? Should the United States have permitted Saddam Hussein to gobble up Kuwait (which, contrary to Carroll's assertion, was never a province of Iraq)? Last but not hardly least, why do millions of foreigners seek American citizenship, and why have states of former Communist Europe flocked to join America's primary alliance?

Carroll believes he lives in a "profoundly militarized" America that is "rushing toward the 'Niagara Falls' of military catastrophe." Really? How militarized is a society that imposes no military obligations on its citizenry, currently devotes (with a war on, no less) but four percent of its wealth to the military function, and proudly boasts one of the most politically docile officer corps in the history of the modern nation state? And what military catastrophe awaits the United States,

and who or what will inflict that catastrophe? China? Russia? North Korea? Iran? Venezuela? A battered al Qaeda? Talk about alarmism!

House of War is a failed, 657-page attempt to exorcize the Pentagon of what Carroll believes to be the inherent evil of US military power. It deserves no place in the libraries of serious students of American defense policy.

Preventive Attack and Weapons of Mass Destruction: A Comparative Historical Analysis. By Lyle J. Goldstein. Palo Alto, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2006. 268 pages. \$50.00. **Reviewed by Stephen J. Blank**, Professor of National Security Studies, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College.

The United States began a preventive war against Iraq because it believed that Iraq actually had weapons of mass destruction which could be launched against its allies, itself, or its vital interests. Washington has also made similar threats against North Korea and Iran. It is known that the Clinton Administration came very close to engaging in a preventive war against North Korea for many of the same reasons. As Goldstein illustrates, such wars or at least the likelihood of war between a stronger nuclear power contemplating war against a weaker power who either has a small number of such nuclear weapons or was on the way to getting them, was commonplace during the Cold War. Washington contemplated preventive strikes to stop the Soviet and Chinese nuclear programs, Moscow sought to stop the Chinese program, and in its turn Beijing sought to stop India's nuclear program. In 1981 Israel launched its preventive strike against the Iraqi nuclear facility at Osirak. And of course, the Clinton Administration contemplated such an attack against North Korea. Thus our war in Iraq is not as unusual an event as might otherwise be inferred from the public debate regarding the war and US foreign policy in general.

Indeed, Goldstein suggests that in the current world order such wars might actually be paradigmatic rather than exceptional crises. Neither are these exceptional cases, for as the author demonstrates, such issues lay at the heart of much of the Cold War's international relations. Based on his historical research, admirably fortified with sources in Russian and Chinese, and interviews with surviving participants or knowledgeable observers, Goldstein makes compelling arguments about the question as to whether the pursuit and acquisition of nuclear arsenals is stabilizing or destabilizing. Goldstein concludes that while the weaker nation pursues such weapons or possesses a small number of them, that such an action is destabilizing because the stronger and rivalrous nuclear power is severely tempted to engage in preventive war against the new "would-be" nuclear power. On the other hand, once that period is past and the new power comes into possession of a credible and usable nuclear deterrent, the fact of that possession becomes a stabilizing factor of the international order.

Iraq, however, is a unique case because here the stronger state was not deterred from launching a preventive war. The author presents a number of cases in which geographical obstacles, the fear of the nuclear state's conventional deterrent, and the possibility of external or an alliance's support for the state; the existence of international norms against preventive war, especially, preventive nuclear strikes have all played a

part in staying the hand of the stronger nuclear power. None of these factors, however, appears to have played a part in inhibiting the United States from acting in Iraq.

Finally, in his concluding epilogue, Goldstein discusses the Bush doctrine of preventive wars, as outlined in President Bush's West Point Commencement Speech in 2002. The author observes that preventive war against proliferators is now the declared centerpiece of US policy. After articulating the premises underlying this new policy Goldstein takes on its critics and offers a sprightly defense of the Administration's policies vis-à-vis Iraq and North Korea. While not all readers will find this epilogue convincing, I too have my reservations, it adds a welcome touch of provocative argumentation based on rigorous and precise reasoning regarding a subject which is all too often engulfed by apocalyptic and overblown charges.

Goldstein's historical examples convincingly show that the Cold War was not, as some claim, a golden age of stable deterrence, but a rather close brush with the apocalypse, and not just with regard to the missiles in Cuba. While he omits what might have been the closest we came to nuclear war with Moscow, the critical period of 1981-84 characterized by the American deployment of missiles to Europe (which in fact was not a proliferation crisis) he does adequately demonstrate to the reader that the causes of the Iraq war, sadly, are all too common in the world of international politics.

For its rethinking of both the present and the past this sprightly and robust book deserves more publicity than Stanford has given it. Readers who are either interested in or who must grapple with the issues raised here should read this book before making up their minds on any course of action.

Through Mobility We Conquer: The Mechanization of U.S. Cavalry. By George F. Hofmann. Introductory essay by Donn A. Starry. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2006. 578 pages. \$45.00. **Reviewed by Colonel Jonathan M. House, USA Ret.**, author of *Combined Arms Warfare in the Twentieth Century* and Associate Professor of Military History, US Army Command and General Staff College.

Between the two world wars, each of the major armies of the world wrestled with the question of how to integrate tanks and other mechanized equipment into their organization and doctrine. No nation entered World War II with the same structure and concepts it had employed in 1918, but different influences led to considerable variations in the final solution reached by each army. In the United States, for example, the effects of budgetary restrictions and of pacifist and isolationist public opinion were complicated by the fact that the available armored vehicles were split between two parochially-minded branches, infantry and cavalry. As a result, even those like George Patton who had commanded tanks in 1918 found it politic to advocate compromise solutions rather than a radical new approach to mechanization.

This conflict is the chosen subject matter of *Through Mobility We Conquer* by George Hofmann. The author is well qualified in this topic, having previously written a history of the 6th Armored Division and co-edited, with General Donn Starry, *Camp Colt to Desert Storm: The History of U.S. Armored Forces*.

In his most recent study, Hofmann focuses on the 1920 creation of strong, independent chiefs of the different combat arms and branches as the principal cause of America's mechanization problems between the wars. First, because the War Department rigidly divided doctrine, budget, and organization along branch lines, the army was unable to develop a truly combined-arms approach to combat of any type and especially with regard to the need for large, combined-arms mechanized formations. Although a series of mechanized units were formed on an experimental basis, units with cavalry designations or commanders were unlikely to receive support from the other combat branches. The resulting mechanized cavalry units were often better suited for traditional cavalry reconnaissance and pursuit than for main battle operations.

Moreover, the author contends that the branch chiefs themselves exacerbated this situation by their strong sense of tradition and territoriality. In particular, Major General John K. Herr, Chief of Cavalry from 1938 to 1942, stubbornly insisted on the superiority of horse cavalry over mechanized forces, preferring at most to create combined horse-mechanized regiments. Hofmann argues that Herr's rigidity not only led to the 1942 abolition of the branch chiefs, but also ensured that neither horse-mounted nor mechanized cavalry divisions fought in America's World War II campaigns. Instead, the new armored divisions, created as a compromise outside the branch structure, performed many of the traditional functions of cavalry.

The remaining divisional and non-divisional cavalry units entered the war with equipment and doctrine that emphasized "sneak and peek" reconnaissance rather than fighting in an attempt to develop information or to perform economy of force missions. In the course of the war, however, numerous cavalry groups (regiments) and squadrons became the nuclei of ad hoc combined-arms maneuver forces.

Through Mobility We Conquer is particularly effective with regard to the controversial tank designer J. Walter Christie. Popular accounts of this period depict Christie as a misunderstood hero whose futuristic tank technology went to the Soviet Union because the US Army was too bureaucratic to recognize his genius. Professor Hofmann provides a more nuanced and detailed explanation, however. Although it was true that the infantry, cavalry, and ordnance corps were all suspicious of Christie's claims, Hofmann strongly suggests that this suspicion was justified. The inventor refused to follow procurement procedures, resisted any changes in his designs to meet the tactical needs of the Army, and continually threatened army officers with legal and political sanctions. In effect, Christie wanted the Army to pay him to conduct unending automotive experiments whose cost could not be absorbed in the restricted military budgets of the Great Depression.

After World War II, both horse and mechanized cavalry units found another incarnation as quasi-police forces in occupied Germany. Hofmann provides extensive detail about this neglected period of history, going beyond the constabulary organization to describe occupation policy, crime, and other matters in considerable detail. The same holds true for his shorter discussion of occupation duty after 1918, an occupation which he acknowledges had minimal involvement by the cavalry.

The principal flaw of *Through Mobility We Conquer* is, in fact, its sometimes excessive length. In particular, the author relies almost exclusively on a chronological approach to a multifaceted story. Virtually every year in the interwar period appears as

a separate section of the book, slicing issues such as the Christie controversy or the evolution of armored cavalry tactics into numerous segments. With the absence of sub-headings within chapters, the reader may find it difficult to connect these segments into an analytical whole. Similarly, when the author turns to World War II, he devotes several chapters chronicling the episodic adventures of various cavalry units before finally providing an excellent, tightly-argued analysis of their performance.

For the reader with sufficient time, however, this remains an excellent work. Indeed, the history of US cavalry in the twentieth century is a case study in the problems of change in military institutions, including the difficulties of adjusting doctrine, organization, budgets, personalities, and attitudes to accommodate new technologies. As such, it has considerable value to historians and military leaders alike.

SECDEF: The Nearly Impossible Job of Secretary of Defense. By Charles A. Stevenson. Dulles, Va.: Potomac Books, 2006. 215 pages. \$24.95. **Reviewed by Colonel Matthew Moten**, author of *The Delafield Commission and the American Military Profession* and Deputy Head, Department of History, US Military Academy.

The first secretary of defense committed suicide. The second was fired by the president. The combined tenure of the next two was 28 months. From such inauspicious beginnings has grown the second most powerful position in government.

Charles A. Stevenson of the Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins has spent almost four decades observing defense policy. He was national security adviser to four US senators and then a professor at the National War College for a dozen years. His purpose in this work is to explore the roles of the secretary of defense, to illuminate the personalities of its occupants, and to determine why so many of them seem to have failed. The last goal lends the book its subtitle and, I fear, creates an interpretive problem.

SECDEF begins with a history of the creation of the Department of Defense. Authors of the 1947 National Security Act intended for the office of secretary to be weak and it was. A chapter entitled “The Cemetery for Dead Cats” surveys the formative years before Robert McNamara, including legislation that gave the secretary more power and his department more coherence. This section would benefit from an examination of the predecessor Departments of War and Navy and the deficiencies that demanded their demise.

The bulk of the book assesses the tenures of selected secretaries, grouping them under three categories in an attempt to define their leadership styles and to gauge their effectiveness. “Revolutionaries” came into office with reform agendas and were largely successful. “Firefighters,” regardless of their intentions, became captives of historical events. “Team Players” seemed satisfied to stay the course, working harmoniously with colleagues inside the Pentagon as well as the outside. Chapters devoted to ten secretaries, clustered in those three groups, begin with biographical sketches covering the principals early life, education, careers, and world views. Stevenson then evaluates each in their ministerial roles: political relations, operating style, relations with Congress, manager of the Pentagon, war planner, diplomat, and NSC adviser.

The author argues that politics and personalities drive government. Yet his penchant for categorization detracts from that argument. Neat subdivision of each secretary's duties facilitates organized analysis, but at the expense of narrative. Moreover, frequent overlap among the functions necessitates much repetition.

The author treats the "Revolutionaries" (McNamara, Schlesinger, and Weinberger), before the "Firefighters" (Laird, Aspin, and Cohen), followed by the "Team Players" (Brown, Cheney, Perry, and Rumsfeld). This historical back-and-forth sacrifices chronological continuity for the sake of typology. It also induces some omissions, such as the lack of a thorough discussion of the Goldwater-Nichols Act, the most extensive Department of Defense reform since 1947. Forcing these men into loosely defined groups adds little to our understanding of their personality. It is a stretch to think of Schlesinger, who dealt with the end of the Vietnam war, Nixon's impeachment and resignation, and Ford's search for legitimacy as the first commander-in-chief who had never faced the national electorate, as a "revolutionary." Similarly, one wonders why Rumsfeld is a "team player." His supporters would call him a "revolutionary," while the effects of events since 9/11 would bid to place him with the "fire fighters." That said, the analysis of Rumsfeld's second tour in office is the best of these sketches, balanced and nuanced.

The final part of the book, "Roles and Performances," examines more comprehensively the evolution of the office, arriving at insightful conclusions that buttress Stevenson's argument about the importance of people and politics. Managerial skills, technical expertise, and political savvy are all useful, but a secretary must also maintain effective relations with the senior military, the Congress, his Cabinet colleagues, and especially the president. Stevenson argues that presidents are reluctant to overrule their war ministers, especially when the senior military supports their counsel. Secretaries of defense tend to be cautious about the employment of the armed forces, and the Joint Chiefs are more cautious still. The author carefully dissects the so-called "lessons of Vietnam," arguing that the doctrinal articulation of the operational level of war in the 1970s and the Weinberger doctrine of the 1980s were meant to place constraints on presidents in the deployment of forces. He objectively considers whether uniformed leaders should wield a veto in strategic discussions.

In the end, *SECDEF* fails to live up to its subtitle, because most secretaries have refused to fail. Many have stumbled and all have been frustrated. Yet as the American military has grown stronger and more professional, as American military hegemony has become undeniable, as defense budgets have swelled, and as the secretary's institutional power has burgeoned, it is hard to argue that the occupants of the office have found it impossible. Indeed, Stevenson has convinced the reviewer that secretaries of defense ordinarily perform better than one would have guessed.

To be fair, Stevenson has taken on a daunting task, analyzing the evolution of the SECDEF and the tenures of 60 years of incumbents in just over two hundred pages. My quibbles aside, he largely succeeds. Students of this period of American political, diplomatic, or military history can profit from this book and instructors of national security and defense policy courses will find it most useful.