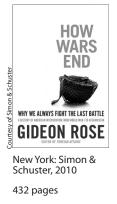Meanwhile, the United States was able to achieve in practice what Moscow had only dreamt about (or to be more precise some in Moscow). Even so, the United States, based on predictable cultural reasons that are brilliantly detailed in the book, had little concept of what it was actually attempting to achieve. Indeed, Desert Storm, as Soviet leaders pointed out, emulated a Soviet operational design for a European offensive albeit on a smaller scale. Predictably, the lesson from that war emphasized the overarching importance of the RMA and its emerging technologies, a fact the United States believed gave it a decisive advantage and a better understanding of what technologies would ensure decisive victory. We are still paying the price for that delusion, as now there is little consensus or understanding of what the future of war might look like. As Adamsky points out, America's failure to grasp the inherent contextual factors and its preference for focusing on the task or phenomena at hand is of no small importance in viewing the RMA.

Similarly, Israeli culture is one of improvisation and anti-intellectualism that frowned on theoretical approaches that were the hallmark of Soviet experience. As a result, Israel designed a brilliant air operation against Syria over Lebanon in 1982, an operation that was the harbinger of the RMA (and recognized as such in Soviet writings). But it failed to capitalize on the RMA in any strategic sense or to use it to fashion a successful war-winning strategy. Instead, Israel was seduced by the mythology of air power, a fact directly responsible for its failure in the battle with Hezbollah in 2006.

The future of innovation in the military realm is by no means over. Indeed, in many respects we can only guess at what might await us or other nations in the future. The only thing that seems certain is the belief that conflicts such as Afghanistan and Iraq will represent future warfare, a belief that could lead us into any number of unpleasant surprises. Greater wisdom concerning novel innovations in technology and the nature of war is required. The analysis offered in this excellent book is a good starting place to acquire that wisdom.

How Wars End: Why We Always Fight the Last Battle

by Gideon Rose

Reviewed by Dr. James Jay Carafano, Director, Douglas and Sarah Allison Center for Foreign Policy Studies, The Heritage Foundation

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432 pages

$27.00

There is a place for an important book that talks about how wars end. This is emphatically not that book. *How Wars End: Why We Always Fight the Last Battle* provides a superficial overview of the pitfalls in conflict termination from World War I to the present troubles in Afghanistan. The work concludes with three "straightforward" lessons. Rather than illuminate the challenge of fighting for peace, the

insight of *How Wars End* reflects the inherent flaws of trying to gloss history through the passion of the moment.

Gideon Rose is managing editor of the prestigious public affairs journal *Foreign Affairs.* He also did a turn on the National Security Council Staff, has a degree from Yale, a Ph.D. from Harvard, and taught at Columbia and Princeton. It is not his pedigree that is the problem. Likewise, it is difficult to impugn his motives. Who could watch the lives and treasure squandered as the United States has struggled to get control of rioting in Baghdad, IED-strewn highways in the Sunni triangle; blossoming poppy fields in Afghanistan; and greedy officials in Kabul, and not share his frustration that America seems to bungle war after war?

The problem is that *How Wars End* adds almost no new understanding to—how wars end. Rose's opening case study on Wilson's struggle to seal a series of international treaties that would make World War I "the war to end all wars" offers a case in point. The treaties' travails have been told well and often. Rose misses an enormous opportunity to do something fresh and, for example, link the geo-strategic troubles over treaties with some of America's postwar challenges. The US occupation of the Rhineland is a subject skipped by most historians. Even the American military ignored its own postconflict trials. There are eleven official volumes on Army's role in the war—ten on fighting, one on the occupation. The author of that one volume lamented that his own service's inattentiveness to understanding the world after war concludes, "despite the precedents of military governments in Mexico, California, the Southern States, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Panama, China, the Philippines, and elsewhere, the lesson seemingly has not been learned." Equally insightful would have been an attempt to delve into the American Expeditionary Force in North Russia in 1918, an equally important episode in evaluating how the United States tried to smooth over the ripples of the Great War with force—as well as diplomacy.

Rose's treatment of World War II repeats these mistakes. *How Wars End* assumes it is all about the deals cut by Washington signaling the formal end of the conflict that are all important. Ignored is the clean-up afterwards that might be as, if not more, important in determining how the future unfolds after the armistice. The Army did not even have a field manual on occupation management prior to 1940. A senior general was not appointed to plan overseas occupation operations until 1942. Even then, the military undertook its occupation duties reluctantly. When President Roosevelt wanted to free up more shipping to ferry civil affairs personnel to Europe for occupation duties, the Pentagon complained about diverting resources from its warfighting tasks. The best way to prepare for the postwar period, the Joint Chiefs argued, "is to end the war quickly." Yet, the scope of postwar occupations was breathtaking including Germany, Austria, Trieste, Japan, and South Korea. Rose skips all this history.

The opening chapters of *How Wars End* reveal that the author labors under a powerful bias—a structuralist view of international relations that places a premium on great power decisions. Rose's writing would be akin to a military

historian scribbling on strategy and assuming that operations and tactics have nothing to do with how things turn out.

Rose's prejudice that smart people can set up smart systems and solve the world's problems is nowhere more powerfully illustrated than in his three conclusions—a short laundry-list of linear, structuralist solutions. His first proposal is "plan ahead and work backwards," an idea that could not be more wrongheaded for postconflict operations. War is a complex, nonlinear, competitive environment. The toughest task imaginable is to plan what the world looks like when the war is over. When World War I started, no one was thinking about the impact of the pandemic caused by the Spanish Flu. When World War II started, no one in Washington could have predicted the Holocaust and the Atomic Bomb. In the waning months of the Second World War (after the United States had been fighting for over three years), allied intelligence believed the Nazis would wage a struggle to the death from a remote Alpine redoubt and that American troops would have to fight guerilla war for years against tens-of-thousands of German insurgents—predictions that turned out to be "uber" wrong.

Arguably, Bush's Iraq occupation was totally screwed up because the Pentagon actually followed Rose's first rule to the letter. The US defined an endstate where they could just hand over the mess to a rump-Iraqi government and let them deal with it. Washington's great sin was not that it guessed wrong, it was that it failed to be flexible and agile enough to adapt to the reality on the ground.

The second rule of *How Wars End* is "define goals precisely and check prices before dying." When Rose finally can explain how to "quantify" terms like freedom, justice, genocide, right, wrong, and so on, then this might be a practical suggestion. The problem with international relations is that it often cannot be reduced to a cost-benefit analysis. Should the United States attack Iran before it becomes a nuclear state? What are the benefits? What are the risks? Such calculations, even after the fact are problematic. We are, for example, still struggling with how much did 9/11 cost. Global expenses were put at about $400 billion. Now, however, with the payouts for responders due to long-term illness issues that bill could jump by billions. It may be decades before we know whether it was cheaper to invade Afghanistan or just absorb a couple of more days like 11 September 2001.

"Pay attention to implementation and anticipate problems" is Rose's third proposal. There is, of course, nothing wrong with this advice. On the other hand, this could be said of virtually every strategic challenge. Most strategists would no doubt sign-up for this aphorism without having read a word of *How Wars End*. Rose writes about ending wars as if they were some kind of grand excursion, where if the Donner Party had just thought of everything beforehand they would not have had to finish eating each other.

Thucydides did a far better job of struggling to answer the question of why wars end badly. He called war a plunge into the dark and he was right. It is a big mistake to think that if leaders are just super smart on the front-end of war, things will all turn out all right on the back end. America needs a deeper and richer kit-bag of capacities and conceptual tools if it hopes to do better at ending wars.