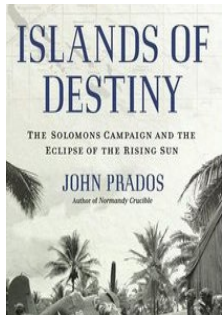


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**ISLANDS OF DESTINY:  
The Solomons Campaign and  
the Eclipse of the Rising Sun**  
John Prados, NAL Caliber, 2012  
388 pages, \$26.95

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FEATURED REVIEW



**D**R. JOHN PRADOS challenges conventional wisdom in an engrossing new work on the Solomons Campaign in World War II's Pacific Theater. Relying on intelligence sources as well as Japanese accounts, the author argues that the Solomons Campaign, and not the Battle of Midway as many historians suggest, represents the true decisive point that accorded the Allies an unmistakable advantage over their Japanese adversaries in terms of air and maritime superiority. This precipitated eventual Allied victory in the Pacific.

While many accounts of the Solomons Campaign focus on the ground war and the desperate, compelling battles that ensued for control of islands such as Guadalcanal and their critical airfields, Prados concentrates on the vicious struggle for air and maritime superiority that was a corollary to permanent success on the ground. Here, the Imperial Japanese Navy was still a juggernaut, "down but not out" after its spectacular loss of four carriers during the battle of Midway in June 1942.

The author shows that the Imperial Japanese Navy was more than a match for Allied naval forces, particularly early in the campaign and especially at night. The U.S. Navy suffered some of the worst defeats in its history during the Solomons Campaign; at the battle of Savo Island, for example, the Allies lost four heavy cruisers in a single, brief engagement. At one point during the campaign, the situation in the Pacific became so dire that the Navy was down to a single carrier in the entire theater—the USS *Enterprise*—and had to request the loan of the HMS *Victorious* from the British.

What turned the tide in favor of the Allies during the Solomons? Intelligence was foremost, according to Prados. The author successfully demonstrates that multiple sources—or pillars, as he refers to them—contributed to eventual Allied success. These included not only the efforts of the well-known cryptanalysts, or codebreakers, but also those of the invaluable coast watchers, radio traffic analysts, scouts, and indigenous persons who provided the Allies with the edge on enemy movements and intentions.

However, as historian Sir John Keegan has shown, intelligence alone doesn't guarantee victory—tactical execution still counts. The Allies were better able to incorporate the pillars of intelligence to decisive advantage. This explanation is one of Prados's strengths, as he gives near-equal coverage to the Japanese viewpoint, incorporating Japanese accounts, combat diaries, and wartime message traffic. It is remarkable how similar both sides were in terms of the primacy of leadership personalities, interservice rivalries, and management of the war with shoestring resources.

Another of the author's obvious strengths is his seamless integration of multiple events across all levels of war—strategic, operational, and tactical. Readers will come away with a broad, holistic understanding of the Solomons Campaign, the strengths and weaknesses of the protagonists, and the role of intelligence as a precursor but not a guarantor of victory. Prados succeeds in making his case in this thought-provoking and highly readable effort.

**Mark Montesclaros,  
Fort Gordon, Georgia**

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**THE REVENGE OF GEOGRAPHY:  
What the Map Tells Us About Coming  
Conflicts and the Battle Against Fate**

Robert D. Kaplan, Random House,  
New York, 2012, \$27.95, 428 pages

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**R**OBERT KAPLAN'S *THE Revenge of Geography* is a worthy addition to his body of

work. The author is, if nothing else, the contemporary poet laureate of geopolitics. As in his previous books, Kaplan displays a rare ability to capture vivid images in simple but incisive prose and filter them through his sensitive and cultivated mind to offer the reader keen insights into current political and social problems based on his understanding of history, social context, and geography. Kaplan has given intellectual respectability and new life to both travel writing and geopolitics, two genres that have fallen into scholarly disrepute for some time.

In Victorian times, travel writing combined descriptions of landscapes, people, and cultures with philosophical musings, narratives of the adventures of travel, and particularly revealing or colorful incidents. Many authors carried the genre to the level of high art while at the same time making significant contributions to geographical knowledge. The field of geopolitics, which initially gained respectability as a more scientific approach to international politics, failed to secure a stable position in academia because it came to be viewed as reactionary, imperialistic, deterministic, and pseudoscientific.

Kaplan's position on world affairs might be described as that of a nondogmatic realist. His views on currently intractable geopolitical problems are balanced and sober, and they are tied to a realistic assessment of human nature as neither naturally good nor evil. Politicians, diplomats, and military officers may find themselves nodding their heads in agreement as they read through one of Kaplan's assessments and violently disagreeing with him as they read the next. This is because the author is not an ideologue. He writes about what he has seen, heard, and experienced in the context of what he has read. Kaplan's commentary on the Pakistan-Afghanistan area, the Mexican-American border, and the historical and geographic roles played by such major powers as China, India, Russia, and Iran are especially illuminating. As the subtitle indicates, to Kaplan, geography is important but not deterministic; there is room for human agency in the "battle against fate."

Although Kaplan's analyses may seem impressionistic and dismissive of current trends in political theory, it is precisely for these reasons—and the fact that they are rooted in a respect for history and a deep, humanistic understanding of human

nature—that they are so compelling to thoughtful academics and interested readers alike.

Kaplan's book is not a breezy journalistic narrative. The author has done his homework both in the field and in the library, and the endnotes show an impressive and eclectic variety of sources. For all the reasons mentioned above, Kaplan's book is highly recommended to all those interested in world affairs, geography, politics, and culture.

**Lt. Col. Prisco R. Hernández, Ph.D., USAR,  
Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**LITTLE AMERICA:  
The War Within the War for Afghanistan**  
Rajiv Chandrasekaran, Alfred Knopf  
New York, 2012, 385 pages, \$12.98

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**S**HORTLY AFTER WORLD War II, Americans established their first presence in Helmand Province. Seeking to revitalize the economy of this remote and backward province, the King of Afghanistan commissioned the U.S. engineering firm Morris-Knudsen to build a system of roads and canals that would make Helmand a model for the rest of his country. American technicians and their families soon arrived, and by the late 1950s, the small American community near Lashkar Gah included a swimming pool, tennis courts, a coed school, and a community club. The local villagers called this enclave of foreigners "Little America." Over time, Morris-Knudsen was followed by soil experts from the U.S. Agency for International Development, Peace Corps volunteers, and more contractors—all seeking to make Helmand a green paradise. Yet, when a communist coup in 1978 drove the aid workers away, the Americans left behind under-conceived and unfinished projects that had failed to realize the king's vision.

For author and *Washington Post* reporter Rajiv Chandrasekaran, the disappointments associated with the Little America projects symbolize the more tragic outcomes he anticipates from our current war in Afghanistan. Chandrasekaran is not a newcomer to conflict in unpleasant places. His best-selling book, *Imperial Life in the Emerald City, Inside Iraq's Green Zone*, was a scathing

critique of the Paul Bremer's Coalition Provisional Authority and its early efforts to "rebuild" Iraq. Given Chandrasekaran's position and liberal outlook, one might expect that he would be gentler in his evaluation of "Obama's war." This is hardly the case. While the author offers a sympathetic portrayal of individual soldiers and marines and their frustrating efforts to win the fight in Helmand, his description of life inside the insulated, alcohol-drenched, and ignorant American communities in Kabul is damning. Chandrasekaran finds that civilians willing to venture outside the fortified enclaves—like the State Department's Kael Weston and Carter Malkasian—were far too rare.

*Little America* covers the period from Obama's surge in 2009 to the beginning of the drawdown in 2011. In describing these events, Chandrasekaran's theme seems to be about cross-purposes: senior military leaders operating at cross-purposes with presidential guidance, marines fighting at cross-purposes with the Army, Richard Holbrooke working at cross-purposes with national security advisors, U.S. efforts to build legitimacy launched at cross-purposes with the hopelessly corrupt Karzai government, America's best intentions placed at cross-purposes to American cultural ignorance, etcetera, etcetera. Chandrasekaran's bleak assessment: "For all the lofty pronouncements about waging a new kind of war, our nation was unable to adapt . . . . Our government was incapable of meeting the challenge."

The last segment in the story of America's longest war has yet to be written. *Little America* may serve as a deeply depressing draft of that final chapter. This book is highly recommended.

**Scott Stephenson, Ph.D.,**  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

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**THE NORTH AFRICAN AIR CAMPAIGN:  
U.S. Army Air Forces  
from El Alamein to Salerno**

Christopher M. Rein, University Press of Kansas,  
Lawrence, 2012, 290 pages, \$31.08

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**E**XACTLY HOW DOES air power win wars? Does strategic bombing, with its massive killing power, ability to knock out industries, and

capacity to destroy resources, do the job? Does tactical bombing, with its support of the ground troops and interdiction closer to the front line, win the day? Historian Christopher Rein tackles this conundrum in *The North African Air Campaign*. This well-researched book explains the buildup of American air power in both the Eastern and Western Campaigns and their contribution to Allied victory in the Mediterranean Theater.

The book is broken down into six chapters. The introduction asks the question: how should air forces be deployed? The following chapters cover prewar theory and doctrine; the 9th Air Force fighting under the British in the western desert; Operation Torch and the creation of the 12th Air Force; the Tunisian Campaign; the Sicilian Campaign; and Ploesti and Salerno.

Rein points out that the 9th and 12th Air Forces suffered under the relentless Air Force generals who wanted to prove the theory of strategic bombing. Despite the two air forces' success supporting ground troops, their commanders gave up bombers to requests from the 8th Air Force in England, and they also were ordered to bomb Hungary's oil fields at Ploesti. In the Western Desert Campaign, the 9th, originally designated the Halverson Provisional Detachment, attacked operational targets such as enemy strong points, roads, convoys, and bridges for the British 8th Army. In this, it was quite effective, prompting Field Marshall Erwin Rommel to admit, "Anyone who has to fight, even with the most modern weapons, against an enemy in complete command of the air, fights like a savage against modern European troops."

The 12th Air Force was born out of the 8th Air Force's building up in England for the strategic bombing of occupied Europe. The 12th had little impact on Operation Torch, the Allied landings in North Africa, with the exception of delivering airborne forces to the fight. As the 12th grew, it contributed to the campaign in Tunisia much the same way the Halverson Provisional Detachment did with the British, using bombers and fighters in an effective tactical role. One of its greatest coups was wiping out an aerial convoy of Luftwaffe transports, the "Palm Sunday Massacre." While the II Corps commander, Lt. Gen. George S. Patton Jr., originally appreciated his air support, he later complained about it when a Luftwaffe raid killed his aide.

Strategic bombing advocates claimed proof that their theory worked when bombers repeatedly attacked the island of Pantelleria, leaving its garrison to surrender to British amphibious forces with barely a fight, but the island was small and relatively undefended. For the invasion of Sicily, the 12th again delivered paratroopers and, despite some grumblings from ground commanders, successfully supported the battle. Patton even credited the air forces with his Army's rapid march across the island. The air forces, however, failed to prevent, or even tried to prevent, the Axis forces from escaping Sicily to the mainland of Italy. The bombers were instead committed to a strategic mission—the Ploesti Raid.

The 1 August 1943 Ploesti Raid was a failure. Aimed at taking out the oil refineries in Romania, the raid failed, and many planes and crews were lost. Of the eight refineries attacked, only one was put out of action, while two others were back in operation in less than a year. The author points out that the 9th Air Force lost 44 heavy bombers in 13 months of action before the raid and lost 55 attacking Ploesti. Moreover, 532 highly skilled air crewmen were killed in the raid. The losses spelled the end of the 9th as a heavy bomber command. The landings at Salerno, Italy, suffered from this lack of bombers, with the Germans almost throwing the Allies back into the sea. Transport planes helped save the day by dropping airborne forces behind the Allied beachhead to shore up the battle line.

*The North African Air Campaign* provides an excellent understanding of an under-examined element of the Mediterranean Theater and reveals the high-level conflicts between generals on the use of air power. This is a great book for students of the macro-level view of the air war in the Mediterranean. The author has done a superb job of digging into the details of the 12th and 9th Air Forces and showing how they fought an almost-daily struggle—over the battlefield and also with the Army Air Forces' brass.

**Kevin M. Hymel,**  
**Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**THE DRIVE ON MOSCOW, 1941:  
Operation Taifun and Germany's  
First Great Crisis in World War II**

Niklas Zetterling and Anders Frankson  
Casemate, Philadelphia and Oxford, 2012  
336 pages, \$32.95

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**W**HEN GERMANY ATTACKED the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941, the invaders chose the best possible time to defeat the Red Army, which was in transition of its leadership, doctrine, organization, equipment, and deployment. However, despite all their initial advantages, the Germans failed to defeat the defenders decisively, condemning both sides to a prolonged war of attrition that Germany ultimately lost. For seven decades, historians and general readers have sought some explanation for why the supposedly invincible Wehrmacht came to grief in 1941. The initial German alibis, focusing on the interference of Adolf Hitler and the extremes of weather and terrain, have long since proven inadequate as answers to this question.

As part of a flurry of recent studies on events of 1941, two Swedish historians, Niklas Zetterling and Anders Frankson, have focused on Operation Taifun (Typhoon), the final attempt of Army Group Center to reach Moscow. In tracing the last German advance, the authors provide a wealth of interesting information, such as statistics indicating the Germans lost fewer tanks and suffered fewer casualties during this operation than they had experienced during the massive battles of the summer. For those interested in details, this book offers such specifics as the number of half-track mounted infantry battalions in certain panzer divisions and the average ages of German and Soviet senior commanders.

Despite (or perhaps because of) continued tactical success, the German commanders consistently underestimated Soviet reserves, believing that each encirclement would be the last and that they could, indeed, take the Russian capital before winter arrived. The authors' conclusion is consistent with the current historiography, to the effect that Germany never had the industrial capacity and manpower to subjugate its huge opponent in a single campaign. If anything, the headlong rush to Moscow seemed to suggest that the German military and political leaders were aware of their vulnerability and sought a quick victory before they would have to face the United States. In fact, Zetterling and Frankson observe, "hardly anything suggests that Germany could have won World War II."

*The Drive on Moscow* includes ample sources from both sides of the battlefield but tends to focus on the German aspects of the story. To some extent, this perspective is unavoidable because the

Germans held the initiative throughout this period. However, in cases of historical disagreement, the authors seem to accept the German account as being more reliable than the Soviet. Thus, for example, they downplay the 1 October battle at Mtsensk—famous in Soviet accounts as a significant victory over German armor—as a small engagement that only cost the Germans six tanks.

Despite such discrepancies, this is an excellent book—well researched, fast paced, and enjoyable to read. Both historians and general readers will profit from reading it.

**Col. Jonathan M. House, USA, Retired,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**WHY PEACE FAILS:  
The Causes and Prevention of  
Civil War Recurrence**

Charles T. Call, Georgetown University Press  
Washington, DC, 2012, 328 pages, \$32.95

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**C**HARLES T. CALL, assistant professor of international studies at American University, sets out to determine why post-civil war peace works in some cases but not in others. His investigation is rooted in conflict theory. He applies quantitative (linear regression) and qualitative analysis to 42 contemporary country case studies—27 cases where post-civil war peace held and 15 cases where it failed—to make numerous notable findings that significantly advance the body of knowledge in conflict theory.

Call's central finding is that political exclusion of opposition groups, rather than economic or social factors, largely determines whether civil wars recur. In other words, inclusionary behavior (power sharing) closely corresponds with successful peace building. Eighty-five percent of cases with inclusionary approaches resulted in sustained peace. His finding also points to the critical role played by national actors in determining success or failure of post-conflict peace. National actors who consolidated power at the expense of social groups associated with a conflict ultimately led to the recurrence of civil war. He also challenges the widely accepted view that economics

is the first factor to address in establishing enduring post-civil war peace.

Call's investigation further uncovers the critical role international actors play in promoting inclusionary solutions to conflict and the instrumental role third-party militaries can play in stabilizing situations. He also reveals that no single factor accounts for success in consolidating peace and preventing the re-igniting of civil war. Finally, he debunks the notion that capacity building is more critical to securing peace than the legitimacy of those in power.

The author discloses that exclusionary behavior does not in all cases lead to recurrence of civil war. In fact, this is true in 4 of the 15 cases he analyzes. Because of the circumstances behind these exceptions, the fundamental outcomes of his exhaustive research are not diminished.

*Why Peace Fails* sheds new light on variables that most positively influence enduring post-civil war peace, as well as the underlying causes of civil conflict that lead to civil war. Call cites sources that represent the most credible scholarly and professional works available. His research is rigorous, comprehensive, and compelling. It is well articulated and appropriately interwoven, with substantive depth and analysis. His conclusions and recommendations are sound and constructive. Moreover, they lend themselves to productive debate and broadening research. This is particularly true for those highlighting the need for legitimacy of external actors in promoting peace and the perseverance they must exude for peace to endure. *Why Peace Fails* is a must-read for conflict theory scholars, academics in the fields of political science and international studies, and military and government leaders—especially those who shape U.S. policy with fragile states.

**Lt. Col. David A. Anderson, Ph.D., USMC,  
Retired, Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**TURNING THE TIDE**

Ed Offley

Basic Books, Perseus Books Group  
New York, 478 pages, \$28.99

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**E**D OFFLEY IS a former Naval officer with an extensive background in military reporting.

## BOOK REVIEWS

Offley has also authored *Scorpion Down: Sunk by the Soviets, Buried by the Pentagon: The Untold Story of the USS Scorpion*; *Pen and Sword: A Journalist's Guide to Covering the Military*; and *Lifting the Fog of War* (with Admiral William A. Owens, USN).

*Turning the Tide* traces the evolution of the battle of the Atlantic in World War II as Germany and the Allies vied for control of the North Atlantic. Germany sought to control the North Atlantic to starve Britain and prevent a buildup of Allied forces and supplies in England. The Allies sought control to secure sea lines of communication for movement of people and material for an amphibious assault and land campaign into the heart of Germany. Both antagonists had to battle the North Atlantic's tremendous weather conditions while waging war.

Offley sets a baseline for the reader to understand the conflict by discussing the organizations and capabilities of each force prior to 1943. He discusses a variety of topics for both opponents that blend together to provide a coherent picture of the circumstances that affected the battles at sea, such as adequacy and quantity of their equipment; service culture; laws and legalities; organization; command and control; intelligence; national resource allocation; technological advancements; and action, reaction, and counteraction to each change in the environment.

The author then shifts his focus to March 1943, when Axis U-boat efforts had reached their zenith in the North Atlantic. The author uses the Axis success in the attacks on convoys SC122 and HX229 as an example of where U-boats inflicted unsustainable losses on the Allied convoy efforts.

The March 1943 Axis actions forced the Allies to make rapid changes in their organization, command and control, and resource allocation for protection of convoys. The Allies did this in April and May 1943. Simultaneously, new detection and attack technologies came on line in quantities large enough to tip the balance in favor of the Allies. The primary example used to show the effects of the convergence of these substantial changes to Allied convoy protection was convoy ONS-5, a westbound convoy transiting to Halifax from the U.K.

The epilogue and appendices summarize the Axis and Allied convoying efforts in the Atlantic for the rest of the war and information on the capabilities

of the various models of German U-boat and Allied escort ships.

*Turning the Tide* is well researched, organized, and well written. It follows logical paths, is free of difficult military language, and does not require the reader to be an expert in naval warfare. This book is for naval and World War II enthusiasts, novice and scholar alike. Additionally it has applicability to those studying change in the midst of conflict.

**Lt. Col. Terrance M. Portman, USMC, Retired,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**ARMS OF LITTLE VALUE:  
The Challenge of Insurgency and Global  
Instability in the Twenty-First Century**  
G.L. Lamborn, Casemate Publishers, UK  
2012, 295 pages, \$32.95

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**F**OR SOME TIME, counterinsurgency has been hailed as the graduate level of warfare. However, in *Arms of Little Value*, G.L. Lamborn argues that counterinsurgency is irrelevant and even harmful without a thorough understanding of insurgency. Through case studies and analysis, Lamborn, a former Army and Central Intelligence Agency officer, seeks to explicate the importance of political action to insurgencies and explain how military power is successful only to the extent it delegitimizes an insurgency.

For militaries, undermining the political activist nature of insurgencies remains a vexing challenge. In successful cases, this has occurred in situations where reform of political and economic policies was enacted by host governments, as was demonstrated by Magsaysay in the Philippines. Conversely, there is little to defend when local partners remain stubbornly corrupt and resistant to political reform, as was the case with Diem's Republic of South Vietnam.

*Arms of Little Value* is reminiscent of Robert Taber's classic *War of the Flea*. However, Lamborn is more concerned with how the U.S. military should better prepare its capabilities through greater understanding of the political nature of war and root causes of insurgencies in particular. As he states, "Pentagon pamphlets and PowerPoint presentations

proliferate on COIN. And yet, the causes and nature of insurgency per se are seldom mentioned.”

Delving into this problem, the book’s first three chapters examine the importance of grievances—whether social, economic, or political—that engender insurgencies. However, solving such grievances is beyond the realm of the military’s capability. The author details how the military decision making process is ill suited to resolve insurgent grievances because it remains locked in a philosophical framework advocated by Antoine Jomini. The problem of differing means and ends in combating insurgencies shapes Lamborn’s argument throughout the book.

For example, he argues, “the U.S. Army has yet to figure out that Jomini has no place in the graduate school of warfare.”

In no way is *Arms of Little Value* a sardonic critique of the U.S. military. The author makes an effort to point out historical cases in which the United States made wise decisions regarding its foreign policy and use of its military. A consistent theme in this regard is that success in countering insurgencies has occurred where the United States supported host governments that reformed the negative practices that served as rationale for revolution. Insurgencies have an emboldened cause where reform has not occurred, as in the case of South Vietnam where Ngo Dinh Diem exemplified failure as a leader. Conversely, Magsaysay in the Philippines eventually overcame the Hukbalahap insurgency because of his willingness to reform. In all cases, political legitimacy is key and cannot be accomplished solely through military power or inundating a country with development aid unless real and perceived reform occurs. This issue is still problematic for the United States.

Despite the astronomical investment by the American people in national security, the defense establishment has shown itself less than fully competent at dealing with low-intensity conflict—insurgency. The answer to this failure is straightforward: the political roots of warfare have been forgotten.

This contentious claim applies to the institutional organization and pathos of the military. Notably, Lamborn cites the expertise of several contemporary generals such as Stanley McChrystal as exceptions. A troubling argument, one central to the book, is the inability of the U.S. military to truly adapt into an organization that teaches and understands the political foundations of insurgency, despite its publicized

statements that it is an evolving and “adaptable” force.

Lamborn recognizes that the U.S. military has been handed politically oriented tasks for which it is not organized, and he drives home the point that other departments must shoulder a greater share. Emphasizing conventional exercises and training officers how to plan static defenses, for example, are understandable but obviously ill-suited to address an insurgency. The author argues that this is a myopic approach and that our military has yet to get its institutional arms around political warfare embodied through insurgency. This is important to fix, Lamborn argues, since political warfare in the form of insurgencies will constitute the type of warfare most likely to occur in the 21st century.

*Arms of Little Value* is not entirely condemnatory. It presents a number of solutions and alternative perspectives on the development of policy and use of military might. Many of the author’s suggestions are in line with a recent RAND study that brought together analysts and military officers on the 10-year anniversary of the Iraq invasion. In essence, the RAND study and *Arms of Little Value* both emphasize the critical importance of an invariably clear policy goal that withstands critical scrutiny. As the RAND study indicates, this did not occur with Iraq. Failure to understand second- and third-order effects of major decisions—such as the Coalition Provisional Authority Orders Nos. 1 and 2 that disbanded the Iraqi Army and initiated de-Baathification—provides ample evidence of such failure. On the other hand, the U.S. military’s efforts in Anbar Province through the Anbar Awakening indicate an adaptability that the author could have examined as a positive example of understanding insurgency.

Although the book does not address the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan directly, the examined historical case studies point to current and recent events. Altogether, significant and substantive arguments are presented, and the author’s focusing on better understanding of the political nature of warfare is merited. Similarly, listening to and evaluating the assessments of a credible author are marks of professionalism. If readers accept the premise of honest, critical evaluation of military power’s limits, there is much to be gained from *Arms of Little Value*.

**Capt. Nathaniel L. Moir, USAR,  
Fergus Falls, Minnesota**

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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE**

David Finkel, Sarah Crichton Books  
Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, New York, 2013  
256 pages, \$26.00

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**I**F DAVID FINKEL'S goal is to break readers' hearts with *Thank You for Your Service*, he succeeds.

In precise, lean prose, the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Washington Post* reporter unflinchingly tells the interwoven stories of the soldiers of Fort Riley's 2-16th Infantry Battalion as they fight to survive the "after-war" upon returning from an Iraq deployment that saw all 800, in Finkel's words, "come home broken in various degrees, even the ones who are fine."

The book unspools like coiled razor wire, stark words interspersed with haunting black-and-white photos purposely made plain to allow the soldiers' lives' vivid hemorrhaging to stand in sharp contrast.

Twenty-eight-year-old Sgt. Adam Schumann is a case in point, plagued by flashbacks, nightmares, and unshakable guilt as he relives his lasting trauma moment by moment, second by second. "Emory, shot in the head, is still draped across his back," Finkel writes of Schumann's tortured memories of comrades hit by enemy attacks, "and the blood flowing out of Emory's head is still rivering into his mouth. Doster, whom he might have loved the most, is being shredded again and again by a roadside bomb on a mission Adam was supposed to have been on, too, and after Doster is declared dead, another soldier is saying to him, 'None of this . . . would have happened if you were there.'"

Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI) may be reduced to acronyms in the press and medical journals, but they rule the after-war world of the soldiers Finkel follows in his fly-on-the-wall narrative.

These are the same young warriors he embedded with and chronicled in a previous best-seller, *The Good Soldiers*. Now he watches from his invisible vantage point as their lives disintegrate on the home front—as they beat their wives, kill themselves, terrorize their children, and despair over ever returning

to normalcy. The collateral-damage suffering of their parents, spouses, and children proves that PTSD and TBI are not just conditions, but they are communicable diseases infecting whole families and American society for generations to come. Whether or not they are curable diseases remains to be seen.

Each soldier is on a mission to find relief from these invisible war wounds and forgiveness for the men they have become, a quest in which they literally endure insults added to injuries. They face insufferable irony inflicted by an intractable bureaucracy and incredible insensitivity from an American public so disengaged during the Iraq and Afghanistan wars but now suddenly so eager to blather "thank you for your service" without understanding what it means.

One GI, his TBI-rattled brain incapable of retaining names or remembering where he parks his car, is nevertheless forced on an arduous paper chase through a convoluted in-processing system to gather 39 signatures just to join the Warrior Transition Battalion, the unit formed to treat people like him. Another, fresh from a suicide attempt during which his wife wrested a shotgun from his hands, is sent by treatment counselors on a therapeutic "Healing Heroes" hunting trip, where well-meaning but clueless civilian organizers, uttering the ubiquitous "thank you for your service," give each participant a shiny new shotgun.

Finkel traces the soldiers, both discharged and active duty, as they navigate the labyrinthine systems set up to help them. His reporting deftly reveals a stressed military culture—staggering under the weight of its own inflexibility and struggling to make sense of "lessons learned" from record numbers of suicides and something as untidy as PTSD, juxtaposed with the need for military order.

The author singles out now-retired Gen. Peter Chiarelli, former U.S. Army vice chief of staff, for his relentless quest to enlighten the services' leadership on the need to ramp up suicide prevention efforts and de-stigmatize war-induced mental illness, even as the general feared that this dismal tidal wave had not yet crested.

These themes and messages are subtly delivered through the real-life, up-close-and-personal suffering of soldiers and their families, at once horrific and mesmerizing.



At the end, Finkel offers a few Band-Aids to stanch the hemorrhaging of his subjects' unhealed lives, but it's not enough to unbreak the hearts of those reading about them.

This book leaves lasting questions: is the phrase "thank you for your service" merely lip service to acknowledge a sacrifice too great to measure? Is any amount of thanks enough?

**Carol Saynisch, Steilacoom, Washington**

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**ZUMWALT:**

**The Life and Times of Admiral  
Elmo Russell "Bud" Zumwalt, Jr.**

Larry Berman, HarperCollins, New York  
2012, 528 pages, \$29.99

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**L**ARRY BERMAN'S BIOGRAPHY of Adm. "Bud" Zumwalt is important to more than just naval audiences. Anyone interested in the meaning of the often-used term "transformational leadership" will profit from the book. For those unfamiliar with Zumwalt, he instigated a virtual "cultural revolution" in the U.S. Navy as the chief of naval operations in the early 1970s. Before that, he served as the commander of U.S. naval forces in Vietnam during the 1968 Tet Offensive. Either of these major "jobs" makes him a person of interest as a historical figure and as a role model for those studying leadership at the highest levels. Zumwalt's life was filled with triumph and tragedy.

The most important chapters are those concerning Zumwalt's time in Vietnam and his tenure as chief of naval operations. Berman examines Zumwalt's decision to use Agent Orange in the Mekong Delta to aid his river assault boat crews in interdicting the flow of munitions to the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese. (Zumwalt's son, Elmo III, who served in the campaign, contracted cancer attributable to the toxins and later died from complications.) Zumwalt never changed his mind about the rightness of his decision to use Agent Orange, given the circumstances of the war at the time, but he devoted much of the rest of his life helping veterans exposed to the deadly chemical.

The book's high point is the discussion of Zumwalt's ability to bring a racist, sexist, and conservative naval officer corps into the 20th century. Zumwalt issued reforms to the fleet through his famous "Z-grams." Officers who had been through Zumwalt's reforms fall into two categories. There are those who believed Zumwalt had done the Navy a great service and those who believed he had ruined it. The group with Berman's judgment of history on their side believed Zumwalt clearly brought the Navy in line with the rest of the United States as to cultural norms. Berman shows how Zumwalt led the difficult fight for institutional change from the top down in the face of opposition from his fellow admirals.

Berman brings to light Zumwalt's skill as an innovative and insightful strategist. George C. Marshall, Paul Nitze, and other famous strategists recognized how Zumwalt's talented mentoring paid great dividends to the U.S. Navy and to the nation. Berman's book is very readable. He makes a few errors common to biographies, such as the tendency to canonize the subject. Zumwalt is presented warts and all although he seems to have had few of them. A minor weakness is the book's end. We never learn how and what Zumwalt died of after his long and productive life—but perhaps that is for the best, given it was his life that mattered, not his death. I highly recommend the book to a broad audience, especially those interested in transformational leadership in peace and war.

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**USEFUL ENEMIES:**

**When Waging Wars is More Important  
Than Winning Them**

David Keen, Yale University Press,  
New Haven, CT, 2012, 304 pages, \$38.00

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**D**AVID KEEN PROVIDES an insightful analysis concerning the complexities of current global conflicts and the factors continuing them long after international attention has moved on. The central premise in Keen's *Useful Enemies* is that

powerful, corrupt actors have an under-appreciated stake in prolonging wars and victimizing civilian populations. He suggests “war systems,” which include aid agencies and the U.S. military, are designed to enhance the power of these military leaders and not necessarily to achieve decisive victory. Supporting counterinsurgencies in weak states does not make the Western world safer. Our support of counterinsurgencies increases civilian dislocations while decreasing their military’s need for compromise with “terrorists” and other intractable enemies.

Early chapters focus on the economic aspects of military conflict. Diamonds and other valuable resources are the targets of greedy warlords. Warlords also take advantage of the conflicts to move people away from their homes to new locations, using security concerns to their advantage. The military-dominated governments delay any peace process that may endanger their control of this process. Keen equates Afghanistan with Vietnam as the U.S. was drawn into extended wars where “winning” was not a high priority for the local government.

Some of his most thought-provoking points are made when Keen discusses the political factors involved in the creation of “permanent emergencies.” He charges key U.S. allies, such as Egypt and Israel, with using military justifications to subvert normal democratic processes and profit from emergencies. Russia and Yugoslavia are mentioned as states where the leadership created a sense of siege to manipulate their people. In a post-9/11 analysis, Keen argues the United States is too quick to declare wars it cannot easily end. He writes that U.S. politicians “have actively encouraged the militarization of the economy” and become reliant on its technology. Finally, when he extends his analysis to shame and the psychology of violence in the United States, he reveals the randomness of some of his research by focusing on a criminology book he stumbled on in his local British bookshop. Keen’s perspective appears strongly influenced by liberal “development studies” academic circles and his personal reaction to war zone violence. He begins the book with Sierra Leone in 1995 and then presents other first-hand accounts of conflict from across the world during his wide-sweeping survey. His rhetoric is sometimes overly emotional and

may be difficult for some military professionals to stomach as he asks if this U.S. military “machinery” should be more accurately “regarded as a monster to be fed new victims.” He would have done well to heed his own advice about not demonizing the opposition. Modern U.S. military thinkers have been incorporating comprehensive approaches into counterinsurgency doctrine since 2006. Joint Publication (JP) 3-24, *Counterinsurgency Operations*, acknowledges the primary objective to foster the development of effective governance by a legitimate government. Corruption is cited as often being a key core grievance and is regularly discussed in military education as a primary detriment to overall mission success. Reading *Useful Enemies* should provoke military officers into thinking about how their profession is perceived by others and understand some of the obstacles to creating true unity of effort.

**James Cricks,  
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**SMALL WARS:  
Low-Intensity Threats and the American  
Response Since Vietnam**

Michael D. Gambone  
The University of Tennessee Press  
Knoxville, 2012, 406 pages, \$40.00

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**H**OW DID U.S. policymakers respond to the multiplying challenges to U.S. security after 1973, what factors influenced their decisions, and what were the end results? Michael D. Gambone attempts to answer these key questions in *Small Wars*. The underwhelming title with its use of “small wars” and “low-intensity” could make the book easily lost among so many other recently published books that cover the same general topic. Yet, this history professor from Kutztown University in Pennsylvania has put together a work that is superior in its analysis, writing, and organization and is, therefore, relevant and useful for today’s military professional. Rather than being lost in the crowd, it is distinctly different.

Gambone’s conclusions are not ground breaking, but his analysis is fresh and informed by careful

attention to the nuances of organizational cultures, policy debates, and the interpretation of lessons learned from previous conflicts. He recognizes and attempts to explain the complexities of decisions concerning the use of military force. While he theorizes that post-war analogies and interpretations of the Vietnam War “continue to have a profound legacy for American policy and the U.S. military,” Gambone explores the influences that go far beyond this legacy. He concludes that the U.S. military of the last decade evolved to meet the contingencies of present warfare (the past 20 years) far better and to a greater degree than the Army of the Vietnam era, but these reforms came late and are likely to recede in the future.

Gambone explores this history through a combination of chronology and topics that extend throughout the period. He starts with an overview of the Cold War and then dissects events of the last 40 years. Toward the end of the book, Gambone explores related themes that have influenced U.S. participation in low-intensity conflict, providing useful chapters on the war on drugs and the rise of private military corporations. Following the effective analysis in each of these, Gambone is able to capture the essence in well-articulated conclusions. In his examination of the 1990s, Gambone makes the astute observation that “military and civilian leadership moved along parallel and complementary paths with

respect to small wars,” and that they “promoted contradictory results of better preparedness for low-intensity conflicts coupled with a reduced commitment to them.” He further proposes that, “Success proved to be one of the largest obstacles to military adaptation in the 90s.” Each chapter contains similarly well-connected conclusions that are both thought provoking and grounded in the evidence and analysis.

The book is especially relevant for its multi-dimensional look at military policy, operations, and perspective changes over the last 40 years. Gambone explains dynamics of strategic reassessments over those decades at the highest levels of government that provide a not-so-distant mirror to debates and proposals being reintroduced to the strategic discourse today. Military professionals who find themselves struggling with the recent attention being given to “new” concepts would do well to pause and read Gambone’s book. The U.S. military has struggled with building partnerships and capacity, persistent engagement, light-footprint operations, and even “deviant globalization” for many years with varying degrees of success. Any insightful understanding of recent history, such as this book provides, will be useful in approaching discussions of these themes.

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