

BOOK REVIEWS

The Air War in Vietnam

Michael E. Weaver. Texas Tech University Press, 2022, 640 pp.

Just when you think you have read all there is to know about the war in Vietnam, particularly the air war there, a skilled academician—in this instance Michael E. Weaver—pens a persuasive historical tome using previously classified materials and documentary policy evidence in a new comprehensive work. Weaver, currently an associate professor of history at the US Air Force's Air Command and Staff College at the Air University in Alabama, breaks down his analysis of the air war via six mission sets: aerial refueling, air superiority, reconnaissance, airlift, close air support, and coercion and interdiction. Rather than plow old ground, Weaver skillfully looks at each of these mission sets not through the lens of sortie counts, missions flown, and bombs dropped—which have been argued to be the worst measures of success in this war, and any war for that matter—but via true effectiveness markers grounded in the mission objectives of the specific campaign or operation and filtered through the lens of US policy goals for the overall war. In this context, *The Air War in Vietnam* is a unique and new contribution to the historical account.

Shortly after beginning the book, most readers will intuit the notion that the Air Force's use of airpower in the prosecution of the war was mostly successful. It was the waging of the war as a whole that was a failure, and Weaver soberly sets out establishing why. With effectiveness as the book's unifying theme—the author rightly notes how he and his colleagues “wrestle constantly” with this, as there is no agreed-upon definition of effectiveness—Weaver posits that America simply forgot the lessons of its past fighting victories. The total war mentality leading to World War II's triumph was a high-water mark that was never to be reached again because of restrictions placed on potential targets. In numerous cases time and again, Weaver explains how field commanders were prohibited from attacking not only specific general target categories, but also specific targets themselves. Airspace constraints, too, limited airpower's effective reach and power because of limitations shackling air commanders. Limitations that might incite overt involvement by the Soviet Union and China were assiduously avoided at nearly all costs, which resulted in the micromanagement we are all familiar with, and sadly, in a war that fell short of national goals.

As noted previously, Weaver uses established policy goals outlined in the State Department's *Foreign Relations of the United States* series to specifically link air operations to national policy and strategy goals, something never done before in scholarship. This dynamic is often overlooked in narrow examinations of war histories and analysis because the two are inextricably linked and a treatment of one is not complete without the other. As a strategist and former commandant of the US National War College, the premier Joint and interagency strategy war college, I teach my students to think about strategy as Weaver would. Holistic approaches that incorporate and analyze all the instruments of power and their interrelationship along with the war's ends, ways, and means, while assessing costs and risks, is a proven methodology for analyzing success in the broader context of national security strategy, which is exactly what Weaver has accomplished here.

Weaver explains the Vietnam War at its core as a siege of North Vietnam. Paring back his evidence and arguments reveals the truth of that supposition as the United States prosecuted a containment strategy in the hopes it would not expand into open conflict with the North's satellite patrons. As strategically sound as this idea may have been, its execution was akin to fighting with both hands tied behind the back, and it frittered away the tactical and operational gains made on a regular basis. For example, when a US bombing campaign or other supporting operation had the North on the ropes, policy dictated a pull back or cease-fire to allow for negotiations to take place. This would often result in the North promising to negotiate a certain peace it never intended to keep while it generated forces for the next battle. This cycle repeated itself numerous times during the war, and the United States never learned, let alone applied, this lesson. Weaver notes that as a result of the existential way the North fought to survive and win, the United States was never going to win because limited war always results in limited outcomes—and that is exactly what happened.

Ultimately, for the United States, Vietnam contributed to larger Cold War geopolitical goals, according to Weaver. Over hundreds of meticulously researched pages, he aptly demonstrates this nuanced point. America needs to realize yet again that limited war prosecution will often result in limited results, and that if victory is truly the purpose, defining goals and objectives more narrowly in the context of participation is a requirement that can never be overlooked. This book will add measurably to the historical record and is a must-read for all Vietnam War and airpower enthusiasts and scholars.

Brigadier General Chad T. Manske, USAF, Retired

The Media Offensive: How the Press and Public Opinion Shaped Allied Strategy during World War II

Alexander G. Lovelace. University Press of Kansas, 2022, 400 pp.

Alexander G. Lovelace, a scholar at the Contemporary History Institute of Ohio University, has made an excellent contribution to history with *The Media Offensive: How the Press and Public Opinion Shaped Allied Strategy during World War II*. This book argues that in their concern over public opinion, the media—encompassing print, radio, and reporting by uniformed personnel—and the military significantly influenced strategic, operational, and tactical aspects of warfare.

This proved particularly true in the case of the US Army, which encompasses Lovelace's focus of investigation. In essence, he claims that nationalizing warfare on an industrial scale carried the public into the conflict simultaneously as participants and stakeholders. This caused World War II to witness a "media revolution," where the power and speed of radio, print, and movies "massively increased" media influence over the population (18). Lovelace argues that maintaining public support via the news developed into a national line of effort influencing many important decisions in the Pacific and European theaters, a trend which previous scholars have understudied.

The book generally works chronologically from the outbreak of the war in 1941 through the defeat of Germany in 1945. The examples are primarily from the European theater, although General Douglas MacArthur's use of media outlets to influence popular US opinion to support his return to the Philippines is also discussed. Lovelace claims the media had a symbiotic relationship with the military and each used the other—the military to gain support on the home front, and the media to write stories that captured the nation's attention. Yet since both the military's and the public's common goal remained the defeat of the Axis, these interests between the population and state aligned. For example, to better serve the public's desires, the US military conducted operations like the Doolittle Raid, the invasion of North Africa, and the seizure of Rome—indirect and perhaps inefficient uses of resources, but operations which nevertheless demonstrated its ability to respond to threats quickly and with success in a way the American public appreciated.

Throughout the text, Lovelace analyzes the strategic decisions of historical figures, such as George C. Marshall, Dwight D. Eisenhower, George S. Patton, and many other generals. Lovelace argues that total war facilitated an evolution in the perceived prominence of media stories due to the importance of public support required to prosecute such wars. Consequently, news stories influenced military decision-making to a point not previously experienced in American history.

In the final section, Lovelace argues that the close bond between the US Army and the American media that developed during World War II would not carry on to later limited wars, like the proxy wars utilized to combat communism on the Korean Peninsula or in Indochina in the 1950s and 1960s. These Cold War conflicts resulted in a strained relationship of distrust between the military and the media. Instead, the media grew to be skeptical of the information provided by the military, which was perceived as deceptive propaganda. Meanwhile, military leaders came to disdain reporters as biased and self-serving. The contrast with the earlier dynamics might leave the reader to believe the media/military relationship was irreversibly altered following World War II.

Yet the prospect of total war remains in the twenty-first century, as demonstrated by the Russian war in Ukraine. As such, this book provides lessons still applicable to today and the future.

Although *The Media Offensive* is an excellent read, there are a few limiting aspects of this work. Lovelace admits that his study does not include the media's influence over Marine Corps operations in the Pacific, a topic rich with scholarly opportunities and iconic moments. Perhaps he might return to that subject in a future project. He also confesses that the media's influence over combat operations had limits and was not always the decisive factor in the decisions made. Correspondingly, the narration often describes the many factors influencing decisions without clarifying if military objectives or media publicity had the greater effect on the decided outcomes. This makes it difficult for the reader to assess exactly what influence the media—or public opinion—had or if certain strategic decisions simply made practical military sense. Additionally, while the introduction and the conclusion are written masterfully, some of the chapters' content reads more like a narration of events rather than an analysis providing the same powerful arguments exemplified in the beginning and closing portions. Nevertheless, Lovelace does circle back in at least one chapter to draw out his main arguments about media influence, which provides an enhanced and scholarly perspective on those events. This methodology might have worked better if used throughout.

This book will prove interesting to a wide audience. Consequently, I highly recommend it for history buffs but also for current practitioners of military science as well as international affairs and political science. The lessons revealed about how the media can influence military decision-making can be applied as a case study to compare with other periods of time. Lovelace only briefly utilizes this methodology in his short comparison with the Korean War and the Vietnam War. In contrast, there remains ample opportunity to examine this nascent time frame in World War II and the application of those lessons learned in the modern era, an age where the term "media" has become so prolific and influential that it increasingly requires numerous qualifiers to define. Radio, print media, and film have been compounded with other digital forms, like social media, social networking, and social medium platforms, to name a few. In short, this work enters into a rich academic space with further opportunities to explore. Lovelace's contribution will prove foundational to future studies on strategic influence.

Robert S. Burrell, PhD

The Polar Pivot: Great Power Competition in the Arctic and Antarctica

Ryan Patrick Burke. Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2022, 261 pp.

In 1947, America was beginning to reckon with an Arctic paradox. The polar reaches were at once a valuable strategic location for the United States and also a site of American vulnerability. The first chief of staff of the nascent US Air Force, General Carl Spaatz, described this paradox: "Through the Arctic, every industrialized country is within reach of our strategic air. America is similarly exposed. We are, in fact, wide open at the top."¹ Ryan Patrick Burke's new monograph, *The Polar Pivot*, revisits this opportunity/vulnerability dichotomy. Burke shows that today, more so than in the period following World War II, the polar regions should be a primary focus of American security discourse because they are the most likely venues for competition and conflict.

Burke brings an impressive resume and background knowledge to the task of redefining the strategic importance of the polar regions. He is currently a professor and deputy department head in the Military & Strategic Studies department at the US Air Force Academy, where he is the

1. James Reston, "Pact with Canada Affirms Agreed Defense Principle: Stations Were Discussed Last Summer, but Appropriation Has Been an Issue," *New York Times*, February 13, 1947, 17.

research director for the Homeland Defense Institute, its joint partnership with US Northern Command. Since January 2021 he has been the co-director of the Modern War Institute at West Point's Project 6633, a platform for discussion and debate about polar security. The publication of Burke's book coincides with that of his Project 6633 co-director, Elizabeth Buchanan. While Buchanan's work focuses on Russia's Arctic strategy under President Vladimir Putin, Burke's book outlines the threats to US security in the polar regions from both Russia and China while also proposing a strategy for the United States to adopt. One of the main contributions of Burke's research to the body of scholarly debate is to describe the security considerations in the Antarctic and the Arctic, the former often neglected in favor of the latter.

Burke's overall argument is that the high latitudes should be more of a focus for international security dialogue as both will likely become contested geographies in the future. In support of this overall point, he makes three subordinate claims. First, he claims that the polar regions are not newly relevant but have historically been geopolitically significant. Burke describes the relevant recent history of great power competition in the Arctic and Antarctic—a useful exercise which grounds his later theorization and recommendations in a historical context. His chronological accounting highlights the ways in which the liberal order and its international institutions provided security and rules-based norms during the Cold War. He takes this approach to contrast the ways in which America's revisionist peer competitors challenge those norms today.

Burke's second claim establishes why the polar regions are so important. To this end he evaluates certain categories that will be more influential than others in terms of future polar security. Through an alliterative device that anchors his independent variables, he describes the "four polar Cs" of regional security: commons, claims, covenants, and cosmos. Burke defines the commons as "regions of shared access and activity" and asserts that freedom of action within the commons is an enduring American interest (46). While the United States was distracted by other geopolitical events during the preceding 20 years, Russia and China have leveraged advantages created by warming oceans to challenge free and open access to the polar regions. Some of the ways in which those states do so is through territorial claims of ownership. Burke argues that contrary to the liberal internationalist contention, international institutions like the Arctic Council and Antarctic Treaty are not sufficiently credible to maintain the status quo.² This is because no mechanism is in place to ensure compliance. Thus, he argues, the resulting international agreements are grounded in wishful thinking.

Burke states that Russia and China will become economically incentivized to break international laws and customs in accordance with neorealist theory, which posits that states pursue power amidst the anarchy of the international system. Burke argues that the United States must be prepared to secure its own interests because America exists within a state system where no legally binding agreements will prevent its enemies from pursuing what is in their own national interests. Therefore, Burke suspects that the covenants—his third C—may be less useful in the future than they were during the Cold War period of liberal hegemony. Burke's cosmos, his fourth C, refers to the celestial commons where he sees increasing competition for access, specifically with respect to the polar infrastructure that allows for space-based communication capabilities.

Burke's third claim is that some states will have greater influence in the polar regions than others and that they have agendas which are evident from their present behavior. He delineates the international players, grouping them into a typology consisting of four categories depending on intent, comprised of posture and policy, and capability, comprised of presence and power. According to this distribution, only three states fall into the polar power category denoting the strongest

2. G. John Ikenberry, "Why American Power Endures: The U.S.-Led Order Isn't in Decline," *Foreign Affairs*, November 1, 2022, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/>.

powers: China, Russia, and the United States. One strength of Burke's analysis is that it avoids simply grouping China and Russia together. While both are dissatisfied with a status quo that favors the United States, they have divergent motivations and goals. This nuanced presentation suggests that different policy approaches may be necessary depending on the region (Arctic versus Antarctic) and actor (China versus Russia).

The pivot in the title of Burke's work recalls the Mackinderian phrase familiar to political geographers, that the so-called Eurasian heartland represented decisive terrain around which the future of the world order pivoted.³ Perhaps a more fitting allusion, however, is to the would-be "Pacific pivot" of the Obama administration.⁴ Burke argues that the United States should turn its attention geographically from Europe and the Pacific but also intellectually from its default inclination toward liberal approaches to international relations.

In place of this approach, Burke suggests a transactional style of international politics aligned with the neorealist playbook. This, he argues, will prevent America from falling into a Thucydidean polar trap. A strength of this approach is that it moves the United States from a knee-jerk militaristic response yet allows America to still demonstrate its assertiveness and leadership. One outstanding question with Burke's recommendation, however, is whether this policy prescription will result in Russia and China willingly assuming the status of a subaltern power. The answer to this question may deal more with whether the United States is in close competition with China, as Burke suggests, or whether it retains unchallenged unipolarity, as others argue in the neorealist camp.⁵

Perhaps the strongest point in Burke's presentation is that it avoids becoming mired in a climate debate and instead takes anthropogenic change as a given. Rather than debating the science he substitutes two relevant questions: 1) What are the geopolitical security implications for all countries of a warmer Earth?; and 2) What should the United States do about it? To the first question, Burke believes the most pressing implication will be the rush to secure economic interests in newly navigable areas of the North and South Poles. To the second, Burke recommends the United States develop a realistic polar strategy now, while it can, rather than later, when it must (202).

The framework of Burke's polar pivot strategy encompasses what he calls projection, protection, prevention, and preservation. Of these four, the most fully articulated is projection, which he argues will allow the United States to demonstrate its commitment to the region. To this end, Burke proposes somewhat counterintuitive suggestions—for example, to stop focusing on building icebreakers, and instead build ships with ice-hardened hulls—and other novel ideas. To the latter point, Burke articulates an interesting idea to create a new US Polar Command or POL-COM that would encompass territory above and below 60 degrees latitude north and south. This new combatant command would cover two independent areas of responsibility and address what Burke sees as a design flaw in the current unified command plan. According to Burke, the plan is cluttered in the North and confusing in the South due to competing responsibilities amongst current regional combatant commands.

The Polar Pivot is an important, interesting, well-researched, well-reasoned, and logically argued presentation of an increasingly important and often neglected geopolitical region. Burke presents rational arguments in support of his transactional approach, which fits comfortably within the current scholarly debate about where the United States should invest its attention and finite resources in a world of strategic competition. In contrast with authors who point to the Indo-Pacific, or others

3. Gearóid Ó Tuathail, "Putting Mackinder in His Place: Material Transformations and Myth," *Political Geography* 11, no. 1 (1992), <https://doi.org/>.

4. "Pacific Pivot," *Harvard Political Review*, November 2, 2012, <https://harvardpolitics.com/>.

5. Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth, "The Myth of Multipolarity: American Power's Stay-in Power," *Foreign Affairs*, April 18, 2023, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/>.

who suggest Europe, Burke makes a compelling case that the future of great power competition will be in the polar extremes. It then follows that the United States should begin planning and posturing for strategic competition there today. Burke's blueprint for American polar defense, security orientation, and influence is a vital contribution to this important debate.

Lieutenant Colonel James M. Davitch, USAF, PhD

U.S. Go Home: The U.S. Military in France, 1945–1968

M. David Egan and Jean Egan. Schiffer Publishing, 2022, 608 pp.

U.S. Go Home is a twofold adventure for readers. First, it offers a nuanced view of life for Americans in post-World War II France, as known on a personal level by authors M. David Egan and Jean Egan. David Egan was stationed at Trois-Fontaines in northeastern France as commander of the 39th Ordnance Company in the early 1960s. Second, it is a thoroughly-sourced monograph, as the Egans channel Edward Gibbon and his six-volume work, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, to detail and then detail some more the who, what, where, and when of the US military presence in a country that was the keystone of European Cold War defense. At 608 pages, the level of such detail is both extraordinary and pedantic. Indeed, as an example, a reader learns the address of the dependent school at Fontainebleau (Villa Lavaurs at 88, rue St.-Honoré), the cost of a school lunch there in 1952 (30 cents), and how and where American student drivers were tested (“In Spring 1966, *Compagnie républicaine de sécurité* personnel arranged red and white striped traffic cones to form a large figure-eight driving circuit behind the warehouse and hospital buildings at Lariboisière”) (201).

Unfortunately, however, the why is lacking. Why did France force the United States to leave in the late 1960s, after nearly two decades of infrastructure and supply buildup following World War II? The subject of strategic cooperation is broached in the second chapter of the book, where the authors discuss the American and Allied decision to station US troops permanently in Europe and rearm Europe to deter the Soviet Union, and the essential leadership of General Dwight Eisenhower to the nascent NATO buildup. In a war with the Soviets, NATO expected to have to fall back to the Rhine River and launch a counterattack through France's Rhône valley. As for specificity on why the United States was in France, the chapter begins with analytical promise: “The enormous US Army logistics system and the US Air Force's forward-based, nuclear-capable jet aircraft that would be located in France were essential components of the military strength of the new [NATO]” (31). Yet any further discussion of the Franco-American relationship and its deterioration is postponed until the book's final chapter.

In that chapter, the authors chronicle the United States' abrupt change in direction to conclude in its forced withdrawal from France. Likewise, the Egans themselves make an abrupt change: whereas, seemingly every installation, exercise, and daily life anecdote are covered in minutiae for nearly 500 pages, an analysis of why French President Charles de Gaulle ordered the withdrawal is a mere four pages. The reader learns that a series of social and political blunders and miscommunications, including French concerns about sovereignty infringements and the US closing of 27 installations in France, resulted in de Gaulle announcing on March 7, 1966, that the United States must be out of France by April 1, 1967. Interestingly, de Gaulle's demand matched Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara's own plan to withdraw US forces from France.

In Operation FRELOC (“fast relocation”), the United States faced an unprecedented challenge: withdrawing more than 70,000 personnel and dependents, relocating 728,000 tons of matériel, rebasing more than 180 Air Force aircraft, closing more than 190 installations, and moving eight headquarters. The Egans conclude that Operation FRELOC was successful “[b]y most measures” (508). They also offer 10 reasons why the withdrawal weakened the defense of Europe, the main reason being lost strategic depth.

Despite the omission of the rationale behind the US withdrawal, the book—titled after communist propaganda from a Korean War disinformation campaign—provides a well-researched history of the US military in France. The first chapter sets the stage by describing the damage from World War II, the redeployment and occupation of US troops, and the Berlin blockade and airlift. The Korean War and its impact on US forces is highlighted, but notably and seemingly unnecessarily, the Soviet-American air war in Korea is introduced to the unsuspecting reader. The chapter concludes with the formation of NATO and the 1948 bilateral agreement to station US troops in France. The latter is stated as fact with the analysis confined to a sentence: “France . . . was militarily weak and depended on NATO and the United States for its security” (28).

The authors then highlight the importance of France. With its Atlantic ports and distance from the Soviet Union, France was to “become the operational headquarters and logistical hub for the defense of the West” (67). Interestingly, but perhaps unnecessarily, the third chapter diverts to chronicle the training and Atlantic crossing of 1950s Army personnel. France offered 39 Army and 21 Air Force locations to the United States to establish a permanent presence. France was also instrumental to NATO war plans, as it approved the locations for 14 dispersed operating bases, which had the purpose of preventing the Soviets from destroying entire wings. Chapter 4 then turns to the struggle in terms of labor, materials, and political disputes to construct US military facilities and infrastructure in France.

In chapter 5, the Egans provide a historical account of the selection of Camp des Loges for US European Command headquarters, the service of the Counter Intelligence Corps, and the US diplomatic, military presence in the Paris area. Chapter 6 focuses on the establishment of Allied Air Forces Central Europe at Camp Guynemer in Avon and Allied Forces Central Europe at Fontainebleau. NATO routinely conducted exercises to practice aerial combat, nuclear bombing runs, and coordinated air-land operations. The chapter concludes with de Gaulle notifying NATO in 1966 that France would withdraw from Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe.

Chapter 7 is about military installations at Orléans, including the US Army Communications Zone (ComZ) headquarters at Caserne Coligny, an organized zone of logistical installations designed to support forward-based combat troops in Germany. Chapter 8 details the location and purpose of medical facilities in France, including the construction of dual-purpose standby hospitals—barracks and classrooms during peacetime and hospital wards during wartime—and the subsequent haggling over the sale price of those hospitals as the United States withdrew from France in 1967.

Chapter 9 focuses on the Advance Section, tasked to supply US troops during a crisis. The chapter starts with the section’s establishment of its headquarters at Caserne Maginot in Verdun and then describes the dozen major depots extending eastward from Vitry-le-François to Metz. Chapter 10 covers the west coast of France, where military officials planned to use ports at Bordeaux, La Rochelle, Nantes, Brest, Cherbourg, and Lorient to offload supplies in time of war. Forty-eight offshore discharge exercises were conducted to determine the best methods to quickly offload and avoid Soviet targeting. The chapter includes an interesting diversion on the filming of the war classic *The Longest Day* on an island off the coast of La Rochelle. Chapter 11 covers the Base Section installations, which included ports and depots in Bordeaux, La Rochelle, and Poitiers. Base Section was responsible for supplying war reserves to Seventh Army in Germany.

Certainly, *U.S. Go Home* is an impressively researched monograph. No fact concerning logistics or the individuals involved seems to be left out, as evident until the end with the book’s concluding sentence: “First Lt Robert A. Hefferman, Commanding Officer of the 77th Trans Co from Ingrandes, rode ‘shotgun’ on the last FRELOC truck out of France” (519). The book is a culmination of more than 400 interviews and research from 50 archives. Most chapters have over 200 references, and the reference section of the book totals 63 pages.

Yet to the dismay of any student of international relations or Cold War history, the overabundance of research does not carry over to the sentiment behind the book's title, *U.S. Go Home*. Four pages of analysis and one top 10 list represent a dearth of evidence for why the United States withdrew from France. It is clear that the communists in France wanted the United States out, but there is no mention of the impact of these domestic malcontents on de Gaulle's decision-making. In fact, as noted, when the United States withdrew, there was a significant negative impact on the French economy. The reader is left to fill in the gaps about why the United States went home: Was de Gaulle's decision based solely on US missteps? Or was it based on domestic political factors? Or both? Perhaps it was part of de Gaulle's grand strategy?

Still, in terms of the who, what, where, and when of the 22 years the US military was in France, *U.S. Go Home* sets the standard. It is definitive, unmatched, and a necessary inclusion in the scholarship of military history.

Bradley F. Podliska, PhD

Modern South Korean Air Power: The Republic of Korea Air Force Today

Robin Polderman. Harpia Publishing, 2021, 256 pp.

Modern South Korean Air Power: The Republic of Korea Air Force Today by Robin Polderman provides a detailed and timely look at the aircraft and armament used by the South Korean Air Force in a region that is home to some of the most influential powers in the world. Since the early 1950s, the heavily industrialized nation of South Korea (Republic of Korea, or ROK) has seen steady growth and is now the world's seventh-largest exporter and 11th-largest economy. As the Cold War on the Korean Peninsula gathered momentum, the development of the Republic of Korea Air Force (ROKAF) became one of the nation's top priorities. While initially dependent on the United States for its aircraft, South Korea's aviation industry has matured rapidly, and ROKAF's use of indigenously manufactured equipment is on the rise. Since 1949, the ROKAF has served as a core power of the republic's national defense, and its importance has grown even more as twenty-first century technology has helped level military playing fields around the region.

The nucleus of the ROKAF—officially established as an independent air force on October 1, 1949, by Presidential Decree No. 254—was formed by an air unit of the Department of Internal Security, which received 10 Piper L-4 Grasshoppers on September 4, 1948, delivered straight from the United States and assembled by South Korean technicians, a foretaste of things to come for many years. When the Korean War began five years after the republic's independence when North Korean armed forces crossed the 38th Parallel, the ROKAF could field no more than 22 aircraft, including the aforementioned L4s, and two additional L-5 Sentinel light observation aircraft and 10 AT-6 Texan trainers imported from Canada. To help bolster the ROKAF, South Korea was provided F-51D Mustangs, formerly known as P-51Ds, as US and UN air and ground forces began their drive against North Korean and eventually Chinese Communist forces back north across the 38th Parallel.

During the 1950s and '60s the ROKAF was equipped with more modern jet aircraft like the F-86 Saber, F-4 Phantom, and F-5 Tiger fighters. Additionally, forward air control and short-range transport aircraft, a vital component to any in-depth defense of the Korean Peninsula, were fielded to the ROKAF during this period. The Vietnam War, which saw the Republic of Korean Army committed to ground operations in defense of South Vietnam, also saw the ROKAF support Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam) forces with a transfer of 41 F-5s to the South Vietnamese Air Force. Since the 1980s, the ROKAF, organized and structured along US Air Force lines, has participated in both internal defense, playing a standby role in the 1980 Gwangju student riots, and external operations, supporting coalition forces in the Persian Gulf War and Global War on Terrorism in the Middle East. The ROKAF, manned by 65,000 personnel, operates a force

of 720 combat aircraft using both foreign and indigenous built airframes and defensive missile systems, primarily as a strategic counter to its North Korean Air Force counterparts. *Modern South Korean Air Power* highlights—through 177 high-quality maps and photos, along with in-depth analysis—cover the full spectrum of ROKAF combat aviation power.

The author provides eight chapters and two appendices detailing ROKAF origins, the ROKAF today, South Korea's national airpower strategy over the Korean Peninsula and defense against its near abroad interests like Communist China and Russia, ROKAF aircraft, and the future of ROKAF programs. Students of the ROKAF "Hot and Cold War" will note the author's description of ROKAF's transition from exclusively American-made aircraft sold, like the F-35, under terms of a mutual ROK-US defense treaty to the procurement of Russian aircraft like the Kamov Ka-32 helicopter and the development of indigenous built aircraft like the Daewoo Heavy Industries KT-1 Woongbi ("Great Leap" in Korean) trainer—a transition made to address both the age of US-built aircraft and to reduce operating costs. The author's approach highlights that while US designs still dominate the ROKAF's fleet, like a number of US long-term Allies, South Korea is taking steps to diversify its force to produce and project a world-class airpower.

Of particular interest to readers is the book's detailed description of Korea Aerospace Industries and Indonesian Aerospace's joint development program of the supersonic fighter aircraft, the KF-21 Boramae ("Fighting Hawk" in Korean). The South Korean-led development program endeavors to produce an advanced multirole fighter for both nations' air forces. An aircraft stealthier than any fourth-generation fighter that does not carry weapons internally like its many fifth-generation contemporaries, the KF-21 is expected to be armed with a range of air-to-air and air-to-surface missiles, and possibly even air-launched cruise missiles. The twin-engine fighters will come in single- and two-seat versions. The first test flight was conducted on July 19, 2022, after publication of this book, with manufacturing scheduled to begin in 2026. At least 40 aircraft are planned to be delivered by 2028, with South Korea expecting to deploy a total of 120 aircraft by 2032. The Boramae will also be available for export, and Poland has already expressed an interest in joining the program. The book highlights, with the development of the KF-21, South Korea's ambition of becoming one of the top seven nations in the aviation industry by the 2030s.

At a time of great geopolitical instability between great powers as seen by Russia's recent invasion of Ukraine, *Modern South Korean Air Power's* analysis of ROKAF current and future air weapons systems and platforms is both relevant and timely, given how the Ukrainian military has leveraged modern western technology against a numerically superior, but technologically lagging, Russian armed forces. Finally, in Chapter 8, the author provides an excellent synopsis of North Korea's threats, of ROKAF's dealings with violations of South Korea's airspace by nuclear-capable states China and Russia, and of standing disputes with neighboring Japan.

For military air planners, the information Polderman provides on South Korean airpower will prove useful in the post-Operation Enduring Freedom planning and doctrine development environment. Yet what is missing from an otherwise professionally written book is a chapter on tactical air traffic services and aviation maintenance organizations, as well as fuel/ammunition support equipment vital to the employment of modern combat rotary winged platforms. Correcting this omission of ROKAF support organizations would provide a clearer picture of how South Korean air commanders might employ their assets in the heart of East Asia. Otherwise, Polderman's book provides a solid picture of how ROKAF operates within an extremely dynamic and complex security environment in which South Korea has long since realized that it can secure a lasting peace on the peninsula only by preparing for war.

Like all Harpia Publishing books, the print quality of *Modern South Korean Air Power* is excellent, and the book is worth the read. The chapter on ROKAF aircraft is as in-depth as any aviation enthusiast would like, and the book's chapters provide detailed descriptions of how ROKAF airpower serves as an integral part of South Korea's role in providing stability to the Asia-Pacific

region. Like Harpia's other series of books on airpower in Asia—including *Modern Chinese Warplanes: Chinese Air Force – Aircraft and Units*; *Modern Taiwanese Air Power: The Republic of China Air Force Today*; and *Red Dragon “Flankers”: China’s Prolific “Flanker” Family*—Polderman's work offers an insightful overview of combat airpower in an economically important, but volatile region of the globe.

Colonel Jayson A. Altieri, USA, Retired

Wars of Ideas: Theology, Interpretation, and Power in the Muslim World

Edited by Ilan Berman. Rowman & Littlefield, 2021, 172 pp.

After nearly 22 years since the September 11, 2001, attacks, the United States now finds itself with a military force and workforce with individuals born after the attacks occurred, including those just joining the service or already serving for a handful of years, and recent college graduates starting careers in national security and foreign policy. At the same time, a large portion of current and soon-to-be senior military leaders have spent all or a majority of their careers fighting the war on terror. But as Ilan Berman argues in his introduction to his edited work *Wars Of Ideas*, despite “an explosion of academic and professional interest in counter-terrorism since 9/11,” the United States has yet to adequately address the “struggle for salience” within the Muslim world that motivated the attacks, having instead focused “extensively on militarily defeating malign extremist actors” (1–2). Berman sees the “wars of ideas” as the struggle between extreme radical and moderate Islam that constitutes the “intellectual battlefield” the United States confronts today (2).

Berman is the senior vice president of the American Foreign Policy Council and a Middle East regional security expert who has consulted for the CIA, Department of Defense, and State Department. In *Wars of Ideas*, Berman has edited a collection of six essays, with two of his own book-ending the collection with an opening essay on the Islamic State and a closing essay on learning from Allies. Contributions discussing Central Asia, Morocco, Indonesia, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia fill the space between. Berman's assembled authors are experts in their areas: religious scholars, professors, security analysts, and think tank fellows.

Like the book as a whole, each section is relatively brief and provides an overview and history, followed by an analysis and assessment of the modern situation. Svante Cornell's Central Asia chapter is of interest in the current geopolitical environment, as it touches on the evolution of Islam in the region, then the rediscovering of its ties with the rest of the Muslim world after the fall of the Soviet Union. For a time, this movement sought secular statehood and government, something changing in Turkey under the rule of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

Another interesting section is Azyumardi Azra's essay on Indonesia, a vital discussion given its status as the world's largest Muslim nation and the third-largest democracy. An analysis of Indonesia's “Third Way” Islam—“which is distinct from, and more inclusive than, its Arabic counterpart”—fits nicely into a book seeking to break down a war of ideas (77).

As the discussion of the world's largest Muslim population being a democracy is noteworthy, so is one on the custodian of Islam's holiest sites and its post-Salafist trajectory. Kamran Bokhari states in his section, “No country in contemporary history has played as significant a role in the struggle for the soul of Islam as has Saudi Arabia” (123). This section is the strongest of the book, providing a history of the initial two failed attempts and the third and final successful attempt that created the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the 1930s. It offers as thorough a history as possible in a few pages. Growing cooperation with America and the West is focused on the First Gulf War and the reaction and fallout from 9/11. A good deal of writing centers on attempts at reform, modernization, and the conflicting priorities of the kingdom's religion along with its push toward Vision 2030, its masterplan to transform the state through broad social and economic reforms. While the

book is a few years old, the writing provides a solid background for those seeking to understand the stories currently in the news.

Berman has edited a work that does what it sets out to do to bring a better understanding of modern Islam and its struggles with extremism beyond discussions of terror tactics and military responses. *Wars of Ideas* also demonstrates well that while Islam, specifically Sunni Islam, is one faith, different states and regions are impacted by the issue of extremism and handle it differently. Many points of the book, especially Berman's closing chapter, discuss the need to learn from and work with partners to understand Islam and its approach to its radical adherents. The focus on cooperation is essential and commendable in the current world.

An area for improvement is one that Berman himself acknowledges and addresses on the very first page of content. Berman points out that Islam is the world's fastest-growing faith, with over 1.8 billion followers, an overwhelming 85 percent that is Sunni. While Berman identifies that there is indeed extremism that comes from Islam's Shia, he states that Iran's role in Islamic radicalism "is unique . . . and beyond the scope of this work" (iii). While Berman is quite correct in this assessment of Iran's role, the chapters discussing the Islamic State and the Gulf countries—specifically Saudi Arabia—may have benefited from a brief discussion regarding the relationship between Shia beliefs and extremism. Or, more simply, how do reactions to Shia beliefs and actions affect the issue at hand?

Wars of Ideas is well worth the read for those seeking to understand better the battlefield of ideas regarding the struggle against radical Islam. At only 172 pages, including references, acknowledgments, and contributor biographies, the book is a quick and highly accessible read for those seeking to gain understanding beyond the kinetic struggles that occur. The work is also highly beneficial as a primer for those wishing to learn more about what specific countries and regions are doing to address the issue.

Lieutenant Colonel Jason Baker

Russia's Path to the High-Tech Battlespace

Roger N. McDermott. Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2022, 470 pp.

Roger McDermott fills a gap in the literature on the West's perception of Russian combat capabilities with *Russia's Path to the High-Tech Battlespace*, demonstrating how the Russian military has created the military theory, command and control (C2), and advanced weapons to continue threatening US and Western interests. He provides key insights into Russian decision-making, C2, and military modernization. McDermott's work is exceptionally well researched, drawing extensively from Russian primary sources, especially professional military journals, general news outlets, and specialized military news sites. As McDermott demonstrates, despite missteps and apparent setbacks from its overt invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, Russia remains a potent military power. It may not reach parity with the West, but it retains the theoretical, organizational, and technological potential to continue disrupting the international order for the foreseeable future. This book is a useful overview for military and policy professionals confronting Russian aggression.

McDermott is a leading Western expert on the Russian military. He serves as a senior fellow in Eurasian military studies with the Jamestown Foundation in Washington, DC, and is a visiting senior research fellow at the department of war studies at King's College in London. Further, he is an assistant editor for the *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*. He has authored numerous articles and books, including *The Reform of Russia's Conventional Armed Forces* (2011).

Russia's Path to the High-Tech Battlespace continues his research tracking Russian military modernization. His work nests in the body of English-language literature on Russia's military, providing details not available in other sources. Bettina Renz and Igor Sutyagin have written on Russian

military reform but with greater focus on the military overall, especially new weapons and logistics. Several researchers evaluate ongoing Russian military performance, notably Dmitri Trenin, Justin Bronk, and Michael Kofman, but McDermott provides the foundation to better understand the military actions those writers describe. Finally, much like McDermott, researchers such as Timothy Thomas and Charles Bartles present concepts from the Russian point of view; however, McDermott emphasizes how the Russian military is achieving its own vision of future warfare.

McDermott organized *Russia's Path to the High-Tech Battlespace* in two main parts. His first four chapters review Russian military theory, outlining the modernization of the Russian military based on its updated doctrine, then providing specific case studies of Russian military modernization. This section culminates with a chapter evaluating Russia's performance in Syria as a case study to understand to what degree the Russian military has reached its own modernization goals. Then McDermott dedicates each of the last three chapters to Russia's most advanced weapons: hypersonic missiles, electronic warfare, and unmanned aerial vehicles. He considers these in light of Russian warfare theories, their planned employment, and examples of fielding and use. These chapters give context to the media hype involving Russian advanced weapons, where technical specifications are sometimes confused for capability. Understanding how the Russian military plans to use such weapons sets expectations for Western military planners who may confront them.

McDermott concludes that Russia can indeed perform advanced warfare tasks using modern systems, but only in limited operations. Russia's C2 is sufficient to steer limited operations, such as in Syria, but does not have the depth for large-scale combat operations. His conclusion stems from the link between Russia's beliefs in the changing nature of war and its battlefield outcomes.

The Russian military understands warfare development in terms of generations. According to Russian military discourse, civilization has progressed through multiple generations with advances in technology and improvements in military art. Advanced nations are now fighting in the sixth generation of warfare, characterized by high precision weapons and a quickened reconnaissance-strike contour. Nations which have achieved the level of network connectivity required for sixth-generation warfare control the speed and timing of combat operations. Conventions of earlier generations of warfare may still be necessary in specific contexts, such as with counterinsurgency or what the West terms low-intensity conflict, but a nation possessing superior sixth-generation capabilities can choose the time and pace of war to be successful. From Russia's own analysis, as McDermott describes, it has not fully realized sixth-generation warfare. It has the advanced weapons, though not always with the C2 networks to make it fully effective.

Airpower exemplifies Russia's incomplete progress towards sixth-generation warfare. Advanced airpower is an essential element of sixth-generation warfare, though Russia views it almost exclusively in the form of precision strike. Airpower allows combatants to apply force with greater rapidity and lethality than other platforms. This leads Russian analysts to describe sixth-generation warfare as noncontact war, where precision munitions could affect targets with minimum risk. From the Russian perspective, in contrast to Western theories, airpower is considered purely a vehicle for precision-guided munitions. Neither McDermott nor any of the Russian theorists he quotes discuss the requirement for air superiority. Russia's failure to consider air superiority, and McDermott's lack of discussion regarding Russian air theories, illustrates the doctrinal shortfalls which have perhaps led to Russia's poor performance. In terms of real battlefield outcomes, Russia has proved unable to gain air superiority during its conflict in Ukraine. In turn, this has reduced the Ukraine war to an attritional, high-contact campaign, with significant losses of manpower and materiel. Without air superiority, Russia has been unable to fight the kind of war it planned, as McDermott describes.

Since *Russia's Path to the High-Tech Battlespace* was published just as Russia was invading Ukraine in 2022, McDermott did not have the opportunity to review his assessment. In the foreword, Bartles briefly touches on that disconnect, noting the impact operations in Ukraine may

have on Russia's future development. That the Russian military struggled to employ its advanced systems in a large-scale conflict proves McDermott's point that its military modernization was uneven and incomplete. As Bartles notes, however, over the next decades the Russian military may absorb and implement the lessons it is learning in Ukraine to continue its path forward.

Beyond its insight into the Russian military mind, *Russia's Path to the High-Tech Battlespace* highlights the importance of beliefs in shaping the conduct of wars. Russian theories regarding sixth-generation warfare are closely linked to the Western concept of the revolution in military affairs. This concept, popularized in the 1980s and 1990s, posited the nation that can gather and exploit information the fastest will be the most successful in combat.

Over the past three decades, the US military has achieved an advanced level of network-centric warfare. Nowhere is this more evident than in the robust American networks providing C2, as well as sensor-to-shooter links. The US military's information dominance is arguably its greatest strength. Yet recent struggles to implement joint all-domain C2 illustrate that Western militaries should not take this advantage for granted. Constructing networks, weapons, and the training to use them effectively will take deliberate effort. Despite the work McDermott describes Russia has taken to achieve this level of warfare, its struggles underscore how important it is to get it right.

Lieutenant Colonel J. Alexander Ippoliti

Disclaimer and Copyright

The views and opinions in Air & Space Operations Review (ASOR) are those of the authors and are not officially sanctioned by any agency or department of the US government. This document and trademarks(s) contained herein are protected by law and provided for noncommercial use only. Any reproduction is subject to the Copyright Act of 1976 and applicable treaties of the United States. The authors retain all rights granted under 17 U.S.C. §106. Any reproduction requires author permission and a standard source credit line. Contact the ASOR editor for assistance: asor@au.af.edu.