

BOOK REVIEWS

WHAT MAKES A LEADER?

Sheehan, J. Kevin. *A Leader Becomes a Leader: Inspirational Stories of Leadership for a New Generation*. Belmont, Mass.: TrueGifts, 2008. 230pp. \$27.95

At first glance, this book seems to be something much like a book of virtues. It is a series of brief biographical sketches that might be mistaken as a return to a simpler and more forgiving literary genre—one where leaders are joyfully portrayed in the most positive light and any trait or act that could be considered detrimental is ignored. Sheehan seems truly to admire his subjects, and his lyrical facility with verbal imagery is so rich that the narrative at times approaches poetry. The book is copiously illustrated and loaded with biographical observations and quotes. Taken in its entirety, it is hard to imagine how *A Leader* could get farther from the in-depth, “warts and all” treatment that modern biographers have come to embrace.

Yet this is not, appearances perhaps to the contrary, a simple book. It provides real value to a spectrum of disparate audiences on very different levels. Readers who do put down the volume after a quick glance-over should not be surprised to find themselves returning later to its pages. This is a work that tends to

raise questions after the book is back on the shelf.

Its list of “leaders” is long and covers a broad range of professions and pursuits. Some readers will have trouble accepting all the showcased people as true “leaders.” There are scientists, presidents, philanthropists, artists, athletes, political activists, and religious figures. There are relatively few business tycoons and soldiers. While war leaders are not completely absent, as attested by the inclusion of Churchill and Lincoln, the book boasts only one military leader, General George Marshall. (Marshall’s virtue is “command presence.”) Whether or not each of the individuals identified in the book is a leader may be debated, but there is no doubt that they are all exceptional.

This book raises several intriguing questions, some of which it attempts to answer; others silently accompany the material. What makes a “leader,” and just who is a leader? Is the ability to inspire the same as the ability to lead? Does emulation equate to followership? Should possession of additional, less positive attributes detract from a

person's positive reputation as a leader? Is it possible to pick out a single strongest virtue in a leader? How can opposing leadership characteristics both be virtues? Were Grandma Moses, Bob Marley, and Nadia Comaneci truly leaders, or did they simply inspire? Was Churchill's "instinct" truly his most dominant leadership virtue? As for feet of clay, some of the leaders identified in this book may have inspired millions but also cheated on their wives. Anwar Sadat was a peacemaker, but he became one only after he had ordered his army to wage an offensive war against Israel. Sheehan identifies the opposite traits of "flexibility" and "determination" as leadership virtues, begging the question of *when* each is a virtue.

The fact that this volume may lead the reader to ask these questions is in itself a virtue. A discussion about whether there are better choices than some of the men and women in the book is bound to be interesting and could well become passionate—another good thing. If Marie Curie is included, why isn't Stephen Hawking? If George Marshall could make the cut, why didn't John Archer Lejeune?

At another, younger level of readership, *A Leader* serves as a marvelous gateway book. Many that have been named will be unknown to the current rising generation of readers. We can only hope that Sheehan will inspire these young scholars to learn more about these remarkable people, making this a book it would be good to see on the shelves of junior and senior high schools across the United States.

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Murphy, Martin N. *Small Boats, Weak States, Dirty Money: Piracy and Maritime Terrorism in the Modern World*. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2009. 411pp. \$60

In the past year the public's fascination with piracy has grown as piracy has manifested itself as a more tangible threat to commerce and individuals with the incidents off the Horn of Africa. Whether it was the 2009 pirate attack on the containership MV *Maersk Alabama* or the terrorist attack on the USS *Cole* in 2000, the media found itself at a loss to understand the issue in depth and often turned to similarly misinformed commentators to feed the twenty-four-hour news cycle. Fortunately, the timely *Small Boats, Weak States, Dirty Money* puts to rest misconceptions about modern piracy, surveying as it does the real threats posed by terrorists at sea.

The author asks three questions: What form does piracy take in the contemporary world? What is maritime terrorism? Are the two similar or linked? Although seemingly simple, these questions constitute a necessary launching point for any serious discussion.

Readers will be hard pressed to find a more methodical and better researched book on piracy and maritime terrorism. The bibliography comprises an additional hundred pages, and one chapter alone has five hundred footnotes. Martin Murphy is a senior fellow at the Center of Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, and his extensive academic, professional, and writing credits on littoral warfare and maritime terrorist threats more than sufficiently rank him

among the experts in this small but growing field.

Murphy takes a bifurcated approach that proves beneficial to both the author and the reader. Each half of the book could easily stand on its own, but the pairing is important to distinguish similarities or differences and provides the means for Murphy to discuss the reasons behind these activities and the challenges they engender.

The section on piracy adequately addresses worldwide incidents and provides appropriate regional perspectives. Readers will also benefit from Murphy's evenhanded treatment of the various forms of maritime terrorism, as well as their potential for unintended consequences. His treatment of the 2002 attack on the French supertanker *Limburg* discusses not only the method of attack used by terrorists but the subsequent impact upon the Yemeni port involved, which lost some three thousand jobs due to reduced commerce from an international industry hesitant to place ships at risk. Murphy's discussions of other possible threats, such as divers, swimmers, submersibles, and small boats, as well as of the particular case of ships carrying hazardous cargo (such as liquefied petroleum gas and liquefied natural gas) are particularly helpful in explaining, realistically and dispassionately, the difficulties.

However, this book still offers opportunities for continued debate. Murphy notes, for example, that piracy in the Strait of Malacca was reduced from 2004 to 2005 due to increased cooperation between international navies. Elsewhere, he suggests that the Free Aceh Movement was impacted by the tsunami of December 2004. Would not the tsunami have had a similar effect on

pirates as terrorists, given the devastation it wreaked?

This book sets the standard for future serious works on piracy and maritime terrorism. Murphy's work is a must for both journalists and the military, to gain a proper understanding of these issues.

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Vlahos, Michael. *Fighting Identity: Sacred War and World Change*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2009. 245pp. \$49.95

Michael Vlahos is a senior member of the National Security Analysis Department at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory. He was recently a visiting faculty member in the Strategy and Policy Department at the Naval War College. He has written extensively on culture and war, including various projects on Iraq and counterinsurgency.

In *Fighting Identity* (the latest title in the "Changing Face of War" series from Praeger Security International, series editor James Carafano), Vlahos offers an excellent analysis of how war shapes the collective identity at the societal level. Combining a variety of disciplines, including anthropology, history, political science, and philosophy, he builds his argument on a foundation of postmodernist theory, expertly merging social identity, theory, and military history. Treading where social theorists disdain to be and military historians avoid, Vlahos provides essential scholarship.

The construct of the book is cogent. Vlahos outlines his rationale for the project before he delves into theory and definitions. He turns to methodology and research, offering guidelines for future scholarship. His content chapters, “Them,” “Us,” and “Fit,” represent the substance of the book, encompassing his analysis on the development of identity through war. Vlahos’s argument centers on the idea that the interactive nature of warfare creates, and changes, identity.

In his view, war is a “sacred ritual” that has been practiced throughout history and that in turn shapes social identity. These rituals have semireligious undertones and come to represent “humanity’s dark liturgy.” Further, war and interactive conflict shape the identities of participants, cultivating cohesion, motivation, and awareness. Vlahos argues that interaction creates common narratives and also leads to an acquisition of legitimacy. Finally, interactive conflict emerges as a central component of social identity (both national and nonstate), which shapes historical hindsight as well as future policy decisions.

This book draws on Vlahos’s extensive knowledge of history. He flows from the ancient to the contemporary with ease, drawing on past and present examples to support his arguments. In the final chapter, “Where I Come Out,” he argues that the United States is facing a crisis of identity in its own sacred narrative, as it transitions from the Cold War to something new. Finally, he suggests that the social identity of the nation will evolve as it faces the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Overall, this is an exceptional work of scholarship on the creation of social identity, as well as a critique of

American social construct. Vlahos provides an analysis of inestimable value based on an impressive grasp of history and philosophy. Written primarily for scholars, *Fighting Identity* is a modern philosophical treatise on war’s influence on the development and evolution of sacred identity. While I recommend this book for a wide audience, the subtleties of its analysis and the structure of its argument are complex and elaborate. This book is easily read but not easily understood.

S. MIKE PAVELEC
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Goodman, Michael S. *Spying on the Nuclear Bear: Anglo-American Intelligence and the Soviet Bomb*. Calif.: Stanford Univ. Press, 2007. 295pp. \$50

The Cold War was a real war, marked by complexity. The nation-states making up the international system (the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union) that emerged in the wake of the atomic age were compelled to avoid a general conflict and to protect civilization from nuclear extinction. As such, a variety of instruments were utilized by these great powers. One of those instruments was the collection and analysis of intelligence and, in particular, nuclear intelligence.

The fact is, Goodman, a lecturer in the Department of War Studies at King’s College London, states, that “intelligence was in some ways the cold war waged by other means.” A little known aspect of the Cold War involved the Anglo-American intelligence communities’ intense focus on the development of Soviet nuclear weapons. Goodman’s main contention is that despite the

strictures of the American Atomic Energy Act of 1946 (the McMahon Act), which forbade the transfer of American scientific and technological knowledge of the atomic weapon to any other power, Anglo-American nuclear intelligence cooperation nevertheless went ahead. These two governments used this intelligence to predict outcomes, and what proved to be even more successful, the detection of Soviet nuclear weapons testing.

Goodman's narrative of this effort focuses on long-distance monitoring, as well as acoustic, seismographic, and electromagnetic monitoring of the Soviets' nuclear weapons program. This is, in itself, an excellent insight into the Cold War nuclear intelligence from 1945 to 1958, an invaluable mirror into these efforts.

What sets this work apart, however, is Goodman's placement of what is essentially one mirror behind another—his revelation of the strategic implications of nuclear intelligence-sharing on the Anglo-American special relationship itself, along with the impact of that relationship on the Soviet Union. To understand the dynamics involved, Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass* is worth recalling, as Alice declares that it is like a huge game of chess that is being played all over the world.

But what of the Soviet Union, the conventionally understood object of all the covert intelligence monitoring and detection efforts? Goodman answers this question in his conclusion. He argues that while extensive literature exists on the Soviet threat and the American perception of it, these works often deal with what he calls an alleged "bomber gap" and "missile gap." He states that "both gaps were figments in the

imagination of the U.S. intelligence community, based in the main on overstating the Soviet potential in order to procure greater funds for military development." While this is a standard critique, Goodman applies what he terms "counterfactual history," a third look into the mirror behind the mirror. Counterfactual history, he argues, "is a tool that often can be used to great effect. The Soviet Union, it seems, would never have seriously contemplated war with the West. Given the American atomic arsenal, it is also unlikely that even if Britain had not developed a nuclear deterrent, the Soviet Union would ever have dared risk war." Goodman then measures the capabilities-to-intentions calculus so familiar to students of the Naval War College, as follows: "In the minds of those who mattered, Soviet capabilities were intimately linked to Soviet intentions. Therefore, while the Soviets were without the capability to wage war, their intentions were perceived to be far less aggressive."

Goodman has produced a definitive work, in that it validates the United Kingdom's unequivocal commitment to an independent nuclear deterrent, and by doing so he has given us a seminal work, a landmark effort in its devotion to prodigious research and commitment to truthful inquiry.

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Brannon, Robert. *Russian Civil-Military Relations: Military Strategy and Operational Art*. Farnham, Surrey, U.K.: Ashgate, 2009. 352pp. \$114.95

Kremlinologists were noteworthy for describing decision making in the USSR as comparable to cats fighting under a large rug in a dark room—the only thing the outside world could clearly and correctly see was the emerging winner of the struggle. Robert Brannon's *Russian Civil-Military Relations* suggests that while Russia's transition from autocracy to nascent democracy has offered observers more transparency, some of the byzantine intrigues remain.

While Brannon summarizes his hypothesis on the evolution of Russian civil-military relations using political-science theoretical literature, this book is all about the three case studies that Brannon brings to life, using his professional notes, along with interviews of the principals and of experts on the subject. The author was in position to know many of the study's protagonists, serving as the U.S. naval attaché to Russia from 1998 to 2001. His proximity to his subjects, however, does not blur his vision. If anything, his harshest appraisals are directed at his closest Russian counterparts.

Brannon illustrates his understanding of Russian civil-military relations by examining the Russian race to Pristina during the Kosovo conflict (1999), the second Russian intervention in Chechnya (1999), and the tragic sinking of the submarine *Kursk* (2000). His writing style enables the casual reader to follow the exciting plots of the episodes with relative ease, each building on the previous story. Some of the juiciest material is in the footnotes, in which Brannon recounts personal tales of harrowing experiences in exotic Russian locales.

This is a book about a subject never widely discussed in the Western press.

During the Bolshevik and communist eras, the Soviet military was slavishly controlled and obedient to domineering and “intrusive” civil authorities, rendering most civil-military discussions irrelevant. However, the relationship of Russian political and military leaders after the fall of the Soviet Union is at best problematic and at worst threatening. Samuel Huntington (the famous American political scientist) held that for a military establishment to act as a profession, it must possess expertise, responsibility, and corporateness.

Brannon argues that the Russian military leadership, while often both incompetent and deceptive, has consistently held to the belief that Russia should be suspicious of American and NATO intentions, whereas the Russian military itself remains strong and assertive, possessing the power to influence international affairs. In other words, with all its flaws, it is a distinct professional organization. However, the author makes a persuasive critique of Russia's political leadership in the 1990s. The military adventurism documented in the three case studies may have been caused largely by the Boris Yeltsin administration's fecklessness while facing budding national security struggles. Military men may simply have been acting as Russian patriots in the face of a political vacuum.

However, the book comes up short in two areas. First, because Russia is unique, it is questionable whether its experience sheds much light on the development of civil-military relations in other postcommunist societies. Second, one of the book's central messages is that the Russian military is in need of reform. Yet as the United States has witnessed over the last decade, terms

like “reform” and “transformation” mean different things to different parties. Brannon never makes clear what he means by his Holy Grail of “reform.”

Brannon sees in Vladimir Putin (and the Dimitri Medvedev–Putin team) the political leadership missing in the 1990s. He suggests that the military is more likely to give its aggressive support and obedience to decisive nationalists who support military reform. This may be both the good and the bad news of this provocative study.

TOM FEDYSZYN
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Evans, Richard J. *The Third Reich at War*. New York: Penguin, 2009. 926pp. \$40

This final volume of Richard Evans’s trilogy on the Third Reich (the earlier titles being *The Coming of the Third Reich*, 2003, and *The Third Reich in Power, 1933–1939*, 2005) is a disquieting masterpiece of scholarship. Although many of the events recounted here will be familiar to most readers, Evans accomplishes the seemingly impossible by merging both the high politics (if one can use that term in describing Hitler’s Germany) with the best in contemporary social history of the Third Reich. This sordid story has never been told so powerfully or from so many different perspectives. The voices of the victims, perpetrators, and bystanders, along with those of the architects of the conquest and genocide, are all heard in chilling detail.

Evans notes that Hitler’s Operation T-4, his “euthanasia action” program, directed against disabled, mentally ill, and incurably sick Germans, laid the

foundation for the more dramatic, Europe-wide extermination programs. To relieve the sense of despair that permeates this book, one searches for heroes, but they are few in number. The sporadic camp and ghetto uprisings were clearly heroic, as was the resistance by such tiny groups as the “White Rose” movement. Although the Roman Catholic bishop Clemens von Galen led the effort to halt the T-4 program, Evans notes that the bishop was silent when it came to the regime’s treatment of Jews and Gypsies. Hitler learned a valuable lesson from the T-4 episode: limit the paper trail and speak in euphemisms when dealing with state-sponsored extermination programs. There was, of course, resistance to Hitler among some members of the officer corps, men whose sense of honor led them to recoil from the atrocities they witnessed in the war in the East. Another group, composed of theologians, lawyers, and some socialist politicians, known to the Gestapo as the Kreisauer Kreis (Kreisau Circle), failed to merge with the military resisters, thus further diminishing the already long odds that Hitler could be deposed.

Unfortunately, more often than not, ordinary Germans reveled in Hitler’s early victories and seemed to endorse, or at least tolerate, Hitler’s annihilation policies. The notion that ordinary Germans were unaware of the atrocities committed in their name is laughable. For instance, in the fall of 1939 German officers and enlisted men wrote home of the incredible “dirt” and “filth” they encountered among the “subhuman” Poles; they began to exterminate parts of the population within days of the

invasion. The swiftness with which Germany implemented a scorched-earth policy designed to eliminate all traces of Polish society is truly breathtaking. Evans convincingly argues that the “final solution” was well under way by the time the notorious Wannsee Conference convened in January 1942. Wannsee was merely an attempt to eliminate bureaucratic infighting and reinforce the authority of Hitler’s point man, Reinhard Heydrich, for the Holocaust.

Evans has written the kind of book to which all scholars aspire. It is a volume in which a lifetime of research and writing comes together in a powerful, and at times moving, manner. It is a book that is sure to become a classic.

STEPHEN KNOTT
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Adams, John A. *If Mahan Ran the Great Pacific War: An Analysis of World War II Naval Strategy*. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 2008. 472pp. \$34.95

It is said of Secretary of War Henry Stimson that in World War II he “frequently seemed to retire from the realm of logic into a dim religious world in which Neptune was God, Mahan his prophet, and the United States Navy was the only true Church.” Now we can judge the validity of that comment, thanks to John Adams’s *If Mahan Ran the Great Pacific War*. Adams grades both the U.S. force and its opponent, the Imperial Japanese Navy (another service professing Mahanian orthodoxy), according to their respective adherence to the sacred text. The result is a lively, interesting exercise in

counterfactual history, one that deals both with what occurred and what might have occurred had the high commands of both navies been more true to what one might call “the revealed Word.”

Counterfactual history is suspect to many historians, who feel they have enough problems figuring out what actually happened, let alone considering what could have happened. However, the Strategy and Policy course at the Naval War College thinks differently, seeking a host of alternatives. Adams essentially agrees, possibly because he is a business executive and not a professional historian; he has written this excellent book as an avocation (more power to him). “War is too important to be left to the generals,” said Clemenceau in World War I. History is too important to be left to historians, if they will not write about counterfactual contingencies.

My reservations about this book are slight but do exist. Excuse my sacrilege, but having taught for twenty years at the U.S. Army Staff College, I cannot help thinking that there might be occasions when Mahan’s precepts could be insufficient. Take his well known injunction, “Don’t divide the fleet.”

Admiral William F. Halsey took this to heart when he was in command of the Third Fleet at the largest naval battle in human history—Leyte Gulf, in late October 1944. As all readers of this journal know, Halsey took his entire force with him to chase down a decoy rather than divide it and provide a blocking force of battleships and escort carriers to prevent a Japanese exit from the San Bernardino Strait. Since Mahan, presumably, cannot be wrong, the blame must fall to Halsey, for not realizing

that his fleet was so powerful that he could divide it and still sustain local superiority. However, because Mahan never considered a situation such as this, one must judge him inadequate as a guide in the last year of the great Pacific War.

“No plan survives first major contact with the enemy,” wrote Helmut von Moltke the Elder, chief of the German General Staff in the mid-nineteenth century. If this be true of plans, which are far less abstract than theories, should one expect that Mahan provides adequate direction through all the contingencies that a warrior might face?

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Parkinson, Roger. *The Late Victorian Navy: The Pre-dreadnought Era and the Origins of the First World War*. New York: Boydell, 2008. 323pp. \$145

Roger Parkinson's study of the Royal Navy from 1878 to the 1890s provides a useful overview of a period in British naval history that is sometimes seen as a neglected "Dark Age." He takes issue with the standard work of the period, Arthur Marder's first book, *British Naval Policy, 1880–1905: The Anatomy of British Sea-Power* (1940). In this published version of his University of Exeter doctoral thesis completed under Dr. Michael Duffy, Parkinson expands on the insights of Oscar Parkes, Bryan Ranft, Donald M. Schurman, Paul M. Kennedy, N. A. M. Rodger, Jon T. Sumida, and John Beeler with his own detailed research work in parliamentary papers, the Admiralty and Cabinet

Office files at the National Archives, Kew, and the private papers of Lord Salisbury, Britain's prime minister in 1885, 1886–92, 1895–1902, at Hatfield House.

Parkinson's central focus is on the background and the effect of Britain's Naval Defence Act of 1889 in the period that has come to be called—and even dismissed as—the “pre-*Dreadnought*” era. He is reported to be preparing a follow-up work that will focus on the era of HMS *Dreadnought* from 1906 onward. In the volume at hand, Parkinson argues that most historians of the period have accepted too easily Arthur Marder's picture of Britain's relative naval weakness in comparison with other European naval powers. In particular, Parkinson shows that Britain was not by any means a weak naval power and that W. T. Stead's famous articles in the *Pall Mall Gazette* of 1884 were based on a gross exaggeration of the actual state of affairs. The key consideration, he points out, was maintaining a naval force that was equal to that of the next two largest naval powers, France and Russia. The effort to maintain that margin of supremacy in terms of naval expenditures, tonnage, and warship numbers resulted in the Naval Defense Act in 1889. Parkinson maintains this was the spark that ignited the naval race that lasted until the Washington naval arms-limitation treaty of 1922. As a result, Britain's strategic situation changed from one that was a relatively stable balance between Britain facing France and Russia up to the 1880s to one of the late 1890s and early twentieth century that became a “strategic melting pot with not three but eight major naval powers—Britain, France, Russia, America, Germany, Japan, Italy,

and Austria-Hungary.” The instigation of this naval arms race, Parkinson concludes, was the consistent overreaction in Britain that resulted in the 1889 Naval Act due to the influence on naval policy and strategy by the Royal Navy’s “Young Turks” and panic mongers—W. H. Hall, C. C. P. Fitzgerald, and Lord Charles Beresford, abetted by leading writers like the Colomb brothers and the historian John Knox Laughton, all of whom were encouraged by older admirals such as Admiral of the Fleet Sir Thomas Symonds and Sir Geoffrey Phipps-Hornby.

In reaching these conclusions, Parkinson makes a useful contribution to scholarship, and his original research in

British archives clearly sets his work in the context of recent writings by other scholars of British naval history on this period. The weakness of his work lies in his complete reliance on older, and often outdated, secondary works for his chapter sections on competing navies, such as the U.S. Navy, and the presence in his sources of little, if anything, that is not English on the Latin American navies or on those of France, Germany, and Russia. While readers may lament these weaknesses, Parkinson’s book is, nevertheless, an important and stimulating contribution to the history of the late Victorian navy.

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