

## BOOK REVIEWS

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### “A WAR NOT YET FINISHED”

Ricks, Thomas E. *The Gamble: General David Petraeus and the American Military Adventure in Iraq, 2006–2008*. New York: Penguin, 2009. 394pp. \$27.95

Thomas Ricks begins his latest chronicle of the American strategic experience in Iraq where he left off in *Fiasco* (2006). In this account, Ricks uses his familiar journalistic approach to describe how the civilian and military leaders arrived at a change of policy and strategy, commonly known as “the surge,” in the war in Iraq. Ricks’s new book appears to be more even in its treatment of the leaders and the new strategy than was *Fiasco*, with its prosecutorial tone. In spite of his upbeat assessment of the American leaders, however, Ricks ends this volume with measured, if not pessimistic, projections for the future of Iraq.

Ricks covers familiar developments described in Bob Woodward’s *The War Within*, but he sheds new light on the role of General Ray Odierno in pushing for a change of strategy. Specifically, Ricks recounts how Odierno corresponded with his mentor and old boss, retired general Jack Keane, to change the “bridging strategy” then advocated by Generals George Casey and John Abizaid, and by the Pentagon leadership. Not wanting to lose this war on

his watch, Odierno relied on Keane and American Enterprise Institute strategist Fred Kagan to change the direction of the strategy in Iraq. They sought to change the strategy of transitioning power to corrupt and impotent Iraqi security forces into a new strategy of providing security for the Iraqi people. The most remarkable aspect of Ricks’s story is that this change in strategy developed outside the president’s designated National Security team and against the recommendations of the Joint Chiefs and the Iraq Study Group. According to Ricks, Keane and Kagan clearly led the way in the White House to get more American combat forces into Iraq.

Ricks describes in some detail how events in al Anbar province greatly influenced a key aspect of the new strategy. The Marines’ experience with the reconciliation movement, or “Sunni Awakening,” of tribal leaders in al Anbar in 2005 and 2006 was the pivotal instance showing how to turn former belligerents into potential allies. In effect, the American forces in al Anbar were already practicing the tactics and techniques of the new counterinsurgency (COIN) manual

recently published by General David Petraeus and a Fort Leavenworth team.

Ricks highlights how Odierno adopted this new COIN approach in the employment of the five surged combat brigades. Instead of putting all the additional forces into central Baghdad to “secure the people,” Odierno deployed them into the fractious “Baghdad belts.” During the surge, American troops would not only live among the Iraqi people in “joint security stations” and combat outposts but also target the insurgent lines of operations running from Syria and Iran into central Baghdad.

Overall, this appears to be a balanced narrative of a war not yet finished. In the last section Ricks considers the lasting effects of the “surge” strategy pursued in 2006–2008. He winds up with a discussion of that famous Petraeus question of 2003, “How does this end?” Ricks notes that perhaps this war does not end. Clausewitz declared, “Even the ultimate outcome of war is not always to be regarded as final”; in Ricks’s view, that will be true of the outcome of this war.

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Deudney, Daniel H. *Bounding Power: Republican Security Theory from the Polis to the Global Village*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 2007. 391pp. \$17.96

Paradoxically, this is one of the most innovative yet least original books written in the past decade on the theory and practice of international relations. Daniel Deudney synthesizes a

broad understanding of the history of Western political theory with an equally broad study of contemporary world politics to recover what he calls “republican security theory.” He sees this theory as having developed from the Greek polis through the Italian Renaissance to the Enlightenment (in the thought of Montesquieu especially), to the American founding to the present, and as having important implications for nuclear proliferation and disarmament in the “global village” of our time. Deudney demonstrates conclusively that the leading schools of international relations today—realism and liberal internationalism—are both intellectual “fragments” of this older tradition, with the fragmentation often obstructing practical efforts to reconcile security from external threats to the liberty of public citizens and private individuals.

Such a reconciliation is the *raison d’être* of republican security theory and practice, though as Deudney shows, the viability of the endeavor depends on learning much from the school of hard knocks. Twenty-five hundred years ago, the members of the Delian League sought to secure their independence from Persia by following the leadership of Athens, but in so doing they jumped from the frying pan of external anarchy into the fire of Athenian imperialism. The Roman republic, if only because its more inclusive approach to citizenship enabled it to grow stronger as it expanded, proved more successful at uniting external security with internal liberty than had Athens or the Delian League, but ultimately it got too big. Generals like Caesar, Pompey, and Augustus were able to count on the private loyalty of soldiers to help them establish

despotic power on the ruins of republican freedom. Studying this checkered past with care, both Niccolò Machiavelli (whom some see as the founder of realism) and Charles de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu (who could be considered a founder of liberal internationalism), sought ways to combine the security advantages of large empires with the freedom (from military rule especially) of healthy republics.

What practical use might this mixed success of republican security theory be today? Clearly, it lies at the origins of the two grandest experiments in international cooperation of the twentieth century—the League of Nations and the United Nations. Rather than view the less-than-complete success, and sometimes patent failure, of either as proof that republican security theory has reached a point of diminishing returns, Deudney concludes with an analysis of how early experiments in nuclear arms control might suggest ways to apply republican security theory to avoid the danger of nuclear violence while preserving individual freedom. In this respect, Deudney appears to have more in common with contemporary liberal internationalists than with today's realists, but he has no patience with charges that his project is utopian. It has worked in the past, and it continues to work in the American union. With enough intelligence and determination, he argues, it might be the only practicable solution to the global problems of this century, which no single state can address on its own. In making this claim, Deudney has gone, like the starship *Enterprise* (which served a federation of republics!) where few today have gone before, to help found a new discipline, one that might be called

“world political theory.” At a time when U.S. maritime strategy has become ever more concerned with the security of the global system, this is a book that thoughtful strategists will need to read again and again.

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Coicaud, Jean-Marc. *Beyond the National Interest*. Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2007. 297pp. \$19.95

It should come as little surprise that Jean-Marc Coicaud, a noted French scholar with extensive experience at the United Nations, sees the need for a fundamental change in the way the international system addresses its most pressing security problems. He bemoans the fact that “narrow national interests” have made prompt, effective multilateral peacekeeping interventions on behalf of humanitarian needs very difficult. In his *Beyond the National Interest* he offers prescriptions to alleviate this situation.

This short book covers in some detail the history of international humanitarian interventions since the 1990s, in search of trends and lessons learned. The author conveys a sense of optimism that the end of the Cold War presented a perfect opportunity for universal human values to displace traditional values according to which sovereignty was sacrosanct and nation-states responded only to direct external threat. He optimistically proclaims that NATO was moving forward progressively in this direction.

Unfortunately, his detailed historical examples consistently belie this

optimism, as some protagonist (normally the United States) always allows its conduct to be driven by the atavistic notions of sovereignty and physical security. In fact, the United States (particularly the last Bush administration) comes out as the book's principal villain, although the Clinton administration also takes its hits. Owing to its superpower status, the United States is directly involved in every incident in which humanitarian intervention is a possible course of action, and its responses never meet the author's high standards.

While Coicaud's facts and historical analysis are correct and fundamentally sound, a reader might get the impression that it is only a matter of time before the entire world is persuaded to see the *responsibility to protect*—the international community sending in forces to protect the citizens of an offending country—much as an enlightened European does now. I am certain that Coicaud is buoyed by the advent of the Obama administration in hopes that the United States will eventually join in this enlightenment. Unfortunately, his optimism is probably misplaced, for two reasons. First, none of today's emergent powers (China, Russia, India, or Brazil) have been proponents of what the author calls "conditional" sovereignty. If anything, they hold dearly their sovereignty and support this right for other nation-states. The second point forces us to focus on the title of the book.

That is, national interest is the real culprit. As long as nations constitute the world's central cast, there is little likelihood that it will achieve Coicaud's idealistic standards. Even his recommendations to strengthen the United

Nation's peace-enforcement and humanitarian roles are largely bureaucratic and peripheral, suggesting that the author is also aware of the fundamental resistance. As long as the UN remains nationally based, the likelihood that its members will be driven by "supranational" interests will be slim. Indeed, simply getting *beyond* the national interest is not enough. The international community must adopt *supranational* interests or it will forever be hampered by the primacy of "security issues" and "self-centered nationalism," which, unfortunately for Coicaud, is likely to be a long time coming.

Although a welcome addition to those advocating for the rights of individuals over those of nation-states, the book unfortunately fails to deal meaningfully with the real obstacles to the ideal. Further, since much of this book is a diatribe against the Bush administration, its salience is increasingly historical.

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Cohen, William A. *A Class with Drucker: The Lost Lessons of the World's Greatest Management Teacher*. New York: AMACOM, 2008. 248pp. \$24.95

Krames, Jeffrey A. *Inside Drucker's Brain*. New York: Penguin, 2008. 257pp. \$24.95

Peter Drucker, considered the father of modern management, died in 2005 at the age of ninety-five. For six decades he consulted with industry and government leaders and taught at New York University and the Claremont Graduate School of Management, publishing thirty-nine books, including one on

Japanese art. Drucker's principles of leadership, responsibility, management, and strategy transcended organizational mission, whether for-profit, nonprofit, or military.

It is not surprising that several books about Drucker have been published since his death. One interesting one, *A Class with Drucker*, is by Bill Cohen. Cohen graduated from West Point and was a PhD student of Drucker's. He served as a major general in the Air Force reserves, worked in the defense industry, and remained in touch with Drucker for thirty years. The goal of Cohen's book is to share lessons from Drucker's classroom.

Peter Drucker was an exceptional thinker and writer. His perspectives on organizations were refreshingly unorthodox and expressed with piercing logic. Drucker drew deeply from global history and economics. Although he was an academic, his audience was the practitioner. Ethics and social responsibility themes permeated his writing and teaching. Many concepts that are now part of everyday organizational vocabulary originated with Peter Drucker, such as management by objectives, knowledge workers, decentralized management, and strategic leadership in business.

Two things make Cohen's book interesting. One is Drucker's influence as his mentor and teacher, and the other is his own military perspective. Cohen interweaves Drucker's concepts of leadership, strategy, ethics, and professional development with his own military education and experiences, often adding candid personal reflection and revealing anecdotes.

One revelation emerged during a class session when a student asked Drucker how he got started as a "management consultant." Drucker talked about being mobilized for World War II, armed only with a PhD and experience in economics. Drucker's job classification in the Army was "consultant," but neither he nor his colonel had any idea what that entailed. Drucker started asking the colonel about the group's goals and resources, and a few days later he went back with a report of priorities and alternatives. As it turned out, the group was quite successful in its mission.

Cohen affirms that Drucker's principles of strategy and leadership are tightly coupled to personal responsibility, and he elaborates on the distinctive challenges between tactical and strategic decisions for the military leader. The strategic leader must persistently ask the right questions; as Drucker would state, "You can't get *there* unless you know where *there* is." To be a strategic leader, one must avoid developing strategy by formula and instead devote time to self-development by expanding one's knowledge and perspective. Drucker's advice for professional development was to "read, write, listen and teach . . . and strive for expertise in an area outside your profession."

Drucker lectured his students about what to do, not *how* to do it. Cohen sometimes takes a Drucker principle and expounds on it using his own "boilerplate" advice. Some of the elaborations are unremarkable, but others are a genuine fusing of Drucker's influence with the author's experience.

Another book on the subject published about the same time is *Inside Drucker's Brain*, by Jeffrey Krames, a seasoned writer who has written extensively on

General Electric's Jack Welch. In 2002 he published a work on Donald Rumsfeld and his leadership style.

Krames's new book draws on a six-hour interview that took place in Drucker's home about two years before he died, as well as upon Drucker's writings. As Krames sat down for the first (and apparently only) interview, Drucker mentioned that Jack Welch had sat in that same upholstered chair twenty years earlier, just before Welch became the legendary CEO of General Electric.

The goal of Krames's book is to capture the relevance of Drucker's most important management philosophies and strategies. Reading this book, one gets the sense that the author wants to ensure that Drucker's contribution to management knowledge does not diminish with time.

His concern has merit. Drucker's career path was varied and unconventional, so he was never really viewed as a true academic, especially by other academics. Krames points out that although Drucker had a seminal influence on such leaders as Welch, Tom Peters, Jim Collins, Michael Dell, Andy Grove, and Bill Gates, Drucker is rarely referenced in management textbooks. Perhaps one reason is that Drucker was not a self-promoter. You will not find a Drucker Consulting Group, spin-off publications, or Drucker training workshops. Drucker declared, "My aim has never been academic, that is, to be recognized; it has always been to make a difference."

Like Cohen, Krames centers on leadership, strategy, and social responsibility, covering much of the same ground. However, Krames has more of a business and historical perspective than

Cohen, who writes from a military vantage point. Each book makes its own unique contribution. For instance, Krames's extensive insights into General Electric amplify the little-known influence Drucker had on the company and its iconic leaders. On the question of whether leaders are born or made, Drucker said that some leaders are naturals (like Welch) but that there are not enough of them—so leaders have to be made! That is one of the reasons why General Electric has done so well; the company has been developing leaders at its renowned Crotonville Training Center since the 1950s. Drucker was a founder of Crotonville, along with Ralph Cordiner, General Electric's CEO at the time. For readers interested in where great leaders get their ideas, the book's chapter entitled "Drucker on Welch" is quite interesting.

However, it seems presumptuous to say that after only one interview and a few letters, the author got "inside Drucker's brain." The reader is left wondering why there was no second or third interview.

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Wukovits, John. *One Square Mile of Hell: The Battle for Tarawa*. New York: New American Library, 2006. 320pp. \$15

*One Square Mile of Hell* relates the story of the November 1943 battle for the Tarawa Atoll from the personal level of the Marines who endured this remarkably bloody fight. John Wukovits makes use of firsthand interviews with veterans of the operation, while also citing personal letters and diaries. The result

is a personal history that draws the reader into the lives of the corporals, privates, lieutenants, and colonels who grimly made their way across the central Pacific.

As events unfold, Wukovits traces the lives of several Marines as their paths converge on Tarawa. The marriage proposals and strong family ties ominously set the stage for the tragedies that would follow, although the general historical discussion of the war leading up to Tarawa is at times made awkward by the intermixed personal story lines.

The assault on Betio, a strip of sand and coconut trees two miles long and half a mile wide, became a bloody slugfest. There was little room to hide or maneuver on the island, and the frontal assaults by the Marines produced unprecedented casualty ratios. As a battalion commander emphasized to his men, there were two choices: move forward or die. Complicating the operation was the fact that amphibious planners had utilized outdated charts and inadequate tide tables to determine water levels over the island's outer reefs, resulting in numerous groundings and unnecessary exposure to enemy fire. After three days of brutal, hand-to-hand fighting, the Marines subdued the Japanese defenders and claimed a costly victory.

A common theme of the accounts is the incredibly adverse battle conditions. The limited space and high casualties resulted in a layer of death and carnage over the entire island. The equatorial sun and legions of flies added to the misery, but it was the smell of death and decay that lingered in one's mind. "The smell was inescapable," wrote a correspondent; "it evoked instant and

nightmarish memories. . . . Betio was nothing but stink and death."

Besides being a testament to the courageous leadership and fighting spirit of the Marine Corps, the Tarawa operation raised questions in 1943 regarding the degree of force that should be employed in war. The issue has been continually debated following the dropping of atomic bombs on Japan, and it is still argued today in connection with harsh interrogation techniques used on suspected terrorists.

*Time* reporter Robert Sherrod, who accompanied the Marines during the Betio landing, struggled to reconcile what he saw at Tarawa with the clean, edited version of war presented to the American home front. "Americans," he wrote, "are not prepared psychologically to accept the cruel facts of war." Sherrod's observation makes *One Square Mile of Hell* poignant indeed for Americans today.

While it is noble to memorialize the courage and sacrifice of the Marines at Tarawa, it is equally important to remind ourselves that victory comes at a steep price. Sherrod regarded the carnage of Tarawa as "the most haunting memory of World War II." Indeed, the story of Tarawa should haunt all Americans.

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Fischer, David Hackett. *Champlain's Dream: The European Founding of North America*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2008. 834pp. \$40

David Hackett Fischer writes of Samuel de Champlain, who founded French

Quebec four hundred years ago, that “[Champlain] wrote thousands of pages about what he did, but only a few words about who he was.” It is well for our own and future generations that Fischer, in his *Champlain’s Dream*, has now splendidly written about both the admirable man and his remarkable deeds. In this, another of his signature and wonderfully readable narrative histories (he is also the author of the majestic 1989 *Albion’s Seed* and the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Washington’s Crossing* of 2004), Fischer presents Champlain as a master mariner, explorer, cartographer, ethnologist, courtier, and soldier, but above all as a deeply humane person in a world that was anything but. Fischer writes that Champlain “had a dream of humanity and peace in a world of cruelty and violence. He envisioned a new world as a place where people of different cultures could live together in amity and concord. This became his grand design for North America.”

Champlain pursued this grand design with astounding skill, perseverance, and stamina, crossing the North Atlantic twenty-seven times between 1599 and 1635 without losing a single major ship. In New France (now Canada) he faced cold, isolation, hunger, mutiny, corruption, war, and other hardships almost beyond imagining. Among his many accomplishments, what stands out is perhaps the balanced relationship that Champlain formed with the indigenous people. He had an insatiable curiosity about the complex Indian cultures he encountered and was genuinely interested in what he could learn from them,

an attitude that resulted in numerous long-lasting alliances, respect, and trust.

On the eastern side of the Atlantic, he faced a far different but equally treacherous environment. It took deft and constant lobbying within the French court to maintain royal support for his daring enterprise in the New World.

Champlain did all this, Fischer explains, not for conquest or riches but “to increase the power and prosperity of France, to spread the Christian faith, to learn more about the world, and to bring together its many people in a spirit of humanity.” Fischer is scrupulous in his research and in distinguishing established fact from assertions based on less-certain accounts. His book includes sixteen appendixes addressing such diverse subjects as Champlain’s separate voyages, the essay he wrote on leadership in 1632, his ships and boats, and the Indian nations in Champlain’s world. There are also thirty-six pages of “memories of Champlain” that explore images and interpretations of the man from 1608 to 2008. Fischer concludes his commanding work with 161 pages of notes, bibliography, and credits.

Fischer’s prodigious research persuaded him that Champlain was a dreamer, who imagined “a New World where people lived at peace with others unlike themselves.” In this grand book Fischer superbly tells the story of Champlain the man, who surmounted the challenges he faced with fairness, prudence, and faithfulness to his dream.

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