

## BOOK REVIEWS

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### A GATHERING OF DIFFERENT IDEAS

Rabi, Uzi, ed. *International Intervention in Local Conflicts: Crisis Management and Conflict Resolution since the Cold War*. New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2010. 326pp. \$99

This edited volume presents an insightful collection of case studies assessing international interventions in the post-Cold War era, with a strong emphasis on the Middle East. The essays offer a broad exploration of international conflict management and resolution, taking a hard look at failure and success. Unlike many other books, this one brings together scholars from different countries, presenting an often unique and most importantly different viewpoint on conflicts of U.S. interest. It is impractical to review each chapter, but the following five are particularly compelling for U.S. readership. The attempts of the European Union (EU) to mediate the Balkan and ongoing Israel-Palestine conflicts present a detailed account of EU conflict management in the larger context of the difficulties brought about by institutional challenges and the complex structure of EU policies. A French perspective on Middle Eastern politics is elucidated by Jean-Pierre Filiu. The value of French diplomatic efforts to conflict resolution is highlighted, with the example of the direct contact with Syria and Iran during Operation

GRAPES OF WRATH in 2006. Comparing France to the United States, the author points out different narratives, citing such examples as Beirut 1982. The next chapter delves into the important topic of clashes between the Islamic denominations, Sunni and Shia. The feeling of alienation between these groups dates back to the earliest days of Islam. U.S. interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan are discussed as a starting point for increased Iranian support for Shias throughout the Middle East and to confute the common argument that Shias are more sympathetic to Iran than to their home countries. No conclusion is offered about “whether sectarianism is the cause or symptom of the recent geopolitical changes in the region,” but the authors do provide informative insight and point to the importance of understanding these dynamics for any conflict resolution in the region. Chapter 12 explores the motives of the involvement of regional actors in the Israel-Palestine conflict. Egypt and Saudi Arabia both have interests in being perceived as the indispensable Arab mediator. Ultimately, Egypt has a larger

stake, because of its proximity and domestic politics considerations, and it has stayed committed throughout, while Saudi Arabia has less of an incentive to guarantee that efforts become reality.

The concluding chapter stimulates the reader to think about the term “international community.” Rajan Menon offers a sharp yet pessimistic evaluation of the international community’s efforts to react to grave human rights violations and its “inability to act, particularly when it encounters opposition from its most powerful states.” While he displays minimal confidence in governments, the author remains optimistic that one day people will change and cure the “weakness of we-ness,” thereby initiating real institutional change. A common ground for all essays is the critical analysis of international efforts to resolve conflicts. Every author strives to answer important questions regarding the motivations of external actors to become involved. Overall, this volume presents a valuable contribution and is essential reading for anyone looking to understand the struggles of international conflict management.

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Fisher, David, and Brian Wicker, eds. *Just War on Terror? A Christian and Muslim Response*. Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2010. 231pp. \$29.95

This edited volume provides fourteen essays on various aspects of combating terrorism and insurgencies from a just-war perspective. All the contributors, with the exception of Philip Bobbitt, an American, are from the United

Kingdom. Contributors are prominent members of their respective faculties and are well-known within the fields of war and security studies. While the subtitle accentuates religious traditions with respect to the just-war tradition, the volume is not a dialogue between religious perspectives, nor is every chapter devoted to religious interpretations. Rather, the book is a collection of essays, of which two are authored by practicing Muslim scholars. Apart from these essays, the religious dimensions of combating terrorism are not prominently presented.

The two essays by Islamic scholars are especially helpful for readers interested in the religious dynamics of post-9/11 terrorism. In the first, “Terrorism and Islamic Theologies of Religiously-Sanctioned War,” Tim Winter, who lectures in Islamic studies at the University of Cambridge and is an imam at the Cambridge Mosque, recounts the interaction of Islamic jurisprudence with the emerging international system of the nineteenth century, as scholars and leaders in Muslim countries have sought to integrate various religious interpretations with international political realities. He also provides a useful overview of the concepts of *jihad* and *hiraba*. The second significant essay is that of Ahmad Achta, “Challenging Al-Qa’ida’s Justification of Terror.” Achta is a lecturer in Islamic studies at Heythrop College, University of London, and he argues, with documentation, that al-Qa’ida’s justifications of terror are not part of mainstream Sunni religious and legal thought and are not shared by the majority of Muslims.

Other essays focus more on aspects of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan and on tenets of the just-war tradition.

Of these, three essays in particular stand out as of interest to readers of this journal: Sir Michael Howard's "Philip Bobbitt's Terror and Consent: A Brief Critique," Brian Wicker's "Just War and State Sovereignty," and David Fisher's "Terror and Pre-emption: Can Military Pre-emption Ever Be Just?"

In the final chapter, the editors offer a reflection on countering terrorism justly after 9/11. In these few pages they provide an excellent summary of the weaknesses of al-Qa'ida and the likelihood of its eventual demise. They also remind readers of the necessity of maintaining ethical standards in the midst of conflict: "A common thread running through all the lessons learnt has thus been a rediscovery of the importance of morality even amidst and, indeed, particularly amidst the pressures and passions of conflict."

As with most edited volumes, not every chapter will appeal to everyone. However, for anyone interested in contemporary just-war thought, its viability, and its relevance to twenty-first-century warfare, there is much in this volume on which to reflect.

TIMOTHY J. DEMY  
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Cheney, Dick, with Liz Cheney. *In My Time: A Personal and Political Memoir*. New York: Threshold Editions, 2011. 565pp. \$35

As political memoirs go, Dick Cheney's *In My Time* is arguably one of the more candid, in a genre that tends to fall into two categories—the remarkably bland and the overly fulsome. Cheney avoids both these pitfalls in a book that will

not change the mind of a single Cheney hater or his small legion of admirers.

Cheney was at the center of American politics for almost forty years, and long before he became the Darth Vader of American politics he had a reputation for being one of the ablest and most reform-minded members of the Republican Party. He had an "A-list" résumé, including stints as the youngest chief of staff in the history of the White House; as the nation's seventeenth secretary of defense, presiding over Operation DESERT STORM; and as a key member of the GOP's leadership in the House of Representatives. So it was no surprise when Texas governor George W. Bush asked Cheney to lead his vice-presidential search committee in the spring of 2000. It was a surprise, however, when Bush selected his search committee chair to be his running mate, for Cheney brought few political benefits to the Republican ticket. Yet as *In My Time* makes clear, Cheney's Washington experience and national-security credentials were seen as an asset to Governor Bush. "You know, Dick, you're the solution to my problem" was the way Bush broached the subject to him.

In short order, Cheney became the point man for all that was seen as wanting in the Bush administration and, in the view of some, for all that was criminal. For the tiny cadre of moderate Republicans who urged the administration to move "to the center" and trim "our sails" in the wake of the divisive election of 2000, Cheney made it clear that the administration would not alter its conservative agenda. He infuriated congressional Democrats by refusing to release the lists of "everyone we met with" when he chaired the administration's energy policy task force, and after the

attacks of 9/11, when he observed that the nation would have to work “the dark side, if you will,” Cheney was seen by many as a champion of un-American practices, including water boarding and warrantless wiretapping. Cheney vigorously defends both programs, arguing that the wiretapping “saved lives and prevented attacks. If I had it to do all over again, I would, in a heartbeat.” The administration’s “liberation” of Iraq, which, in concert with the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, dramatically eroded public support for President Bush, is also vigorously defended, although Cheney concedes that “we could have done things better” in terms of dealing with Katrina.

Cheney and his loyal lieutenants, I. Lewis “Scooter” Libby and David Addington, saw themselves as restoring the American presidency to the status it had held prior to Vietnam and Watergate. Some refer to this bygone era as one dominated by an “imperial presidency,” but for Cheney it was the natural, constitutional, order of things. Presidential precedents were on their side but the quiet constitutional revolution that occurred while Cheney served as Gerald Ford’s chief of staff—a revolution that produced an adversarial media with no qualms about releasing the nation’s most closely held secrets; a judiciary willing to overrule executive and legislative war powers, while sometimes invoking elements of international law; and a Congress eager to challenge presidents on sensitive national-security issues, including intelligence matters—triumphed in the end. Bush and Cheney left office as discredited figures, and while both remain optimistic that history will vindicate them, this book makes a strong case that some of the

administration’s actions deserve a sober second look. However, far too much seems to be at stake for that to occur.

STEPHEN F. KNOTT  
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Boyne, Walter J. *How the Helicopter Changed Modern Warfare*. Gretna, La.: Pelican, 2011. 352pp. \$29.95

“In either case, the helicopter has significantly changed the face of modern warfare. It has done so despite restrictions placed on its performance by its inherent design features. And perhaps more than anything else, it has done so because of the brave, talented aircrews who flew the helicopter in the most intensely dangerous conditions of warfare that have ever been seen.”

So concludes the final chapter of a new and timely book by noted aviation writer and retired U.S. Air Force colonel Walter Boyne. This volume revolves around two theses. The first is stated in the title: helicopters, since their introduction, have produced dramatic changes in the conduct of warfare. The second thesis suggests that helicopters themselves have failed to keep pace with the very changes caused by their introduction. The conclusions drawn from this corollary idea are likely to prove controversial.

Boyne’s prose combines accuracy with regard to technological issues with a clarity that renders these complex ideas accessible, even to readers unfamiliar with the intricacies of rotorcraft aeronautics. The scientific and engineering challenges are interwoven with the stories of such industry pioneers as Igor

Sikorsky, Frank Piasecki, and Arthur Young. The narrative offers a tip of the hat to the Marine Corps, acknowledging that institution's decision to champion this emerging technology, as well as the parts played by the Navy and Coast Guard, but the strength of this book resides in its examination of the helicopter's influence on combat over land.

The Vietnam War serves as the lens through which the rapid development of helicopter-borne operations is studied. Anecdotes about operational leaders whose vision married capabilities provided by industry with the arduous conditions of the Southeast Asian battlefield provide evidence of how modern warfare was changed. Anecdotal evidence is supported by statistics detailing the number of troops and the amount of material transported within the theater, as well as the grim losses suffered in accomplishing these missions. Within the Vietnam context, the tactical and operational impacts of rotary-wing aircraft are clearly demonstrated. The argument revolves around the postwar failure to maintain the wartime momentum.

The discussion of the post-Vietnam developments asks difficult and uncomfortable questions. Delving into the fiscal disparity between the research and development efforts supporting fixed-wing, tactical aircraft and similar efforts for the benefit of rotary-wing aviation, the author reaches conclusions that may be disconcerting for advocates of traditional airpower. This critique of overspending on fixed-wing research and development at the expense of survivability, lethality, and capability for rotary-wing aircraft gives the book a controversial edge.

Walter Boyne has delivered a timely study that asks difficult, important questions about the future of military aviation, especially in an era when the nature of combat operations is rapidly evolving. For these questions alone, it is a worthwhile read. The lucid analysis of the technological issues and the compelling stories of the pioneers and warriors who brought the helicopter to prominence are icing on the cake.

K. J. DELAMER  
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Tully, Anthony P. *Battle of Surigao Strait*. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 2009. 329pp. \$18.45

The sprawling battle of Leyte Gulf was fought from 23 to 26 October 1944, and nearly seventy years later it still has the power both to fire the imagination and to provide enduring military lessons. As drama goes, the battle (or more precisely, a series of engagements, each deserving a name of its own) is an apparently bottomless cornucopia of personalities, desperate gambles, and heroism, as well as of enough “what-ifs” to spawn a cottage industry of alternate histories. In at least one way, Leyte Gulf has similarities to Gettysburg. Both battles have been written about so extensively that some authors focus on the smaller engagements that together complete the picture of the larger conflict.

The basic story of Leyte is a familiar one. Faced with growing U.S. naval power, a steadily weakening fleet, and initial American landings in the Philippines, Japanese naval authorities initiated a bold stroke. Using their precious remaining carriers as bait, they drew off Admiral William F. Halsey's Third Fleet

while they attempted to reach the U.S. beachhead with powerful surface forces approaching through the San Bernardino and Surigao Straits. The majority of power would be contained in Admiral Takeo Kurita's Central Force, which would force the San Bernardino Strait and approach the U.S. transports from the east. Two smaller but still potentially deadly forces, commanded by Admirals Shoji Nishimura and Kiyohide Shima, would attempt the Surigao Strait and attack the Americans from the south. Kurita's force came closer to victory, but, due in part to a gallant defense by inferior U.S. forces, and with the counsel of his own forces, Kurita turned back on the doorstep of success. In contrast, Nishimura never had a chance. Admiral Jesse B. Oldendorf turned the Surigao Strait into a killing sack. As Nishimura drove deeper into the strait, his forces were treated to wave after wave of attacks that ended in a crescendo of firepower, as Oldendorf's main battle line put an end to the Japanese southern attack.

Rather than write only about the big picture, Tully puts Surigao Strait under a microscope. Drawing extensively from little (or never)-accessed Japanese records, he painstakingly pulls together his account of the battle. Each Japanese ship is discussed in detail, each commanding officer is subjected to scrutiny, and communications are reviewed. The result is impressive: what emerges is a convincing and incredibly detailed account of this segment of the battle.

In re-creating the battle, Tully takes on several "mysteries" that have endured since 1944. The first is the fate of the Japanese battleship *Fuso*. It is known that the ship was destroyed, but the exact circumstances of its sinking have

been a matter of conjecture. The next mystery is the sinking of the Japanese destroyer *Michishiro*. In this instance there is uncertainty regarding the claim that USS *Hutchins* (DD 476) sank it. Finally, Tully seeks to discover the exact manner in which the Japanese destroyer *Yamashiro* was sunk. By Tully's own admission, these issues are military minutiae, but they are important to him. He obviously wants to know where U.S. torpedoes struck the doomed *Yamashiro* and what happened to *Fuso*.

Tully's writing style, for the most part, is pleasant, analytical, and temperate, although from time to time the neutral tone of the distant observer shifts to a more impassioned vernacular, particularly when Tully is arguing a position or describing some especially dramatic moment. However, the result is not problematic. It is Tully's personal passion for the subject that elevates this book above many naval histories, along with his eagerness to present the Japanese point of view. This is a perspective that with few exceptions is lacking in Western accounts.

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Busch, John Laurence. *Steam Coffin: Captain Moses Rogers and the Steamship Savannah Break the Barrier*. New Canaan, Conn.: Hodos Historia, 2010. 726pp. \$35

One of the great events in American, and indeed world, maritime history occurred in the summer of 1819, when the American steamship *Savannah*, commanded by Captain Moses Rogers, became the first steam-powered vessel to cross the Atlantic Ocean. Its pioneer

voyage from Savannah, Georgia, to Liverpool, England, in May and June 1819 is sometimes mentioned as an epoch-making event that marked the coming age of the steamship. While the ship was remembered 140 years later, when in 1959 its name was given to the first American nuclear-powered merchant vessel, the context and the details of the pioneer voyage were overlooked. The 1819 voyage was quickly dismissed as a commercial failure in which steam power was used for only a fraction of the time; the ship itself was forgotten as a short-lived phenomenon after its shipwreck on Long Island in 1821.

Certainly, *Savannah* was far ahead of its time, as it would take another twenty years for steamships to begin regular transatlantic passages and thirty years before there was another American steamship to carry the flag across the Atlantic. Despite all the innovation that the 1819 voyage of *Savannah* represents, however, there is remarkably little historical investigation of it. *Savannah's* captain, Moses Rogers, has been almost completely overlooked as an innovator. Up until the appearance of this fine work, Frank O. Braynard's 1963 study *S.S. Savannah the Elegant Steam Ship* was the only major work on the subject.

For the Connecticut-based independent historian John Laurence Busch, the tale of Captain Rogers and his steamship *Savannah* is clearly a passionate labor of love. With exemplary research, Busch followed an archival trail that led to twenty-two historical manuscript depositories in the United States, ranging from Portland, Maine, to Savannah, and which included ten massive record groups in the National Archives.

Moreover, following the wake of the ship, Busch's research carried him to archives in Denmark, Russia, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Equally impressive is his productive research in nearly 150 contemporary newspapers that matches his archival range and extends beyond to India, Ireland, and Norway. All of this, Busch has marshaled into a beautifully written and engaging narrative that places his solidly based factual details within a broad context. It is a complex story, but one that is clearly presented.

The book opens with an evocative description of Moses Rogers's involvement in the introduction of the first steam passenger service between Charleston, South Carolina, and Savannah, Georgia. The author then traces back to the early rise of steam propulsion in the United States and Moses Rogers's story from his birth in New London, Connecticut, through his career as a pioneer steamboat captain on the Hudson River, then as steamship designer and founder of the Savannah Steamship Company. In detailing *Savannah's* pioneer transatlantic voyage, Busch effectively covers the entire range of issues from finances to the many different characters in the ship's company. Not stopping there, he explores the public reception and professional interest in the ship's further onward passages to Denmark, Sweden, and Russia, including its return home across the Atlantic. In conclusion, Busch reflects that while the achievements of Rogers and *Savannah* have sometimes been lost to collective memory, they broke a psychological barrier that had hindered such technological innovation up to that point.

Produced by a heretofore-unknown publisher, *Steam Coffin* is enhanced by more than a dozen well-drawn maps, as well as more than forty illustrations. Seventy-one pages of endnotes document Busch's prodigious research, but they are not easy to use, as they are

linked to the text by quoted phrases rather than numbered positions. Nevertheless, John Laurence Busch has made a major contribution to American maritime history with this fine book.

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