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Marie von Clausewitz: The Woman behind the Making of On War, by Vanya Eftimova Bellinger

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challenges in the Gulf of Guinea. Indeed, the book may be viewed as a compendium of the existing legal regimes in the Gulf of Guinea. This legal landscape is important to understand as efforts proceed to combat maritime insecurity and enhance maritime governance through cooperation. The section on emerging jurisdictional issues and legal complexities is particularly significant, as it provides a helpful warning of problems that are likely to arise as the cooperative architecture continues to develop.

Naturally, one of the challenges of writing an analysis of real-world issues is that they do not remain constant. If one were to attempt to identify a criticism of the book, it is that it is already out of date on a few specific issues, although one hardly can blame that on the author. For example, the section on private security companies or private maritime security companies, if written today, likely would include a number of new issues as well as new accountability mechanisms. But the analysis and lessons that can be gleaned remain sound and important, even if additional facts exist that could enhance the discussion.

The book expressly arrives at five main conclusions: (1) Current processes for maritime security cooperation in the Gulf of Guinea do not address adequately the multiple security threats in the region. (2) Poor governance contributes significantly to maritime security threats in the Gulf of Guinea, but the current cooperative framework does not address the land-sea nexus of maritime security concerns. (3) The relevant legal framework for maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea is poorly developed, and this undermines the effectiveness of maritime security enforcement and regional and

international cooperation. (4) Prevailing regional cooperative processes lack coordination and have suffered several setbacks. (5) International support for maritime security cooperation in the Gulf of Guinea is inadequate, uncoordinated, and in some cases driven by national interests that affect its overall effectiveness.

These conclusions, as well as the analysis that led to them, serve as an invaluable aid in the ongoing effort to secure the maritime domain of West and Central Africa. This book is a must-read for maritime security scholars and anyone—from policy makers to industry leaders to students—working on maritime matters in the Gulf of Guinea.

IAN M. RALBY



Marie von Clausewitz: The Woman behind the Making of On War, by Vanya Eftimova Bellinger. Oxford Univ. Press, 2015. 312 pages. \$29.95.

One is tempted to ask why naval officers should be interested in reading a biography of the wife of the famous Prussian philosopher of war Carl von Clausewitz. In answer we might go to the words of Marie von Clausewitz herself, from her letter of dedication to Carl's unfinished masterpiece *On War*: "Readers will be rightly surprised that a woman should dare to write a preface for such a work as this. My friends will need no explanation. . . . Those who knew of our happy marriage and knew that we shared *everything*, not only joy and pain but also every occupation, every concern of daily life, will realize that a task of this kind could not occupy my beloved husband without at the same time becoming

thoroughly familiar to me” (preface to Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret [Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1986], p. 65 [emphasis in original]). In other words, to understand better *On War*’s hidden treasures, it helps to understand the formidable woman behind *On War*. We historians have this quaint notion that understanding the context for things helps one better understand the things themselves. For naval professionals, especially at the Naval War College, which owes so much to the Prusso-German intellectual tradition, to understand better the genesis of the greatest philosophy of war is no small thing. (Readers interested in evidence for this idea should consult Ronald H. Spector, *Professors of War: The Naval War College and the Development of the Naval Profession* [Honolulu, HI: Univ. Press of the Pacific, 2005; originally published by the Naval War College Press, 1977], pp. 14–17).

Additionally, Bellinger’s biography is the result of a fruitful collaboration with Donald Stoker, who has published a companion biography of Marie’s more-famous husband. Together they mined a treasure trove of recently uncovered correspondence between Carl and Marie held in Germany by the (now) famous couple’s descendants.

Marie von Clausewitz is more than just a biography of a woman married to an officer and military theorist; it covers the spectrum of relevant social, intellectual, military, political, and feminist history. It is truly a synthesis of all these forms, much like Peter Paret’s *Clausewitz and the State* (1976), which has held the field on the details of Clausewitz’s life and

times until now. As advertised, though, the book is centered on the life of his companion and lifelong love, Countess Marie von Brühl. With her formidable language skills, Bellinger does exceptional work in bringing the history, and even the prehistory, of the Brühl family to life.

Many surprises await the reader regarding Marie’s background and influence. For example, she was no “ordinary” Prussian countess, but rather a daughter of an imperial count of the Holy Roman Empire. As an imperial aristocrat, she frequented only the very highest social circles in Europe. Her friends and acquaintances were queens, princesses, and various types of grand duchesses—all themselves politically influential women, in an age when few women wielded such influence.

Marie’s elevated background raises the book’s first major question, which Bellinger poses in this way (p. 47): “How and why did a countess raised in the highest social circles ever allow herself to consider marrying a man with conspicuously less social standing?” Carl’s family had only a dubious claim to the “von”—which denoted nobility—in front of his name, he being a son of (at best) a very minor provincial official. Bellinger answers the question in this way (p. 8), and it tells one much about both Carl and Marie: “Indeed, from the very beginning of their romance, the couple determinedly defied the parochial attitudes of the time and strived to build a relationship if not equal in status, then at least equal in nature. . . . [I]t was Carl’s promise to treat her as an independent and free individual that made this formidable countess decide upon marriage with a man of lesser social standing.”

In other words, Carl and Marie managed to rise above the social norms of their times. Until now we have had only Carl's perspective, as it were—the one we read in *On War*. By telling the story of the collaboration between the two, Bellinger's book makes clear that the real political animal in the family was Marie, not Carl. Her influence can be judged by the fact that after Carl resigned his commission in the Prussian army and left for Russia to join its army—without the Prussian king's written permission—the king still acknowledged Marie, and even nodded to her at court functions. As for Carl, the king never forgave him completely; he did allow him to rejoin the Prussian army later, but never gave him a position of real influence. Again, this misfortune is our good fortune, since it probably allowed Carl the extra time, beyond that required for his minimal duties at the *Kriegsakademie* in Berlin, to write and rewrite his masterpiece.

One also learns that Marie was very active in supporting her husband's career, and developed friendships and corresponded independently of Carl with the great figures of the day, especially General August Neithardt von Gneisenau. Marie's mother, interestingly, was from the British middle class (a story in itself), and she taught Marie to speak English exceptionally well for a German aristocrat. This probably further cemented her relationship with Gneisenau, who also spoke English fluently. The two were so close that Marie, an accomplished painter, later executed one of the more famous existing portraits of Gneisenau.

Bellinger herself is married to a military service member. Because of that experience, as she writes about this military marriage she has an exceptional eye for the sorts of details that some academics

might miss. Her text is full of interesting insights and observations on the extraordinary couple, but also includes details that even sailors will recognize, such as the fact that Marie and Carl numbered all their letters when he was in the field so they could tell if some were missing. (The reviewer used this very technique with his spouse during his many cruises in the U.S. Navy.)

Readers looking for new insights on the Prussian perspective from inside the Prussian court during the Napoleonic Wars will be well rewarded, as will those interested in how little or how much Marie played a role in the genesis and writing of *On War*, the subject that occupies roughly the last quarter of the book. Addressing Marie's pivotal role in getting Carl's work published, Bellinger leaves little doubt that without Marie there might have been no *On War* for us to read today, nor any of Carl's other works. Ms. Bellinger's work reminds us that a human life is rarely a solo accomplishment, lived apart and distinct from other human beings. Rather, a relationship such as that of Marie and Carl von Clausewitz is an enterprise lived in collaboration with others of our kind—or in Marie's case, not her kind—especially those we love and who love us. Highly recommended for all audiences.

JOHN T. KUEHN



A Higher Standard: Leadership Strategies from America's First Female Four-Star General, by Ann Dunwoody. Boston: Da Capo, 2015. 288 pages. \$25.99 (Kindle \$14.99).

In this book, General Ann Dunwoody, USA (Ret.), traces her illustrious career from initial entry into the Women's