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# By His Own Rules: The Ambitions, Successes, and Ultimate Failures of Donald Rumsfeld

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effectively established the American maritime dominance in the Persian Gulf that exists to this day.

Among the key issues that Zatarain raises in his gripping account of the various battles fought between the United States and Iran is the controversial claim by many U.S. Navy commanding officers that Iran used Chinese-made Silkworm antiship missiles against American ships. Their claims were discounted by senior military commanders, who refused to acknowledge that any such attacks had occurred, despite extensive evidence to the contrary—such attacks would have required a military response that the United States and the U.S. military were neither willing nor able to undertake.

As political tensions have continued to rise in recent years between the United States and Iran, *Tanker War* is a must-read for those who have a desire or a duty to understand how recent history may shape perceptions of these protagonists in the future.

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Graham, Bradley. *By His Own Rules: The Ambitions, Successes, and Ultimate Failures of Donald Rumsfeld*. New York: PublicAffairs, 2009. 803pp. \$35

In a speech given to Pentagon employees on 10 September 2001, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld stated that the “adversary that poses a threat, a serious threat, to the security of the United States” is not “decrepit dictators” but rather “the Pentagon bureaucracy.” The blunt message of this speech was very

soon to be bound together in a tension-filled relationship with the ensuing wars initiated by the terrorist attacks of the next day. This tension gives dramatic shape to the career of Donald Rumsfeld as portrayed by Bradley Graham in his well researched book *By His Own Rules*. A veteran *Washington Post* correspondent, Graham intends that the title be regarded literally, as his detailed story focuses on Rumsfeld as a master bureaucratic infighter who did indeed work by his own rules. (The rules encapsulated Rumsfeld’s views on serving and surviving in government and were eventually printed in the *Wall Street Journal*.)

Rumsfeld applied the rules in his intense commitment to the type of U.S. military President George W. Bush had called for during his campaign, an “agile, lethal, readily deployable” armed force. To build this force required a significant transformation of the outsized and ponderous military developed during and immediately after the Cold War. Graham portrays Rumsfeld as a reformer who “had never met an organization he didn’t want to change” and who had come well prepared to transform the Defense Department, but for two untimely wars.

Rumsfeld’s personal goal of transforming the military seemed to overshadow his responsibilities for prosecuting the wars. Graham describes at length how Rumsfeld’s missteps in managing the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan caused him to become the “personification of the arrogance and misjudgments of the Bush Administration,” from damaging interagency power struggles to intolerance of differing viewpoints, to a lack of ability to acknowledge mistakes or change strategies.

Yet Graham also well portrays Rumsfeld as a complex man who got things accomplished. A tenacious collegiate wrestler at Princeton and a Navy pilot, Rumsfeld was elected to Congress at age thirty. He served four terms before President Richard Nixon appointed him as head of the Office of Economic Opportunity and then as ambassador to NATO. Under President Gerald Ford, Rumsfeld would serve as White House chief of staff and as the youngest-ever secretary of defense. In Rumsfeld's business career, he was a CEO responsible for the successful turnaround of several major corporations. With his appointment in 2001, he would also become the oldest to serve as secretary of defense. In all of his many appointments and responsibilities, Rumsfeld comes across as an intense, capable, and ambitious operator with a "deep moral streak."

Graham's well written and comprehensive narrative implies an answer to the question of why an administrator known for his diligent and rational approach to resolving complex issues ultimately presided over a deeply dysfunctional policy-making process. In Rumsfeld, overconfidence eventually converted a healthy skepticism about thorough organizational procedures into near contempt for them. Transforming the military, like countering an insurgency, proved to be more about changing minds than about building new weapons or using old ones. Graham concludes that Rumsfeld's "biggest failings were personal—the result of the man himself, not simply of the circumstances he confronted."

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Barlow, Jeffrey G. *From Hot War to Cold: The U.S. Navy and National Security Affairs, 1945–1955*. Palo Alto, Calif.: Stanford Univ. Press, 2009. 710pp. \$65

The U.S. Navy that patrolled the world's oceans with such unquestioned dominance in the 1990s did not spring into existence full-blown, nor was its creation a smooth evolution based on dispassionate analysis and national consensus. The early years of that postwar Navy, particularly its first, crucial decade, were marked by storms, impassioned debate, and bitter political battles. This turmoil had started before the end of the Second World War and would continue into the mid-1950s. Unfortunately, there has been far too little written about this period in the U.S. Navy's history.

Jeffrey Barlow, a noted naval historian and author, has done much to close that gap and in the process has produced a stunning book. Meticulously researched and scrupulously documented, *From Hot War to Cold* is a gripping account of how the modern Navy was formed in the crucible of the first ten years after the war. As a history, this volume is first-rate. As a study of decision making, it is superb.

Barlow consistently reminds the reader just how important this decade was. As he relates, military and government leaders wrestled with critical emerging technologies, tectonic political shifts, and ferocious internal battles. He examines every aspect of these times, tracing how military organizations were shaped and affected by a series of defense reorganization acts, and how the Air Force and Navy battled for a role in the nation's nuclear strategy. Over time,