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Victory in War: Foundations of Modern Military Policy

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has seen its standard of living decline and its people suffer.”

Why the scramble for African oil? Because African oil is of high quality and therefore relatively cheap to refine. Africa is surrounded by water, so access to the sea and less expensive maritime transport further reduces costs (in comparison to Central Asia, which must ship by pipeline), and there is increasing global demand, in which Africa represents a larger percentage of new discoveries and production. In addition, newly discovered offshore reserves coupled with new ultra-deepwater drilling technology and transshipment directly from oil platforms avoids the usual onshore problems.

Ghazvinian’s field work is based on wide-ranging interviews with politicians, economists, warlords, diplomats, aid workers, oil-company executives, activists, priests, crude-oil bandits, soldiers, bureaucrats, technocrats, scientists, historians, oil-rig workers, lawyers, bankers, old men, and boys, among others. He provides comprehensive assessments on Nigeria, Gabon, Cameroon, Congo, Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe, Chad, and Sudan. Ghazvinian is quick to point out that each country differs in terms of the dynamics of the complex factors at work. A few examples in his words:

“Nigeria, it is simply the doomsday scenario, an amalgamation of all the worst oil has to offer Africa: corruption, ethnic hatred, Dutch disease, and rentierism, organized crime, militant rebellion, hostage taking, and sabotage of industry activity, and a country held together tenuously.”

“Gabon is the golden child ruled by a self-interested French puppet who

forgot to prepare his country for life after oil and has left it with a castrated economy.”

“Cameroon and Congo are much the same story, but in the latter country, oil has fueled a bloody civil war that has left the population traumatized and afraid to speak out against the country’s high-level corruption.”

“Angola is the sleeping giant where billions of dollars have disappeared and where government maintains deep distrust of and distance from the international community.”

Ghazvinian concludes with a discussion of the U.S. military’s increasing interest in Africa, such as in the Gulf of Guinea and the establishment of a new Africa Command. He also details China’s long-term strategy of gaining access to oil by providing patient capital for oil infrastructure in riskier areas coupled with considerable development aid without the typical Western conditionality.

The reader will find this informative, comprehensive, fast-paced journey to Africa invaluable in better understanding the challenges and complexities of the “curse of oil.”

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Martel, William C. *Victory in War: Foundations of Modern Military Policy*. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2007. 446pp. \$36.95

William Martel, formerly of the Naval War College and now of the Fletcher School at Tufts University, accomplishes his chief goal of starting a discussion of a worthy, intensely policy-relevant topic. He demonstrates that a consensus

definition of the term “victory” remains out of grasp, despite centuries of learned commentary on military affairs. Martel casts his book as a preliminary investigation of the nature of victory. This “pre-theoretical” inquiry, he declares, is the best that can be achieved, given the nature of war—a violent clash of wills pervaded by uncertainty and strong passions. Given these realities, no social-science theory can tell political and military officials how they can arrange matters to assure victory.

After surveying the works of classical and modern strategic theorists, Martel constructs a framework for analyzing past wars and informing future deliberations on when and how to use force to achieve policy objectives. Victory, says Martel, can be classified by: its level, designated (in descending order) grand strategic, political-military, or tactical; how, and how much, the war alters the prewar status quo; how fully the victorious society mobilizes itself for war; and the manner and scope of postwar obligations incurred by the victor. The author next uses this framework to classify several U.S. military actions, ranging from the 1986 Libya raid to Operation IRAQI FREEDOM.

Evaluating victory is an ambiguous undertaking, even using this analytical approach. The Libya raid yielded only a “quasi-political-military victory,” inducing a change of political behavior on Moammar Gadhafi’s part. The outcome of the 2003 invasion of Iraq, sure to engender the most controversy among Martel’s case studies, remains in doubt. While American policy makers are clearly thinking in terms of a thoroughgoing, grand-strategic victory that reorders Middle Eastern affairs, only a partial victory is yet in hand, and even

that result could slip away amid terrorism and communal bloodletting. *Victory in War* renders a service by improving our ability to learn from past operations and think through future operations before embarking on them.

Given the preliminary nature of Martel’s work, certain issues await elucidation. Most notably, the terms affixed to the levels of victory—grand strategic, political-military, and tactical—imply that the author wants to invert the familiar Clausewitzian relationship between policy and strategy. Placing grand-strategic victory above political-military victory in the hierarchy suggests that strategy—roughly speaking, “grand strategy” means deploying diplomatic, economic, and ideological as well as military power to realize policy aims—ranks above politics in the order of things. A taxonomy clearly affirming the supremacy of policy would enhance Martel’s analytical enterprise and its relevance to practitioners and scholars considerably.

In short, *Victory in War* marks the beginning of what promises to be a fruitful debate on matters of vital interest to political and military leaders—and the nations they serve.

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Prados, John. *Safe for Democracy: The Secret Wars of the CIA*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2006. 696pp. \$35

In an era where overhead imagery is available to anyone with a computer and a credit card, where the twenty-four-hour cable news cycle drives government decisions and the Internet