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# Transformation under Fire: Revolutionizing How America Fights

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Macgregor, Douglas A. *Transformation under Fire: Revolutionizing How America Fights*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2003. 320pp. \$34.95

This book provides an exceptional look at a complex subject—bringing the U.S. Army into the twenty-first century. Building on the themes presented in his book *Breaking the Phalanx: A New Design for Landpower in the 21st Century* (Praeger, 1997), Macgregor again calls for the Army to leave behind, once and for all, its “garrison” mentality and fully embrace a joint expeditionary mindset. He sees an army whose transformation has bogged down because it chooses to focus too narrowly on new technology whose performance to date has fallen short of expectations.

The value of this book is the constructive manner in which it describes how the Army (like all services, for that matter) should transform from a Cold War force to one that is capable of meeting the nation’s requirements in the new century. Macgregor provides a lucid and well reasoned argument on what is wrong with the Army’s current approach to transformation. He asks several simple but demanding questions: Whom and where do we fight? How should we fight? Most importantly, what is the strategic purpose for the Army in the future?

Macgregor makes clear that transformation must be more than wholesale replacement of current equipment using new information and nanotechnologies. Rather, what is needed, he insists, is greater emphasis on developing fresh ideas about how to restructure and reorganize the current force. Such change must be made in conjunction with a

rationally evolved plan that replaces legacy equipment with tools that will generate the desired combat *effects* needed in the future. In his view, the Army already has the skills and 90 percent of the technology and platforms it needs; what is missing is a “joint organizational structure and combat leadership philosophy” needed to exploit an effects-based operational framework.

The current global war on terrorism, in Macgregor’s view, provides the perfect opportunity to change the Army. Yet such transformation must not risk losing what is clearly the finest fighting force in the world today. America’s current and future enemies are resourceful and imaginative and will find ways to obviate or mitigate current U.S. tactical and strategic advantages, especially where equipment and material are concerned. To meet these evolving challenges, Macgregor repeatedly admonishes the Army to develop and articulate a concept for joint maneuver and land strike that embraces a joint operational architecture.

Leveraging ideas presented in other forums, the author recommends that the nation’s security planners begin developing military command and control organizations that are regionally focused and structured to incorporate land, air, and sea elements into a joint architecture integrated with and subordinate to current regional combatant commanders. To be effective their forces must be capable of seamlessly plugging into such regional command and control arrangements. The Army in particular, with its indigenous hierarchical and top-heavy command structure, is ill suited to do so and must change if it is to do its part in the joint fight.

Throughout this work, Macgregor provides specific and concrete examples of problems and solutions. He explains, for instance, how the Army should align itself in a joint architecture based on combat maneuver groups composed of light reconnaissance, airborne assault, aviation combat, and early deploying support. The purpose of such groups is to integrate lean fighting units with powerful strike assets that are not only lethal in combat but have the necessary strategic agility to achieve rapid decisive results. Lest the reader think that Macgregor is a proponent of smaller and lighter forces, he also makes clear there can be no substitute for superior firepower in any fight. In examining the most recent U.S. combat experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq, Macgregor notes that the real challenge of the close fight is that “the advantage of information dominance diminishes considerably”; “old-fashioned firepower delivered in mass” remains essential.

The conclusion reminds us that the nature of warfare will continue to change and that the need for transformation will only grow in importance as our enemies adapt to our past successes. The process of transformation, he points out, however, is not the sole responsibility or purview of the Army—it requires the best civilian and military minds. Macgregor’s effort goes a long way toward furthering that thinking and is a must read for those who wish to enter the military transformation debate.

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Karnad, Bharat. *Nuclear Weapons and Indian Security*. New Delhi: Macmillan India, 2002. 724pp. Rs795

Roy-Chaudhury, Rahul. *India’s Maritime Security*. New Delhi: Knowledge World, 2000. 208pp. \$42.64

Analysts and observers interested in global security issues would do well to pay closer attention to the always rich debate in Indian security circles about that country’s future national policies, supporting budgets, and force structures. India is a rising power with a rapidly growing economy, an increasing military budget, and in some key areas, a newly enhanced national will to translate its potential into broader influence on the world stage. These two books are excellent examples of the national debate on how India should use its power to protect and advance its growing national interests. Each covers specific elements of India’s national security—nuclear weapons and maritime security.

Bharat Karnad is an unabashed advocate of a robust Indian nuclear weapons structure, doctrine, and policy. Karnad, a national security policy analyst at an Indian think tank, the Centre for Policy Research in New Delhi, was a member of the First National Security Advisor Board to the National Security Council of India. In that capacity, he was a member of the Nuclear Doctrine Drafting Group. In the wake of India’s May 1998 nuclear weapons tests, the group produced a draft nuclear doctrine that was submitted to the National Security Council in August 1999. (After significant delay, the essence of the doctrine was adopted formally in January