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# The Principles of War for the Information Age

Drew Hamilton

Robert R. Leonhard

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joint or allied operations, an interesting omission considering how important both are to fulfilling American political and strategic goals.

In addition, a number of assumptions are alluded to (perhaps unintentionally), without explanation, that tend to weaken the NCW concept as it is described in this book. For instance, strategic context and action are assumed away in favor of a focus on gathering, processing, and disseminating information. Another assumption is that there will be less need to move forces into position to take action, which implies that the necessary forces for a given operation will always be in position. This seems unrealistic. Finally, the authors mention the idea that levels of war that have been used in defense concepts for years will collapse or be compressed under NCW. They do not say what this means, or if it will be true for all services.

This book falls short of its goal. It is not a good text or reference book. Such a book would facilitate access to knowledge, clearly explain key points, and provide references for future explorations. It is not hard to understand why NCW has had difficulty finding wider acceptance. This is the kind of work one expects to find in a magazine article, not in a book of more than 250 pages. The ultimate value of this book will depend on the needs

of the reader. If one is already grounded in NCW concepts, it will provide a useful review of the current state of the literature. However, all others must look to future publications.

MICHAEL C. FOWLER  
Newport, Rhode Island

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Leonhard, Robert R. *The Principles of War for the Information Age*. Novato, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1998. 287pp. \$29.95

Robert R. Leonhard is an active-duty Army officer who is clearly well versed in Army doctrine. His previous works include *Fighting by Minutes* and *Art of Maneuver*. His third book, *The Principles of War for the Information Age*, is a thought-piece that is occasionally entertaining and thought provoking but sometimes tedious. Leonhard explains that "the purpose of this book is to examine each of the principles of war and to comment on their validity and utility." He accomplishes his objective, though the reader may find it slow going in some places. Although Leonhard's lively writing style relieves some of the tedium, at the same time it can be distracting.

Leonhard uses historical vignettes to illustrate the nine principles of war. They are well written and generally quite interesting. Although no glaring errors present

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themselves, one cannot really be sure, because there are no footnotes or other pointers for the reader to follow up in order to check for accuracy.

Leonhard states that the nine principles of war (mass, objective, unity of command, simplicity, offensive, maneuver, surprise, economy of force, and security) have been misused and that this misuse has warped them. He takes each apart in turn and comments on them, accepting some, rejecting some, and modifying others. He then presents a list of seven principles that he has developed (knowledge and ignorance, dislocation and confrontation, distribution and concentration, opportunity and reaction, activity and security, option acceleration and objective, and command and anarchy). High marks must be given for originality, but the book simply gets bogged down with the details of nine principles versus seven principles.

However, it brings to light many important points. For example, Leonhard frankly describes the technological "generation gap" in the armed forces. But rather than expand his thought, he simply concludes, "In a sense, we have to keep things simple so we leaders can participate"—perhaps leaving the reader to wonder, "So what?"

Harsh words must be said about the bibliography. Twenty references are listed, but only some

have complete bibliographic information. Other entries consist only of the title and author, with no publisher. Leonhard provides a short description for most of the works cited; they include such unsubstantiated comments as, "Although the student of war must admire Foch's circumspection and intellectual bent, his book on the principles of war borders on the incoherent." About another work he writes, "After two complete readings, I can understand about two-thirds of the book." Since Leonhard cites only twenty references, one would think he would have selected those that were useful. I found his comments about my friend and mentor, the late Colonel Trevor Dupuy, completely uncalled for. If in fact Colonel Dupuy's theoretical work was "useless" and a "superb instruction in how not to interpret historical data," why cite it?

Leonhard does have important things to say. He is on target when he questions the impact of technology on future warfare, and he brings a valuable operational Army perspective to the contemplation of future warfare. However, poor organization makes this work unnecessarily hard to read and masks some of its excellent points. Unfortunately, the great deal of original thinking in this book is devalued by its faults. This book is simply too ambitious. There is too much

ground to cover in under three hundred pages. It would have been better if the author had completed his thoughts at each point before moving on.

DREW HAMILTON  
Lieutenant Colonel  
U.S. Army

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Russett, Bruce, ed. *The Once and Future Security Council*. New York: St. Martin's, 1997. 179pp. \$ 39.95

Bruce Russett of Yale University is best known for his signal work on the democratic-peace theory. He is the editor of this concise book on the nuts and bolts of United Nations Security Council composition and voting patterns. *The Once and Future Security Council* is a collection of eight essays that analyze the Security Council in light of its newly central role after the Cold War.

James Sutterlin gives a historical context to the discussion, describing the framing of the UN Charter and the debates that helped to create the Security Council. Far from being newly divisive, the issues of membership on the council, the length of terms, voting rules, and especially veto powers were bones of contention from the very beginning.

The next essay, by Bruce Russett himself, is a particularly helpful "big picture" approach to the

current debates. In it he presents ten "balances," or ideals in tension, that allow the student of the Security Council to evaluate all dimensions of a proposal for change. This chapter should be required reading in any course focusing on the organization or operations of the UN. Soo Yeon Kim and Russett co-authored the next piece, which is a technical analysis of voting blocs within the General Assembly, to provide a touchstone for examining Security Council actions in light of the larger body's tendencies and preferences. The editor having created the historical and theoretical frameworks in the previous two essays, the data in this and subsequent essays may be more effectively absorbed and understood.

Focusing specifically on voting patterns within the council itself, Barry O'Neill's essay contains a fascinating statistical analysis that yields the greatest surprise of the entire book—that changing the nonveto membership of the Security Council makes almost no difference in the relative powers of the veto-carrying and nonveto members. The disproportionate nature of the veto, necessary for great-power participation and perhaps desirable as a balance to the developing nature of the larger General Assembly membership, is the central fact of all Security Council decisions. Flowing from