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An Empire Wilderness: Travels into America's Future

Lawrence Modisett

Robert D. Kaplan

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but assistant operations officers should have it on their bookshelves.

KEVIN L. MCMULLEN
Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army Reserve

Kaplan, Robert D. *An Empire Wilderness: Travels into America's Future.* New York: Random House, 1998. 393pp. $27.50

Robert Kaplan offers in this book some provocative variations on a theme he first sounded in a February 1994 article in *Atlantic Monthly* (of which he is a contributing editor) and later developed in his 1996 best seller, *The Ends of the Earth*. His earlier work suggests that the nation-state may be losing its relevance for much of the developing world, where ethnic conflict, crime, and anarchy are surging, and domination by clan leaders and warlords seems destined to replace the authority of governments. Now Kaplan suggests that even in the United States the concept of a national government as the focal point of allegiance is fading, raising questions about our continued ability to perform essential functions, such as controlling nuclear weapons and regulating water use. In making his case, Kaplan focuses not on crime and anarchy (although both are conspicuous in his portraits of inner cities) but on the perceived globalization, stratification, and communalization of American society.

As the most visible sign that globalization is breaking down our sense of national identity, Kaplan describes how international influences increasingly affect the ethnic composition, architecture, fashion, and diet of American communities, including towns in once-remote areas. At a more basic level, he notes that regional economic ties are linking cities like Tucson and Portland more closely with suppliers and markets across the Mexican and Canadian borders, and in some cases with other Pacific rim economies, rather than with U.S. communities thousands of miles away.

More disturbing for our unity as a people are the stratification and communalization Kaplan discerns in virtually every community. He sees growing disparities in income leading to increasingly formalized boundaries, as affluent citizens seek to isolate themselves ever more securely from growing numbers of lower-income compatriots. The result is a proliferation of gated communities and "urban pods," localities more sharply defined and exclusive than the suburbs of earlier eras. Kaplan notes that greater St. Louis, Missouri, now encompasses ninety-two incorporated cities, some with as few as a dozen inhabitants—lot size and building restrictions determine who can afford to move in.

Kaplan bases his case on impressions gained from visiting dozens of cities and smaller communities in the Midwest, Southwest, and Pacific Northwest, including Omaha, Nebraska; Los Angeles and Orange County, California; Tucson, Arizona; Santa Fe, New Mexico; Lincoln, Nebraska; Bozeman, Montana; Missoula, Montana; and Portland, Oregon. Visits to Vancouver, Canada, and several Mexican cities, as well as the Hopi community at Black Mesa, Arizona, make for illuminating comparisons, a particularly dramatic example being the juxtaposition of

Nogales, Mexico, and Nogales, Arizona.

Kaplan supplemenrs his own observations with interviews of local officials; business leaders; journalists; and professors; leaders of Hispanic, native American, and Black communities; environmentalists; survivalists; truck drivers; and even the rootless, disturbed passengers on a bus from Albuquerque, New Mexico, to Amarillo, Texas. Perhaps of particular interesr to readers of the *Naval War College Review*, Kaplan begins and ends his account with conversations with officers attending the U.S. Army Staff College at Fort Leavenworth; their traditional patriotic values serve as a benchmark for how far their fellow citizens have moved from such a perspective. Kaplan pays high tribute to the intellect and professionalism of the officers, who wonder about America's future and their role in it, even as the gap widens between themselves and their countrymen.

Critics have accused Kaplan of being superficial and subjective; one letter described his articles in *Atlantic Monthly*—on which much of this book was based—as "drive-by journalism." Some of his key observations, such as the growing disparity in U.S. incomes and the proliferation of exclusive communities, are hardly original, and his sweeping generalizations require rigorous research and analysis before they can be validated. Nonetheless, this book is insightful, entertaining, and provocative. Anyone with a strong desire to understand contemporary trends in America should read it and contemplate its message.

LAWRENCE MODISETT
Naval War College

Cimbala, Stephen J. *Coercive Military Strategy*. College Station: Texas A&M Univ. Press, 1998. 229pp. $39.95

In light of events in the Balkans, the subject of this book is singularly timely. Stephen Cimbala's thesis is that "an understanding of coercive military strategy is a necessary condition for policy makers, military leaders, and scholars who hope to understand and to manage favorably the forces at work in the post–Cold War world." He defines such a strategy as one that "explicitly seeks to employ deliberately calibrated means in order to accomplish policy objectives, while adjusting its ends and means relationship to the evolving situation and context." (Military readers will be forgiven if they feel the hair rising on the backs of their necks.)

Cimbala uses several case histories to discuss how the United States employed such strategy, with more or less success, in the past. These include limited-war strategy during the Cold War, coercive diplomacy in the Cuban missile crisis and in Vietnam, and coercive military strategy in DESERT STORM. In two other chapters, Cimbala discusses the subject in the contexts of collective security and operations other than war (OOTW).

The subject would seem to be of significant interest to military officers and policy makers—but the book is disappointing. It is essentially a political science text, and one that suffers