Naval War College Review

Volume 49
Number 1 *Winter*

Article 21

1996

Intelligence and Mirror: On Creating an Enemy

James J. Tritten

Follow this and additional works at: https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review

the same publishing restrictions as the American military, signs a book contract to tell the story of that war.

Because of Palmer's background as author of *Stoddert's War*, *Origins of the Maritime Strategy*, and *Guardians of the Gulf*, and his years at the Naval Historical Center, it is not surprising that he focuses on the naval war and (remember that this is based on 1989 planning and capabilities) follows the Maritime Strategy's prescriptions for U.S. naval operations. Thus you can expect aggressive, early, and forward deployment of carriers, horizontal escalation to a global war, and a fair share of amphibious assaults. This scenario may be music to the ears of some readers, but I am waiting for the novel that ends the insubstantial debate over "coalition warfare versus maritime strategy" that so dominated the mid-1980s.

Although Palmer's account of the war game captivated me, I found a portion of the epilogue most intriguing. Through the voice of the Russian captain, Palmer argues that "the Cold War was . . . the equivalent of sea anemones fighting for a rock . . . a sort of slow-motion world war. But if it was on video, and if we could fast forward the Cold War . . . we would see it for what it really was—a very deadly conflict." And the resulting total collapse of the Soviet Union was "far worse than any of the scenarios dreamed up by your think tanks, or even the minds of your fiction writers"—a gift of insight at the end of an enjoyable read.

All in all, one cannot miss whiling away a rainy Saturday with Palmer's novel. Be warned, however. The reader will likely find points of disagreement with Palmer's scenario. I, for one, found his "war" too optimistic from the U.S. perspective. For example, Palmer has forty-four U.S. Navy amphibious ships with about fifty-thousand Marines embarked already at sea on the opening day of the war. But I cannot reject his thinking out of hand, since, when the pundits talked of massive casualties on the eve of Desert Storm, Palmer only wondered whether the U.S. had enough military police deployed to handle all the Iraqis who would surrender. Well, he turned out to be right on that one. For this one, happily we will have to rely on dueling novelists to tell us the story of the war that never was.

ADAM B. SIEGEL
Center for Naval Analyses
Alexandria, Virginia

Bathurst, Robert B. *Intelligence and Mirror: On Creating an Enemy*. London: Sage for the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo, 1993. 131pp. (No price given)

Robert Bathurst is a former faculty member of the U.S. Naval War College, a well known author, and a former intelligence officer in Moscow. This book is his attempt to answer why, despite enormous investments, U.S. intelligence still hasn't got it right. He states that the intelligence community must understand the important role that culture plays when gathering intelligence, and that not until then will it improve. To make his case, the author offers examples of intelligence analysis from the Cold War.

Russia's history demonstrates its need to build fences—what is inside is known and safe, danger and the unknown lurk outside. Hence, geography plays a controlling role in Russia's strategy. In the late 1960s the Soviets feared Western naval capabilities to cross their sea borders, led by U.S. aircraft carriers. They concluded, however, that aircraft carriers were vulnerable to attack out at sea. Therefore, Bathurst explains, the 1970 *Okean* exercise was designed to influence the U.S. to stop building carriers by demonstrating the Soviet capability to destroy them in the open oceans. The response, however, was quite different from what the Soviets had intended— The U.S. built more and bigger carriers designed to stand up to the Soviets and deter war. The Soviets did not understand the centrality of the aircraft carrier to the United States Navy; instead of reducing the threat to their homeland, they had increased it.

On other occasions, however, the Soviets were more successful, deliberately manipulating data they knew was sought after by the Americans. When the commander in chief of the Soviet Navy, Admiral Sergei Gorshkov, published writings that sounded like those of Alfred T. Mahan, the U.S. found a voice it could understand. Gorshkov's words were scoured and analyzed and cross-checked with other evidence. The Soviets learned what the West took seriously and provided it with enough data to keep legions of analysts employed.

Another example offered by Bathurst is that it appeared to the U.S. that the Soviet Navy intended to withhold the bulk of its forces and fight in "bastions" close to its homeland. The author claims that this assumption was wrong—the Soviets planned to disperse their submarines to the Northern fjords. Yet at the time, the best minds in the West believed they had cracked the Soviet "enigma" and provided good and accurate intelligence. Why did the Soviets encourage incorrect conclusions? Was it merely to deceive the West into making operational war plans to fight in areas where the Soviets did not intend to be? The consequences of their deception included the Maritime Strategy, which was a concept for war that would have brought the U.S. Navy directly off the shores of the Soviet Union. But the U.S. did not know then what it apparently knows today, that the Soviets intended to use nuclear weapons from the outset of any war. The bastion assumptions underpinning the Maritime Strategy would have been undercut, and funding for anti-Soviet programs might have ended. Did the Soviets know how their messages would be interpreted?

While most of the book is concerned with what was and still is wrong with intelligence analysis, Bathurst does offer some suggestions about how the U.S. might do better. He believes that the military is in need of foreign-area officers whose education would include the culture, geography, and ethnic loyalties of the area of their specialty—more than the rudiments of the intelligence cycle and military capabilities. He also notes that promotion in the intelligence community comes from administrative and not substantive achievement.

Where substance is addressed, the culture of intelligence encourages warnings of possible danger rather than predictions of stability. Bathurst also offers cautions about the American bias for technology, which ignores the human and especially the emotional elements of intelligence. The danger is that one day the U.S. may demonstrate its technological prowess against an unsophisticated foe who simply will not be impressed.

Although *Intelligence and Mirror* is not an easy read, it is worth the effort and the attention of the serious scholar who shares Bathurst's vision for peace.

JAMES J. TRITTEN
Norfolk, Virginia

Alexander, Joseph H. and Barnett, Merrill L. *Sea Soldiers in the Cold War: Amphibious Warfare 1945–1991.* Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1995. 292pp. $32.95

Amphibious warfare experienced a "golden age" during the Second World War when the ability to project ground forces along an enemy coastline at a point of one's choosing realized one of the greatest advantages of seapower. As Liddell Hart observed, it was allied amphibious power that compelled Hitler to remove forces from the Eastern Front and disperse them from Norway to Greece. The European theater showed that the centuries-old British practice against militarily stronger continental enemies (the "British way in warfare") was still of value in an era of air and mechanized forces.

The authors demonstrate that although in the Cold War the "golden age" was over and the period provided few examples of amphibious operations on the scale of World War II, it was not necessarily a time of stagnation. Indeed, as stated in the Navy and Marine Corps white paper ". . . From the Sea," emphasis on conducting littoral warfare in the post–Cold War era rests on the strong foundation of Cold War amphibious operations. Operational maneuver from the sea, the most recent concept development in amphibious warfare, is based upon technical and doctrinal developments that preceded the fall of communism, and cannot be understood without reference to those antecedents. The model of operational maneuver from the sea is, for the Marines, not a World War II invasion but, in fact, the Seoul-Inchon campaign of 1950.

This book was written by two Marine Corps officers who offer an informative account of amphibious operations, primarily by the U.S. but also by its allies, opponents, and others, between its "golden age" and the "new age." (It includes an excellent seventeen-page bibliography.) Alexander and Barnett demonstrate that progress has been uneven, due in large part to block obsolescence of World War II–era ships, and that obstacles now considered threats to amphibious operations, such as missiles, mines, and weapons of mass destruction, actually have been of major concern since 1945. Indeed, they attribute General Omar Bradley's 1949 statement that future amphibious operations were unlikely to the realization that an armada like that which was anchored off