

1995

## Gulf War: Air Power Survey Summary Report

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### Recommended Citation

Winnefeld, James A. (1995) "Gulf War: Air Power Survey Summary Report," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 48 : No. 3 , Article 13.  
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol48/iss3/13>

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Keaney, Thomas A. and Cohen, Eliot A. *Gulf War: Air Power Survey Summary Report*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Air Force, 1993 (available from U.S. Govt. Print. Off., Supt. of Documents., Washington, D.C.). 276pp. (No price given)

At the time of this writing, four serious books on the performance of air power in the Gulf war have been published. All were either sponsored by the U.S. Air Force or written by analysts having an institutional affiliation with the Air Force. They include: this summary, which is part of a five-volume study and captures the main points of the larger document; Air Force historian Richard Hallion's *Storm Over Iraq: Air Power in the Gulf War* (Smithsonian Press, 1992); *Air Power in the Gulf*, by retired Air Force Colonel James P. Coyne (Air Force Assoc. Books, 1992); and *A League of Airmen: U.S. Air Power in the Gulf War* (RAND Press, 1994), by this reviewer along with RAND colleagues Preston Niblack and Dana Johnson. In the "Summary Report," Professor Eliot Cohen of Johns Hopkins and Professor Thomas Keaney of the National Defense University have provided what is probably the most authoritative and in-depth examination of the 1991 Gulf war air campaign. Of course, Air Force interest in this topic is not surprising, since the service provided most of the air units that participated in Operation Desert Storm, which it believes vindicated its long-held views on the important role (even primacy) of air power. Former Secretary of the Air Force Donald Rice ordered this survey in the immediate postwar period; the post-World War II Strategic

Bombing Survey was deliberately chosen as its model. Rice directed the team to "tell it like it was," no matter what the damage to strongly held institutional beliefs. While Keaney and Cohen admire the Air Force's Gulf war achievements, they are not cheerleaders and do not hesitate to take on cherished Air Force views of "lessons learned" from that war.

For example, many officers and Air Force research associates view air power's performance during the Gulf conflict as a revolution in warfare. The combination of stealth technology, precision-guided munitions, high sortie rates, and a unified command and control system are alleged to have shifted the balance of effectiveness and efficiency to air power. Cohen and Keaney take a more guarded view, marshalling evidence that suggests a revolution has *not* occurred—yet. Rather, they write that a "true revolution in war may take decades and require not merely new technologies but new forms of organization and behavior to mature. . . . The ingredients for a transformation of war may well have become visible in the Gulf War, but if a revolution is to occur someone will have to make it."

The strength of this survey lies in its methodical analysis of the effectiveness of the Gulf air campaign: measuring results against objectives. Attacks against specific target sets are examined to determine what the functional objectives of the attacks were and what results were achieved in terms of reduced enemy capabilities. The survey focuses on the success of control of the air; "strategic" attacks—a mixture of success (electricity and oil) and at least partial

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failure (nuclear-biological-chemical targets and Scud missiles); gradations between leadership and C3 (i.e., command, control, and communications); and the high degree of success of attacks on Iraqi surface forces.

A Navy or Marine airman (neither of whose services have yet sponsored or authored a book on the subject) may be disappointed with some parts of the survey due to the scant coverage of carrier and Marine air wing operations. While Air Force basing, logistical, communications, and other support elements receive thorough treatment, Navy and Marine counterparts receive almost none, and that lack, although unavoidable, will probably result in the loss of acceptance among many of those services' personnel, who may also express reservations about the tactical and aviation systems. For instance, most will take exception to the emphasis given to USAF F-4G Wild Weasels compared to the major contribution provided by the EA-6s of the sea services. While the Weasels were the principal agent of lethal suppression, the EA-6s were to become an indispensable element of almost every strike package launched from the Gulf airfields and nearby carrier decks.

Regardless, this summary is possibly the best technical analysis of the air war available. This reviewer found it refreshingly devoid of bias, cant, and invidious comparisons of land and sea-based air power. Although other books on the air war have better coverage of some parts of the campaign, none contains more details and backup data.

What is still needed, however, is an analogous Navy-Marine air book that is as solid analytically and as unbiased in judgment as the Keaney-Cohen summary.

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Ahrari, M.E. and Noyes, James H., eds.  
*The Persian Gulf after the Cold War*.  
Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1993.  
264pp. \$57.95

Helms, Robert F., II and Dorff,  
Robert H., eds. *The Persian Gulf  
Crisis: Power in the Post-Cold War  
World*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger,  
1993. 216pp. \$45

Both books under review include "Persian Gulf" in their titles, and both are edited collections of short articles written by numerous contributors. The similarities, however, mostly end there.

While Ahrari and Noyes examine key contemporary economic, political, and security issues facing the Persian Gulf, Helms and Dorff largely deal with the broader issues of international security and world order in the post-Cold War environment, with analyses drawn from lessons learned during the Gulf war.

Readers interested in Persian Gulf issues should enjoy *The Persian Gulf after the Cold War*. The final three chapters, which examine the regional arms race, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and oil issues, are most worthwhile. Ahrari, formerly a professor at the Air War College, now at the Armed Forces Staff College, has written extensively on