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# George Bush vs Saddam Hussein: Military Success! Political Failure

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be approached. Leonard instead defines the weak point, or vulnerability, itself as the enemy's center of gravity.

One real weakness of the book is Leonhard's failure to defend sufficiently this unusual thesis. This is an important point because the view of the distinction between "vulnerability" and "center of gravity" is not merely part of the Army lexicon but has become fairly standard in the evolving joint doctrine. Leonard has an intriguing argument, and it is plucky of him to take on such accepted doctrine, but he offers little proof to back it up. Another weakness is that the chapter on the Gulf War is treated as an appendix; apparently the manuscript was completed before the war. Although it does support some of the author's arguments, the subject cries out for further discussion. The editor would have been wiser to have incorporated Leonhard's views on the war into the text.

The author is at his best when attacking Army artillerymen for their undue emphasis on centralized firepower planning at the expense of rapid and decentralized maneuver. This reviewer, as an old Marine light armored commander, has seen some of the same problems in Marine Corps artillerymen. However, the Gulf War did show some of the reason for the attitude of the "cannon cockers." "Friendly fire" casualties and their attendant public scrutiny have shown how dangerous a cavalier attitude toward fire support coordination can be. Notwithstanding, and though artillerymen are not agents of evil, they can be some of the most doctrinaire and mechanistic of our late-twentieth-century warriors. We must

find a more coherent way of ensuring troop safety in a fast-moving environment if more advanced maneuver warfare concepts are to be taken seriously. The author also questions the Air Force's dedication to close air support on the Air-Land battlefield. In this he is no different from thousands of other infantrymen and tankers in the Army who have struggled with that problem for over forty years.

However imperfect this book may be, it is worth reading for two reasons. First, it is full of good, new ways of looking at old problems. Second, and more important, it challenges the conventional wisdom of our profession in a way that should make us all examine our convictions, no matter how deeply we may hold them. This is what professional reading is supposed to be about.

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Hilsman, Roger. *George Bush vs Saddam Hussein: Military Success! Political Failure*. Novato, Calif.: Lyford Books of Presidio, 1992. 273pp. \$21.95

First there was the "mother of all battles," then the "mother of all retreats," and now we have the "mother of all hastily written books" on the Persian Gulf War. This is a recounting—I would refrain from calling it history—of the 1990–1991 war with Iraq. Roger Hilsman, a distinguished World War II veteran and Cold War policy analyst, unfortunately possesses expertise

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neither in military nor Middle Eastern affairs.

He argues that while the Gulf War was a tremendous military achievement, American interests were ill served because of George Bush's inept policies. From the author's suggestion that Bush gave Saddam the "green light" to invade, to his intimation that the president halted the offensive too soon, Hilsman lashes into Bush unmercifully.

Unfortunately, the author totally ignores evidence that undermines his assault. This evidence includes: Tariq Aziz's comment to Turkish president Bulent Ecevit that Saddam did not view his meeting with U.S. ambassador April Glaspie as a "green light" to invade Kuwait, reports that Saddam had already made up his mind to strike before the 25 July meeting with Glaspie, and General H. Norman Schwarzkopf's famous 27 February briefing where he stated before a global audience of millions that no one would be happier than he if the war ended as soon as possible.

The military sections of this work are abominable. Hilsman has American paratroopers dropping outside of Kuwait City on 24 February. Patriot missiles, according to Hilsman, failed to work, and that simply because they were designed to shoot down Soviet aircraft. The text and maps have major units—entire corps—out of position. Hilsman places the 82nd Airborne and the 101st Air Assault divisions on the right flank of VII Corps; these divisions, of course, belonged to XVIII Airborne Corps (labelled on the map as the XVII Airborne Armor Corps), operating on the left of VII Corps. He has also

reversed the positions of the two American Marine divisions.

Hilsman's discussion of policy is just as disappointing. He provides the reader less with a well-written narrative than with an extended outline of myriad arguments for this or that view. Readers must plow through two hundred pages of background and a recounting of positions taken by, for the most part, people who have no connection with policymaking, before they discover what Hilsman actually thinks about the war.

It is in the epilogue that Hilsman finally states his own views—and demonstrates his lack of military understanding. He argues that an Arab solution to the invasion was possible, and preferable. How? He writes often of the Egyptians coming to save their Saudi brothers, but the author appears totally ignorant of the historic Egyptian designs on the Arabian peninsula that make such assistance unacceptable to the Saudis. Yes, it is true that in many ways the Saudis fear the Egyptians more than the Americans, because they can depend on the Americans to go home.

Without a doubt, Roger Hilsman's book will not become a classic of Gulf War literature. Many of the options the author considers were never really options at all. The book is marred with typos (or major errors). The manuscript clearly needed a rewrite to smooth out the prose and weed out inconsistencies.

While reading this book I quickly realized that I was not paging through a well-thought-out analysis of the Gulf War but a rancorous diatribe hastily written by a man whose pre-Desert Storm predictions of catastrophe had

not been matched by the course of events.

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Lowther, William. *Arms and the Man: Dr. Gerald Bull, Iraq and the Supergun*. Novato, Calif.: Presidio, 1991. 298pp. \$24.95

Some observers were concerned after the collapse of the former Soviet Union that newly unemployed or financially desperate weapons scientists might put their talents to work for disreputable regimes. *Arms and the Man* is about a weapons designer and ballistics expert who did just that. Gerald Bull, however, was not a Russian but a Canadian, who had worked on highly classified projects for the Pentagon. William Lowther describes Dr. Bull's brilliant but controversial career.

During the 1950s and 1960s Gerald Bull won an international reputation for his research on supersonic wind tunnels, ballistics, high-altitude rocketry, and especially for his work with very large guns. He did considerable work for the U.S. Army and indeed was involved with such highly classified Pentagon projects that, to avoid breaking security regulations, he was granted U.S. citizenship by special act of Congress in 1972. His lifelong dream was to develop guns large enough to use for launching satellites and for antiballistic missile defense. To his intense frustration, however, he was never able to convince the Pentagon of the superiority of gun-launched satellite systems over rocket-based ones.

The drastic reductions in defense spending after Vietnam ended funding for his large-gun projects and led him to form his own company in the early 1970s. Although he achieved notable technical successes, eventually working on projects for more than thirty countries, he and his firm were perennially in financial trouble. Eventually Bull was implicated in illegal transfers of arms to South Africa and served four months and seventeen days in prison in 1980.

Embittered, he shifted his company's base of operations from North America to Belgium, where he survived by working on artillery for the Chinese Army and maintained his interest in very large guns. By the mid-1980s the Chinese projects were coming to an end, and again Bull was in financial trouble. It was then that he was approached by representatives from Iraq's large arms-buying network and invited to Baghdad by senior officials in early 1988. He was soon involved with several Iraqi weapons projects, including the nascent space program. He also sold the Iraqis on his pet gun-launched satellite program, claiming that the project "would bring with it enormous scientific prestige, publicity and praise for Iraq." It eventually became the monster gun that attracted such lurid headlines in 1990.

Lowther suggests that Bull was an exceptionally naive man who typically became so absorbed in the technical beauty of his designs that he deliberately made himself oblivious to their possible offensive applications. Indeed, he was apparently so convinced of (or self-deluded about) Iraq's peaceful objectives for his work that he secretly briefed British and