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An Unknown Future and a Doubtful Present: Writing the Victory Plan of 1941

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with science and technology. Each essay addresses some element of the revision and development of the United States's national security strategy to meet the changes in the international security environment. The work was produced for educators, journalists, and analysts who are concerned with security policy and defense.

Twenty-eight essays about diverse security topics are hard to digest, but it is important to make the effort and, one hopes, do them justice. Of the total, this reviewer has chosen those essays that may be of particular interest to the readers of the *Naval War College Review*.

The lead essay is an adaptation of a lecture given by the former White House chief of staff John Sununu, who is also a nuclear engineer. In it, Dr. Sununu promotes the participation of scientists and engineers in policy formulation. He calls attention to the pervasiveness of technology in all aspects of national security, and addresses the importance of quantitative reasoning. Sununu believes that the technically oriented bring with them a sense of propriety, and that therefore it is their obligation to participate.

Senator John McCain's essay on force structure is interesting because it was written before the Gulf crisis. It is instructive to learn the extent to which his comments were borne out by the events of that crisis.

Richard L. Wagner and Theodore S. Gold use the phrase "long shadow" to describe the downstream impacts

of defense-related science and technology. They discuss how defense research and development will assume an even stronger role than previously, while a greater reliance will be placed on the industrial base to permit timely reconstitution of military forces when they are needed. In this reviewer's opinion, this paper was tantalizing but much too short.

"Reducing Tactical Naval Nuclear Weapons," by Dr. Valerie Thomas of Princeton, suggests that such reductions will most likely result from unilateral actions. An accompanying essay, "Confidence Building Measures," by Adam Siegal and Patrick Cronin, suggests that there is an emerging "acceptance" for some type of naval arms control.

With the end of the Cold War, our ideas and assumptions need challenging and reexamination. National and international security concerns will continue to dominate the political agenda, and we must be sure that our approach continues to be relevant and affordable.

The informed professional military person, in or out of uniform, will benefit from reading this text.

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Kirkpatrick, Charles, E. *An Unknown Future and a Doubtful Present: Writing the Victory Plan of 1941*. Washington: U.S. Army Center for Military History, 1990. 158pp. \$4.95

Lieutenant General Albert C. Wedemeyer is remembered for his missions to China and as George Marshall's war planner. He was uniquely qualified by intellect and some lucky breaks. He married the daughter of the Army's chief war planner, and his studies at the *Kriegsakademie* in Berlin in 1936-38 alerted him to blitzkrieg doctrine. But he first grabbed a piece of history when he was just a captain. In the crisis summer of 1941 he wrote the Victory Plan. It was an extraordinary fourteen-page document that shaped the U.S. Army ground forces of World War II. This concise and readable monograph, however, claims much more: that the Victory Plan was a national policy document of the highest order.

Did Wedemeyer write a profound strategic guide to victory, or was it merely a useful mobilization plan? Historians are of two minds on the subject, but Charles Kirkpatrick argues for the grander version.

As German tanks rumbled toward Moscow, Captain Wedemeyer adopted a worst-case scenario. Hitler would knock the Soviet Union out of the war. He would mobilize five hundred divisions (twelve million men) and the resources of a continent. Only the United States could defeat Hitler, and only by engaging the Wehrmacht before the Nazis crushed Britain, which was a vital base but could provide only one million combat troops. Presuming a two-to-one edge for the offensive, the Allies would have to levy between seven

hundred to nine hundred divisions—twenty-five million men in khaki!

Wedemeyer delved into three centuries of history and discovered that a nation could put into uniform only ten percent of its population without sapping its industry and civil society. For the America of 1941 that meant fourteen million. Deducting naval, air, logistical, and garrison manpower, that left only six million for offensive ground forces.

Undaunted, Wedemeyer believed that quality could prevail over mass. The new U.S. Army had to be mobile and rich in firepower from armor and tactical aviation—"force multipliers" in today's jargon. The bedrock demographics of his plan were right on target in describing the next four years. It was "either a remarkably accurate planning of the minimum forces, or a fairly narrow escape . . . winning by the skin of our teeth."

The details were less prescient. Wedemeyer anticipated forming two hundred and fifteen divisions premised on the one-to-one "tooth to tail" ratio of 1918. His "division slice" of thirty thousand envisioned fifteen thousand support personnel behind each fifteen thousand fighting men. In fact, the wartime slice was between sixty to eighty thousand. Thus the U.S. Army put only ninety divisions in the field. Astonishingly, Wedemeyer also omitted replacements, did not mention amphibious warfare, and his notion of a passive Japan was wildly out of sync with the Navy's Pacific war plan. On the other hand, he may be forgiven

for wanting too many armored, antitank, antiaircraft, and mountain outfits, since he could not have guessed how well aviation would squelch the panzers and Luftwaffe, or know the number of tanks shipped to allies or about the bypassing of Norway and the Balkans.

Charles Kirkpatrick is a line officer and a former history instructor at West Point. His research for this work has been thorough (but for a few mistakes that could have been avoided had he checked prewar plans such as Rainbow Five), and he had the good fortune to interview General Wedemeyer in 1987. He is a sound scholar of his subject with a knack for breathing life into statistics, but he fails to persuade on two critical points.

First, Wedemeyer's vision was not that of a grand strategist. His approach was demographic, a residual calculation of men at arms that was correct but merely "superficially impressive," as the author admits. The flawed allocations to unit types, theaters, and action dates were hardly "remarkably prescient." Secondly, the author believes that Wedemeyer got his smarts from reading the classics of Prussian and British strategy, which are recounted at length. This suggests that the author is projecting his own tastes on his subject. Perhaps a more plausible explanation is the wisdom that Wedemeyer garnered in Germany, prized no doubt by his superiors. However, I still would like to know the source of that bedrock constraint of ten percent of population

on which everything in his plan rested.

Discounting a biographer's adulation, the Victory Plan was still a remarkable document. It did chart a mobilization vastly larger than the million-man armies expected to fight Japan or defend the Western Hemisphere, and it granted the priority of industry. It outlined a new sort of army. Yet the plan belongs to a bygone era. To call it a model for today seems dubious: the world shall never again see a great-power mobilization, the equivalent now of twenty-five million American men and women, for a war of many years. The firepower of a half-million in the Persian Gulf was awesome enough. Wedemeyer based everything on manpower. The limiting factors in future wars are sure to be munitions, equipment, and tolerance for devastation.

A final note. In 1989 General Wedemeyer died at the age of ninety-two. Sadly, he may never have read this fine tribute.

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Grove, Eric. *Fleet to Fleet Encounters: Tsushima, Jutland, Philippine Sea*. New York: Sterling, 1991. 160pp. \$24.95

Eric Grove's book, *Fleet to Fleet Encounters*, emphasizes tactics and their influence on battle outcomes—tactics as they are used in the broad and classical sense by naval officers to encompass the effects of technology and