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# History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense: Vol. I, The Formative Years, 1947-1950

David R. Mets  
*U.S. Air Force (Ret.)*

Steven L. Rearden

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considers "naval operations . . . largely irrelevant . . . for Soviet military action in the major continental theaters of war . . ." He especially condemns the large carrier.

In chapter 11, he comes to his reforms. "Absolutely the first priority is to provide a central military staff" of "national defense officers" who would opt for joint careers, and place that staff under a Director. The operational chain would be through SecDef direct to the unified and specified commands. Only "national defense officers" could hold such commands. Luttwak thinks this change would provide better "joint" advice.

Luttwak does not really tangle with some thorny questions, like the apparent operational disconnect between the joint staff and the unified and specified commands. I find no real attention to what the new joint staff would really do that would be so much better than we do now. Luttwak apparently thinks that having career "national defense officers" both in Washington and at the unified and specified commands will create like thinking both at the center and in the field. Since he believes a thoroughgoing world war III is "imaginary" but that minor regional contingencies are likely, the author is not concerned with how a worldwide contingency or war would be coordinated or prepared for.

His book is readable and provocative. On his reform "solution" and related questions, however, the Senate 1983 hearings are more useful.

FREDERICK H. HARTMANN

Naval War College

Rearden, Steven L. *History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense: Vol. I, The Formative Years, 1947-1950*. Washington: Historical Office, Office of the Secretary of Defense, 1984. 667pp. \$25

The creation of a unified national security establishment turned out to be a much tougher proposition than anyone supposed it would be. But a start was made in 1947 and the story of the first two secretaries was one of somewhat more success than failure—though the shortfalls were serious and frustrating. But this history of those first two Administrations is a clear success.

The author of *The Formative Years* has good experience, appropriate credentials and a sound attitude on what official history can and should be. He is a graduate of the University of Nebraska and holds a Ph.D. from Harvard. He is experienced as a teacher at Harvard and Boston College, as a consultant in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and as a researcher at Johns Hopkins University. His research seems to be painstaking and his writing style clear, economical and readable.

*Formative Years* is organized along topical lines. Its first part covers the initial structuring of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and next comes the treatment of the external national security problems it faced in its first four years. Finally, it handles the domestic problems—largely ones of trying to get the services to live together in harmony and of helping divide the scarce dollars of the immediate postwar years.

Rearden shows that the problems facing James Forrestal and Louis Johnson during those early years were immense, more so than is typical for a large and new organization. It was a time of political upheaval all over the world and of revolutionary technological change. It fell to those two men to try to build an effective new national security structure in the face of those uncertainties. The author concludes that they did about as well as could be expected. They took the first steps towards centralized control of the larger armed forces that emerged from World War II, and laid the foundations that led to further rationalization and centralization in the subsequent years. But neither Forrestal's gradualist consensus-building leadership, nor the forceful and direct methods of Johnson ever really overcame the insecurities within the armed forces to the point where unification became any more than a hope for the future.

Steven Rearden has done a capital job on *Formative Years*. His documentation is impressive and heavily weighted with primary sources. He seems to understand that his function was to describe and interpret, not to glorify and he gives us something on the warts. His organization is sound and his prose is a pleasure to read.

The first volume of *History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense* establishes a standard for those to follow. It shows that official history *can* be good history and it should be read by the serving armed forces officer. The book is an essential acquisition for all

scholarly libraries and one worthy of the personal collections of the students of military history or national security studies.

DAVID R. METS

Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Air Force (Ret.)

Buss, Claude A., ed. *National Security Interests in the Pacific Basin*. Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1985. 350pp. \$27.95

A collection of papers given at a 1983 Hoover Institution conference on Security in the Pacific Basin, this book is a first-rate *tour de horizon*. The participants include many well-known names in Asian matters—Roger Swearingen, Paul Wolfowitz, James Gregor, Douglas Pike, to name a few—as well as some that, at first glance, seem a bit out of place in a book on Pacific Basin security matters: retired Admiral Inman and Dr. Edward Teller. To Dr. Buss' credit he has fashioned a most interesting compendium from this diverse group.

Part I of the book deals with "Great Power Confrontation" and sets an overall theme: "The reality of global confrontation is a dominant factor in the decision making processes of the United States, its allies and friends as they seek solutions for their bilateral and regional problems." Part II examines U.S.-Soviet relations and their effect on the Pacific Basin nations. Some of the more interesting observations:

- "Hostilities are not likely to occur in the vast Pacific except as a