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"Strategic Command and Control: Redefining the Nuclear Threat," "The Button: The Pentagon's Strategic Command and Control System-Does It Work?"

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war-torn ruins of a defeated and devastated nation. Oftentimes such nations have surprised even the most optimistic predictions and achieved far more than ever was conceived possible within a short period of time. If one lesson may be learned from such drastic progress it is that it is far easier to destroy a person than it is to destroy a people. In his book, *The Militarists: The Rise of Japanese Militarism Since WW II*, Edwin Hoyt closely and articulately examines the spirit of such a people—the Japanese. Through an examination of Japanese culture and postwar political and economic progress, Hoyt proposes that despite the devastation of World War II the Japanese spirit has endured and, more importantly, perpetuated its traditional tendency towards militarism.

In *The Militarists*, Hoyt specifically cites the creation and evolution of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces to imply that there indeed exists a possibility that Japan is on the road to creating a formidable military force which could conceivably lead to regional and global instability. The very existence of Self-Defense Forces, Hoyt explains, is a direct contradiction to its U.S.-imposed “peace constitution” which outlaws Japan’s right to develop a warfighting capability. It is more than just the development of a military force, however, that leads Hoyt to his alarming conclusions. Rather, it is his interpretation of the self-image of the Japanese nation itself. It is the parallels between current political rhetoric and pre-World War propa-

ganda that create the perception of a Japan which is struggling to reattain a position of power in the world.

Clearly, the concept of the “rising sun” has already manifested itself in Japan economically since 1945. The question Edwin Hoyt attempts to answer is whether the same vigor and resilience of spirit will be redirected toward a revitalized and potentially aggressive military. His conclusions are as fascinating as they are distressing.

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Blair, Bruce G. *Strategic Command and Control: Redefining the Nuclear Threat*. Washington: Brookings Institution, 1985. 341pp. \$32.95 paper \$12.95

Ford, Daniel. *The Button: The Pentagon’s Strategic Command and Control System—Does It Work?* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985. 270pp. \$16.95

Shortly after the end of the Second World War there was a great flurry of interest in something called “push-button warfare.” Such great strides had been made in weapons and in electronics during that war that it seemed inevitable that a combination of such developments would lead to a global chessboard where two players could fight each other by remote control. Yet, at least one speaker of that era would attempt to dramatize the ridiculous aspect of such an idea by confiding to amazed audiences that yes, half of the equipment necessary to implement the concept

of pushbutton warfare had been designed, built, tested, and was even then in operation. He would then gleefully hold up a pushbutton—*attached to nothing*.

The image of that unattached pushbutton kept recurring during the reading of these two books on the subject of nuclear command and control. Both of them tell us in effect that if a President under attack were to “push the button,” nothing much might happen. They lay before us in great detail the vulnerabilities of the systems, that the great chess players have been assuming all along would function effectively. The authors remind us again and again that systems for the command and control of nuclear warfare are so complex that it is a wonder that they function in the first place, that they probably will not work well under the stress of sudden, heavy loading, and that under attack they might not work at all.

The two books cover much of the same material, but differ in their approach and in their ultimate conclusions. Daniel Ford, *The Button*, has taken a journalistic approach (portions of the book first appeared in *The New Yorker*) by visiting defense sites, interviewing officials, and describing what he saw and heard. Bruce Blair, *Strategic Command and Control*, who was then with the Brookings Institution and is now with the Defense Communications Agency, has written more of an “insider’s” book, relying heavily on congressional testimony and on his analysis of defense budgets. Both describe the

vulnerabilities of our existing command and control system in enough detail to convince any Soviet nuclear strategist that it ought to be a high priority target system.

However, the authors draw somewhat different conclusions from their analyses. Ford sees the vulnerabilities of our nuclear command and control system as both the cause and the reflection of a U.S. first strike strategy, which he claims is the strategy preferred by U.S. military planners. Blair attempts to avoid the dead end of such a strategy by recommending that we adopt the alternative strategy of riding out an enemy attack, and that we use our command and control system not to launch an immediate second strike under attack, but to enhance the survival of the nuclear forces. His proposal of “no immediate second use” is an attempt to relieve the intense pressure on the President that would be created by the perception of an imminent enemy attack. He describes the great difficulties that will arise at that critical moment when the national command authorities consider shifting from negative control of nuclear weapons to positive control. The difficulties include both organizational inertia and military overeagerness. Ford describes these same difficulties more colorfully by using such terms as safety catches, hairtriggers, and loaded dice.

When the history of the nuclear era is written, the 1980s will be remembered as the decade that command and control became recog-

nized as a central player. This recognition probably results from an appreciation of the likely effects of electromagnetic pulse and the deployment of Soviet SSBNs off our coasts. Our attention has been drawn to current vulnerabilities by the short time now estimated to be available for decision makers to assess the nature of an attack, to select a course of action, and to deliver the necessary orders, before our command and control system begins to be picked apart. But according to Blair, our nuclear command and control systems have throughout the nuclear age been more vulnerable and less capable than our nuclear strategists assumed them to be. He doubts that we have ever been capable of carrying out any of our nuclear strategies. And as for the present Administration's goal of fighting a protracted nuclear war, both authors consider such a strategy to be hopelessly beyond the capabilities of present and perhaps even of planned command and control systems.

Both authors paint a bleak picture, so bleak that Secretary of Defense Weinberger has found it necessary to assert that the two books contain "a great number of inaccuracies and poorly founded judgments." But whatever the facts, there is a difference between having a system that is vulnerable and having one that is totally incapable. The reader may find that in learning that his remarkably sophisticated command and control system may be seriously degraded by an

attack, he has also learned that the system that is now in place is remarkably sophisticated. And since rational decision makers on the other side cannot be assured that it will be totally incapable, the strategy of deterrence may continue to succeed. In the response quoted above to an inquiring senator, Secretary Weinberger encapsulates in a single sentence the "official" view of system vulnerabilities and of these two books: "I can state unequivocally that the present system, despite its current limitations, supports our national policy of deterrence and does not force us first to absorb a nuclear attack as suggested in Blair's conclusions or resort to the preemptive strike, implied as necessary by Ford."

These books describe how command and control vulnerabilities would undermine escalation control strategies by reducing the ability of either side in a conflict to perceive what level of conflict is being pursued by the other, how the same vulnerabilities tend to increase the pressure for the militarization of outer space, and how difficult it is for the individual services to procure command and control systems in a way that insures their overall coherence. But the most important issue raised by these books concerns the pressures placed on policy decision makers on both sides during a crisis between superpowers. As Ford points out, the military wisdom of striking first is reinforced by the recognition that one's own command and control system is so vulnerable that it is

reasonable to assume that it has been made a major target system by an opponent as a means of reducing damage to himself. The implications for rational decisionmaking by political leaders during a crisis are immense. Both authors argue that the vulnerabilities of some of our weapons systems pale to insignificance when compared to the impact of vulnerabilities of our nuclear command and control system. Ford is content to describe and deplore this state of affairs, while Blair at least advances an alternative strategy.

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Stares, Paul B. *The Militarization of Space U.S. Policy, 1945-1984*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1985. 352pp. \$25

Even the most casual observer of defense decisionmaking is aware that outer space is an integral part of Soviet and American military activity. According to Stares: "For those familiar with the history of the US military space programme, there must be a strong sense of *deja vu*. The very same weapon systems that are currently being developed were all proposed in a remarkably similar way during the 1950s and 1960s." The impetus for the development of space weapons being a direct result of fears caused by the launch of the Soviet satellite Sputnik in 1957. The anticipation that the United States would respond militarily to this threat led to proposals for a variety of space systems and weapons, including anti-

satellite (ASAT) weapons and space-based ballistic missile defenses.

Yet, Stares finds that while space developed as an important component of the U.S. military posture, the level of U.S. ASAT effort remained rather restrained, even after the U.S.S.R. began testing a satellite interceptor in 1968. Soviet interest in ASAT was similarly restrained and the tests that began in 1968 ceased in 1972 and were not to resume until 1976. Stares suggests that during this time ASAT was not a high-priority development project in either country. The fact that an arms race did not develop in space leads Stares to the first of the three questions around which he centers his study: "*Why were space weapons never extensively deployed by the United States and the Soviet Union when all the conditions were apparently ripe?*" On the basis of the findings presented in his study, Stares challenges the widely accepted theory that the absence of an arms race in space was the result of a tacit agreement reached between the United States and the U.S.S.R. not to interfere with the other's space systems because of the mutual benefits gained from reconnaissance satellites in strengthening the system of stable mutual deterrence. Instead, he hypothesizes that the absence of an arms race in space was not the result of the recognition of the benefits of satellite reconnaissance but rather: "the result of a convergence of national interests, military disincentives and technical constraints, which were buttressed at important times by formal agreements."