

Naval War College Review

Volume 36
Number 4 *July-August*

Article 30

1983

The American Military and the Far East

Joseph M. Siracusa

Joe C. Dixon

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

Recommended Citation

Siracusa, Joseph M. and Dixon, Joe C. (1983) "The American Military and the Far East," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 36 : No. 4 , Article 30.

Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol36/iss4/30>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu.

Asencio puts it, there is not a little difference between the intellectual concept of fighting terrorism and the visceral reality of being its victim as a hostage.

L. BRUCE LAINGEN
National Defense University

Hooper, Alan. *The Military and the Media*. Brookfield, Vt.: Gower Publishing Company, 1982. 247pp. \$34

The military and the media: if ever there were enemies, these two professions are it! How many reporters do you know who are happy with the information provided by the Defense Department? How many military officers do you know who are satisfied with the media coverage? Yet in certain respects, as Alan Hooper demonstrates in this splendid book, there are many similarities in the two professions, and often there are, or can be, similar objectives.

For all the similarities, the practitioners of these two professions know remarkably little about one another. Certainly there is often a deep suspicion about, and little sustained knowledge of, the media in military circles, even though we know from experience the considerable effect of the press and television on the soldiering and sailing business. So perhaps we ought to take Winston Churchill's advice about the media: "Learn to get used to it. Eels get used to skinning."

This is a book, written by a military officer (Royal Marines), that will help military officers—or any-

one else—understand the media. It is a superb book, and explores what most serving officers never have time to explore for themselves—the inner workings of the press and the professional motivations of reporters and others in the press "chain of command," and their effect on military operations. In the process of exploring media-military relations, the author examines the particular circumstances of media coverage of Vietnam, Northern Ireland, the Iranian hostage case, and the Falklands episode. These case studies, although briefer than one would like (each is worthy of book-length treatment in itself), contain especially valuable insights for the military officer who, for good or ill, will be living with the media throughout his or her career. There are very few books on this subject. Here is a book, written by a military officer, that ought to be required reading for all officers in all armed forces—or at least all officers in democratic societies.

ROBERT J. MURRAY
Center for Naval Warfare Studies

Dixon, Joe C., ed. *The American Military and the Far East*. Washington, D.C.: Office of US Air Force History, 1980. 318pp. \$7

The focus of this volume, the proceedings of the Ninth Military History Symposium held at the United States Air Force Academy in October 1980, is on American military involvement in the East and Southeast Asia. Within the space of

250 pages—the rest of the book turned over to notes and an adequate index—the papers deal with various aspects of “American Objectives and Strategy in Asia”; “American Pacification and Occupation in Asia”; “Impact of the Asian Experience on the American Military”; and “Impact of the American Military on Asian Societies.” The papers, which begin with Akira Iriye’s underscoring of the role of power in “Western Perceptions and Asian Realities,” range from the commonplace to the extraordinary.

The best of them include Roger Dingman’s “American Policy and Strategy in East Asia, 1898-1950”; Ronald Spector’s “The First Vietnamization”; and Roy Flint’s “The United States Army on the Pacific Frontier, 1899-1939.” The most original, and for my money worth the cost of admission, is Sadao Asada’s “Japanese Perceptions of the A-Bomb Decision, 1945-1980,” which ought to be required reading for everybody claiming to be in the field.

The wartime generation in Japan, according to Asada, tended to be more tolerant of the A-bomb decision than younger people who have never experienced war. For reasons that are not always clear, Japanese youth are susceptible to both the “Atomic Diplomacy” thesis and to a retrospective sense of victimization expressed in the racist interpretation of Truman’s decision, the latter generally reinforced by analogy with incidents that occurred in such places as My Lai.

Similarly, Japanese historians are polarized on the issue. On the one side are well-organized leftists who assert “that the *real* American aim in the atomic bombing of Japan was to pressure the Soviet Union into making concessions in Eastern Europe, especially in Poland,” though this same group appears oblivious to the fact that the Soviet Union declared war a week sooner than the pledge Stalin had given Truman at Potsdam in order not to miss out on the kill. On the other side is a group of more balanced historians, familiar with American works, who place particular emphasis on organizational momentum and the like.

The impact of the historical controversy on other aspects of Japanese life, including the case for nuclear armament, completes this interesting story. All in all, the United States Air Force Academy team that put this symposium together ought to be commended.

JOSEPH M. SIRACUSA
University of Queensland

Kennedy, Paul M., ed. *The War Plans of the Great Powers, 1880-1914*. Winchester, Mass.: Allen & Unwin, 1979. 282pp. \$28.50

This book is a compilation of eleven articles on the war planning of the major powers prior to the First World War. The selections are designed to illuminate the dynamics of the military planning process, the impact of war plans on foreign policies and the role of war plans in