

## Naval War College Review

---

Volume 33  
Number 2 *March-April*

Article 22

---

1980

### Air War Southeast Asia, 1961-73

David R. Mets

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

---

#### Recommended Citation

Mets, David R. (1980) "Air War Southeast Asia, 1961-73," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 33 : No. 2 , Article 22.  
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol33/iss2/22>

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](mailto:repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu).

Asia could make the west coast difficult to defend against invasion as the author suggests in her treatment of security issues relevant to the United States.

James Linger offers a good overview of the Carter national security policy as it relates to Europe and the Soviet Union. He formulates an excellent five-point framework that is particularly useful in understanding the Carter initiatives in Europe. Unfortunately, events subsequent to publication of the article have overtaken Linger's SALT discussion and have reduced the value of the article as history. Decisions on the MX missile system and a continuing deadlocked MBFR conference are political and military realities that affect a number of the conclusions rendered by the author. Also the Carter initiative, a high point (in terms of political bravery) of Carter's evidenced concern for improving the military capabilities of the alliance, to take on the Turkish Arms Embargo issue (attributed to Ford and Kissinger by Linger) were not foreseen by Linger. The chapter does offer an excellent analysis of Soviet motivations and European perceptions of the Carter policies, which analysis is generally lacking throughout other parts of the book.

The chapter dealing with China and Japan suffers from a tortuous introduction, a China section almost totally unrelated to how the Carter policy eventually evolved, and a Japanese section that is very general and Korea almost untreated.

George Jan quite frankly failed to appreciate the Carter commitment to normalize relations with the People's Republic and the President's intent to abrogate the U.S. security pact with Taiwan. His digression into public opinion research does not seem entirely germane to the underlying premise of the book, and is somewhat difficult to assimilate.

This reviewer hoped that the final chapter of the book would attempt to draw together the disparate parts that

preceded it. However, the final chapter is a rather critical review of the book's substantive chapters, more critical than this review. Sheldon Simon certainly raises several discordant notes, some of which are valid but most have little basic relevance because they are simply the product of his own intellectual biases. His prescriptions and viewpoints are highly conjectural, emotion-laden and, in a major sense, irrelevant, which is unfortunately true of the book as a whole.

CHARLES L. FOX  
Major, U.S. Air Force

Smith, Myron J., Jr. *Air War Southeast Asia, 1961-73: An Annotated Bibliography and 16 mm Film Guide*. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1979. 298pp.

Myron Smith is correct when he says that a bibliography on so recent a subject as the Vietnam war is a moving target. Still, he succeeds in his objective of writing the basic work so that future compilers will only have to add new entries as they come from the presses. This comprehensive compilation is done so competently that it should become the definitive work in its field. It is organized alphabetically, but a substantial index enables the specialized researcher to find his material quickly. Articles and books are covered in the main subdivision of the work, and lesser sections exist for Air University studies, 16mm films, sources of photographs, and material published after 1977—all are indexed. The scope of the coverage is impressive and the work should be the starting point for any project having to do with the war in Vietnam. *Air War Southeast Asia* goes well beyond the standard, but more general, *An Aerospace Bibliography* by Samuel Miller (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1978) and Robin Higham's *A Guide to the Sources of US Military History* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon, 1975) and

## 126 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

should be added to the collections of all libraries and airpower historians.

DAVID R. METS  
Troy State University

Wohlstetter, Albert, et al. *Nuclear Policies: Fuel without the Bomb*. Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger, 1978. 107pp.

Despite the conscientious efforts of the United States, a number of states continue to creep toward the development of nuclear weapons, constantly shrinking the leadtime between a discernible interest in nuclear weapons and the actual possession of them. As the authors of *Nuclear Policies* rigorously argue, "present conventions allow activities to come too close to a bomb to give a warning [safeguards] system time to work." This argument has had enormous significance in shaping the U.S. policy response to the problem of nuclear proliferation.

In fact, *Nuclear Policies* is a logical outgrowth of the seminal study, *Moving Toward Life in a Nuclear Armed Crowd?*,\* which was prepared for the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) in 1975. The ACDA study played an important part in the formulation of the decisions of Presidents Ford and Carter to defer the commercial separation and use of plutonium in this country, and to ask other countries to join us in this moratorium. Unfortunately, while many countries share the U.S. concern with the prospect of living in a nuclear-armed crowd, they have not all shared the U.S. analysis of the problem and, as a result, have continued the construction of plutonium reprocessing facilities. Of course, the fact that makes such efforts worrisome is that plutonium—unlike

reactor grade uranium—may be used without modification as a fissile explosive material in nuclear weapons.

In September 1977 Albert Wohlstetter, considered by some to be the greatest living U.S. strategist and a leading scholar of matters nuclear, testified at British hearings in which proposals were reviewed for the construction of a plutonium reprocessing facility at Windscale. Wohlstetter's testimony is reprinted (with a few additional notes) as chapter two of *Nuclear Policies*. In his testimony he systematically addresses and demolishes a number of arguments that had been marshaled to support the construction of the Windscale plant. To very briefly summarize: Wohlstetter illustrates the questionable economics involved in recycling plutonium to reduce uranium requirements; he attacks the argument that as there are other routes to nuclear weapons, restrictions on plutonium commerce are irrelevant. (Such arguments are "like opposing inoculation for smallpox because one might die of bubonic plague.") He demonstrates that the storage of unprocessed spent reactor fuels is a safer alternative than an early commitment to commerce in plutonium; he establishes, using recently declassified information, that plutonium contained in spent power reactor fuel is neither "denatured" nor contaminated by unstable isotopes of plutonium. Therefore, it would be adequate for a fission weapon in the kiloton range, notwithstanding claims to the contrary; and he addresses the economic attractiveness of expenditures at the margin of civil nuclear programs in order to gain a nuclear weapons option, as opposed to the more costly and dangerous step of developing nuclear weapons from scratch. Wohlstetter's arguments are carefully supported, tersely presented, written in a readily accessible style (as are the other contributions in *Nuclear Policies*) and keenly persuasive to this reviewer. Sadly, the arguments

---

\*Subsequently published in an updated and revised book as *Swords from Plowshares: The Military Potential of Civil Nuclear Energy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.