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Soldiers and Civilization: How the Profession of Arms Thought and Fought the Modern World into Existence

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manual is lacking or what additional views exist. For this herculean effort, the authors should be commended.

JEFFREY BILLER



Soldiers and Civilization: How the Profession of Arms Thought and Fought the Modern World into Existence, by Reed Robert Bonadonna. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2017. 336 pages. \$35.

A former Marine colonel with a PhD from Boston University and the retired director of the ethics and character development program at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, Reed Bonadonna makes the daring assertion that the profession of arms and the culture of Western civilization are inextricably bound together in a symbiosis of mutual influence. The subtitle wittingly captures the central thesis of his book: how the profession of arms thought and fought the modern world into existence. Although it may seem contradictory to suggest that military service and civilization are in any way constitutive of each other in an interdependent relationship, Bonadonna carefully illustrates how warriors can be destroyers yet, ironically, guardians of civilization as agents of both continuity and change. Once the book has been read, Bonadonna's daring assertion seems less daring and quite reasonable, given the skillfully presented historical evidence. In this respect, Bonadonna successfully defends his thought-provoking thesis and achieves a balance of overarching generalization and sufficient detail to deliver a compelling examination of the role of the military in the development of Western civilization.

Whereas Bonadonna furnishes in the main body of his work a historical narrative delineating the advance of the profession of arms, in the conclusion he ventures to offer strategies for emerging trends in the twenty-first century. One among the several fascinating topics explored is the issue of humanitarian assistance (HA). At the 2005 World Summit, the United Nations adopted the doctrine of "responsibility to protect" as a moral imperative for multinational forces to intervene in countries where humanitarian crises are egregious, thus in effect amending the nation-state sovereignty established by the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. Bonadonna observes that HA operations have become increasingly important initiatives for addressing global problems of hunger, genocide, and disease in the twenty-first century.

While the need for HA seems apparent, Bonadonna rightly highlights the complications of intervention: the threat of imperialistic encroachments on the territorial sovereignty of nation-states by "helping" neighboring states; the resentment of local authorities to the intrusion of outside aid; the disruption of the existing, albeit fragile, order; and miscalculations, as a result of misinformation, that prompt violent resistance. Bonadonna cites the relief campaign in Somalia as an HA operation that backfired and achieved the opposite of the intended results, pointing to the Black Hawk helicopter incident in the battle of Mogadishu in 1993. Since that time, a number of military leaders have come to believe that other government organizations and nongovernment organizations can take the lead more effectively on such campaigns, with limited military support.

Bonadonna also cautions that humanitarian interventions require subtlety in the conduct of nonkinetic operations. Whatever the multinational solutions are to the humanitarian crisis, coalition forces must treat the endemic political and social causes, not only the outward symptoms of human suffering. Furthermore, transnational forces should be sensitive to the anthropological customs and sociological systems that have cultural meaning and historical value for the indigenous society being helped.

With those caveats articulated, Bonadonna expresses the viewpoint that the military will continue HA operations because of its organic medical and security capabilities and the mobile and mission-ready assets it has available for rapid deployment. Bonadonna concludes that humanitarian operations at their best exemplify the central goals of the military profession through the maintenance of global stability and the protection of human rights. The altruistic ethics of HA underscores the eminent value of nonkinetic missions that foster and protect the common dignity of every man, woman, and child, befitting the highest standards of human flourishing.

Although *Soldiers and Civilization* may be criticized for what is not included in this ambitious historical undertaking, the reader undoubtedly will be enriched by this intellectual journey from classical antiquity to postmodernity. Warfighter and policy maker alike will encounter the larger-than-life personae of legendary heroes such as Ulysses, Alexander the Great, and Charlemagne—to name only a few—accompanied by a keen analysis of their strategies, operations, and tactics. For example, the game of chess may seem like a harmless pursuit passed benignly

from one generation to the next, but Bonadonna reveals how the game that once embodied medieval strategy and feudal society eventually evolved into the Prussian *Kriegsspiel* (war game) in the nineteenth century for the Prussian general staff. Here and in many other places, Bonadonna introduces profound insights worthy of serious consideration, and in so doing distinguishes himself as an exceptional historian, military strategist, and ethicist. The coverage of military history and civilization in the East would prove an excellent sequel to this outstanding overview of military professionalism in Western civilization. Suffice it to say, *Soldiers and Civilization* is a significant addition to the study of war fighting as the basis for the literature, culture, and politics of Western civilization.

EDWARD ERWIN



Selling War: A Critical Look at the Military's PR Machine, by Steven J. Alvarez. Lincoln, NE: Potomac Books, 2016. 384 pages. \$34.95.

Selling War is a mixed bag. Like the proverbial description of the North Platte River, it is simultaneously “too thick to drink and too thin to plow.” Steven Alvarez, an experienced former Army public affairs officer (PAO), suggests as much when he describes his work as “part memoir, part public relations handbook, part after-action review, part white paper, part catharsis, and a firsthand account of [his] yearlong mobilization” in Iraq from 2004 to 2005 (p. xxi). The result does partial justice to each of these perspectives, but full justice to none.

Alvarez is a severe critic of Army public affairs. He convincingly appraises the