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# Birth pangs of the new NATO

Abenheim, Donald

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# Review Essays

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## **Birth Pangs of the New NATO** **by Donald Abenheim**

*Waging Modern War.* By Wesley K. Clark. (New York: Public Affairs/Perseus Group, 2001. 499 pp. \$30.00)

*NATO's Empty Victory: A Postmortem on the Balkan War.* Edited by Ted Galen Carpenter. (Washington D.C.: CATO Institute, 2000. 201 pp. \$9.95)

*NATO: Its Past, Present, and Future.* By Peter Duignan. (Stanford: Hoover Institution, 2000. 159 pp. \$16.95)

Since the birth of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 1948–49, the allies have struggled to find a common policy and strategy amid episodes of dispute about the ends and means of their common effort.<sup>1</sup> This process represents a leading feature of the alliance and perhaps a chief cause for its durability across five decades. However, the succession of crises beneath NATO's blue and white flag fed skepticism among numerous critics. In the minds of such doubters,<sup>2</sup> the alliance suffered from flaws of lopsided, U.S.-centric decision making, an uneven division of labor that gave European members a "free ride," and, most of all, a nuclear strategy that in the unthinkable event would cause a "Euroshima." Briefly in 1989–91, all such skepticism seemed to dissolve thanks to the bloodless demise of the Cold War. This false dawn of peace, however, gave way to a new day of violence

<sup>1</sup> For instance, Lawrence S. Kaplan, *The Long Entanglement: NATO's First Fifty Years* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1999).

<sup>2</sup> Of many examples, see Melvyn Krauss, *How NATO Weakens The West* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1986).

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in Europe as well as to the renaissance of collective security in which NATO has played a decisive part, despite its past as an organization of collective defense.<sup>3</sup> The 1990s brought fresh evidence of divergent conceptions of policy and strategy and a new struggle for consensus as NATO shifted its focus from collective defense to the imperatives of collective security and even the waging of war in the former Yugoslavia.

The books under review here focus chiefly on the most well known episode of NATO's adaptation to the imponderables of the strategic present: the 1999 campaign from the sky against the Slobodan Milosevic regime. However, the story of force and statecraft in Kosovo in 1998–99 makes no sense without an analysis embedded within more generalized issues of war and peace as well as the dominant continuities in the essence of NATO itself. In particular, the books recall how leaders of democracies and democratic alliances make policy and strategy, issues of U.S. commitment to European security, the nature of strategic theory as visible in Clausewitz, and the character of military professionalism in the United States, all in the changing face of war, particularly since 1989 in limited war. Clark, Galen Carpenter, and Duignan, each in their own way, address these overarching problems of force and statecraft. The constants of policy and strategy in the Atlantic sphere emerged decades before 1989 and have remained present in modified form as NATO's focus shifted from the imperatives of collective defense within the red-blue confines of the Cold War to the more gray regions of collective security in a Europe devoid of perpetual peace.

By spring 1999, the policy and strategy makers in the Euro-Atlantic sphere had to relearn two fundamental insights from Clausewitz's theory about the nature of war: (1) that war in the abstract and war in reality are two different things, and (2) that war is a "true chameleon" that is constantly changing its outward shape and appearance.<sup>4</sup> The sorties of the first allied aircraft on March 24 and thereafter against a handful of targets brought no swift capitulation, disappointing those who hoped for a repeat of the diplomatic and strategic effects of the limited air strikes against Republika Srbksa circa 1994–95. Rather, once the first NATO projectiles fell in late March, the Serbs, in keeping with the Yugoslav doctrine of territorial defense "to all azimuths," both hunkered down in Belgrade and lashed out with greater fury at the Kosovars around Pristina and beyond.

In this connection, the U.S. advocates of air power theory and a

<sup>3</sup> David Yost, *NATO Transformed: The Alliance's New Roles in International Security* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Institute of Peace, 1998).

<sup>4</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Michael Howard et al., eds. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), pp. 78 ff. In addition to Clark, the present account of the Kosovo war relies on Ivo Daalder et al., *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 2000).

strategy of annihilation<sup>5</sup> have asserted that the manner in which the NATO powers waged war in March–June 1999 was disfigured by an excess of “political control.” They decry the manner in which Secretary of State Madeleine Albright assumed the role as chief of the war party in the U.S. cabinet. In this view, undue timidity in the civil-military selection of such air targets as Belgrade’s television stations, the highway, and Danube bridges had hamstringed the sorties of the NATO allied tactical aircraft, needlessly softened the blow to the Milosevic regime, and thus prolonged the war. According to such shibboleths of annihilation, this combination of “civilian interference” in U.S. strategy and operations, as well as in the North Atlantic Council (NAC), unduly constrained the ability of military professionals to fight according to their doctrines of operations and tactics.<sup>6</sup> In this way, NATO and U.S. policy and strategy repeated the “errors” made in the Vietnam War in 1964–65.

All the tension over strategy, operations, and tactics of annihilation or attrition seemed to concentrate itself in April 1999 around the person of the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), Wesley Clark. One should consider the inherent strengths and weaknesses of the office of SACEUR—the senior operational commander of NATO’s Allied Command Europe (ACE), which is simultaneously that of Commander in Chief (CINC) of the U.S. theater command for Europe and most of Africa.<sup>7</sup> Despite his grand official residence and the huge desk and flags that surround SACEUR at his workplace in Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), his command post stands on low ground, denuded of cover.<sup>8</sup> Hence, this most prominent of U.S. commands is especially vulnerable to policy and strategy shifts, both national and multinational, which have previously tossed U.S. theater commanders from their posts in times of crisis and war.

So as NATO bombs fell after dusk on the air defenses and strategic targets of Belgrade, Novi Sad, and Podgorica, by dawn’s light the bully boys of Serbian ethnic purity wielded their cudgels and fired their antiaircraft guns against the ethnic Albanians of Kosovo. The NATO aircrews flew their machines safely out of range of Serb anti-aircraft fire, but they had seemingly sped beyond the sphere of strategic efficacy as well.

The reader of General Clark’s memoirs learns that SACEUR responded to this incipient disaster for the Western alliance with a draft plan to escalate

<sup>5</sup> Gordon Craig et al., *Force and Statecraft: Diplomatic Problems of Our Time*, 3d ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 258–74; on the strategy of annihilation versus attrition, cf. Hans Delbrueck, *Die Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1962) Vol. IV, pp. 333 ff.

<sup>6</sup> Gian P. Gentile, *How Effective is Strategic Bombing? Lessons Learned for World War II to Kosovo* (New York: New York University Press, 2001), pp. 10–32, 191–94.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas Durell Young, ed. *Command in NATO after the Cold War: Alliance, National and Multi-national Considerations* (Carlisle, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, 1997).

<sup>8</sup> Robert S. Jordan, ed. *Generals in International Politics: NATO’s Supreme Allied Commander, Europe* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1988); Jordan, *The NATO International Staff/Secretariat, 1952–1957* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967); and Jordan, *Political Leadership in NATO: A Study in Multinational Diplomacy* (Boulder: Westview, 1979).

the war. Clark's scenario against the Serbian center of gravity in Kosovo unfolded before him in the remove of his headquarters in Casteau, Belgium, where it must have first glimmered on PowerPoint slide screens in the CINC's conference room. This strategic/operational idea was based, in part, on his previous experiences in the tactical and operational echelons of the U.S. Army doctrine and training establishment. These PowerPoint slides cast a beam 60 kilometers up the road from Casteau into the main wing of NATO Headquarters at Brussels/Evere, where men and women of the NAC debated across the table. Simultaneously, just down the hall from the Council meeting, this light flashed before Dr. Jamie Shea, the head of the NATO office of information and press, as he tried to banish the specter of stalemate and defeat that hung over the briefing auditorium amid the mixture of jet exhaust, exploding ordnance, and television images.

Such smoke and fire failed to obscure SACEUR's vision. He glimpsed the way forward to victory via a decisive NATO air-land campaign in two dimensions against the Serbian center of gravity in Kosovo. In short, deep strike forces must hit home at the Serb military and paramilitary units that were tormenting the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. Clark's conceptions called for batteries of surface-to-surface high-tech rocket artillery firing their barrages at the Serbian forces across mountains from Albania into Kosovo, driving them out of their cover, where they would then fall easy prey to the flying armor of the U.S. Army and subsequent echelons of heavy, mechanized ground troops.

Fate dealt otherwise with this PowerPoint air-land battle, as it did with so much else in this unhappy story. The high command in Washington, D.C. (that is, the combination of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the staff of the U.S. Army) balked at the idea: it departed from the U.S. military strategy and dogma of two simultaneous wars being waged in the Persian Gulf and on the Korean Peninsula. The deployment of U.S. Army forces from Germany to Albania took longer than expected. The tactical training of the task force in Albania demanded yet more time. Most important, the nineteen North Atlantic allies could never finally agree on this step, which would symbolize a vast escalation of the war via the dispatch of ground forces—all talk about echelons of deep strike and “full spectrum dominance” notwithstanding. In the event, the rocket batteries stood silent, the armored helicopters never took up the hunt across the mountain passes, and the armored and mechanized infantry remained in their assembly areas in Albania and Macedonia. They only marched into Kosovo weeks later, once the knotted effects of NATO force and statecraft in combination with the UN/EU/U.S. Contact Group (i.e., Russian diplomacy in league with the West) compelled Milosevic to capitulate to the nineteen allies.

Even those casually versed in policy, strategy, coalitions and combat

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are awestruck at how contentious the making of policy was in March–June 1999 and how close NATO apparently came to failure in the first weeks of the war. However, this may be beside the point.<sup>9</sup> In the first instance, one might generalize that ever since the middle of the nineteenth century, when democracies have waged war they have generally started out rather haltingly amid great setbacks, and then done better as they went along.<sup>10</sup> Such was plainly the case after December 1941, June 1950 and even after August 1990. In the second instance, there is nothing especially remarkable about feuds and strife among generals, civilian defense officials and ministers of defense. The tasks of command, even in peacetime, require a bold will to accomplish them, and inevitable clashes with others with golden shoulder boards, stars and crossed batons or in blue serge suits.

In the case of the SACEUR in the years 1998–99, the reader becomes aware of an old truth that reaches back to the foundation of NATO and to the war in Korea, namely, that leading figures in the high command of the U.S. armed forces have had significant doubts about U.S. policy and strategy in Europe; further, there has long existed a school of thought in the U.S. Army and elsewhere in the Department of Defense that assigns greater strategic importance to geographical areas other than Europe.<sup>11</sup>

However, the chief issue in Clark's book is the dilemma of how a U.S. theater commander balances the dictates of national strategy with those of multinational and alliance strategy in crisis and limited war.<sup>12</sup> In this regard, the fate of Wesley Clark recalls that of one very well known general, Douglas MacArthur,<sup>13</sup> and another less well-remembered general, Lauris Norstad.<sup>14</sup> Each of these theater commanders in earlier instances of coalition war faced circumstances that might be said to resemble those connected with Clark's war and his discomfiture. All of this was also somewhat less prominent in the now reified case of the 1990–91 Gulf War, the memory of which has revived the dogma of the battle of annihilation for strategists and tacticians of all

<sup>9</sup> Too many contemporary observers of these processes assume a kind of ideal form of civil-military interaction and harmonious roles for the political leader as strategist and for the field commander at the cusp of strategy and operations. Such is unsubstantiated by the record of war and policy in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Cf. Dominick Graham and Shelford Bidwell, *Coalitions, Politicians, & Generals: Some Aspects of Command in Two World Wars* (London/New York: Brassey's, 1993); Gordon A. Craig, *Krieg, Politik, und Diplomatie* (Vienna: Zsolnay, 2001); Adolf Heusinger, *Befehl im Widerstreit: Schicksalstunden der deutschen Armee, 1923–1945* (Tuebingen: Hase/Koelher, 1950).

<sup>10</sup> Michael Howard, *War in European History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976); Russell Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of U.S. Military Strategy and Policy* (New York: MacMillan, 1973).

<sup>11</sup> Richard Betts, *Soldiers, Statesmen and Cold War Crises* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), pp. 81–83; Phil Williams, *The Senate and U.S. Troops in Europe* (New York: St. Martin's, 1985); Simon Duke, *United States Military Forces and Installations in Europe* (London: Oxford University Press, 1989).

<sup>12</sup> Limited war in the sense of Clausewitz, but also in that of the U.S. experience since 1945.

<sup>13</sup> D. Clayton James et al., *Refighting the Last War: Command and Crisis in Korea, 1950–1953* (New York: Free Press, 1993); Callum A. MacDonald, *Britain and the Korean War* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990).

<sup>14</sup> Robert S. Jordan, *Norstad: Cold War NATO Supreme Commander, Airman, Strategist, Diplomat* (New York: St. Martin's, 2000).

stripes.<sup>15</sup> At the start of the decade, apparently, the dynamics of coalitional decision-making at the nexus of the strategic and operational levels of war for U.S. Central Command posed fewer conundrums than for SHAPE and U.S. European Command in Kosovo. However, a comparison of these two cases, although it is implicit in Clark's analysis, lies outside the scope of this essay. The issue of greatest import rests in the set of underlying ideas about policy and strategy, which the theater commander brought to bear in the face of policy and strategy in a limited war waged by a coalition.

Clark's idea of "modern war" is "limited, carefully constrained in geography and scope, weaponry and effects. . ." (p. xxiv). This phenomenon is counterpoised to its notional opposite, visible in U.S. military doctrine of the decisive battle, the sources of which, are found in the era of revolutionary and Napoleonic warfare. Clark's first chapter contains an account of how the author learned at the U.S. Military Academy in the early 1960s the answer to the first question in Clausewitz's *On War*, "What is War?"<sup>16</sup> That is, Clark acquired, like thousands of other company-grade officers in the U.S. Army of his era and since, the fundamental U.S. strategic, operational and tactical doctrine. He and his peers embraced the emphasis on the decisive battles waged by large echelons in the manner attributed to Napoleon by his successors. This code is summed up in the dogma of Douglas MacArthur, namely that "there is no substitute for victory" (p. xxii), which since the end of the Indochina war in 1975 has been reinterpreted by succeeding generations and embodied in the Weinberger-Powell doctrine.

Not by accident does Clark open with a reference to Douglas MacArthur's order of 1943 to a subordinate commander to seize his objective in New Guinea or perish in the process. In the same page (p. xxi), the former SACEUR describes the grim moment on March 31, 1999, when then NATO Secretary General Javier Solana gave the SACEUR guidance on the political-military process of decision making for the selection of air targets in Serbia. Here Clark makes the odd blooper (which so many reviewers strangely accept uncritically) to the effect that "above me everything was political or political military. Below me was just the military. I was at the waist of the hourglass. . ." (p. xxi).

Elsewhere in his account of the diplomacy and strategy that led to the 1995 Dayton Accords and, finally, to the luckless 1998 negotiations at Rambouillet, Clark well understands the civil and military character of the strategic friction that accumulated before and during the Kosovo war (pp. 29 ff). This process concerns the forward policy in Southeastern Europe advanced by the

<sup>15</sup> Jehuda Wallach, *The Dogma of the Battle of Annihilation* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1986).

<sup>16</sup> Clark learned the answer of Clausewitz's rival, Henri de Jomini. The Prussian has only been en vogue since 1976 and, more often than not, he remains a subject of total misunderstanding among soldiers and civilians alike. Cf. John Shy, "Jomini," in Peter Paret et al., eds., *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986) pp. 143-185.

National Security Council and the U.S. State Department and the resistance to such policy that concentrated itself in the U.S. Department of Defense. Here Clark witnessed a frustrating and bloody experience in the sorry years of the middle and late chapters of the war of Yugoslav succession in which the United States became ever more involved amid an arduous process of hesitation and later action in the leading allied capitals. There is really little about which the West can boast here in the years 1991–1995, save that it finally acted, albeit too late for those in their multitude who presently fell victim to war.

This phenomenon of resistance in DOD to an interventionist policy in Southeastern Europe in the early years of the descent of the U.S. into the travail of former Yugoslavia marched under the banner of the Weinberger–Powell doctrine. This phase brought forth ludicrous assertions as to how Tito’s partisans circa 1941–43 had defeated dozens of Axis divisions and would dole out the same fate to NATO troops. General Clark saw in frightening detail the long slide into war in Bosnia and Kosovo on the twisted road to the besieged Sarajevo circa 1994–95 as he aided Ambassador Richard Holbrooke’s negotiations that led to the Dayton peace accords and to the dispatch of the NATO Implementation Force to Bosnia in December 1995 (pp. 46–74). But the peace deal for Bosnia laid the seeds of renewed crisis in Kosovo in the interval thereafter until 1998. The Rambouillet negotiations of that year only accelerated the process of collapse and formed the prelude to the NATO assault of March 24, 1999.

Wrestling with the evolution of NATO strategy since the early 1960s, Clark takes exception with NATO’s Flexible Response<sup>17</sup> strategy, characterizing it as a burdensome relic of the 1960s with a crippling impact on successor generations of strategists, guilty of the same “gradualism” of U.S. strategy in Indochina in the “Operation Rolling Thunder” period of 1964–65 (pp. xix–xxxi, 3–28, 417–61). While a student of the early 1970s at the U.S. Army’s Command and General Staff School, Clark had written a study on the Vietnam strategy of Lyndon Johnson, Robert MacNamara and McGeorge Bundy, who wrongly believed that calibrated bombing would persuade the North Vietnamese to negotiate in the summer of 1964. Such limitations of policy and strategy, Clark argues, instead signaled to the Vietnamese that the United States sought some modest substitute for victory.

The hypothesis of Clark’s Fort Leavenworth master’s thesis in military art, written as he began his rapid rise in a brilliant military career, suggested that American forces must wield rapid hammer blows against vital enemy centers of gravity in order to break the opponent’s will (p. 6). This idea

<sup>17</sup> Jane Stromseth, *The Origins of Flexible Response: NATO’s Debate Over Strategy in the 1960s* (New York: St Martin’s, 1988); Ivo Daalder, *The Nature and Practice of Flexible Response: NATO Strategy and Theater Nuclear Forces Since 1967* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991).



accords with that of Col. Harry Summer's 1982 work, *On Strategy*,<sup>18</sup> which analyzed the sources of American defeat in Indochina. He asserted that a strategic/operational way out of the strategic impasse loomed circa 1964–65 in the face of communist successes in South Vietnam; however, makers of U.S. policy failed to grasp this opportunity, with the tragic results of a strategy of attrition and eventual collapse.<sup>19</sup> In this way, Clark echoes many other soldiers of the past and present when he writes that in "modern democracies" the political leaders are "too hesitant" in the decision to wage war in its initial phase and hence apply too many constraints on military action; while military leaders are "too timid" to insist upon the knockout blow and to achieve "significant military objectives." The result, in Clark's mind, has been "extended campaigns that could leave democratic governments vulnerable to their public opinion" (p. 6). Here he echoes a familiar refrain of professional soldiers as they regard the civil-military requirements by which military institutions and modern strategists must secure a basis in policy and society amid the knotted effects of pluralism, mass politics, and the technological refinement of weapons.<sup>20</sup>

Clark writes further in this vein about the impact of instantaneous and omnipresent communications and the degree to which they now pose an almost insurmountable problem for those who must master friction and secure victory on the battlefield (p. 8 ff.).<sup>21</sup> Media exposure only makes a fetish of "zero defects" dogma and can paralyze military professionals. Thus the inadvertent casualties among civilians, ranging from the twenty killed when missiles struck a train on a bridge at Grdelicka Klisura to the accidental bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, consume pages of Clark's memoir and put to rest once and for all any idea that technology has somehow made war subject to perfect human control. On the contrary, in Clark's view, the perfectionist fetish, combined with pervasive media coverage, only blur the distinction between the sphere of the soldier and the sphere of the civilian in modern warfare.

The crux of the issue, however, resides in the manner in which democratic statecraft and civil-military checks and balances impact on the span of control of the commander and in the making of strategy. In Clark's conception of modern war, all strategic effort must move more rapidly and achieve more decisive political and strategic results while operating on the

<sup>18</sup> Harry Summers, *On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War* (Novato, Calif.: Presidio, 1982).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1–7, 181–206; cf. critique in Andrew Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986). pp. 258ff.

<sup>20</sup> Donald Cameron Watt, *Too Serious a Business: European Armed Forces and the Approach to the Second World War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975); Michael Geyer, "German Strategy in the Age of Machine Warfare," in *Makers of Modern Strategy*, pp. 527–597.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Michael Ignatieff, *Virtual War: Kosovo and Beyond* (New York: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt, 2000), esp. pp. 91ff.

surreal ground zero of the rapidly blinking public eye (pp. 417 ff.). Here the former SACEUR stands on less firm ground. He has found no firmer ground by his conclusion, where he celebrates the timeless verity of the so-called Principles of War—clear objective, unity of command, simplicity, massive forces, etc. (p. 423).<sup>22</sup> Thus he returns to what he learned as a cadet in the battlements above the Hudson River in 1962 and relearned as a field grade officer in 1973 while writing his master's thesis at the fort on the plains.

By his embrace of what seems to this reviewer to be such a pessimistic stance about the efficacy of strategy in a democracy, Clark associates himself with a school of military thought and civil-military relations of problematic origin and perhaps even more questionable spirit. In the first instance, one should say something about the gallery of ancestors in the U.S. military experience who have shared this pessimism. Clark stands in the shadow of the first professional U.S. officer-theorist, Emory Upton.<sup>23</sup> Though essentially unknown among today's company and field-grade officers, his influence pervades their universe of ideas. Upton's suspicion of pluralistic politics thrusts into the reader like a dagger from the pages of his history of U.S. military policy,<sup>24</sup> written prior to his untimely death in 1881 and only published in 1904. This work is the great-granddaddy of all writings by U.S. soldiers about what General Clark would have his readers believe to be civilian governments and "modern war." Nonetheless, Upton's dismissal of the civil-military potential of U.S. political institutions proved ill founded in its day and has essentially remained so ever since. Clark seems to take more than a page from Upton's book.

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**Unknown  
Emory Upton  
pervades the  
military's  
universe of  
ideas.**

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While Clark should surely be unhappy at how Secretary of Defense William Cohen sent him into early retirement in 2000 after his extraordinary and difficult service in former Yugoslavia, the issue here is less the strategic limitations of democratic government than the nervous floundering of civil and military elites as they face strategic realities in all their political complexity and disorder, weighted down by an array of historical analogues and ideological assumptions.

In the end, Clark shared the fate of the now forgotten SACEUR of 1956–62, Lauris Norstad.<sup>25</sup> Both men ran afoul of the U.S. Secretary of Defense in the midst of crisis because (a) they became perhaps too attuned to the demands of their office in its multinational dimension, growing too close to the realities and requirements of their theater of operations; (b) their

<sup>22</sup> Cf. the critique of the "principles of war" in John Alger, *The Quest for Victory: The History of the Principles of War* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1982).

<sup>23</sup> Russell Weigley, *Towards an American Army: Military Thought from Washington to Marshall* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962) pp. 100–126.

<sup>24</sup> Emory Upton, *The Military Policy of the United States* (New York: Greenwood, 1968) pp. 1–32.

<sup>25</sup> Jordan, *Norstad*.

conceptions of strategy in its practical and operational form applied to the crisis of the moment (Berlin in 1961 and Kosovo in 1999) diverged from strategic ideas dominant in the Pentagon and elsewhere in the U.S. government; and (c) personalities of ambition and convictions as SACEUR succumbed to the changing power relations of the North Atlantic arena in crisis.

Norstad and Clark both tripped on difficulties with the political and strategic logic of Flexible Response in the zone of tension between national and multinational policies. The essential civil-military cause is unmistakably linked across the gulf of time. Norstad wanted to retain the efficacy of the Eisenhower administration's strategy of Massive Retaliation by means of nuclear sharing in NATO, so as to uphold the promise of extended deterrence, a position to which the Kennedy/McNamara team could not assent because of fear of French and German unilateralism with the bomb.

Clark wrongly blames gradualism and Flexible Response for all ills in contemporary strategy and, in particular, for the fate that befell him. One should resist such a generalization. NATO's Flexible Response, despite its flaws of logic and its wretchedness in the minds of air power and annihilationist strategists, did its job in the Cold War. Perhaps this success in the era 1967–89 derived from its never having been tested in combat, but the very vagueness and elasticity of its principles allowed the alliance to “agree to disagree” over issues that might otherwise have shattered the alliance many times over. Rather, much of the effort of NATO's senior civil and military mechanisms since 1951 has constituted an attempt to bring some measure of political and strategic logic and operational restraint to the imponderables of escalation, terror, and alliance cohesion. The civil-military machinery of the alliance had long been organized around the problems of nuclear deterrence and the crisis management of limited Soviet incursions on the periphery of the Article IV area that would impel only a measured rejoinder; that is, how NATO could wield a politically sensible counterstroke to a move of less than all-out war and thereby avoid the doomsday mechanism of the nuclear Single Integrated Operational Plan. The 1999 war proceeded from this NATO custom, since the civil and military reform of the past decade has decidedly been one of evolutionary steps, not an act of radical renovation that has junked all that previously existed.

What is more, despite criticism of half measures and misdeeds in leading NATO capitals and in the NAC, the Serbs blundered far more than the West in their wars of the 1990s. Of paramount strategic importance for the West must have been the sight of all the little Kosovar children in carts, put to flight by Serbian thugs that recalled the Nazi SS. Such images were far more strategically and operationally crucial to the war in Kosovo than most of the day-by-day events in Clark's war diary. Furthermore, the stumbling response of gradual air strikes, which Clark and others interpret so critically, nonetheless did escalate the war and propel diplomacy that roughly achieved its objectives. To be sure, this success derived from a combination of force and

statecraft and not merely from combat alone. That is, the alliance did respond to the violence and threat to values and interests circa 1998–99, and at a more or less commensurate level of combat, thanks to NATO’s enduring strategic culture. It may, therefore, subsume more wisdom than frustrated generals are prepared to admit.

While the center of gravity of Clark’s memoirs is the interaction of policy, strategy and operational doctrine, in *NATO’s Empty Victory* Galen Carpenter and his collaborators place greatest weight on the interplay of policy and diplomacy in the political systems among and within states.<sup>26</sup> Accordingly, they take a dissenting view on nearly every aspect of policy in the Kosovo war. They ask whether the conflict could have been averted and answer yes: that a less ham-fisted diplomacy by the West would surely have avoided war (pp. 11–50). They ask whether at least the consequences of the conflict were successful and answer no: nearly all the effects were baleful (pp. 51–122). They speculate about the way forward in Southeastern Europe and Europe as a whole with analyses and prescriptions for action that diverge sharply with U.S. and NATO statecraft and strategies (pp. 123 ff.). The CATO Institute authors are concerned with a doctrine of a very different kind, that is, the tradition of doubt and skepticism about the U.S. policy in NATO, specifically, and U.S. engagement in Europe generally. This doctrine reaches back to the revisionist historical writings of Charles Beard in the 1930s, if not to the origins of American political thought about the international system.

In Galen Carpenter’s view, the 1999 war has resulted in a “full blown fiasco” (p. 1), visible in the enduring conflict in the southern reaches of former Yugoslavia. This debacle arises from grave errors of policy and strategy outlined by Christopher Layne (pp. 11–20). Especially odious, in his view, is the wrongful belief of Secretary of State Albright that the 1999 air campaign would lead swiftly to the same diplomatic outcome as in 1994–95, when Milosevic yielded to the West. This error derived, in turn, from the West’s naive and gullible sympathy for the Albanians and the insistence on turning a blind eye to the terror and thuggery of the Kosovo Liberation Army. Moreover, in Doug Bandow’s view, this one-sided affection for the Kosovars made the leading proponents of NATO intervention argue hypocritically that the events in Kosovo constituted genocide, even though the toll of violence there was statistically minuscule by comparison to those of the civil wars in Algeria, Sierra Leone, and Sri Lanka (pp. 31–50). Further, he suggests that NATO betrays a glaring falseness in its humanitarian rhetoric of “never again” (referring to the Holocaust) given that it whitewashed Turkey’s expulsion of some 165,000 Greek Cypriots in 1974 and tolerated Ankara’s subsequent ethnic warfare against the Kurds. Those upon whom the NATO bombs fell draw Christopher Layne’s sympathy, in a further chapter (pp. 51–58), wherein

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Galen Carpenter, *Beyond NATO: Staying Out of Europe’s Wars* (Washington, D.C.: CATO, 1994); also Galen Carpenter, ed., *The Future of NATO* (London: Frank Cass, 1995).

he damns the alliance for destroying highway bridges, the electricity network and killing hundreds of innocent Serb and Kosovar civilians. Indeed, in his view, NATO's decision to wage war against the Serbs to aid the Kosovars turned a "bad situation into a humanitarian crisis" (p. 3). While the foregoing contains a well known set of arguments heard before the war and thereafter, the chapter by Gary Dempsey highlights the lesser known damage done by the war to the whole region's economy, trade, and investment (pp. 59–76). This chapter is the most informative of the compendium. Dempsey believes that this collateral harm has exacerbated the political and social conflicts among Serbia's neighbors to the general detriment of the West. Galen Carpenter also faults NATO for having treated the Russians shabbily and pushed them into a closer anti-American relationship with China. This shambles of a strategic outcome scarcely justifies NATO's rhetoric, much less the scale of its war effort.

Further chapters underscore still broader deleterious effects of the "humanitarian war." The imperial presidency and constitutional problems inherent in U.S. civil-military relations have only increased. A deleterious precedent is set for the world's democracies by the U.S. executive kicking the traces of checks and balances. The thrashing of a small, defenseless power has unwittingly undermined the goal of nuclear counter-proliferation. The pan-Albanians are now on the march and will surely assume the role of chief mischief-maker in Southeastern Europe, with the result that NATO itself will have to partition Kosovo in its own version of ethnic cleansing or else remain its warden for decades. In any event, peace support operations in Southeastern Europe depend far too much on NATO and the United States, even though they lie well outside the vital interests of the United States. Finally, the transformation of NATO according to the imperatives of collective security invites an unstable future featuring one kind of Kosovo-type intervention after another. Galen Carpenter believes that NATO's policy and strategy put in hand in the 1999 "New Strategic Concept",<sup>27</sup> that is, to go beyond the narrower confines of collective defense as visible in Articles V and VI, reflects an attempt by the buccaneers of Brussels/Evere to renovate an obsolete NATO in the highly reckless manner that has erected a drill grounds in Southeastern Europe for a super-constabulary (p. 173 ff.).

If one seeks a slim volume that contains a panoptic of contrarian arguments against the 1999 war as well as a catalog of its destructive effects on policy, the international system, U.S. domestic politics, and Southeastern Europe itself, then NATO's editors leave little to be desired. But what they gain in polemical force is lost through a certain absence of objectivity. After all, the electoral triumph in October 2000 of pro-Western parties in Belgrade, however incomplete, has been a signal accomplishment linked to the passage

<sup>27</sup> Cf. NATO Office of Information, eds. *NATO Handbook, 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition* (Brussels: NATO, 1999) pp. 59–80.

of arms in 1999. The overthrow of the Milosevic clique and his subsequent dispatch on June 28, 2001, to the defendant's stand at the International War Crimes Tribunal in the Hague appears to have made NATO's victory somewhat less hollow than it appeared at the close of 1999. Finally, might the editor of this volume perhaps suffer from a certain kind of hollowness, himself, when he dismisses the wars in former Yugoslavia as having been "annoyances" from "small countries on Europe's periphery" and suggests that Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, Serbia, and perhaps Macedonia have had no real meaning to American interests because the fighting since 1991 left the "macro-stability" of Europe unaffected (pp. 178–19)? But notwithstanding the volume's mission to "broaden the parameters" of policy debate (p. 196), its characterization of the wars of Yugoslav succession as an "annoyance" will not win approbation from anyone who actually saw the misery firsthand and detracts from whatever merit the book may have for the parameters of policy.

If one thought that authors from the CATO Institute and the Hoover Institution would embrace the same points of view, then a comparison of Galen Carpenter's volume and *NATO: Its Past, Present, and Future* by Peter Duignan, a scholar of international history of Stanford University's Hoover Institution, suggests otherwise. Whereas Galen Carpenter sees NATO as having fiendishly reinvented itself so as to entangle the United States in a new era of European blood feuds, Duignan praises the success of NATO for having contributed to a better Europe after 1945 (pp. ix ff.). Duignan writes in defense of the U.S. engagement in Europe in this little volume prepared for NATO's fiftieth anniversary in April 1999. Sadly, that celebration held in Washington was eclipsed by the smoke of the war. In the first instance, Duignan offers a highly compact history of the alliance, which, if a novice or student had only an hour to devote to this topic, offers an excellent point of departure. Many such readers indeed exist in North America and Europe, and they always look for a place to start to understand the organization, which for an outsider is a daunting task. Duignan describes the origins of the alliance, the rising importance of nuclear weapons, the problems of alliance cohesion in the Cold War, and the characteristics of national contributions to security and defense. Moreover, he includes the political and military transition from confrontation to a reduction of tensions that began in the 1970s, only to be followed by renewed crisis at the end of the decade, and finally, the transformation of the alliance that ensued at the end of the 1980s.

Duignan's historical treatment is joined with the remainder of the book, roughly eighty pages, which devotes itself to NATO policy of the immediate past, present, and future. Much of this section concerns the wars in former Yugoslavia and Kosovo, where the author fears that the alliance will become bogged down in open-ended constabulary missions. He hopes that some kind of European force would assume this burden, although his thinking in this connection remains somewhat diffuse, as does the number of organizations and policies—past and present—which he believes should

shoulder the task. Thus, it is important to distinguish between the now essentially defunct Western European Union (WEU), a European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI) and a European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), the latter two representing the policy desire of the European Union to act more cohesively in security and defense, which, by the way, has long been a goal of U.S. policy, as well since the time of the European Defense Community in 1950–51. The “headline goal” of ESDP to raise a 60,000-strong EU rapid reaction force reflects this policy and poses no threat to the durability of NATO. The author does welcome the 1999 enlargement of the alliance, but his fears that enlargement may weaken decision making in the NAC and Military Committee (p. 115) are dubious. Moreover, the author assumes far too much of the willingness and capacity of Germany, in his words, to “take over” the banner of leadership in NATO from the United States (p. 119). No such desire exists today in Germany, which is beset with the long-term consequences of unification and where the political culture harbors no nostalgia for the trappings of glory and power that long ago disappeared. Germans, no less than the Danes or the Dutch, are far more interested in prosperity, personal security, and “lifestyle” issues than in strategy and diplomacy—thanks, in large part, to the very success of NATO. But only a part of the continent enjoys the peace and security that allow for such self-indulgence. The challenge of the decades is precisely that of getting Europeans—and Americans—interested in working arduously for pluralistic institutions that can address the current and future causes of strife and war. The rise and fall of Milosevic proves that the dangers of integral nationalism and war have not been eradicated—indeed they take on an even more sinister aspect when policy intellectuals assert, to paraphrase Harry Lime in Graham Greene’s *Third Man*, that democracy is best suited to the production of cuckoo clocks, or dismiss the broken and emaciated bodies of tens of thousands of “peripheral” Europeans as an “annoyance.”

## **Empires Benevolent and Otherwise**

**by William Anthony Hay**

*Empire: The Russian Empire and Its Rivals.* By Dominic Lieven. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001. 528 pp. \$35.00)

*Oxford History of the British Empire vol. III: The Nineteenth Century.* Edited by Andrew Porter. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. 800 pp. \$45.00)

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