

BOOK REVIEWS

Barnett, Frank R., B. Hugh Tovar, and Richard H. Shultz, eds., *Special Operations in U.S. Strategy*. Washington: National Defense University Press with National Strategy Information Center, 1984.

On March 4 and 5, 1983, the National Strategy Information Center (NSIC), in cooperation with the National Defense University, Fort McNair, Washington, D.C., and the National Security Studies Program of Georgetown University, conducted a symposium on "The Role of Special Operations in U.S. Strategy for the 1980s." The purpose of the conference was two-fold: first, to examine how special operations can complement an effective "conventional" defense capability; and second to determine the means by which special operations can be legitimized as a crucial element in national security policy. A major premise of the conference was "that the United States must develop diverse and even novel ways to defend its economic and geopolitical interests when these are affected by unconventional conflicts, particularly in the Third World."

This book, set in eight chapters, contains the major papers presented at the symposium and the discussions which followed each presentation. Conference participants included representatives from the Department of Defense (DOD), the academic community, research and policy centers, and the media. Although no attempt was made to establish consensus positions, most participants favored the development of an effective U.S. special operations capability. Opinions, however, differed on ways and means of achieving that objective.

Organizationally, the book begins with a brief Foreword by the President, National Defense University, who acknowledges the cooperation between the government and the private sector in hosting the special operations symposium. Next, a fifteen-page Introduction by Messrs. Barnett, Tovar, and Shultz — all of whom are associated with the NSIC — provides an excellent overview of the major themes presented in the conference papers, as well as participants' comments. In addition, the editors argue that although U.S. national security priorities are normally focused on deterring nuclear war, defending NATO, and preventing the Soviets from obtaining "technological surprise," lesser, recurring threats such as terrorism, subversion, insurgency, and guerrilla war, cannot be ignored. They further contend that although "Special operations may not always be compatible with the ideals of the American public, ... sometimes the options are even more unpalatable."

A "Keynote Address" by the Honorable John O. Marsh, Jr., Secretary of the Army, traces the history of U.S. special operations to the Revolutionary War and outlines the recent developments in that area in the wake of the 1981 Defense Guidance document. Addressing the question, "Why is it so important that we develop this [special operations] capability?" Mr. Marsh argues that "among many of our military,

our national legislators, and our citizenry in general, the subject of special operations is not adequately understood." Despite being "capable of self-sustained missions," special operations forces "can support conventional operations. They are not competitors, nor should they be isolated from conventional forces. In an era of collective security, their capabilities in the field of military assistance and training are exceedingly important."

The subsequent eight chapters deal with a diverse range of topics regarding special operations: threats to U.S. interests in the 1980s; American moral, legal, political, and cultural constraints; the Soviet approach; military capabilities; intelligence assets; economic/security assistance; psychological operations; and organizational strategy and low-intensity conflicts.

In sum, this is an informative, highly-readable, thoughtful book which provides useful insights into the ongoing DOD special operations forces revitalization program. It is highly recommended for policymaker, professional military personnel, and the serious student of national security affairs.

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Turley, William S. ed. *Confrontation or Coexistence: The Future of ASEAN-Vietnam Relations*. Bangkok: Institute of Security and International Studies, Chulalongkorn University, 1985.

Confrontation or Coexistence consists of the papers and proceedings of a workshop sponsored by ISIS in February 1983. It ostensibly addresses the question of what kind of relations the ASEAN states should promote with Vietnam in light of the intractable Cambodian conflict. Workshop participants included Canadian, ASEAN, American, and Australian academics as well as regional journalists and diplomats. The book is, however, more narrowly focused than the title suggests, actually concentrating on Thai-Vietnam relations. Only two of the ten papers deal with broader implications for ASEAN and the great powers. Nevertheless, this volume provides a useful snapshot of the Thai and Vietnamese positions toward each other and Cambodia in the early 1980s and discusses each actor's relations with both mentors and adversaries.

In a brief historical overview Dhavorn Sukhakanya argues that Thai suzerainty over the Khmer had been more benevolent than Vietnam's, since the former left internal affairs to the Cambodians and supported Khmer Buddhism, while the Vietnamese had attempted to destroy Cambodian culture and institutions, supplanting them with Vietnam's.