

BOOK REVIEWS

Shultz, Richard H. Jr., Uri Ra'anan, Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr., William J. Olson, and Igor Lukes, eds. *Guerrilla Warfare and Counterinsurgency: U.S.-Soviet Policy in the Third World*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1989.

The list of contributors to this volume reads like a "Who's Who" in the field of policy, strategy, and special operations. They range from civilian policy analysts to military strategists and operational experts. The contributions owe their inception to a major conference in 1987 cosponsored by the International Studies Program of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, and the U.S. Army War College and National Defense University. The theme of the conference was "Protracted Warfare - the Third World Arena: A Dimension of U.S.-Soviet Conflict." The product of the conference is a wide-ranging book covering many of the most important elements of US and Soviet involvement in Third World revolutions and counterrevolutions.

As is the usual case, in trying to come to grips with such a broad volume a reviewer is torn between addressing the specifics or focusing on general themes. Trying to centre on the specifics precludes a detailed analysis of all the contributions. While focusing on the general may not be the most satisfying in identifying and comparing the various contributions, it does offer a more manageable thematic assessment. The latter approach is followed here.

The volume is divided into five parts.

- US and Soviet Involvement in the Third World: Objectives and Constraints
- US and Soviet Doctrine and Strategy
- Protracted Warfare: Force Structure, C3, and Technology
- Protracted Warfare: Political and Psychological Operations
- Case Studies in US and Soviet Insurgency and Counterinsurgency Policy

Each part begins with a brief introduction by the editors identifying the major themes of the contributions. Within each part a comparison is made of US and Soviet postures. The comparisons provide important historical overlays, albeit brief, of the evolving positions of each Superpower encompassing the differences between Superpower policy, strategy, doctrine and institutional evolution for involvement in Third World conflicts. These are rooted in the nature and character of the particular political system and their geostrategic perspectives. Thus, the United States posture has been shaped by democracy, the attempt to capture the moral high ground and the variety of counterbalancing forces within American society. For the Soviet Union, the nature of its centralized system and ideological drive shaped its attempt to expand its influence into various parts of the Third World. As in the case of the United States, there have been limits to what the Soviets have been able to achieve.

The Soviet Union maintains highly centralized control of its special operations forces and formulation of policy and strategy for Third World involvement. In contrast, the United States is characterized by a fragmented policy process, strategy design, and institutional framework. Indeed, within American policy-making circles there is disagreement on the very nature of conflicts within the Third World.

The studies assessing psychological operations are particularly useful in examining Superpower successes and failures. As one would expect, the Soviets have been more successful than the United States in the use of psychological warfare. The case studies which cover a variety of conflicts ranging from Afghanistan to Nicaragua and El Salvador offer substance to some of the more theoretical assessments.

Aside from the comparative perspective, the themes include a focus on the conceptual basis of Low Intensity Conflict (LIC). This leads to an analysis of the capability and effectiveness of promoting or countering revolutionary insurgency and resistance movements. There seems to be general agreement that the term LIC is ambiguous and difficult to define, much less conceptualize accurately. Having said this, the contributors use a variety of terms ranging from special operations, insurgency, guerrilla warfare, resistance movements to revolution and counterrevolution. Nonetheless, it is clear most agree that such conflicts, whatever their name, are primarily political-social in substance and rest on psychological foundations. While the military has an important role to play, it is clearly secondary to a variety of non-military components. It is also apparent from the volume that low intensity conflicts are likely to characterize the future conflict environment. But there are only sporadic references to this in many of the contributions.

To be sure, these broad generalizations do not do justice to the insights and analysis provided by the excellent contributions. Nonetheless, they do provide contours of the landscape for understanding the scope and focus of the volume. As such, the subject matter and the quality of the contributions are the basis of the volume's excellence as well as its shortcomings. On the one hand, the breadth and substance of the contributions provide a compendium of almost encyclopedic proportions that can serve as a reference book for the evolution of US and Soviet policy, strategy, doctrine, and institutional characteristics for responding to Third World conflicts. On the other hand, the contributions can stand by themselves; each can easily be a subject for a book of its own. For example, the evolution of the US structure for special operations and low intensity conflict covers a number of years and includes much discussion, debate, and political maneuvering between Congress, the Oval Office, the Pentagon and within the Services themselves. Eventually, Congress mandated the creation of an Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict, among other things. Similarly, the US involvement in Nicaragua raises a number of questions going back to Somoza and the Sandinista Revolution to the evolution and operations of the Contras. This has been the subject of a number of published works.

Another problem with the general perspective may be the lack of serious

study of the middle range; that is the connecting links between policy, strategy, doctrine, and operational feasibility and capability. While this is touched on here and there, it is generally missing from the overall landscape.

Finally, even though several of the contributions project into the future and consider long-range policy and strategy, it appears that events of the last eighteen months have overtaken many of contributors' assertions and conclusions. These events include, for example, Operation JUST CAUSE, the unraveling of the Superpower concept, the evolution of independent states in Central and Eastern Europe, and of course, the victory of Violetta Chamorro in Nicaragua. Admittedly, it is expecting too much for contributions originally fashioned in 1987 to have foreseen events in 1990. A concluding contribution by the editors writing at a much later time, could have, at the least, identified signals and directions that were becoming more clear in late 1988 and early 1989. Also, such a contribution could have provided an additional element to the coherency of the volume and, at the same time, painted a broad picture of future developments.

Regardless of these problems, the editors have done a masterful job in bringing together authors with a wealth of experience and knowledge to produce an important book. This volume should appeal to both specialist and layman alike. For the specialist it is an excellent reference source and for the layman a comprehensive lesson in US and Soviet postures in response to Third World revolution and counterrevolutions. It is highly recommended.

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Joes, Anthony James. *The War for South Vietnam 1954-1975*. New York: Praeger, 1989.

Books about the Vietnam War are generally of four kinds. The most popular are the various memoirs and novels of isolated experiences which make for wrenching drama and are full of pathos. A second kind are concerned with American war politics at home or on the diplomatic front. Other books, like Stanley Karnow's *Vietnam: A History*, attempt to present detailed and comprehensive histories of the war. And in the last and smallest category are those that systematically analyze the conflict in order to draw lessons from it. In this last category would be Harry Summers' *On Strategy, The Army and Vietnam* by Andrew Krepinevich and, now, Joes' *The War for South Vietnam*.

But whichever category a Vietnam book falls into, it is likely to be ethnocentric. Most books about Vietnam are written by Americans, and American interest in the Vietnam conflict has, not unnaturally, been limited to questions about American actions there: how and why the United States became involved and how US foreign and military policy was conducted. American