

cover adequately the wide range of material considered. This was particularly troubling when the propositions following from each theoretical argument were presented. The propositions dealt with expectations regarding crisis outcomes and, since none of the theories were originally developed to address these questions directly, a great deal of effort should have been devoted to showing exactly how the propositions follow logically from the theoretical perspectives. Since such detailed expositions are missing, one is not entirely convinced that there truly is a theoretical basis for the hypothesis. The concluding chapter should also have been more fully developed. We are left with the prospect that the three theories could be integrated into a single explanation for crisis escalation, but this argument is not carried to the point where we have a firm grasp of what the resulting theory would look like. In general, however, the book is a commendable effort at evaluating and integrating previous research on the causes of war.

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Cohen, Eliot A., and John Gooch. *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War*. New York: The Free Press, 1990.

Eliot Cohen and John Gooch have written an intelligent book about military failure and what they call "pathways to misfortune." Finding that previous analysts of misfortunes in war have too often decided that military failure was due to single causes such as individual incompetence, the military mind, institutional problems, and cultural failure, the authors of this book turned to business and civilian disasters for a model on which to base their analysis of severe military reverses. Specifically, Cohen and Gooch borrow from the work of the organization analyst Charles Perrow, and his study of systems. Perrow thinks of systems as linear or complex, and their interconnections as tightly or loosely coupled. Systems accidents that occur in tightly linked, but complex systems, are analogous to military failures and the causes of these failures can be traced through the different levels of the system. These are the pathways to military misfortune, and Cohen and Gooch find that such pathways operate in five basic kinds of military failure, namely, failures to learn, to anticipate, and to adapt. When two kinds of failure combine, this is aggregate failure, and when all three come together, the resulting disaster is a compound failure.

Cohen and Gooch then look at Pearl Harbor as an example of their method, which comprises firstly asking precisely what the failure was; then analyzing the critical tasks that went unfulfilled or uncompleted; then thirdly attempting a "layered analysis" of behavior at different levels of the system; fourthly an analytical matrix is constructed, i.e., a chart presenting key problems at different levels; and finally from this chart are derived the pathways to misfortune.

Cohen and Gooch are now ready to analyze their case studies, which are: American antisubmarine warfare in 1942 (failure to learn); the Israel Defense Force in 1973 (failure to anticipate); the British at Gallipoli in August 1915 (failure to adapt); the defeat of the US Eighth Army in Korea, Nov-Dec 1950 (aggregate failure to learn and anticipate); and the French Army and Air Force, May-June 1940 (catastrophic or compound failure of all three primary failures).

Cohen and Gooch lay heavy stress on what one may call the structural causes of military misfortune, i.e., problems inherent in the organization and particularly in the system or process by which that organization operates. This reviewer strongly supports such an approach, because it enables the military historian to avoid the tedious, traditional and one-sided emphasis on individual heroes and scapegoats. But there is a danger that if the particular system is seen as the ultimate source of failure, then the actors within that system are reduced to powerless characters within a deterministic structure. This difficulty in Cohen and Gooch's analysis is seen, for example, in the Gallipoli chapter, where the authors conclude that the failure was due to systematic and organizational weaknesses and not to individual shortcomings; yet earlier it is pointed out that "The matrix shows that the primary pathways to misfortune originated at two separate levels: with the expedition and operation commanders." (p. 146). Similarly, in the concluding chapter, the authors argue that some generals *do* make a difference, i.e., Matthew Ridgway in Korea, but that in other cases, command failures cannot be reduced to flaws of character or intellect (pp. 231-232). This is to argue that in some cases, the historian may zero in on the commander as the source of failure, but in other cases, the historian should stay with the organization-system type of analysis that Cohen and Gooch emphasize. Perhaps the solution is to paraphrase Marx and say that military commanders make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please And this is really Cohen and Gooch's point — that the prevailing concept of command at any one point in time, i.e., the system, determines to a considerable extent how military commanders and their subordinates act, and sometimes fail disastrously.

One other point is that the three primary types of failure do seem to lend themselves to a greater degree of psychological analysis. Individuals and groups do "paint a picture," or operate within mental paradigms — the difficulty is to get such individuals and groups to change their minds when contrasting information becomes available. Hence cognitive dissonance theory may be useful here. But this is to quibble with an original and ground-breaking study of military misfortunes. Cohen and Gooch have pointed a new direction for military historians to follow in this stimulating book — it should be required reading for all who are interested in the history of warfare.

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