

to Restore U.S. Special Operations Forces”), believe it or not, contains humorous moments and insightful comments regarding the Pentagon’s bureaucratic interaction with a very political Congress. Another, Harry Summer’s “A War Is a War Is a War Is a War,” while attempting to untangle the conceptual knots of low-intensity conflict, demonstrates once again his misunderstanding of the nature of the Vietnam War.<sup>2</sup> The most original contribution is William V. O’Brien’s “Counterterror, Law, and Morality.” O’Brien discusses the nature of terror and counterterror as political tools in late twentieth century conflict, then moves on to an examination of the war decision law and just cause doctrine, and finally applies his analysis to the American raid on Libya in 1986. He concludes that the action was a just, effective, and moral means to defend America’s legitimate interests against illegitimate attacks. O’Brien’s more general accomplishment is that he has provided a moral foundation on which a state can establish and implement an effective counterterror policy. And as a policy influencing document his is probably the most important chapter in the book. Even so, his words speak more to special operations than to the larger subject of low-intensity conflict.

Taken together the books tell us that we live in melancholy and imperfect times. However, just as Brogan tells the tale of “Man’s inhumanity to man” since 1945, Thompson gives us modest hope for the future.

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#### Endnotes

1. John Schlight, “Low intensity Conflict,” in *Army History*, (Fall 1990), p. 5.
2. The debate over whether it was a conventional or guerrilla war is sterile and wasteful. We should realize once and for all that it was a revolutionary war, a type of war that has been defined and explained over and over by Vietnamese theorists and practitioners such as Vo Nguyen Giap and Truong Chinh. A concise and elegant inquiry into this approach is John Gates’, “People’s War in Vietnam,” *The Journal of Military History*, 54, no. 3 (July 1990), pp. 325-44.

Adkin, Mark. *Urgent Fury: The Battle for Grenada*. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath, 1989.

Grenada, one of the long string of islands which mark the boundary between the Atlantic and the Caribbean, has an agreeable climate, but a disagreeable history.

Its modern history begins in 1974 when Britain thankfully cast loose the island’s colonial bonds. They were caught by Sir Eric Gairy, a native

strongman who ruled until overthrown five years later in a coup engineered by another prominent local, Maurice Bishop.

Bishop, whose admiration for the Soviet and Cuban way seemed boundless, ruled, as Gairy had, with a heavy hand. He attempted to militarize the male population and, to help him along, brought in advisors from both the Cuban and Soviet armies. The advisors, of course, brought with them what was, for this tiny island without foreign enemies, a substantial arsenal. Fidel Castro, Bishop's close friend, provided about 600 laborers to build a jet-capable airfield at the island's southern tip. For the tourist trade, said Bishop's government when queried about the big field. For Castro's troop-carriers flying to and from Angola, muttered others. Despite his harsh ways, Bishop managed to remain popular with many, perhaps most, Grenadians.

But not with all of them. In October 1983 a gang of Marxist-Leninist ideologues in the government, led by Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Coard, carried out their own coup, with the full support of Bishop's new army. Despite, or perhaps because of Bishop's popularity, the plotters murdered the deposed leader and many of his supporters.

Tom Adams, prime minister of Barbados, one of the neighboring island states, and Eugenia Charles, prime minister of Dominica, another such state, led a Caribbean movement to bring United States forces in to rescue the unfortunate Grenadians from their bloodthirsty new overlords. Unavoidably, President Forbes Burnham, despot of Guyana, was told of the movement. Burnham informed Grenada's new tyrants that they were likely to be visited by the Colossus of the North. Coard and Co. called on Castro for help. But Fidel, aghast at the murder of his friend, offered none. He did, however, see to it that his airfield workmen were armed and organized militarily. If shot at, they were to shoot back.

President Reagan and his State Department acted swiftly and competently. Their aim, they said, was to ensure the safety of several hundred young Americans studying at an island medical school. Under the theatrical title URGENT FURY, within a few days the US army, brought in by the air force, seized the unfinished jet airfield and fought it out with the Cuban workmen. The marines, brought in by the navy, first seized a commuter airstrip and then took St. George's, the island's capital. One way or another the American forces rescued Sir Paul Scoon, the governor-general of Grenada, and, almost as an afterthought, the students. The latter, it turned out, had never felt endangered.

Most of the Grenadian troops quickly faded away, while the Americans rounded up the Coards, their military henchmen, and the Cubans. The Cubans were sent home and, guarded by troops and police from some of the neighboring Caribbean islands, the criminal chieftains went to jail while awaiting trial by reconstituted local civil authority.

Among the Americans, the diplomats, the marines, and the navy's amphibious sailors did particularly well. But the performance of the intelligence agencies and military planners in Washington, Norfolk, and elsewhere,

the special forces such as Rangers and Seals, the airborne troops, and the naval gunners and aviators who occasionally got into the act, left something to be desired. Some of their problems stemmed from the fact that few of them had good radio communications with any of the others, and none of them had suitable maps. When it was all over, the Pentagon handed out awards and promotions with astonishing generosity. But the officer who commanded the most successful unit of all, the 2nd battalion, 8th Marines, received neither award nor promotion. Evidently, the Defense Department had, and liked, its own version of the old rule that no good deed shall go unpunished.

The author, Major Mark Adkin, is an Englishman who at the time of the Grenada episode was serving as an officer of the Barbados Defence Force. There he was well positioned to see and to judge those events he saw. Though his book does not answer all questions about this event now eight years in the past, it answers a good many of them. Major Adkin is to be thanked for this.

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Gamba-Stonehouse, Virginia. *Strategy in the Southern Oceans: A South American View*. London: Pinter, 1989.

*Strategy in the Southern Oceans: A South American View* is a misentitled book. What Ms. Gamba-Stonehouse presents is "An Argentine View," which is also in need of exploration.

The author gives the reader some valuable insights into the world as seen from Argentina, which is surely different from looking at it from the top down, geographically speaking. Her point of view offers a fresh look from this unique angle. And there are many statements worth pondering. For example, "Historically Argentina has felt that the most effective way of gaining recognition as a dominant power in South America was to offer an alternative to U.S. influence . . ." (p. 43), an opinion shared by this reviewer. Gamba-Stonehouse states that both Argentina and Brazil seek outlets through west coast countries to directly reach the Pacific (p. 65) and she down plays the military significance of the water routes around the tip of the continent. (p. 64) The author believes that the United States strategically divides North and South America at the northern boundary of the Amazon Basin (p. 3) and she makes a convincing argument to support this statement. She points out that the deterioration of communications between the United States and the region in recent years is due to the withdrawal of military aid and implementation of human rights policies of the Carter Administration (p. 4), hardly a fresh observation but worth restating. Through her research and writing, the reader will also gain an appreciation of how close Argentina and Chile came to war in 1978.