

Manwaring, Max G., ed. *The Uncomfortable Wars: Toward a New Paradigm of Low Intensity Conflict*. Boulder, CO: Westview, 1991.

In the opening essay of this collection General John Galvin calls for a new understanding of war not as a conventional contest between rival armies but as a struggle that “encompasses entire populations” in the highly politicized arena of low-intensity conflict. It is a tall order and one that is only partially filled by the remainder of the book.

While *Uncomfortable Wars* contains many valuable articles, the work as a whole suffers from a divided purpose. As the subtitle suggests, the book seeks to construct a theoretical framework for low-intensity conflict, particularly counterinsurgency. At the same time this contribution to the Westview Studies in Regional Security series examines the threats to United States interests in Latin America. To fulfill both objectives, to derive a paradigm from a regional context, would require the unified effort of a single pen, and Manwaring might have done better to produce this work as a monograph rather than as an anthology. He has written or co-authored half the essays and by far the best of them. With its discussion of the multi-faceted as opposed to multi-dimensional nature of counter-revolutionary conflict, “Toward an Understanding of Insurgency Wars” breaks new ground in what is becoming a heavily studied area. The articles on the conflicts in El Salvador and Peru, written by Manwaring in cooperation with John Fishel and Courtney Prisk, are balanced and incisive. Some may disagree with the authors’ perspective, but few will question their meticulous research and in-depth analysis.

While the other essays in this collection contain valuable insights, they all too clearly reflect the outmoded thinking of the Cold War. This tendency is most noticeable in General Fred Woerner’s article, “The Strategic Imperatives for the United States in Latin America,” which is chocked full of anti-communist platitudes. The complaint that “legislative restraints reduce the effectiveness of the security assistance program” reflects the “turn us loose” mentality of Vietnam days. Perhaps this rhetoric should be excused because the essay was based on Congressional testimony delivered in 1988, before the opening of the Berlin Wall. However, this article, which contains only two footnotes, should have been thoroughly revised before publication in a scholarly work.

Courtney Prisk’s “The Umbrella of Legitimacy” also reflects the ideological bias of the Cold War, although the article does provide insights into the Latin American insurgencies. Of the five indicators of legitimacy identified by Prisk, the government’s ability to “extract and distribute resources” and “a fair and just judicial system” are probably most important. The Marxist nature of both the FMLN and the Sendero Luminoso does not establish the primacy of ideology in insurgent wars. People denied adequate food, shelter, clothing, medical care, and education are not terribly interested in such abstractions as “moral legitimacy.” Those who live in fear of both the insurgents and the security forces will be far less concerned with “free and democratic elections”

than is the US State Department. To his credit Prisk insists that the United States must take the human rights record of its prospective clients into account, but his criticism of oppressive regimes is uneven. Quite willing to justify the isolation of Cuba, he down-plays the degree to which the US has supported equally oppressive but non-communist governments. Salvador Allende, whom the United States opposed, was after all a democratically elected Marxist. Legitimacy transcends political ideology.

The problems of redefining United States military doctrine to focus on low-intensity conflict are addressed by General Galvin, Ambassador Edwin Corr, and Dr. William Olson. Galvin calls upon a new generation of officers to abandon the traditional "fortress-cloister mentality" of the army and develop new, innovative approaches to low-intensity conflict. Corr astutely points out that America's difficulty with low-intensity conflict stems more from the "World War II syndrome" than from the "Vietnam Syndrome." Finally, Olson presents an excellent analysis of the institutional resistance to doctrinal change of any kind.

Despite a certain lack of unity and cohesiveness *Uncomfortable Wars* has much to commend it. What the work lacks as a whole is made up for by the value of its component essays, all of which advance understanding of low-intensity conflict. Some of these authors raise important issues that deserve further study in complete monographs.

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Collins, John M. *America's Small Wars: Lessons for the Future*. Washington: Brassey's, 1991.

John Collins, senior defense analyst at the Library of Congress and author of a series of works on the US-Soviet military balance, has produced, at the request of the House Armed Services Committee, this book on the history of American low-intensity warfare. While the subtitle promises "Lessons for the Future," the work consists largely of two annexes, one listing and describing sixty cases and the other detailing the actions of Congress in each case. The two annexes are preceded by 89 pages of text, including numerous charts and graphs, but only five pages are devoted to drawing lessons from the past conflicts for the future.

Collins defines low-intensity conflict as anything between "normal peacetime competition" and mid-intensity wars like Korea, Vietnam and Desert Storm. (p. 4) Using this definition, he comes up with no less than sixty cases of US involvement in low-intensity conflict since 1899. A similar study by the author of this review in 1989 uncovered only fifteen such cases.¹ Upon closer examination, however, the difference between the two nearly disap-