

an effort to bind together many partial interests. Reductions of military expenditures do not easily yield “peace dividends,” US job losses will be very difficult to reverse and it is doubtful that radical regimes in the Third World have good development records.

The criticism of Wolpin’s recommendations also applies to his historical analysis. There is too much post-hoc rationalizing, too many facts and trends linked with each other. Sometimes, the link is reduced to a hint at a great conspiracy, for instance in the case of the Kennedy murder which was followed by changes in military policy towards the Third World. Such obscurancy — or is it even paranoia? — detracts from the basically sound analysis.

Wolpin has collected a large bag of facts and views which he presents in his twelve chapters. While the data is neither new nor unusual Wolpin’s analysis often deviates from the conventional. Readers can expect Wolpin to be controversial both in detail and in general conclusions. He is quick to jump to strong views.

Wolpin wants to offer an “alternative populist strategy.” (p. xii) He seeks “National Security,” in the sense that the security of the inhabitants of the United States is optimized. He wants to see US manufacturing strengthened and jobs for the workers in the US. Mostly, though by far not always, he arrives at positions that are congruent with what one would label as “left wing.” His position is best characterized as that of a left-wing populist.

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O’Sullivan, Patrick. *Terrain and Tactics*. New York: Greenwood, 1991.

As the title suggests, this volume examines the important but often overlooked nexus of military action and geography. The author draws from his many previous works to present in one book a range of topics from geopolitics to guerrilla warfare.

The book begins with a series of descriptive examples from recent wars in the Third World which demonstrate the underlying, powerful effects of terrain on the outcome of military conflict. It then proceeds from the macro-level topics of geopolitics, revolution and “classical spatial ploys” to the micro-effects of terrain on military tactics, insurgency and urban warfare. Each chapter is supported by a range of well-informed examples and interesting detail.

O’Sullivan carefully acknowledges that the causes of war are found in cultural, sociological, economic and political factors but reminds us that “we need to turn to physical and human geography to trace the course of war.” He contends that “all political conflicts are territorial. They are contests for power over certain parts of the earth” — a lesson that is liable to be lost among the proliferating

examinations of war in various social scientific disciplines which have arisen over the last century.

The author does not fall prey to the romance of an unidimensional analysis of military conflict. He wishes to focus on this one important influence among many. Most factors that produce and define war are fluid and changeable while the salience of geographical features changes slowly, if at all, so that geography has a strong, independent influence on military conflict. In the end, "jurisdiction and sovereignty," the tangible manifestations of political power, "are defined in spatial terms."

Chapters on "The World at War" and "The Geography of Revolution" focus particularly on the inverse correlation between power and distance (as suggested by Kenneth Boulding in *Conflict and Defense*, 1963). These geographical analyses offer respite from the plethora of modern views of conflict as something determined primarily by societal or psychological factors and remind the reader that the technological triumphs of our time applied to warfare have not annulled the influence of the physical environment on human conduct.

The weak points of the book are two. First, the author avoids any definition of either politics or power and leaves the reader to infuse his own meanings into these words loaded with confusion and vastly disparate connotations. Second, while each chapter is interesting and convincing, the book as a whole tends to be episodic and inconsistent in its thrust. Two chapters demonstrate this frustration.

A chapter on guerrilla warfare concentrates on the relation of the slope of terrain and precipitation to the probability of guerrilla success. We learn that the author's multivariate analysis reveals no correlation between precipitation and guerrilla wins but that slope has an inverse correlation with guerrilla success. No further explanations are offered. Why the author makes this analysis is the source of some puzzlement.

O'Sullivan explains that as it is conventionally thought that guerrillas benefit from cover and concealment, guerrillas should have an advantage where there is greater cover and greater opportunities for concealment. From there, he implies that vegetation provides cover and concealment, precipitation provides for vegetation, and therefore a measure of precipitation should provide us with a correlative to success. Yet, even without a multivariate regression, one can see that such an argument is false. Cover and concealment may have nothing to do with vegetation while precipitation may have nothing to do with appropriate vegetative cover as parts of eastern Africa demonstrate.

In the same chapter, O'Sullivan's analysis shows that "guerrillas have won most frequently in regions of less than average slopes" but no explanation is offered as to why this might be. His non-geographical conclusion asserts that "what tips the balance of numbers in war is the will and ruthlessness of the protagonists."

The book's penultimate chapter proposes that the case of Northern Ireland be used as a "sustained example of the interaction of geopolitics, strategy, tactics,

*Winter 1993*

and terrain.” But in these thirteen pages the different strands of the book are not brought together. After pressing the point that the tenacity of the UK in the northern counties was essentially due to anti-communism and a NATO obligation to defend the GIUK gap, the author asserts that the Provos were “apolitical revolutionaries.” In the next sentence, however, the IRA are described as “republican nationalists” who wanted “to create a united republic by force of arms” and, in the next sentence, that “playing politics was merely a means to this end.” Thus is the thrust of the book thwarted by an undefined view of politics and of power, and limited by a desultory analysis of geographical effects on political conflict.

Nonetheless, this slender and well-written volume would be an excellent text for university courses on political geography or military science. Students will benefit from the constant attention to geographical effects on politics and find a beginning point for discussion and prediction. The range of topics addressed in *Terrain and Tactics*, the range of examples used, and the fundamental importance of geographical influences make the book an important addition to a small and undervalued modern literature on the geography of conflict.

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