

Bergerud explains that his aim was to “view all the major parts of the soldiers’ world,” (p. xi) **not** to produce a unit history. Ultimately Bergerud hopes to “help people of today better understand what the Vietnam war was like in fact, not fiction.” (p. xi) If so, one must question the contribution embodied here. Recent literature on Vietnam has been overwhelmingly preoccupied with the experience (the “what it was like”) of that place, both in histories and in (serious) fiction. Every account tells of the exotic land, the climate, impressions of the Vietnamese, and there is plenty to read on weapons and tactics. There are whole books, more than one, on the problems of the M-16 rifle for example, problems which typically feature in many Vietnam books, so that the six pages devoted to it here are not unusual. The same is true of the discussions of tunnel warfare, B-52 strikes, and fancy division base camps. Conversely, something missing from *Red Thunder, Tropic Lightning* which totally dominated the **experience** of GIs in Vietnam was the impact, on every facet of life (from willingness to take risks to patrol tactics, leadership quality, disposition to rely upon artillery and air support, and so on), of the 365-day tour of duty. The green soldier/short-timer dichotomy had enormous effects on the conduct of the 25th Division’s war, with commensurate need for treatment in a work seeking to illuminate the experience of Vietnam.

Finally, the preoccupation of the Vietnam literature with retailing individual experience poses special problems for any effort to create a distinctive work. Bergerud’s writing is straightforward and his account competent, but it lacks the flair of a personal story, such as Robert Mason’s *Chickenhawk* (1983). Nor is this approach superior to unit oral histories like Matthew Brennan’s *Headhunters* (1987). As an overview social history, *Red Thunder, Tropic Lightning* makes and implicit assumption that experience was uniform, i.e., that there was no change (in effect, no “history”) between 1965 and 1970. Eric Bergerud clearly has assembled a fine cross-section of recollections of 25th Infantry Division veterans. In doing so he accumulated the raw materials for a distinctive Vietnam book, one that spoke to *Tropic Lightning*’s social environment **and** its history. I wish *Red Thunder, Tropic Lightning* were that book.

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Gottlieb, Gidon. *Nation Against State: A New Approach to Ethnic Conflicts and the Decline of Sovereignty*. New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1993.

In these closing years of the twentieth century nationalism seems to have established itself once again as the foremost geopolitical trend. From the territories of the former Yugoslavia to the newly independent states of eastern Europe and the former USSR, nationalism has caused a surge in the birth of new nation-states from the wreckage of the former communist empire. This increase, however, may not be

a phenomenon limited to Europe or the former communist world. There are distinct indications that nationalism may soon be inflicting its wrath in India, Iran, Iraq, and various nations of Africa.

This present rise of nationalism, the move toward national self determination, and the resulting increase in nation-states is the subject of Gidon Gottlieb's *Nation Against State*. Gottlieb argues that both the realist school and the Westphalian system of sovereign nation-states have come under significant assault in the post-Cold War world. Notions of traditional sovereignty are no longer viable in an era where information, people, and wealth can be swiftly transferred worldwide and in disregard to national frontiers. According to Gottlieb, there is a need for fresh thinking in dealing with the rise of nationalism and the demand for ethnic sovereignty. A new paradigm must be developed to meet the rising call for national self determination and the explosion of nation-states. The author acknowledges that the abstract Wilsonian notion that all religious, cultural, or linguistic groups that want their own state should have one is difficult to oppose. The misfortune of complying with such demands lies in the need to move state borders. Historic lands of ethnic, religious, or language groups overlap or may be claimed by more than one group. Any moving of borders to accommodate one group will more than likely be met with objection from another, thus resulting in conflict.

Gottlieb proposes a unique and plausible solution to the problem. Since separating nations from host states will lead in most cases to open conflict, Gottlieb suggests instituting the "state plus nation," paradigm in which national homelands can overlap with existing states in a multitiered system of sovereignty. Such non-state sovereignty could become associated with a national homeland which would sometimes stretch across state boundaries. For example, a Kurdish national homeland could establish the basis for an all Kurdish national authority with common rule of Kurds in Iraq, Turkey, Syria, and Iran, but would not effect the sovereignty of the individual host states. Those Kurds who wish not to be included could opt out of the arrangement and would come under the authority of the host state.

The thrust of Gottlieb's argument and resolution to the nationalism problem rests on the notion that all power does not have to be accorded to a single sovereign state. Power can be sorted into functions and allocated among different authorities which have overlapping jurisdiction. Gottlieb's book presents a fresh, fascinating, and dual purpose model; a model which could effectively confront the old dilemma of nationalism while providing a new way of viewing global order and security in the post-Cold War world.

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