

BOOK REVIEWS

Record, Jeffrey. *Hollow Victory: A Contrary View of the Gulf War*. Washington, DC: Brassey's (US), 1993.

Jeffrey Record has done a superior job in pulling together what may not qualify totally as "a Contrary View of the Gulf War," but one which is comprehensive, balanced and sober. If that is the criterion for "Contrary," then he has succeeded after all.

His opening chapter, "Was War Avoidable," which follows an extended prologue masquerading as the first chapter, should be read in concert with Elstain *et al.*, *But Was It Just? Reflections on the Morality of the Persian Gulf War*. These two works dovetail the issues of Just War and international diplomacy with satisfying completeness. Record succumbs, as do most, to the tales of unremitting Iraqi brutality toward the Kurds, but correctly identifies the impact of those tales upon the American Congress. (It continues to be a mystery how Iranian brutalities remain so removed from view.) His depiction of "Iraqi Desperateness" is likewise satisfying in its brief, but thorough description of the breadth of the impending Iraqi economic disaster. Had a Chapter 11 bankruptcy been available in the international money market, it would have been Iraq's only way out — failing that . . . In short, Record's description of events is sound.

The next to last chapter, "Lessons, Nonlessons, and Others' Lessons," is a wonderfully useful study of how to study a war. In that regard it may be the most useful chapter of the entire book and should be read by all senior military leaders and analysts.

Record's first Lesson, that Lessons are political products, is absolutely true. As a laborer on the Tait Report, the US Army's first attempt at an After Action Review/Lessons Learned exercise, I witnessed the distortion of observations to fit the agendas of schools and branches. In fairness to those reviewing authorities it is true that where one stands conditions what may be seen and how things may look. Record's next Lesson is particularly astute — what were the nonlessons and why? To the ever-lasting credit of the Tait group, there was some attention paid to things that did not break because they were not tested or were not tested enough. The group also noted that the apparent success of the Goldwater-Nichols legislation was in need of a very large caveat — there was only CINC to support, and therefore no competition for resources as was the case in World War II, which constantly bedeviled the Pacific Theater, in particular.

In a Strategic Studies Institute study completed shortly before the Iraqi invasion, the authors (including this reviewer) noted that any attempt at serious US military involvement in the Gulf was not going to be feasible except at huge expense because of systematic deficiencies. This study was briefed to CINCCENT, General Schwarzkopf, who applauded it and asked what was being done to bring it to the

attention of people who really mattered — at the National Security decision making level. Record correctly identifies the deficiencies and their impact upon decision making and execution.

Record handles the issue of casualties gingerly, but with satisfying historical background. The premise that Americans cannot take casualties isn't necessarily true. In fact, it is dangerous to stress that factor so as to create false expectations. Although the mood of the American public was ambivalent about our involvement in Somalia, for example, the immediate public reaction after the October '93 debacle was to go in in strength, "kick-ass," and then get out.

Record is most decidedly correct on the non-test of the All Volunteer Force. It is at this point that the casualty issue has more particular relevance. American military replacement operations have never been satisfactory, have always been a day late, and have usually been insensitive to a degree unimaginable in a democratic state. While there was no doubt that, although the pool of leadership in the Army was more than satisfactory (reputedly three deep in every command position, by some accounts), availability of men and women to sustain any kind of rotation policy and absorb moderate casualties was more problematical. The pundits who noted that only a quarter to a third of the Army was deployed failed to account for the continued need to man and operate the global infrastructure and support sensitive places like the Korean DMZ. Raw numbers never provide a satisfactory analysis. Of course, the manpower needs could have been met by a full call out of the Army Reserves and National Guard with the attendant 120-180 day train up requirement. As noted in our pre-war study, it could be done, but at great expense.

Sustainment is one of those areas that remains a very big question. Logistics control was lost early in the operation and recovery was only partial, despite the somewhat rosier picture Lieutenant General Pagonis has painted in *Moving Mountains: Lessons in Leadership and Logistics From the Gulf War*. Logistics were only on the road to recovery when the shooting stopped. However, no one ever ran out of anything for more than a moment, including gas. Colonel Jim King's 24th Division Support Command had over 600,000 gallons of fuel on hand and available for issue when the 24th Division was ordered to cease operations. But had the war gone on for another week or so But it would not have done so, so it is idle to speculate.

Many of the other nonlessons are valid, but mundane and comprise a host of admitted highly improbable scenarios, e.g. no lessons learned about nuclear warfare.

On the other hand the "Lessons Others Can Learn" is an excellent primer for what Americans as well as their potential adversaries should be aware of — we are unpredictable and dangerously capable if angered. These are lessons we teach to the future senior Army leadership at the US Army War College. They are lessons well worth a year's study as they encompass virtually every facet of national security policy formulation, interpretation, and execution.

Having said all this, I wonder if I am the person to review this book after all. I share almost all of Record's views and do so from a position of a relatively well-informed observer who was involved in the lesson learning process, has lectured and written on the war and debated it in seminar. This is a good book even though much of it is self-evident. It is the kind of book senior leaders should read every year or so: the splash of sobering cold water we all need from time to time to awaken our real selves. It is a book Congress should read in order to be better able to formulate the tough questions at budget time. It is a book for the American public to read to remind themselves of the fragility of any victory — to keep before their eyes the proverb that "Pride goeth before a fall."

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Kemp, Geoffrey. *Forever Enemies?: American Foreign Policy and the Islamic Republic of Iran*. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for Peace, 1993.

The Islamic revolution of Iran in 1978-79 has not only drastically changed the shape of politics in that country, but has also similarly affected Iran's ties with its neighbors and its former patron, the United States. The duration of this bad blood between Washington and Teheran has been only about sixteen years, but these ties may not get better anytime soon. That seems to be the logic underneath the tongue-in-cheek title of Geoffrey Kemp's monograph, *Forever Enemies?*

In the post-Cold War world, when the arch enemy of the United States, the Soviet Union, has become non-existent, the need for an enemy has remained very much alive. After all, the winning grand strategy, containment, worked very well for the United States and the Western alliance for about forty-five years. Washington had gotten so used to having an enemy that US foreign policy misses having one now. Iran, though no match for American military might in the 1990s, has demonstrated a political will to challenge the only remaining superpower. But it has to be careful about not crossing that imaginary line when the United States would unleash its military might on Teheran. Iran's arch enemy, Iraq, is still bleeding profusely from the punishment it received from the United States in 1991.

There are a number of conflicting issues. In two arenas, Iran appears to be — at least so says the Clinton administration and the preceding one — challenging Washington. The Persian Gulf and Lebanon were two areas where Iranian activities never really decelerated, as Washington sees it. But what is the reality? Does Iran have the right to create a sphere of influence in the Persian Gulf? If so, what should be the nature of its activities? What are Iran's legitimate interests in the Persian Gulf area? How should it go about pursuing them? Is the Iranian presence in Lebanon a legitimate one? None of these questions are directly addressed by Kemp.