The Human Face of War
by Jim Storr
London: Continuum International Publishing, 2009
240 pp. $120
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Reviewed by
CLINTON J. ANCKER III

At a time when debates on a range of issues are taking place within the defense community, the ability to step back from the particulars and look at first principles is particularly important. This book, an important work by a serious student of the profession of arms, does just that. Surveying an array of disciplines including history, psychology, systems theory, complexity theory, and philosophy, Storr (a former British army officer) looks at what a theory of combat should include, and then provides one. He goes on to apply that theory to the design of organizations and staffs, leadership, information management, and the creation of cohesion in units. In doing so, he takes on many currently popular theories such as effects-based operations, the observe-orient-decide-act loop, and the use of postmodern theory and language.

Its title may lead readers to expect *The Human Face of War* to be similar to Richard Holmes' *Acts of War* or John Keegan's *The Face of Battle*, both of which focused on how people behave in combat. Rather, this book is about how that behavior affects how we think about battle or, more precisely, how we develop our theories of warfare. It is a serious and profound look at how and why human nature should guide the theories of combat and their implications for doctrine, organizations, training, and leader development.

The first three chapters discuss theories of conflict: what they should do, how they should be developed, and why many recent attempts at theories are really shallow approaches based on a single governing idea, ignoring many of the contradictory or more complex aspects of warfare. Storr discusses rationalism, determinism, and empiricism, dissecting why each is or is not a valid approach to a working theory of combat. He clearly establishes why rationalism fails us in our quest for a theory, and why empiricism is an appropriate approach. It boils down to a simple test: does our theory work in the current circumstances, and do we think it will work in the future? Even if a theory appears to be working, we must recognize that it is never more than a best guess that must be continually revised based on the results of actual operations. Nothing we propose is ever an immutable law, but rather a hypothesis to be tested and, if found wanting, discarded in favor of one that does work, at least for now. Combining a healthy pragmatism with empiricism should produce something that works for a given set of circumstances. Storr's position is best summed up with this passage: "[C]ritically, military theory should not be a case of 'this is the right course of action,' but rather 'doing this will probably have beneficial outcome'" (p. 29).

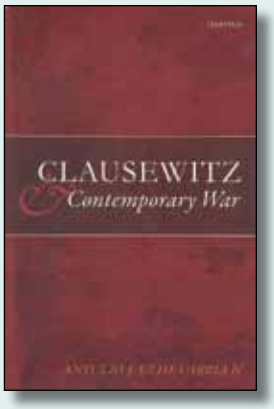
The third chapter, "The Nature of Combat," is a detailed look at why combat is not, and cannot be, deterministic. This discussion alone is worth the price of the book. Anyone who believes that we can predict with any degree of certainty how a specific action will turn out should read this chapter. What results from Storr's effort is a superb guide for how to approach the conduct of operations. Much of it focuses on the need to act in order to provide concrete evidence of how things will evolve, all the time maintaining an open mind instead of following a predetermined script. While much of this approach is not new, Storr's explanation of why it is necessary is compelling. The chapter further looks at some advanced research done by the British Defence Operational Analysis Centre on the factors that do have a significant impact on the outcome of battles. Four factors tended to dominate, regardless of force ratios: surprise, air superiority, aggressive ground reconnaissance, and shock. Storr closes the chapter with a discussion of the much-denigrated and misunderstood idea of attrition. His defense of attrition runs counter to much of what is being bandied about today but, when put in context, is quite convincing. All these factors are linked to the fundamental idea that combat is about how humans behave in battle, not some mechanistic approach based on a thorough systems analysis.

After developing his precepts in the first three chapters, Storr uses the rest of the book to deal with specifics about how to apply those precepts to "Tools and Models," "Shock and Surprise," "Tactics and Organizations," "Commanding the Battle," "The Soul of an Army" (a fascinating discussion of leadership styles), and "Regulators and Ratcatchers" (a discussion of personality types based on the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and how they relate to military leadership). The discussion in these chapters presents a superb treatise on the use of examples and counterexamples to support points of view. A single counterexample is not sufficient to falsify an argument, for there are no absolutes. Rather, we are looking for patterns that appear better than others, the fact that they sometimes fail notwithstanding.

The Human Face of War is a densely packed book that takes on much of the conventional wisdom about theories of combat. Whether one agrees or not, the ideas are all amply documented and well reasoned. One would ignore them at the peril of overlooking insights provided by superb research. While Storr's stated focus is the tactical level of war, the discussions of what makes for good theory are applicable at any level of war. The book is also clearly focused on classic combat operations. While there are some who feel that the days of major combat operations are over, much evidence exists that small unit combined arms operations encompass the skills needed for any kind of combat. The idea that we will not have to fight a "conventional" fight again because we are so good at it only holds as long as we are good at it. This book can go a long way toward helping to build a force that is formidable in the conduct of combined arms combat.

If there is a downside to this book, it is the absurd price of $120. One can only hope that some American publisher will produce it in paperback at a reasonable price. It deserves to be widely read by those who think seriously about the profession of arms. **JFQ**

Colonel Clinton J. Ancker III, USA (Ret.), is Director of the Combined Arms Doctrine Directorate at the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.



Clausewitz and Contemporary War
by Antulio J. Echevarria II
New York: Oxford University Press, 2007
210 pp. $99.00
ISBN: 978–0–19–923191–1

Reviewed by
THOMAS BRUSCINO

Interpreting the writing of Carl von Clausewitz continues to be a cottage industry; in the last few years, Jon Tetsuro Sumida, Hew Strachan, and Andreas Herberg-Rothe have all added to a library already well stocked with the works of Michael Howard, Peter Paret, and Michael Handel, to name but a few. Indeed, Antulio Echevarria's *Clausewitz and Contemporary War* builds on his significant writings on the work and influence of the Prussian theorist. What can one review add to this voluminous literature? Very little, except a reaffirmation that engaging that literature is still worthwhile for any serious student of military affairs.

With *Clausewitz and Contemporary War*, Echevarria, the Director of Research at the Strategic Studies Institute, has provided one of the more useful contributions to the Clausewitz canon. Anyone who has grappled with *On War* is well aware of the difficulty of the material, and Echevarria, like so many before him, has set out to clarify it, but not at the expense of losing the subtlety and nuance of the original work. For that reason, the first part of his study, on the purpose and method of *On War*, is also the most difficult. Clausewitz sought an understanding or theory of war that transcended specific time and place while recognizing that all real wars remained constrained by their specific context. For example, his discussion of absolute war represented one aspect of a generalized theory, but the probabilities of reality kept actual wars from ever reaching their absolute nature. For Clausewitz, such testing through experience and history of the tension between the ideal and the real improved the understanding of war far more than the declaration of fixed principles found in the work of some of his contemporaries, including Antoine-Henri Jomini.

That said, Echevarria spends most of part two of his work explaining what Clausewitz did find to be universal in the nature of war, focusing especially on the importance of violence. Too many interpreters have misunderstood Clausewitz's emphasis on combat to mean the search for decisive battle, when in reality he was making the assertion that war itself was inherently about the use of violence to achieve some purpose. Policy determines the purpose of the war, and politics (the interplay among political, military, social, and economic institutions) affect the purpose and the conduct of the war; but war itself is always about the use of violence.

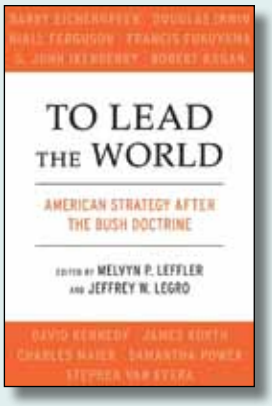
Where things get a bit less familiar in today's terms is the discussion of strategy, part three of *Clausewitz and Contemporary War*. Clausewitz understood strategy in the classical sense, as "the use of engagements to accomplish the purpose of the war," by which he meant the balancing of ends, ways, and means to use violence or, according to Echevarria, the threat of violence to achieve the purpose of the war. In that sense, it is useful to remember that the book is called *On War*, not *On Statecraft*. The threat of war is the domain of statecraft. The threat of violence in war is a dimension of strategy.

Lest those definitions sound too restrictive for contemporary war, Echevarria argues in one of the more contentious sections of his book that Clausewitz said war "occurs whenever one party resists the violent actions of another" (p. 145). Therefore, most of the missions of the military today, to include arms control, peace operations, humanitarian assistance, combating terrorism, and civil support in domestic emergencies, reside in the domain of Clausewitz's definition of strategy. Echevarria probably reaches too far here—some missions carried out by the military belong to statecraft, not war—but then again from the military's perspective, the principles of strategy probably still apply.

Those principles, which Echevarria calls more subjective and flexible than laws, constitute much of *On War* and the final part of *Clausewitz and Contemporary War*. They include the issues of strength of defense and attack, superiority of numbers, concentration of forces, economy of force, surprise, perseverance, turning movements, culminating points, and the much-debated center of gravity (Echevarria makes a solid case for its continued relevance). Much of this section will be familiar to modern readers, even if many of the principles laid out by Clausewitz now more properly belong at the operational level—a level he did not recognize because it muddied conceptual clarity. That said, it would be a trap for readers to assume that only the familiar is relevant to contemporary military studies.

Perhaps the best that can be said for Echevarria's book is that it is not easy. Whether Clausewitz's intention or not, the effort to find order across his work is exactly the sort of mental exercise that is necessary to find order in either making or studying war, in this or any other era. The easy practice is to take the parts that make the most sense from Clausewitz (or Echevarria, Strachan, Sumida, and others) and excerpt them to prove military theory bona fides. But that is precisely what must be avoided. We must continue to do the hard work of struggling with Clausewitz and his interpreters because after all these years, war is simple, but the simplest thing is still difficult. **JFQ**

Thomas Bruscino is an Assistant Professor of Military History at the U.S. Army School of Advanced Military Studies.



To Lead the World: American Strategy after the Bush Doctrine
Edited by Melvyn P. Leffler and Jeffrey W. Legro
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008
303 pp. $17.95
ISBN: 978–0–19–536941–0

Reviewed by
JORDAN MICHAEL SMITH

In June 2007, as the George W. Bush administration's batteries died, the University of Virginia's Miller Center of Public Affairs hosted a 2-day workshop called "After the Bush Doctrine: National Security Strategy for a New Administration." The event brought together 10 U.S. scholars—historians, political scientists, and economists—from across the political spectrum and tasked them each with writing a concise national security statement. The statements were to offer advice to future officials on the overall goals of national strategy, and to identify and assign priority to the greatest threats facing the Nation. This book is a collection of the responses.

To Lead the World is notable for the prominence and eclecticism of its contributors. Few editors can entice such high-profile names as Samantha Power, Francis Fukuyama, and Niall Ferguson to write for them. Even fewer volumes can simultaneously claim such a diversity of political opinion. The book's authors encompass a wide range of political perspectives, from Robert Kagan's neoconservatism to Stephen Van Evera's defensive realism.

For all the range of opinion, however, the contributors find commonalities. As the book's title indicates, all the authors agree with the necessity for American leadership. All agree that the United States should maintain its military dominance. All agree, furthermore, on the benefits of an open economic order. There is also consensus on the need for the United States to embrace multilateralism. Finally, unanimity is present among the contributors on the desirability of improved democracy and human rights abroad.

Agreement ends there. MIT political scientist Stephen Van Evera, in the book's most specific, persuasive chapter, identifies nuclear-armed terrorists as the greatest threat to the United States (p. 11). Global warming and epidemic diseases are other potential threats he names. With these three problems posing dangers to the world, Van Evera calls for a "Concert of Cooperation" among the great powers, along the lines of the Concert of Europe established in 1815 (pp. 16–17). He writes that cooperation with China should be a primary goal of American foreign policy (p. 18), and that "the main threat to the United States is no longer conquest but war itself" (p. 4). Van Evera contends that the main impediments to this grand strategy are foreign lobbies and the defense establishment (p. 25).

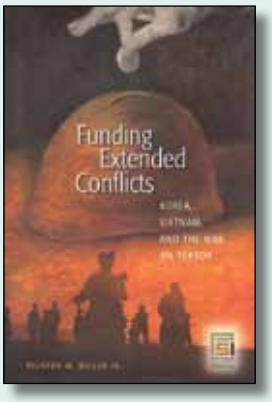
Robert Kagan disagrees. For Kagan, a columnist at the *Washington Post* and Senior Associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the spread of autocracy is the chief menace to the Nation. Undemocratic powers Russia and China are pursuing regional predominance and encouraging the spread of autocracy to protect themselves (p. 48). It follows that the United States should form democratic coalitions, and spread democracy, to push back against the Sino-Russian offensive (p. 53). Kagan is thought-provoking and provocative, but ultimately he starkly overemphasizes the dangers of Russia and China and consequently overstates the need for U.S. power projection.

G. John Ikenberry, Francis Fukuyama, Samantha Power, and James Kurth also offer intriguing, if ultimately less persuasive, ideas. Not one of the 10 contributions is unoriginal, nor is any ludicrous. Perhaps the most frustrating contributor is Niall Ferguson, who spends most of his chapter ruing the public's ignorance of the statesman's dilemmas, only to hastily declare near his conclusion that a new President should jettison the assumption that the biggest threat to the U.S. is nuclear-armed terrorists (p. 242). He identifies four alternative dangers, among them the Middle East's disintegration, as more important. Given the provocative nature of this claim, it would have helped if he had elaborated on it. Instead, he simply says that "we must take very seriously the risk that the Greater Middle East could become in our time what Eastern Europe was in the 1940s or Central Africa in the 1990s: a lethal zone of conflict." The wars in 1990s Central Africa were horrid, but they were not a major threat to the United States. If the Middle East now poses as little a threat to the United States as Africa did, we are in for a peaceful future.

To Lead the World benefits from its contributors' varied backgrounds. Stanford University historian David M. Kennedy offers one of the best chapters, the historically informed "Two Concepts of Sovereignty." Kennedy roots the U.S. interventionist streak in its messianic birth: "When Britain's North American colonies struck for their independence in 1776 they at once invoked Westphalian principles and bid them defiance" (p. 159). America's respect for self-determination has led to great successes, but its moralistic streak leads it to crusades. Kennedy also places great importance on the so-called revolution in military affairs, believing that devastating force wielded by an all-volunteer army divorced from the mass public tempts policymakers into unnecessary wars (pp. 169–176).

Books such as this have an expiration date. With international events changing rapidly, foreign policy assessments in general become obsolete as quickly as computer software programs. The lack of a narrative puts edited volumes in particular at risk of being overrun by the train of time. But before *To Lead the World*'s time is up, international relations students and policymakers would do well to read its contents and consider its recommendations. **JFQ**

Jordan Michael Smith is a writer in Washington, DC.



Funding Extended Conflicts: Korea, Vietnam, and the War on Terror
by Richard M. Miller with foreword by Dov Zakheim
Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007
200 pp. $49.95
ISBN: 0–275–99896–7

Reviewed by
RICHARD S. TRACEY

In his first address to Congress, President Barack Obama declared that his budget would include "for the first time . . . the full cost of fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan." He then bluntly added an exclamation point to his declaration: "For seven years, we have been a nation at war. No longer will we hide its price." Unquestionably, the price of the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other global war on terror operations has been extraordinary. At the time of the President's speech, according to the Congressional Research Service, the total direct cost of operations since September 11, 2001, was $864 billion. While it is true that the George W. Bush administration and Congress largely funded costs for the war on terror outside of the normal budget cycle with a string of emergency supplemental appropriations bills, the issues behind President Obama's assertions are more complex and less unique than one might suppose, and thus merit close analysis.

Funding Extended Conflicts offers such an analysis with case studies of how the legislative and executive branches budgeted for the wars in Korea, Vietnam, and the war on terror. Because it was published in 2007, the book covers funding only through Congress' consideration of the Bush administration's request for fiscal year 2006 emergency supplemental funding. Nevertheless, it provides an essential starting point for a thoughtful consideration and understanding of the arcane issues associated with funding extended conflicts.

Richard M. Miller, Jr., an Active-duty U.S. Navy officer, as well as a resource manager and congressional analyst for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, is well suited to this task. A laudatory foreword by Dov Zakheim, Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) from 2001 to 2004, attests to his bona fides and the value of his analysis. A winner of the B. Franklin Reinauer Defense Economics Prize at the Naval War College, Miller makes his judgments based on his deep knowledge of defense budgetary policy and an ability to handle a range of budgetary data spanning over five decades.

Miller's close analysis of the war funding for Korea, Vietnam, and war on terror through 2005 identifies a set of enduring issues that he summarizes in 12 "Resourcing Considerations." Here, Miller correctly concludes that determining war costs before, during, and after a conflict is an extraordinarily difficult exercise. The inherent problem with predicting the nature, intensity, and extent of any war should be self-evident to policymakers, but often it is not. This uncertainty contributes to tensions and suspicions over funding between the legislative and executive branches. Exacerbating these tensions was the tendency of the administrations considered in this study—Harry S. Truman, Lyndon B. Johnson, and George W. Bush—to lowball estimates or conceal potential war costs at the outset of the conflict. Moreover, determining what the war costs exactly are is problematic. For example, as Miller points out, during the Korean War, sorting out the direct costs of the fight on the peninsula from the general Cold War expansion triggered by the North Korean invasion was a contentious and challenging issue. Similar problems emerged during the war on terror. Arguments over whether funding for the Army's modularity program should be included in the emergency supplemental appropriations bills or folded into the regular base budget illustrate this issue. Next, Miller appropriately notes that capturing second- and third-order war costs is elusive, as expanded Servicemember benefits and pay, veterans' care, and equipment reset costs continue to make demands on budgets well after the end of a conflict.

All three conflicts featured the use of emergency supplemental appropriations to fund costs. Miller notes that debates over when and how to move ongoing war costs into the baseline budget and the regular appropriations cycle is a "perennial" resourcing consideration. Thus, while the initial use of wartime emergency supplemental appropriations was not a Bush administration innovation, the continued use of supplementals to fully fund operations over an extended period did stretch the norms of past practice.

The argument underlining President Obama's assertion that the Bush administration hid war costs through supplemental funding is that funding the war on terror exclusively through supplementals excluded these costs from long-term budget projections, obscured the real size of projected deficits, and minimized congressional oversight. Miller takes a somewhat contrary view. Although he agrees that war costs need to be incorporated into long-term Federal budget projections, he argues that supplementals offer more, not less, visibility of direct war costs, and, furthermore, they offer the executive branch necessary planning and operational flexibility. This complex argument cannot be adjudicated in a short book review. Suffice it to say that Miller introduces the issue fairly, carefully outlines the parameters of the argument, and offers his perspective for the reader's consideration.

Finally, a pair of distractions in an otherwise fine study should be noted. First, a chart titled "Funding Tensions in Clausewitz's Trinity" reflects a common misunderstanding of the trinity that misses Clausewitz's profound insights regarding the nonlinear, interactive, and unpredictable nature of war. Miller, as have many others, takes Clausewitz's remarkable trinity and flattens it into a linear model for pursuing successful war policies that emphasizes the need to maintain balance among the army, people, and government. Second, at the beginning of most of Miller's chapters, a string of four to five quotations appears without proper citations or consistently clear connections to the subsequent text. These numerous quotations, although often interesting, should have been reduced, properly cited in the endnotes, and in many cases integrated into the text.

These distractions aside, this is a balanced, well-documented, and thoughtful work that makes a significant contribution to understanding an important subject. It recognizes that the struggles between the legislative and executive branch over war funding are not new and identifies enduring war funding issues that will vex the current as well as future governments. We should look forward to further contributions from the author on this subject. **JFQ**

Lieutenant Colonel Richard S. Tracey, USA (Ret.), teaches strategy and joint operations at the Army Command and General Staff College's Fort Belvoir, VA, satellite campus. In 2005, he worked for a Member of the House Armed Services Committee.