

## New-Look Annual Reflects Changing Defense Environment

reviewed by Maj F.G. Hoffman, USMCR

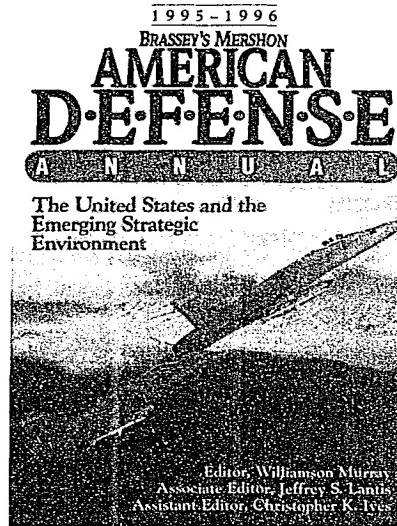
**1995-1996 BRASSEY'S MERSHON AMERICAN DEFENSE ANNUAL: The United States and the Emerging Strategic Environment.** Edited by Williamson Murray. Brassey's, Washington, DC, 1995, 264 pp., \$55.00. (Member \$49.50), paperback \$22.00. (Member \$19.80)

Ever since a pair of Pentagon analysts, Alain Enthoven and K. Wayne Smith, popularized the phrase with their 1971 book, the perennial defense question asked by strategists, politicians, and taxpayers alike has been "How much is enough?" Thanks in large measure to the consistency of the threat offered by the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, this remained the principal, if not sole, issue in defense planning for more than a generation. The end of the Cold War reduced the value of such simplistic approaches.

Now the country is moving forward into an uncertain strategic environment, where that question is secondary—if not irrelevant—to broader and more fundamental questions about the purpose and objectives of our defense strategy. It is not just "how much" anymore. Basic questions about "what," "how," and "why" are back on the agenda for the first time since the Cold War began. What are our national interests and what will be the challenges to these interests at the turn of the century? Why should the United States remain engaged in Europe or Asia? Where should we invest our treasure to deter aggressors and to build armed forces capable of responding to the challenges of the 21st century? How can the United States structure a military

strategy and force within the expected resources available for defense?

Rarely in our history have we approached such strategic crossroads, and our record with such journeys after major conflicts is less than sterling. Now is the time to ask such questions and to evaluate how our defense establishment should be adapted. This exercise is far more complicated than the intellectual landscape surveyed by Paul Nitze and his State-Defense Department team during the drafting of the Cold War strategy, which was encapsulated in NSC-68 in 1949.



Appropriately, the Mershon Center of Ohio State University and Brassey's have recently collaborated on a comprehensive analysis of the strategic horizon.

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Published by Brassey's, this is the Mershon Center's 10th annual analysis, but this year's work represents a sharp departure in content and approach, consistent with the sharp dynamism of the defense field. This edition has been ably edited by Ohio State professor emeritus of European military history, Williamson Murray. Dr. Murray should be familiar to many Marine and Navy officers. His previous publications include the insightful *The Change in the European Balance of Power 1938-1939*, as well as the three-volume *Military Effectiveness* series, which was coauthored with Col Allan Millett, USMCR(Ret). Most recently, he coedited, *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States, and War* (see MCG, Jul95), a systemic overview of the process by which nations have developed and executed national strategies. This latter effort is certainly relevant to today's strategic challenges.

In addition to a sterling career at Ohio State, Professor Murray has taught at the U.S. Military Academy and the Naval War College, Newport, R.I. He presently holds the Horner Professor of Strategy chair at the Marine Corps University.

In editing this volume, Murray has chosen to alter the normal organization of the annual. Previous editions provided end-of-year assessments of functional issues such as the defense budget, manpower issues, and nuclear arms as well as geographical summaries of Europe, Southwest Asia, and Northwest Asia. Given the great shifts occurring in the international setting, the editor has scrapped this steady but static approach. Instead of a report card, this edition asks each contributor to raise and address the broadest questions and critically examine the major issues of this decade and beyond.

The editor has assembled a distinguished field of defense experts to provide insights into today's volatile world. This year's version includes contributions from MacGregor Knox, Brian Sullivan, Eliot Cohen from Johns Hopkins University, the Defense Budget Project's Andrew Krepinevich, arms control expert Dr. Colin Gray, Professor Mackubin T. Owens of the Naval War College, and Gen John Galvin. The European scholar, Lawrence Freedman, head of war studies at King's College, adds an historical and provocative essay about America's options from a foreign perspective.

These essays address the spectrum of defense planning and investment problems facing the Nation and the Pentagon. They illuminate the issues around the following questions:

- What can we learn from history about seismic change in strategic environments?
- What military strategy should the United States adopt for the 21st century?
- What military capabilities do we really need, and what sort of choices must be made?
- What kind of conflicts (and how many) should the U.S. military plan, train, and equip itself for? Is the Bottom Up Review's yardstick of two nearly simultaneous conflicts practical and appropriate?
- What sort of special challenges are raised by the potential for greater involvement in peacekeeping or stability operations?
- What level of defense spending is necessary to modernize the major components and weapon systems of the U.S. armed forces?
- What is the likelihood of such resource levels given the structural

limitations in the U.S. economy and domestic political considerations? Is the Bottom Up Review force structure affordable?

- What are the proper tradeoffs between readiness and modernization for the Bottom Up Review force?

This collection of issues and viewpoints represent a comprehensive overview of the range and scope of challenges facing the Defense Department. Not all of the essays reflect favorably on current Pentagon plans or processes. A few are quite critical of the Clinton Administration's security strategy, while others predict troubled horizons, caused by a military establishment that is blind to the dawning of a new era in military affairs. Yet, they are all thoroughly researched, highly analytical, and fully practical. The essays written by Cohen, Krepinevich, and Owens are particularly informed and insightful. They address the basic parameters of strategic planning, defense capabilities, and military spending in terms that educate the uninformed without shortsighting any sharp pencil-pointed defense budget expert. The appendix listing the major defense and national security publications

for 1993-1994 is a useful addendum for scholars and students alike. I found it an excellent list of the best published material, and my only addition would be Professor George Baer's *One Hundred Years of Seapower 1889-1989* (Stanford University Press, 1994). Dr. Baer, head of the Strategy and Policy Department at the Naval War College, has written the definitive history of the rise of American seapower as an instrument of national strategy.

The Mershon/Brassey annual should be required reading among force planners on the Joint Staff and the Service headquarters. It is strongly recommended for senior defense planners at the Pentagon, strategists and scholars at our senior war colleges, and any student of military arts and sciences looking for provocative analyses and options to present defense policy problems.



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