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Exporting Security: International Engagement, Security Cooperation, and the Changing Face of the US Military

Michael McCrabb

Derek S. Reveron

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BOOK REVIEWS

ROUGH WATERS

Exporting Security: International Engagement, Security Cooperation, and the Changing Face of the US Military, by Derek S. Reveron. 2nd ed. Washington, DC: Georgetown Univ. Press, 2016. 256 pages. \$98.95.

Exporting Security will surprise even the most learned defense experts in its framing of the extraordinary changes to U.S. military force employment today. Faced with new threats, or security deficits, from “subnational, transnational, and regional challenges to global security” (p. xi), today’s national leadership has directed defense forces to take on a new and more meaningful peacetime role. This revision of Dr. Reveron’s 2010 book on security cooperation and the changing face of today’s military will reshape views of the armed forces’ role in national security by highlighting its new focus on developing partnerships. These changes are additive. Defending our nation and our way of life through the maintenance of superior war-fighting capabilities is still primary, but the national approach to addressing the gaps between stability and conflict is remarkably different and requires close scrutiny. The term *security cooperation* has been in use for less than twenty years, apparently first used when Congress renamed the Defense Security Assistance Agency the Defense Security Cooperation

Agency in 1998. Yet in that short span the practice has evolved quietly into “a key pillar of military strategy” (p. 4), one that thus far has stirred limited academic or government dialogue. That is changing, and Reveron skillfully lays out the context within which this dialogue should be conducted.

Exporting Security explains the popularity of security cooperation among presidential administrations through well-targeted examples of recent armed forces engagement, chosen to illustrate specific purposes. Security deficits have root causes. In some cases, security cooperation activities are designed to address these causes, while others are intended to help partner nations develop the capacity to address both cause and deficit. In almost every case, security cooperation activities additionally serve to build trust. Trust—and common security deficits—form the foundation on which desired defense partnerships and coalitions are built. Reveron invests considerable effort in examining the government’s rationale for developing security partnerships.

Pursuing global stability today requires more than just unilateral Defense Department actions to address security deficits that may be “simultaneously military, economic, social, and political” in nature (p. 8). Security cooperation provides the United States with tools to shape partnerships so as to build coalitions, gain access, strengthen national governance, build partner nation security capacity and confidence, deter bad actors, and fulfill alliance responsibilities; however, Reveron emphasizes that security cooperation efforts, more often than not, fail to achieve these objectives. Nonetheless, he contends that the value of the successes outweighs the cost of the failures; but the U.S. taxpayer deserves a better return on investment.

A full chapter is committed to explaining sources of resistance to the military’s changing role. Some officials express concern about the military’s growing influence in shaping foreign policy through peacetime engagement, while others perceive these activities as taking resources and attention from the military’s primary war-fighting role. Elaborating on these concerns, Reveron examines government interagency dynamics related to foreign policy implementation, especially those between the State and Defense Departments. Is Defense, with its new authorities, becoming too autonomous, at the cost of State’s role in leading foreign policy? Regardless of the answer, the recent proliferation of Title 10 (Defense Department) programs literally has forced the agencies to find more-productive ways to plan and integrate their efforts. This is a dynamic that *Exporting Security* might have addressed in greater detail.

Reveron consistently emphasizes the preventive intent behind cooperative

engagement. Military activities in support of maritime domain awareness, counterinsurgency efforts, combating terrorism, antipiracy campaigns, disaster relief, medical/dental deployments, education in good governance, and similar efforts garner most of the book’s attention. These efforts with partner nations form the cooperative basis for addressing today’s security deficits, and successes in these arenas are win-win scenarios. But today’s changing focus also brings a new approach to coalition war fighting—with similar preventive effect, one hopes—through initiatives such as increased international officer presence on U.S. military staffs, cooperative deployments, and high-end foreign military sales acquisition. Added attention to these influences on coalition war-fighting capabilities would have made the book’s message more complete.

Combatant-command and U.S. Security Cooperation Office (SCO) staffs scattered globally deserve more attention. Combatant-command staffs are charged with synchronizing engagement activities to develop effective theater campaign plans. The proliferation of security assistance programs, partnerships, and engagement activities conceived to address security deficits makes it increasingly difficult for staffs to succeed in these efforts. For the same reasons, SCO staffs are challenged to orchestrate security cooperation efforts effectively in each country. Failure to equip properly these components of the security cooperation community—which operate outside the Washington beltway, and therefore with less visibility—puts their ability to accomplish partnership development objectives at risk.

Exporting Security “offers a framework to understand the change and to

illustrate how the military is changing from a force of confrontation to one of cooperation” (p. 224). But this strategic pillar is still a work in progress, as the United States seeks out the most effective formulas for achieving national objectives via security cooperation. Congressionally approved security assistance programs will be shaped more effectively. Interagency policy and planning will be refined. Better assessment, monitoring, and evaluation methods will be implemented. Military services will learn to execute engagement activities that simultaneously sharpen war-fighting skills and build partner capacity. The underrepresented tool to accelerate this progress is insightful academic and government dialogue. Dr. Reveron has laid a solid foundation on which this dialogue should build. Then perhaps the taxpayer can look forward to a better return on security cooperation investment.

MICHAEL MCCRABB



How Everything Became War and the Military Became Everything: Tales from the Pentagon, by Rosa Brooks. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2016. 448 pages. \$29.95.

This is a history of modern war, particularly America’s war against terrorists since the attacks of September 11, 2001. Rosa Brooks analyzes the forces and principles underlying modern conflict, including history, international relations, international law, political-military relations, and domestic politics. She has produced a fascinating, realistic, and at times humorous look at our struggles to make sense of it all.

The book begins with a Pentagon meeting whose purpose is to decide

whether and when to launch a drone attack on an Al Qaeda operative. Brooks takes the reader on a journey that ultimately addresses two simple but important questions: Is war or peace the norm, and what rules apply?

Brooks reviews conflict in Rwanda in 1994, Bosnia in 1995, and Kosovo in 1999, parts of a continuum stretching until today. Since the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, sovereign states have formed the basis of international relations, but recently civil wars and revolution have spilled across state borders, upsetting international law and order. Many of these states, such as Sierra Leone, Somalia, and Afghanistan, never enjoyed a firm footing in statehood. Interstate conflicts with fixed beginnings and ends, such as the two world wars, are distant memories. Modern war is both boundless and endless.

Using historical examples, Brooks argues persuasively that war is the norm, peace the exception. Our concept of peace arose only around the middle of the nineteenth century. In 1863, the Lieber Code codified law-of-war traditions for Union troops in the American Civil War. In 1864, the International Committee of the Red Cross was founded to ease the burdens of war. Our international institutions are predicated on the belief that we can limit war in space and time while maintaining our humanity. Our current “war” against terrorists, however, does not fit this paradigm. Use of “enhanced interrogations” and targeted drone attacks, and even our definition of our enemy, push our notions of law into uncharted territory.

How do common notions of human rights fare in this environment? Brooks revisits this idea throughout. Do states have a responsibility to protect