

Japanese surrender misses the fact that the introduction and continuation of war powers were not confined by these dates. She also devotes a chapter to the question 'What kind of war was the Cold War?', a period that included anti-communist repression, the Korean War and the creation of the military industrial complex, which remains enormously powerful today.

In his book about the Pentagon (*House of War*), James Carroll argues that the path to this 'disastrous rise of American power' was laid by the first secretary of defense, James Forrestal, whose obsessions about the communist threat would contribute to a nervous breakdown and probable suicide. Forrestal coined the term 'semiwar' to describe what he believed was the permanent crisis facing the US. Dudziak does not refer to the term, but we can see a long line linking Forrestal's appointment in 1947 to today's temporal confusions.

Dudziak justifies the narrow, US focus of her book as 'a reasonable starting place for a historian of the United States' and suggests that a more global and comparative account would benefit from collaboration with others. A good basis for this would be Michael Howard's *The Invention of Peace*, in which he showed how war had been the norm in European history and that the peace 'invented by the thinkers of the Enlightenment' only became practicable during the past 200 years. America, he added, does not share the European 'visceral aversion to war'; but what of the UK? As Iraq and Afghanistan clearly show, we remain closer to the American camp when it comes to war.

While Dudziak is mostly interested in the legal implications and abuses of wartime, she touches on some of the wider cultural and sociological issues that influence the way we think about time. A more global and comparative account would benefit from exploring these areas further. Current research into the way the brain works and new theories in physics are changing our understanding of how we experience and perceive time. Dudziak notes that different cultures see time differently. Strategy can be undermined by ignoring

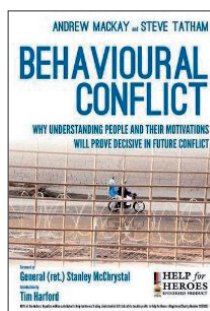
or misjudging these differences. When Robert McNamara, the US defense secretary during the Vietnam War, asked the Viet Minh commander General Giap why the North Vietnamese were willing to lose so many in fighting the Americans, Giap replied, 'Didn't you know we have been fighting for our independence for a thousand years? ... We would have fought until the last Vietnamese was dead before we surrendered'. Let us hope we are not witnessing a similar disconnect with Afghanistan and are still capable of re-establishing peacetime. ■

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Behavioural Conflict: Why Understanding People and Their Motivations Will Prove Decisive in Future Conflict

Andrew Mackay and Steve Tatham
Military Studies Press, 2011



Change is long overdue – certainly in the world of military strategic communications. It has become axiomatic that information-rich message clusters be launched over horizons at (hostile) populations, both seen and unseen, in the hope of finding sympathetic targets and achieving behavioural change. Well, according to Andrew Mackay, Steve Tatham and their fellow contributors, it can no longer be a question of *if* but *when* we abandon this fallacy, and transform our own behaviour. What is called for, they plead, is a Copernican shift of perspective. The buzz phrase is 'audience-

centric' as opposed to 'audience-focused' engagement. The latter means the audience is out there somewhere – more chimera, or remote concept, than families with their own lives and concerns; whereas audience-centric implies 'we strive to see things from their viewpoint in order to understand how the "right" solution would look to them': marketers would call this consumer-led rather than product-led campaigning. Sounds simple enough; but it is not. For those of us who have worked on the other side of the journalistic fence, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that militaries have never really got the information thing. Despite recent efforts by more enlightened thinkers like the Chief of the Defence Staff, General Sir David Richards, the traditional resistance in the senior military mindset endures. The world has moved on, meanwhile; and it is a world full of uncertainty and the unexpected.

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engagement*

The strength of this book lies in its second half. Not that the first – a sometimes uneven but nevertheless appropriate springboard of communications sociology and social psychology theory – should be glossed over. However, as it moves towards its climax, *Behavioural Conflict* really scores on two counts: one, it is driven by two seasoned practitioners of counter-insurgency, British Army Major General Andrew Mackay and Royal Navy Commander Steve Tatham, who bring invaluable insights from Northern Ireland, the Balkans, Sierra Leone, Iraq and Afghanistan to their conceptual framework; and two, the authors capitalise on a lifetime's reflection in their attempt to shift an understanding of populations in conflict theatres to the centre-stage of public debate. Their book is topped-and-tailed by other contributors, including General Stanley McChrystal, former commander of ISAF, who supports their aim. 'We are tactically and strategically ineffective,' he says,

'when we expect to win populations without trying to understand them.' This prompts the authors to offer three major platforms for addressing this traditional failing in conflict theatres, particularly pertinent to the Information Age. Most significantly, Western militaries need to undergo a radical broadening of their education. Furthermore, those who handle information – namely information, media and psychological operations personnel – should be increased in number and resourced to become more professional, and their command and directing functions must be accorded equal importance within military hierarchies. Finally, only by stepping up organic research capabilities is there any serious hope of meeting the challenge of the 'unknown unknowns' – the unpredictability and uncertainty that characterise tomorrow's (make that today's) stochastic politico-military environment.

Even the early communications scholars at the dawn of the Cold War recognised that getting messages across to foreign populations was nigh impossible. Forget state jamming of the airwaves; on a simple human level what likelihood was there, never mind guarantee, of one human being picking up on what another actually intended to say? Furthermore, how could you measure effect anyway, particularly when crossing language and cultural divides, not to mention political barriers? When governments get involved in speaking to individuals within any population, things only become more, rather than less, clouded. Now imagine the implications of living in today's digital era, with its mobile phones and laptops, of many-to-many, self-generating communications. All of these elements make the picture infinitely more complex than the one-to-many halcyon days of the mid-twentieth century.

So Mackay and Tatham plead for state actors to adopt the techniques and lessons learned that advertising and branding agencies have refined over the last century. To be fair, states have long since become immersed in a market-oriented approach to communications as the corporate world has annexed public-sector thinking. The

real problem is governments do it so badly, and populations by and large do not trust them. Militaries are caught up in that dilemma, never mind the constraints politicians place upon them, determining what they can and cannot say. The authors propose a greater focus on TAA (Target Audience Analysis) and MoE (Measurement of Effectiveness). Part of the answer, they propose, is to scope the target audience, find the 'right campaign', then measure the penetration of the message: it is an evidence-based approach to communications. The way to achieve 'success' as opposed to 'victory' (language more suited to these post-modern times) is by 'nudging, shoving and shaping behaviours', not by relying on tailored messages. Anything short of that is just whistling in the dark. However, even that is not problem-free, as advertising agencies will volunteer.

Mackay and Tatham propose an evidence-based approach to communications

On a stylistic note, the tone of the text is, however, an acquired taste – heavily personalised with repeated references to 'we' and the authors by name – that jars as the narrative veers occasionally between theoretical exposition and the folksy. Yet for most readers this might make it a more accessible and digestible experience. Either way, that should not overshadow a narrative whose heart is in the right place. It is full of useful information, anecdotes, and revealing insights filtering the historical transformation in the character of conflict through the lenses of the Balkans, Lebanon, Gaza and Afghanistan. However, most importantly, it spotlights an argument that demands a wide hearing in policy-making circles. Their ambition, therefore, is only to be lauded – particularly against a backdrop where they confide that 'in the absence of a mechanism with which to embrace complexity, the West, we worry, has retreated to its "home base" – exporting values and beliefs that it does understand

to environments that it does not in the hope that clarity will ensue.' One might question even further the West's true understanding of its values and beliefs, or at least its ability to communicate them to its own populations, regardless of exporting them to more exotic and distant climes. ■

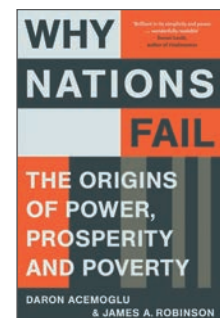
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Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty

Daron Acemoglu and James A Robinson

Profile Books, 2012



Acemoglu, a professor of Economics at MIT, and Robinson, a professor of Government at Harvard, argue that economic development is the product of inclusive institutions: pluralist structures involving broad coalitions. Nations fail economically because of extractive institutions, where predation by the elite keeps countries poor. They begin the book with a comparison of Nogales Arizona and Nogales Sonora, almost identical in geography, culture and history: Nogales Arizona was in Mexico until 1853. The part of town on the US side of the fence has a per-capita income three times that of the part of the town with Mexican institutions. This is despite the fact that Nogales Sonora is a relatively rich Mexican town.

Why Nations Fail is an important book, the product of fifteen years