

perceptions is a theme consistently present in ancient Chinese strategy texts and modern publications. Her chapter also underscores the complexity of divining competitive approaches against opaque adversaries, a warning that we should not assume away.

The current competition between the People's Liberation Army and American military power has been played out near Taiwan. This competition includes extensive investments in antiaccess capabilities to thwart U.S. power projection forces and acquiring significant numbers of advanced antiship cruise missiles, ballistic missiles, and targeting capabilities that could reach most of the Western Pacific. Dan Blumenthal captures the details of apparent Chinese strategy, concluding that "In sum, the balance of power between China's control capabilities in the first island chain and denial capabilities in the second island chain, and America's ability to project enough power into the Taiwan Strait to defeat China objectives, has shifted markedly, and in a manner that calls into question strategic stability." He goes on to predict that the character of competition in the South China Sea will be marked by China's coercive conventional strike and undersea capabilities in an "attempt to bully Southeast Asian states to accept its claims."

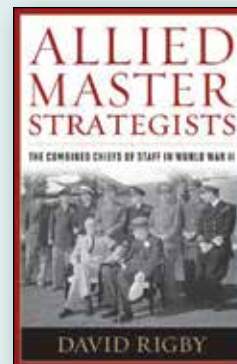
Augmenting Blumenthal's pessimistic conclusion, Michael Chase and Andrew Erickson of the U.S. Naval War College cover the marked growth in China's Second Artillery, noting that conventional missiles "have emerged as the centerpiece of China's ability to assert control over contested areas of its maritime periphery." They offer clear recommendations for American strategists: "Avoid playing into Beijing's hands by investing disproportionately in technologies that could leave it on the wrong end of an arms race that might prove too costly to continue to wage."

This volume frames competitive strategies in largely military terms. The exception is a superb chapter, the most multidimensional in orientation and content, by James Thomas and Evan Montgomery. While careful to note that conflict with China is not preordained, they argue for the need of American strategists to think competitively and lay out a comprehensive approach. The three core components of their proposed strategy include bolstering American military posture in the Western Pacific to preclude the possibility of successful sudden

Chinese strike operations, enhancing the technological capabilities and defensive capacity of friendly regional actors to ensure they are not intimidated by Chinese pressures, and exploiting internal crises within China as it comes to grips with its weak banking sector, rising ethnic unrest, demographic and environmental challenges, and so forth. The authors recommend against interfering with China's internal affairs, but counsel decisionmakers to prepare to exploit any opportunities that could arise.

Competitive Strategies is an invaluable historical assessment with clear prescriptive utility for modern application. It fills a hole in our grasp of strategy, especially for creating the elusive conditions by which one may attain the Nation's security interests well before forces are employed. If the art of generalship is all about creating the conditions for success on the field of battle by maneuver, then competitive strategies represent the highest form of art for strategists before the war even begins. Scholars and serious students of strategic studies should find its collective insights valuable. This volume is strongly recommended for senior military schools and any strategic studies program aspiring to ensure that its students are intricately familiar with the basics of competitive strategies and the Sino-American rivalry that could shape the 21st century. **JFQ**

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Allied Master Strategists: The Combined Chiefs of Staff in World War II

By David Rigby

Naval Institute Press, 2012

272 pp. \$29.95

ISBN: 978-1-61251-081-1

Reviewed by
FRANCIS P. SEMPA

In *The Grand Alliance*, the third volume of his history of World War II, Winston Churchill speculated that future historians would judge the establishment of the Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS) in January 1942 as the most valuable and lasting result of the first wartime Anglo-American summit meeting in Washington, codenamed "Arcadia." The CCS met more than 200 times during the war, mostly in Washington but also at conferences in Casablanca, Quebec, Tehran, Cairo, Malta, and the Crimea. The CCS, wrote Churchill, "considered the whole conduct of the war," and submitted recommendations to British and American political leaders. Despite sharp conflicts of views and heated, frank arguments, "sincere loyalty to the common cause prevailed over national or personal interests." Churchill concluded that "[t]here never was a more serviceable war machinery established among allies."

Historian David Rigby in *Allied Master Strategists: The Combined Chiefs of Staff in World War II* describes the CCS as "the nerve center of the most highly integrated effort at coalition warfare in history" (p. 1). Headquartered in the Public Health Building near the War and Navy Department offices in Washington, DC, the CCS evolved into a huge wartime bureaucracy that oversaw Anglo-American planning, production, logistics, and grand strategy. Its importance



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*Offshore Control: A
Proposed Strategy for
an Unlikely Conflict*

By **T.X. Hammes**



This paper is the start of what the author hopes will be a deep, wide-ranging discussion of potential strategies for a conflict with China. While such a conflict is undesirable and highly unlikely, it is driving many of the Pentagon's investment decisions today. Under a proposed strategy of "Offshore Control," the United States would work with Asia-Pacific nations to interdict China's energy and raw material imports and industrial exports, while protecting our partners. This strategy would have several advantages: it would slow a crisis down, reducing escalatory pressure on decisionmakers; align U.S. strategic requirements with the resources available; take advantage of Pacific geography to provide strategic, operational, and tactical advantages for U.S. forces; provide a way for the conflict to end that is consistent with previous Communist Chinese behavior; and finally, provide for conflict resolution that does not require an unobtainable "decisive" victory.

to the Allied war effort cannot be overestimated. As Rigby writes, "[N]ever before or since in history has one military staff been responsible for the planning and ongoing supervision of as many simultaneous, large-scale military operations" (p. 210).

Rigby begins his study with brief biographies of the CCS principals: for the British, General Sir Alan Brooke, Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Portal, Admiral of the Fleet Sir Dudley Pound, Admiral of the Fleet Sir Arthur Cunningham, and Field Marshal Sir John Dill; for the Americans, General George Marshall, Lieutenant General Henry "Hap" Arnold, Admiral Ernest King, and Admiral William Leahy. Of these, Generals Brooke and Marshall exercised the most power and influence due to their dual roles as CCS members and principal military advisors to Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt, respectively. Field Marshal Dill played a key role as head of the British Joint Staff Mission in Washington where he established a strong relationship with General Marshall and earned the respect and trust of most of the other American military chiefs. Rigby is not alone in concluding that "without the Marshall-Dill friendship the Combined Chiefs of Staff system simply would not have worked" (p. 57).

The CCS mission was to organize and run a global war on every continent, on the high seas, and in the air to defeat the Axis powers. To perform that mission effectively, the CCS had to overcome many obstacles including the different strategic perspectives and cultures of each nation, interservice rivalry within each nation's armed forces and between the British and American militaries, clashing personalities and egos within the CCS and among theater and field commanders, competing demands for soldiers and material in the different theaters of war, and the peculiar political personalities of Churchill and Roosevelt.

Throughout the war, British and American members of the CCS clashed over strategic priorities and the most effective strategy to win the war. In the European theater early in the war, the British, with vivid memories of the slaughter in northern France and Flanders in World War I, favored a Mediterranean-centered strategy focused on North Africa, Sicily, and Italy in an effort to strike at the "soft underbelly" of the Axis, while the Americans throughout the war viewed northwest Europe as the Clausewitzian "center of gravity" of the European theater. In the Far East, Britain

focused its attention on Singapore, Hong Kong, and Burma/India, while the Americans sought the defeat of Japan primarily by striking across the Central Pacific with sea- and airpower. Gradually and inevitably, as the American material and manpower contribution to the war effort outpaced Britain's, U.S. strategic preferences guided Anglo-American policy.

Rigby notes that there was nothing comparable to the CCS on the Axis side. "In spite of the Tripartite Pact, Germany, Japan, and Italy repeatedly kept each other in the dark in regard to issues of vital strategic significance" (p. 97). This lack of coordination among the Axis powers put them at a significant disadvantage against the Anglo-American coalition and its efforts to coordinate plans and strategy with the Soviet Union.

Rigby faults American and British political leaders for not including Soviet representatives in the CCS. He admits that this was a complicated issue given the nature of the Soviet regime but believes that a diplomatic overture by the Western Allies should have been attempted and, if successful, would have proved advantageous to the war effort. This is too sanguine a view of Stalin's Soviet Union, which was nothing more than an ally of convenience during most of the war and a political adversary at the end. Indeed, one cannot help thinking that James Burnham of the Office of Strategic Services and General Muir S. Fairchild of the Joint Strategic Survey Committee were right in late 1943–early 1944 when they proposed ending all lend-lease shipments to the Soviets, who by then did not need them to defeat Adolf Hitler.

Historians can find fault with certain members of the CCS and some of its specific decisions, but in the end it proved its worth by winning the war. As Rigby shows in this interesting book, "It was the Combined Chiefs of Staff organization, not politicians, diplomats, or bureaucrats, that was the most important planning agency behind the military victories achieved by the Western Allies during the war" (p. 7). **JFQ**

Francis P. Sempa is an Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Pennsylvania and the author of *Somewhere in France, Somewhere in Germany: A Combat Soldier's Journey through the Second World War* (Hamilton Books, 2011), *America's Global Role: Essays and Reviews on National Security, Geopolitics and War* (University Press of America, 2009), and *Geopolitics: From the Cold War to the 21st Century* (Transaction Publishers, 2007).



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