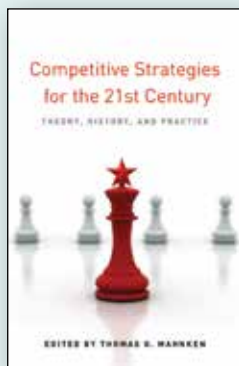


a program that would identify and shepherd them in a new separate career field—like environment. To cultivate those who traditionally leave Active duty, we need a program to allow a few to freely flow among various established career paths, academia, and even industry (modeled on the Individual Mobilization Augmentee program). The target of both is to capture unique talent when it is in the best interest of the Service without sidelining them from progression.

Ensuring that the joint force retains and promotes the best leaders to meet the challenges facing us will test leadership. Kane provides one possible pathway to get us there by unleashing market-based forces. *Bleeding Talent* is a thought-provoking call to arms. This book and its bibliography should be required reading for anyone attempting to assess and implement change with the goal of establishing a truly adaptive personnel system conducive to these challenging times. **JFQ**

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Competitive Strategies for the 21st Century: Theory, History and Practice

Edited by Thomas G. Mahnken
Stanford University Press, 2012
344 pp. \$29.95
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Reviewed by
F.G. HOFFMAN

Strategy has always been a difficult art, and the challenges that modern strategists now face make practicing that art even more daunting. Some argue that American strategic thinking is deficient, or that there is a black hole where U.S. strategy should exist. If true, that does not bode well. As the United States comes out of protracted conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, facing an age with myriad threats but fewer resources, the American strategy community must reinvigorate its intellectual tools if the Nation is to sustain its position and underwrite international order.

This requirement makes *Competitive Strategies for the 21st Century* a timely and relevant exploration of an intellectual concept known as competitive strategies. It is also a serious examination of the possible contours of Sino-American strategic interaction. In this volume, editor Thomas Mahnken of the U.S. Naval War College observes that “U.S. leaders need to develop a well-thought out strategy for competing over the long term, which mandates an enhanced ability to clarify and prioritize its goals, conduct a net assessment of enduring U.S. strengths and weaknesses, and formulate and implement a strategy that leverages our existing or attainable competitive advantages against a range of competitors.”

The concept of competitive strategies, originally developed by business strategists including Michael Porter of the Harvard Business School, offers a viable approach for defining and exploiting such a sustainable, competitive advantage. Purists will argue the adjective is unnecessary; strategies are supposed to be inherently competitive. But just as often, security communities fail to examine long-term trends in the operating environment and to identify the potential influence of investment in key technologies or geostrategically relevant capabilities that could reduce the potential for violence or establish the conditions for success should a contest of arms occur. While strategies should be competitive against designated adversaries, many are not.

There are numerous characteristics of competitive strategies, which focus on long-term interaction between defense establishments in peacetime, long before any conflict arises. The authors share an understanding of these fundamental characteristics: a long-term approach, a distinct opponent with a

defined set of strengths and weaknesses, and a concerted effort to align one’s own strengths against enduring weaknesses of the adversary. The goal of a competitive strategy is to induce one’s opponent to invest in the game we want to play, and channel his investments and attention into forms of competition that are the least threatening to us.

Like any anthology, several chapters stand out. The overall quality of these papers is high, and the volume includes detailed assessments on specific elements of Sino-American competition including missile developments, submarine warfare, and aviation capabilities. The strength of *Competitive Strategies* lies in the contributions of major strategists, including Steve Rosen of Harvard and Brad Lee of the U.S. Naval War College. The latter’s chapter offers a number of strategic insights drawing upon both European and Chinese strategic thinking and influences. His presentation of particular strategies (cost imposing, denial, attacking the enemy’s strategy, and attacking the enemy’s political system) offers a foundation for any student of strategy, and should be tied to the remaining authors’ more specific assessments.

Barry Watts, a former senior Pentagon official and retired Air Force officer, identifies a number of barriers to thinking strategically. His chapter merits a close reading and incorporation into the curricula of both civilian and professional military educational programs that delve deeply into strategy. Watts brilliantly captures the complexities of strategies as mere heuristics, and probes why our capacity to predict their effectiveness is limited and how our own rationality is fouled by human biases. He exploits the work of Richard Rumelt, author of *Good Strategy/Bad Strategy*, whose list of “strategy sins” correlates too highly with U.S. national security products. Anyone truly interested in understanding what makes strategy difficult should examine this chapter closely.

Another invaluable contribution comes from Jackie Newmyer Deal, president of the Long Range Strategy Group, a Washington-based consultancy. Deal has long been a student of authoritarian regimes and their decisionmaking. She notes that Chinese history and strategic culture suggest that the People’s Republic will seek to mask the players, processes, and outcomes of decisions. Manipulating information and

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."

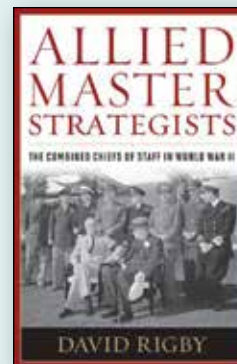
Augmenting Blumenthal's pessimistic conclusion, Michael Chase and Andrew Erickson of the U.S. Naval War College cover the marked growth in China's Second Artillery, noting that conventional missiles "have emerged as the centerpiece of China's ability to assert control over contested areas of its maritime 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

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272 pp. \$29.95

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Reviewed by
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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