

## Fighting the Cold War: A Soldier's Memoir

By John R. Galvin  
University Press of Kentucky, 2015  
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Reviewed by Joseph J. Collins

As the Cold War fades from memory, it is essential that we study its course and absorb its lessons. In that spirit, General John “Jack” Galvin, USA (Ret.), who commanded U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) and U.S. European Command (USEUCOM), wrote a memoir, published several months before his death in September 2015, that is both an important lesson in history and a tutorial in strategic leadership. Written by a general who was also a prize-winning author and scholar, it is a delight to read. The real Galvin—son of Boston, family man, soldier-scholar, *mensch*—comes through on every page.

Galvin, who came from a working-class family in Boston, joined the Massachusetts Army National Guard in 1947 and was pushed by his superiors to apply to West Point. He graduated in 1954 with a bachelor of science degree,

as well as a fondness for history and literature and a taste for adventure. Not one to follow the crowd, Galvin spent his early assignments in Puerto Rico and teaching at Colombia’s *Lancero* School, a Ranger school-type course. Duty in the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division and the Armor Officer Advanced Course subsequently followed, as did graduate school at Columbia University and a teaching tour at West Point.

Galvin later did two tough combat tours in Vietnam. Remarkably, in his first tour, he was relieved of his duties in combat as a brigade operations officer. Although the relief came at the behest of two powerful figures, Galvin was able to fight his way back and later commanded a battalion in the storied 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division. Galvin does not mention in the book that he was awarded the Silver Star for gallantry. Most of his other high honors also go unmentioned.

Brigade-level command in Europe and command of a mechanized infantry division followed. In the latter assignment, General Galvin latched on to then-Captain David Petraeus, who appears time and again in the narrative as both a Galvin mentee and an intellectual alter ego. Galvin’s closest comrades are a key part of the book, and each of them, like Petraeus, is described in careful detail by the author.

Galvin’s senior assignments came as the four-star combatant commander in USSOUTHCOM and later as the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe. His professional contacts in Germany, Latin America, and Spain also grew in rank, and they became a great network. His contacts, education, and empathy made him the ideal general for maneuvering on the political-military terrain. Whether it was Russian generals, German statesmen, Margaret Thatcher, or characters such as Panama’s Manuel Noriega, Galvin reveals the people and personalities behind the policy. For example, in detailing his first meeting with Ronald Reagan:

*Tall and wide-shouldered, he seemed to take pains not to be overwhelming; he had the gift of being both impressive and unassuming. His hearty handshake and down-home*

*smile made you feel good, and his corny jokes conveyed an assurance that he liked you right away and was truly happy to be talking to you at that moment. His ease cured your unease; his ordinariness allowed you room to be your ordinary self, too* (p. 296, emphasis in the original).

Nearly one-fourth of Galvin’s memoir covers the end of the Cold War during the Reagan years. He artfully showed how the general-statesman navigated political-military issues, lined up the allies, openly consorted with ambassadors, and coordinated with multiple bosses, all while simultaneously developing new warfighting concepts and arms-control proposals. The Cold War was followed not by peace but by the First Gulf War. Again, Galvin’s persona and skills shine through as he opened the military coffers of USEUCOM to support General Norman Schwarzkopf’s juggernaut, all with the expert help of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) nations that turned Europe into U.S. Central Command’s rear area. USEUCOM’s trained and ready forces played a starring role in the desert war.

After the Gulf War ended, Saddam Hussein began attacking the Kurds. In the spring of 1991, USEUCOM under Galvin came to their rescue and, with the aid of Turkey and many nongovernmental organizations, launched a military rescue mission into northern Iraq. USEUCOM’s rescue of the Kurds was a brilliantly executed pick-up game, led by a then-obscure Army Lieutenant General John Shalikashvili. Later, with General Colin Powell’s blessing, Shalikashvili became Galvin’s successor as NATO Supreme Allied Commander, Europe.

Galvin ended his career by spending nearly a decade in academia, teaching and mentoring at West Point, The Ohio State University, and Tufts University’s Fletcher School, where he became the dean. Galvin’s military career and educational pursuits are testament to his call for us “to see the workings of our daily lives on a larger scale than our backyards. . . . Our survival in the long run will depend on our recognition of this simple but

powerful understanding: that we need a global perspective” (p. 491).

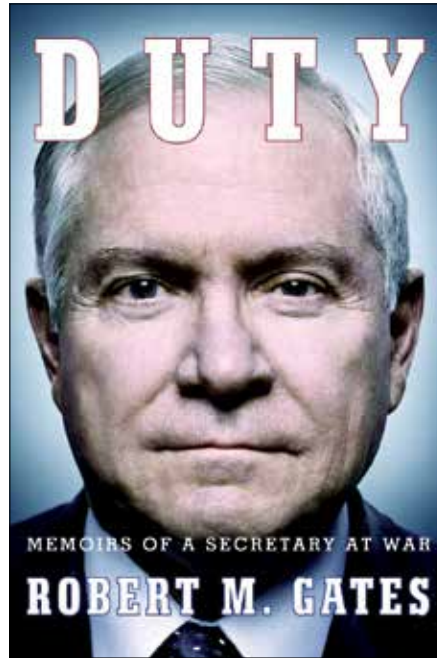
What accounts for Galvin’s success as a strategic leader? Having known him for some years, I am tempted to say that his most astounding trait was that he was a wonderful, thoughtful man, but there must be more. First, Galvin had that global perspective that he preached about. He saw local culture and individuals as very important. He found time to learn German and Spanish well, but with a hint of a Boston accent.

Second, he was a consummate military professional. He could talk tactics with the captains and discuss arms-control proposals with the experts and the eggheads. The details of operational art and the peculiarities of low-intensity conflict were subjects that he mastered. He knew when to stay at a high altitude and when to dive into the details, many of which were recorded on his omnipresent note cards.

Third, like the American eagle, Galvin did not flock. He was his own man. He understood and wrote about the requirements for low-intensity conflict when few in the Army cared about it. Galvin also wrote three books: two on the Revolutionary War and one on modern airmobile operations. Most generals do not have time to do this kind of in-depth intellectual work, but he did. Galvin studied the past for clues to the future, but he could also spot trends that were new factors for analysis. NATO was fortunate to have his leadership during the Mikhail Gorbachev years. Steeped in the Cold War for 40 years, Galvin also knew that change was a constant, even with the Soviet Union. Finally, Galvin saw his mission as including the need to learn from and to teach others, sometimes directly and other times so subtly that they did not notice that it was taking place.

*Fighting the Cold War* is a big book, but it is worth every minute that you invest in it, whether you are a historian, a student of leadership, a NATO-phile, a USSOUTHCOM staffer, or just interested in the Cold War as seen through the eyes of a general raised in Boston’s working class. JFQ

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### **Duty: Memoirs of a Secretary at War**

By Robert M. Gates  
Borzoi Books and Alfred A. Knopf, 2014  
640 pp. \$34.95  
ISBN 978-0307959478

Reviewed by Thomas F. Lynch III

**D**uty: *Memoirs of a Secretary at War* is a valuable work by a unique public figure. Former Secretary Robert M. Gates recounts his 4½ years at the helm of the Department of Defense overseeing two separate wars for first a Republican and then a Democratic President. In this regard, Bob Gates has no peer; he is the only Defense Secretary to serve for consecutive Presidents from opposing political parties.

Gates is no stranger to the business of scribing memoirs. He previously published *From the Shadows: The Ultimate Insider’s Story of Five Presidents and How They Won the Cold War* (Simon and Schuster, 2007), recounting his

years from 1969 to 1991 in the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and on the National Security Council (NSC). While the chronological approach to storytelling is similar to that found in *Shadows*, *Duty* sustains an intense and passionate narrative unrivaled in Gates’s 1996 work. *Duty* is a conspicuously rich tome.

It came as little surprise that political passions were aroused by *Duty*’s early-2014 publication. With President Barack Obama still in office, Gates’s commentary on the inner workings of security decisionmaking in the final 2 years of the George H. Bush Presidency and the first 2½ years of the Obama administration was bound to generate a noisy and partisan clash. Even before *Duty* hit stores, some labeled it as harsh and highly critical of President Obama and claimed that it painted an antagonistic portrait of a sitting President while failing to note that Gates mainly chided White House counselors while applauding Obama’s decisionmaking style. A Republican former defense policy advisor and university scholar wrote that it was less Gates’s criticisms that were wrong than his timing.

The politically inspired reviews of *Duty* focused on the superficial and missed the substance. This included the deeply etched lessons of executive-level strategic leadership when engaged in a complex and costly undertaking such as counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations in two disparate countries with a domestic political dynamic that is anything but collaborative. As the lead agent for the conduct of that undertaking, Gates’s assessments tell us a great deal about how difficult an endeavor war is in general and how demanding counterinsurgency operations are in particular.

From the beginning of *Duty*, Gates reminds his reader that he was happily retired from government and ensconced as the president of Texas A&M University before coming to the Pentagon. He had declined an administration feeler about a return to Washington in 2005 to become the first Director of National Intelligence. He had grudgingly accepted a temporary appointment to serve on the Iraq Study Group (ISG) and was often surprised and irritated by what he saw