BOOK REVIEWS

Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, Racing the Enemy: Stalin, Truman, and the Surrender of Japan. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005. Pp.ix+366. $29.95, HB. ISBN 0674016939.

In this ambitious and highly praised study of the ‘triangular relations’ between the United States, the Soviet Union, and Japan, the author traces President Truman’s alleged ‘race’ to force Japan to surrender with the atomic bomb before Stalin could enter the Pacific War. The book is rich in interesting details, especially on the Soviet side, but it is marred by one-sided interpretations and contradictions.

In the first place, the author’s attempt to build the whole book on the theme of the ‘race’ between the two leaders does not quite come through. He admits that the ‘race’ did not get under way until after 21 July 1945, when Truman, attending the Potsdam Conference, received Major General Leslie R. Groves’ report of the successful detonation of a plutonium device. Hasegawa quotes from the President’s diary: ‘[Stalin] will be in the Jap War on August 15th. Fini Japs when that comes about.’ (p.138) But this entry does not betray any sense of urgency about ‘the race to see who could force Japan to surrender’. On the contrary, the President seemed rather pleased with Stalin’s promise to join the war in mid-August. This notwithstanding, Hasegawa asserts that ‘the race between Soviet entry into the war and the atomic bomb now reached its climax’. He immediately contradicts himself. On 23 July Truman asked Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson to find out ‘whether [General George C.] Marshall felt that we [needed] the Russians in the war’, and on the following day Stimson replied that Soviet assistance was no longer needed. So, it turns out, Hasegawa’s ‘race’ began only on 24 July and lasted for a bare two weeks until the Soviets won the ‘race’ and entered the war on 8 August. These two weeks are not long enough to sustain Hasegawa’s thesis.

Truman’s all consuming purpose was to defeat Japan as soon as possible with the minimum cost in American lives. For Hasegawa his primary aim was to win the ‘race’ and forestall Soviet entry into the war and its expansion in the Far East. For this purpose, the author says, it was imperative to use the atomic bomb before Japan surrendered, so the United States rigidly adhered to the unconditional surrender demand. Wistfully Hasegawa deplores that a promise of a constitutional monarchy would have ‘tipped the delicate balance’ in favor of
Japan’s peace party, but he ignores the absolute opposition of the military to surrender of any sort.

Chapter 5 (‘The Atomic Bombs and the Soviet Entry into War’), the heart of the book, presents an extremely one-sided view. Hasegawa claims that ‘there is no convincing evidence to show that the Hiroshima bomb had a direct and immediate impact on Japan’s decision to surrender’. (p.186) Yes, there is ample evidence, but he ignores it. According to Shusen shiroku (4: 57–58), a documentary collection that is as reliable a source as any and that Hasegawa uses when convenient, Foreign Minister Togo Shigenori proposed at the Cabinet meeting of 7 August that surrender be considered at once on the basis of the Potsdam Declaration (on one condition that the Emperor system remain), but the meeting came to no decision. Hasegawa repeats ad nauseam that the Hiroshima bomb did not change the situation, but he quotes the Emperor as telling Togo: ‘Now that such a new weapon has appeared . . . . my wish is to make such arrangements as to end the war as soon as possible.’ (p.185) In reality, the effect of the bomb was shattering and it galvanized the peace party.

The author’s central thesis is: ‘Indeed, [the] Soviet attack, not the Hiroshima bomb, convinced political leaders to end the war by accepting the Potsdam Proclamation.’ (p.199) He gives no evidence for the primacy of Soviet entry in the decision for surrender, except for the well-known fact that it dashed Japan’s last hope of Soviet mediation. (He makes no use of new Japanese sources.) Hasegawa magnifies the shock effect of Soviet entry by claiming that it was not expected ‘right up to the moment of attack’ and that it ‘caught the army by complete surprise’. But again he contradicts himself by quoting Prime Minister Suzuki Kantaro as telling Chief Cabinet Secretary Sakomizu Hisatsune: ‘What we feared has finally come.’ (p.197) If there had been a complete surprise attack, it was the atomic bombing of Hiroshima which came as a great shock.

The author assumes that just because the Big Six (the top Japanese leaders) heatedly contested surrender on the basis of the Potsdam Declaration on the day after Soviet entry, the latter event must have had the greatest impact. Without belittling the importance of Soviet entry, the analyst must measure the cumulative effect of the Soviet entry into the war on the heels of the Hiroshima bomb. It never occurs to Hasegawa that Soviet entry, coming as it did when the bomb had already shaken Japan’s ruling elite badly, reinforced their determination to surrender. It is revealing that Kido later testified: ‘I believe that with the atomic bomb alone we could have brought the war to an end, but the Soviet entry into the war made it that much easier.’

Hasegawa tells us twice how ‘important’ it was that while the Imperial Rescript of 15 August announcing the surrender mentioned
the atomic bomb, the rescript of August 17, specifically addressed to soldiers and officers, mentioned only Soviet entry. The reason is simple: for soldiers, scattered all over China and Southeast Asia, the atomic bomb would have been an abstraction beyond their understanding, whereas Soviet entry was a reality they could readily understand. While Soviet entry was important for implementing the surrender order, the atomic bomb was the crucial factor in the decision to surrender.

Hasegawa’s counterfactuals are far-fetched and contradictory. On the one hand, he says ‘even without the atomic bombs, the war most likely would have ended shortly after Soviet entry into war – before November 1’, which was the date scheduled for the Allied invasion of Japan. (Are the intervening 85 days to be regarded as a ‘short’ timespan?) On the other hand, ‘Without the Soviet entry into the war [but with the two atomic bombs], the Japanese would have continued to fight until numerous atomic bombs, a successful allied invasion of the home islands, or continued aerial bombardments, combined with a naval blockade, rendered them incapable of doing so.’ (p.298) Thus Hasegawa both minimizes and maximizes Japan’s reserve fighting strength. In effect, he seems to be saying that Soviet entry saved Japan from total national ruin.

In his conclusion Hasegawa claims to have buried the ‘myth’ that the atomic bomb gave Tokyo ‘the knock-out punch’, a myth that serves ‘to justify Truman’s decision and ease the collective American conscience’. Or does it? Robert Jay Lifton’s and Greg Mitchell’s *Hiroshima in America* suggests that the problem of ‘American conscience’ goes deeper than that. Hasegawa challenges Americans squarely to face ‘moral responsibility’. ‘Do we have the courage to overcome the legacies of the war.’ Which legacies? Such moral tenderness at the end of the story is strangely incongruous with the body of the book in which the author apparently delights in exposing ‘cat and mouse’ games, ‘Machiavellian’ and ‘duplicitous maneuvers,’ and mutual ‘deception’ between Stalin and Truman, between Stalin and Japanese, and between the peace party and war party in Japan.

Suddenly taking on an Olympian posture, Hasegawa declares: ‘This is a story with no heroes but no real villains, either – just men.’ (p.302) Pious words, but this comes close to placing President Harry S. Truman, a plain-speaking ‘man from Missouri,’ on the same ‘moral’ plane as Generalissimo Joseph Stalin (and Japanese warlords), and I for one find it difficult to identify with such a moral equation.

PROFESSOR SADAO ASADA
Professor of International History,
Doshisha University (Kyoto, Japan)
Michael Evans, *The Continental School of Strategy: The Past, Present and Future of Land Warfare*. Duntroon, Australia: Land Warfare Studies Centre, 2004. Pp.173. No price, PB. ISBN 0642296014.

Michael Evans, Head of the Australian Army’s Land Warfare Studies Centre at the Royal Military College, Duntroon, has written a book of extraordinary sweep. In a brief 173 pages he spans Scipio to Schwartzkopf and beyond, covering a remarkable range of issues over centuries of military history. Few attempt such a synthesis and fewer still pull it off; Evans does.

In the process, Evans develops six main themes. First, he frames the strategic debate in terms of the comparative merits of continental, maritime, and aeronautical schools, which find the key to victory residing in the control of the land, the sea, and the air, respectively. He then draws a distinction between the *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* dimensions of these schools. The intrinsic dimension involves the professional knowledge needed to fight successfully in that medium per se; the extrinsic dimension involves the knowledge needed to use success in that medium to meet the security goals of the state overall.

Focusing on the continental school, he argues that for the intrinsic dimension, the central development of the last three centuries has been the emergence of the operational level of war. Whereas *tactics* governs the conduct of battles and *strategy* concerns the higher direction of the war effort to meet the political needs of the state, *operational art* bridges the two by interconnecting battles into consciously planned campaigns whose results can achieve the strategist’s goals. Before Napoleon, the limited scale of warfare enabled single decisive battles to determine war outcomes; operational art was normally unnecessary. Since Napoleon, however, warfare has often become too big in space and time for a single engagement, no matter how decisive, to end a war. As a result, skill in orchestrating a series of engagements over time and into great depth has become increasingly important to success in land warfare, leading to the eventual maturation of operational art in the deep battle concepts of the twentieth century.

For the extrinsic dimension, Evans sees the key issue as the emergence of continental geopolitics as the key to national power. Prior to the twentieth century, poor inland transportation and communication made the sea the essential highway for both goods and military force. Control of the sea was thus enormously advantageous, and maritime powers dominated continental enemies. As inland transportation and communications improved, however, the mobility advantages of the sea diminished and the importance of directly controlling the key Eurasian landmass grew. This resulted both in the rise of the European
(and later American) continental powers, and in the ascendancy of continental over maritime strategy for translating military force into political purpose.

Evans’ final, and most interesting theme, is the failure of two recent attempts to overturn the fundamentals of orthodox continental strategy. For the intrinsic dimension, many advocates of the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) thesis have argued that the growing reach and importance of standoff precision strike will make it possible to attack simultaneously all targets of interest throughout a theater of war. If so, the sequential land battles of traditional operational art would be unnecessary and the tactical effects of precision strikes could have immediate strategic consequence. Others see the threat of ‘asymmetric warfare’ via insurgency or terrorism as undermining the importance of orthodox operational art. Evans is not persuaded: precision strike has serious limits against covered, concealed targets, and even against asymmetric threats, the need for operational-level guidance to ensure that the tactical application of violence serves a strategic purpose remains central.

For the extrinsic dimension, advocates of cyberwar or strategic information warfare hold that geography has lost its significance; hence the control of continental landmasses is no longer the sine qua non of strategy. Before them, strategic bombing theorists such as Alexander de Seversky argued that the airplane’s ability to overfly land armies to reach any critical point meant, likewise, that geopolitical position had lost relevance to the ability to impose political will on an opponent. Again Evans disagrees. The people and resources at the heart of national power reside on the land, and without control of that land, control of its resources is beyond reach. The airplane and the information revolution have become critical enablers of continental strategy, working together with ground forces to contest control of key geography, but they have not replaced it.

It is the book’s last two themes that are its most important. Much of the book, while impressive in its sweep, is nonetheless more synthetic than original. By contrast, Evans’ defense of the continental strategic tradition is a new and important antidote to today’s reflexive assumption that everything has changed since 2001.

In a work covering this much ground, one will inevitably find details with which to quibble. Evans, for example, is quite taken with the emerging concept of ‘effects based operations’ (EBO) but to make EBO viable he must stretch it so far beyond its original meaning as a form of aerial coercion as to render it almost a truism. Yes, all strategy must be mindful of the effect it seeks to achieve, but if EBO is no more than this, then it is hard to see how it differs from a bland injunction to think clearly rather than sloppily.
I would also be inclined to put less emphasis on the unique distinctiveness of the operational level of war per se. Strategy is a long chain of ends-means relationships: for the lieutenant, destroying the machine gun nest is the means to the end of taking the hill; for the captain, taking the hill is the means to the end of turning the flank; for the colonel, turning the flank is the means to the end of capturing the city; for the general, capturing the city is the means to the end of encircling the army; and so on.

Armies tend to slice this continuum into arbitrary pieces then reify the slices as something fundamental to the conduct of war; while it is clearly important to ensure that local actions serve, ultimately, grand strategic purposes. I see less magic in any one of the slices for this essential goal of strategic integration than does Evans. But these are indeed quibbles. Evans has written a fine book that advances important arguments and deserves a wide readership.

PROFESSOR STEPHEN BIDDLE
US Army War College Strategic Studies Institute

Jock Covey, Michael J. Dziedzic, and Leonard R. Hawley, (eds) The Quest for Viable Peace: International Intervention and Strategies for Conflict Transformation. Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press and the Association of the United States Army, 2005. Pp.322. $22.50, PB. ISBN 1-929223-67-6.

It has become conventional wisdom that the United States and its partners have to improve their capacity for post-conflict reconstruction and stabilization. This capacity will be important to restore failed states, but it will also be a critical component in preventing the emergence of new hotbeds of terrorism.

While this bit of conventional wisdom is true, it is also incomplete. The hard part in many cases – such as Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq – is to get to the post-conflict stage in the first place. The Quest for Viable Peace, a publication of the US Institute of Peace (USIP) and the Association of the US Army (AUSA), focuses on conflict transformation, moving the problem from the end of major hostilities to a viable peace, the point where ‘the capacity of domestic institutions to resolve conflict peacefully prevails over the power of obstructionist forces’. (p.xi)

The authors of this edited volume met and worked together on state building in and for Kosovo. Jock Covey, the lead editor, was the principal deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations (SRSG) in Kosovo, Michael Dziedzic of USIP was
a strategic planner there, and Leonard Hawley was a former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State with supervision over the US effort there. The other 10 international contributors had in-depth experience in various jobs in Kosovo. Some are international diplomats, another is a Royal Marine colonel, and some others are well-known Washington insiders.

The book is really two books in one. On the one hand, it describes the complex history of the conflict in Kosovo and the evolution of the international community’s policy toward that troubled sub-state. On the other hand, it is part field manual, with very detailed procedural guidance for four independent strategies for moderating political conflict, defeating extremists, institutionalizing the rule of law, and establishing an open and fair economy. It is in some ways a daring book because the authors agree that their advice is being drawn from a case where viable peace is still on the horizon.

I found Len Hawley and Dennis Skocz’s chapter on pre-interventionary political-military planning (pp.37–76) to be readable, complete, and very much on point. In particular, their ‘ten building blocks for a successful intervention’ should be used in the training all of American soldiers and diplomats.

Covey’s two well-written chapters on how an SRSG should think about his job and how the last five years have gone in Kosovo (pp.77–122) are perhaps the most valuable ones. Discarding the notion that SRSGs simply take UN Security Council mandates and execute them, Covey tells us that the productive SRSG should ‘...think like a little country that can service its national interests only by working through others. This notion meant that UNMIK [United Nations Mission in Kosovo] could develop its own “foreign policy”. ’ (p.80) He adds later on that: ‘In Kosovo, we essentially did what any little country would do when constrained and overshadowed by bigger powers...This involved building working relationships with those powers for the specific purpose of pursuing the interests of the mission. We consulted widely...aiming to construct a mosaic of strategic alliances.’ (p.80)

While Covey’s description might frighten those who fear international organizations and runaway bureaucrats, it is fair to note that the UNMIK was virtually the government of Kosovo. This is not the situation that an SRSG would find in Afghanistan or Iraq.

Other chapters in this work are no less excellent even though their scope is less than Covey’s. Colonel Lovelock’s essay on ‘fourth generation peace implementation’ and the chapter on rule of law give important advice to those whose primary interest is on the security side of the equation. The chapter on a ‘legitimate political economy’ covers a critical issue in a land where economy, organized crime, and
corruption were synonyms. The final two chapters by Michael Dziedzic and Leonard Hawley do an excellent job on pulling all of the sectors together.

In sum, The Quest for Viable Peace is an important, well-planned, and highly detailed book, even if it is not always easy reading. Conflict transformation is as necessary as it is complex, and Michael Dziedzic concludes with this warning:

Neglect is not a strategy. It is, rather, a guarantee that the price of intervention will inevitably become exhaustive. The better alternative is to become proficient at transforming internal conflict. Viable peace will result only if this strategic challenge is understood and appropriately addressed. (p.281)

PROFESSOR JOSEPH J. COLLINS
US National War College
Professor Collins also served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Stability Operations, 2001–2004

Major-General V. K. Singh, Leadership in the Indian Army: Biographies of Twelve Soldiers. Sage: New Delhi, 2005. Pp.417 including biblio. NP, PB. ISBN 0761933220.
Lt.-Colonel Vivek Chadha, Low Intensity Conflicts in India: An Analysis. Sage: New Delhi, with United Services Institution of India, 2005. Pp.513 including index. PB. ISBN 0761933255.

The connections between historiography and political change have been the subject matter of social history, seldom applied to the study of a developing world military. The two books under review are a part of the flowering of the intellectual accoutrements of the transformation India is currently undergoing. Delhi’s think-tanks and publishing houses have clearly stepped up to support the making of a great power.

To do so, they have reached out mainly to retired military officers, the available but subjective talent pool. The unwillingness of the government and the armed forces to submit themselves to external scrutiny and disinterest in the military matters in a country obsessed with development created a structural absence of independent military analysis in the country. The results of this semi-official history writing are mixed. On the one hand, insiders have knowledge denied to outsiders, but too often identity and income shackles are hard to break.
Singh’s 12 biographies of exemplary Indian Army leaders is an ‘officers and gentlemen’ script written for Cary Grant: hard-charging, hard-drinking, witty, honorable, and beside the point. Must we know of Prem Bhagat’s courtship of his wife or Sam Manekshaw’s ability to discern Dimple Scotch whisky as aspects of military leadership? Chadha’s effort is more deliberately an exercise in objective history writing, though he falls into the trap of including all that is known and generally-held about nine cases of rebellion in the country: when you say a lot of what is already known, you say not very much at all.

The books serve useful inferential purposes, however. Reading Singh, you get the sense that the critical period in the lives of these men occurred before India even became independent. All 12 officers profiled in Singh’s book were commissioned under the British rather than in free India. The exception, Thakur Nathu Singh, was the most nationalist of Indian officers serving the British, who ironically turned down Nehru’s offer to lead the Army after 1947. All this, of course, begs the question whether independent India has produced any fine military leaders. It is true that the search for a ‘fully Indian’ officer would bring us into the late-1980s and the 1990s, which might be too contemporary for historical comfort, but that absence to me is the most damning evaluation Singh might have given the Army he is so clearly proud of.

Singh’s biographies are also significantly about the early years of the careers of these officers rather than investigations of their performance in leadership. Yes, Manekshaw, stood up to Indira Gandhi to push the 1971 war back by eight months—an exploit Manekshaw himself is known to have related with the periodicity of an early model machine gun – but his story and may be that of Mohammed Usman and Sagat Singh are the exceptions.

The early life focus of the biographies confuses the meaning of leadership. The exploits of these heroic men were mostly very personal and of little more than tactical utility: Cariappa insisting on keeping the flag on his car as traveled in wartime Kashmir in 1948 or Usman’s efforts on the eastern front in World War II can hardly be called leadership of the Army as a whole.

There is little doubt that the years of British tutelage created in India machinery for training fine company commanders. Generalship is another matter. That independent India has not generally fought an equal power, and when it did in 1962 it got walloped, suggests that the history of Indian generalship is in sore need for critical examination. The blame for India’s poor military effectiveness cannot be placed entirely on political leaders alone. As H. R. McMaster held the leadership of the US Army culpable for dereliction of duty in Vietnam,
surely some blame for India’s military performance falls on its army brass. You will not find that in Singh’s book.

Chadha’s relatively greater success is the result of a self-conscious effort to write the objective story of India’s experience with low intensity conflict, particularly for use by other researchers with lesser access than him; Chadha is a serving army officer. With this in mind, each episode is told from beginning to the end, in detail. The stories by themselves are well known. Chadha follows the semi-Marxist economic determinism of conflict causes. He says that low-intensity conflicts are the result of multiple factors and fighting against them requires comprehensive policy. In particular, all nine cases of rebellion have in common four specific factors, the many causes and cases captured in a chart (pp.422–23): political opportunism, administrative neglect, lack of jobs, and corruption. Everything else – ethnic division, external help, religion, language – come and go.

The policy implications of this analysis come with the subtlety of a sledgehammer. The undertone of ire is directed not so much against the insurgents whom the Indian Army has had to fight as it is against self-serving and corrupt politicians who let things drift so far that citizens rise up in armed protest. The Indian Army, like its contemporaries, is an unwilling counterinsurgent.

Pride of place in the book is occupied by Kashmir, about a fifth devoted to the conflict. Here multicausality is jettisoned. It is true that without Pakistan the Kashmir troubles may not have lasted as long as it has. What is interesting to note, however, is the change in semi-official position in India on the question of when the conflict began. In keeping with the mild Marxism of the state in India, the rebellion was believed to have started in 1989 following the Congress Party’s fraudulent victory in elections, which lit up an already combustible mix of educated unemployed, corruption, poor governance, and images of Muslim triumph in Palestine and Afghanistan. Increasingly though, Indian writers are drawing a longer lineage of the problem, back to 1947, to argue the case for structural change in Pakistan before that country can give up its support for terrorism. This is an interesting gambit by Indians to change the narrative of the conflict in order to take advantage of the global war on terror, but its success is yet uncertain.

The larger rationale for studying India’s armed forces is quite clear. As a set of institutions, India’s armed forces present a fascinating case study of continuity and change. The Indian military is the legacy of the British colonialism, yet it is at the center of India’s emergence as a great power. India has one of the largest militaries in the world, but has found it difficult to convert its numerical superiority into military victories. This presents rich material for research and discovery. In that
spirit – and for the unintended inferences – these books are to be welcomed.

PROFESSOR SUNIL DASGUPTA
Georgetown University, Washington DC

G. Sheffield and J. Bourne, (eds) Douglas Haig: War Diaries and Letters, 1914–1918. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 2005. Pp.x + 550. £25, HB. ISBN 0297847023.

This new edition of Haig’s diary supplements the long out of print edition edited by Robert Blake in 1952. It reflects the historical interests of its editors, two of the leading British historians of command and operations in World War I, who make no excuses for an edition which seeks to emphasise Haig’s military role over the political dimension which Blake’s edition focused on. Thus this edition is not definitive, as it leaves out much of the material already edited by Blake. It is however substantial and welcome. Haig’s actions and writings remain the most contentious and over-analysed aspect of Britain’s war.

Rather than revisit these debates in detail, after a short but thoughtful introduction to the nature of Haig’s diary and the development of his command between 1914 and 1918, the editors leave the Field Marshal’s writings to speak for themselves. Their publication is unlikely to settle the many controversies, if only because they reveal the contradictions in Haig’s own character and actions when faced with his huge task, which would have overwhelmed lesser men. The general availability of such a substantial portion of the diaries will at least allow those interested to make their own judgement on Haig – the chief ‘Donkey’ or one of Britain’s greatest military commanders – free of the interpretation and acrimony of later scholarship.

DR WILLIAM PHILPOTT
Department of War Studies, King’s College London