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Jennifer Morrison Taw, *Mission Revolution: The U.S. Military and Stability Operations*. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2012. Pp. xvi, 261. ISBN 978-0-231-15324-9.

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In *Mission Revolution*, Jennifer Morrison Taw (Claremont McKenna College), a former policy analyst at the RAND Corporation, examines the recent shift of the US military towards “stability operations,”¹ broadly defined as peace programs, humanitarian assistance, arms control, and counter-narcotic and anti-terrorist activities. Taw traces this change to Department of Defense Directive (DODD) Number 3000.05 (28 Nov 2005), which elevated stability operations to the same status as conventional military offensive and defensive roles. She boldly compares this development to the immense changes enacted by the National Security Act of 1947² and the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986.³

Overall, this book means to demonstrate that DODD 3000.05 represents a significant change from previous practices, to identify and examine the dynamics that led the Pentagon to adopt this new approach, and to consider the implications—for the military, for policy makers, and for U.S. interests more generally—of elevating stability operations to a primary mission.... DODD 3000.05 indicates that the progressives, who in the 1990s could not quite sell their leadership on a new *raison d'être* for the military, have since been able to capitalize on the securitization of instability, have positioned themselves to create change, and have begun the process of moving the military in a very new direction. Their efforts have resulted in a marginally changed force with substantially changed doctrine and a rapidly changing mindset. (6, 138)

The author draws on a wide array of sources, including government documents, reports, and studies, congressional hearings, and speeches by key officials. She also surveys in detail military doctrinal publications, field manuals, etc., and is conversant with the relevant scholarly and journalistic materials.

The book comprises five main chapters, plus a short sixth reflecting on “A New World Order.” In the first chapter, “Stability Operations in Context” are defined as “the application of a group of operations in support of establishing and maintaining order” (8). Taw outlines the history of such operations, for example, during the Vietnam War—the Civil Operations and Rural Development Support program, the Phoenix program, and the initial Strategic Hamlets program—all of them disappointments. “Vietnam gave the lie to the assumption that conventionally trained troops could conduct effective counterinsurgency and stability operations and demonstrated the limitations of the American ‘way of war’” (14).⁴ Other Cold War examples, such as the Multinational Force II (MNF II) in Lebanon (1982–83), failed badly as well. Though stability operations were ramped up following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the military’s focus remained their antithesis: the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA). After the 9/11 attacks, this emphasis influenced initial

1. Her previous work includes co-authorship of *World Politics in a New Era*, 5th ed. (NY: Oxford U Pr, 2011).

2. See Roger Z. George and Harvey Rishikof, eds., *The National Security Enterprise: Navigating the Labyrinth* (Washington: Georgetown U Pr, 2011); Douglas T. Stuart, *Creating the National Security State: A History of the Law That Transformed America* (Princeton: Princeton U Pr, 2008); Andrew J. Bacevich, ed., *The Long War: A New History of U.S. National Security Policy since World War II* (NY: Columbia U Pr, 2007); Aaron L. Friedberg, *In the Shadow of the Garrison State: America’s Anti-Statism and Its Cold War Grand Strategy* (Princeton: Princeton U Pr, 2000); Michael J. Hogan, *A Cross of Iron: Harry S. Truman and the Origins of the National Security State, 1945–1954* (NY: Cambridge U Pr, 1998).

3. See James R. Locher III, *Victory on the Potomac: The Goldwater-Nichols Act Unifies the Pentagon* (College Station: Texas A&M U Pr, 2002); Gordon N. Lederman, *Reorganizing the Joint Chiefs of Staff: The Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Pr, 1999).

4. On the American way of war, see Dominic Tierney, *How We Fight: Crusades, Quagmires, and the American Way of War* (NY: Little, Brown, 2010); Thomas G. Mahnken, *Technology and the American Way of War since 1945* (NY: Columbia U Pr, 2008); Brian M. Linn, “The American Way of War Revisited,” *Journal of Military History* 66 (2002) 501–33; Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy* (Bloomington: Indiana U Pr, 1973).

force planning for the Iraq War. As the challenges of post-conflict circumstances in Afghanistan and Iraq forced leaders to rethink the military's role, many seized on stability operations as a panacea.

Taw highlights two major debates: "The first is over the political use of the military; the second is over the requirements of stability operations in terms of training, organization, and equipment" (25). She maintains that the American public has normally opposed the political use of the military. The "steady pushback" (27) in this regard has been reflected in Defense Department policies: under Caspar Weinberger, DOD doctrine was a reaction to the 1983 failure in Beirut specifically and the Vietnam War generally. Colin Powell's 1992 revision of the Weinberger doctrine sparked contentious disagreement between the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and Madeleine Albright, US ambassador to the United Nations. Taw writes that two opposing groups emerged: "traditionalists" dedicated to fighting conventional wars and "progressives" advocating stability operations (31).⁵ The Vietnam War, MNF II, and American involvement in Somalia made painfully obvious the unique requirements of successful stability operations—foreign language facility, cultural sensitivity, and diplomatic skills. All of these were ideally suited to Special Operations Forces (SOF). Nonetheless, military leaders have increasingly tasked stability operations to conventional forces lacking qualifications in these vital areas.

In chapter 2, "Doctrine and Stability Operations," Taw sees military doctrine as "a snapshot of military priorities, abilities, fundamental principles, and concerns" (39). She rightly stresses the hierarchical nature of military doctrine, from capstone (highest level) to keystone (middle level) to tactics, techniques, and procedures (lowest level). Doctrine is an "engine of change" because altering it necessitates modifications in equipment, organization, and training (40). In the past, doctrine on stability operations remained at the lower levels.⁶ From Vietnam until the 1980s, responsibility for stability operations doctrine resided with special operations forces, while the purview of conventional forces was an anticipated outright war with the Soviet Union, a kind of Fulda Gap scenario.

During the 1980s, anticommunist operations in Latin America forced military leaders to revisit counterinsurgency doctrine, with corresponding changes in military manuals.⁷ The Army also moved low-intensity conflict doctrine from the SOF Special Warfare School to the Combined (conventional) Arms Center and added it to its capstone doctrine for the first time in 1986. The end of the Cold War compelled American military leaders and policy makers "to reconsider every assumption that had underpinned U.S. security strategy for the previous fifty years" (47).⁸ In the 1990s, low-intensity conflict figured more prominently in military manuals.⁹ Significant more recently, besides DODD 3000.05, Taw points out, has been the accentuation of full-spectrum operations in such Army keystone doctrine publications as FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency* (2006), co-authored by (then) Lt. Gen. David Petraeus and Lt. Col. John Nagl among others, and FM 3-07, *Stability Operations* (2008). Both manuals were widely distributed in the armed services and among the general public.¹⁰

In chapter 3, "Practical Adjustments to Achieve Doctrinal Requirements," Taw considers alterations in equipment, force structure, and training. The Army transitioned over 80 percent of its units to a modular

5. On the progressives, see Fred Kaplan, *The Insurgents: David Petraeus and the Plot to Change the American Way of War* (NY: Simon & Schuster, 2013); John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago: U Chicago Pr, 2002).

6. Taw characterizes the 1935 Marine Corps manual *Small Wars Operations* (1935) and the revised version entitled *Small Wars Manual* (1940) as "historical quirk[s]" and "harbinger[s]" for how such operations would be treated when they resurfaced in military publications forty years later" (40-42). See the Marine Corps's FMFM-21, *Operations against Guerrilla Forces* (1962), and the Army's FM 100-20, *Counterinsurgency* (1964).

7. See the Marine Corps's FMFM 8-2, *Counterinsurgency Operations* (1980), and the Army's revised FM 100-20, *Low Intensity Conflict* (1981).

8. Examples of this reexamination included the Commission on the Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces, the Base Force Review, the Bottom-Up Review, and the Quadrennial Defense Review.

9. E.g., the Army's FM 100-20, *Low Intensity Conflict* (rev. 1990) and the Air Force's AFP 3-20, *Low Intensity Conflict* (1990); the Army also addressed low-intensity conflict in a capstone doctrine document, FM 100-5, *Operations* (1993).

10. See also the capstone doctrine document FM 3-0, *Operations* (2008).

paradigm, shifting away from divisions and toward brigades. The brigade combat team became the foundational unit in various configurations, including heavy, infantry, Stryker, and stability. Other emphases were provincial reconstruction teams, the Air Force contingency response groups, and the Navy's Expeditionary Combat Command. Special operations personnel almost doubled and the SOF budget nearly tripled in the decade after 9/11.

As for training and education, the Army created the Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (2003) and added the Culture Center within Training and Doctrine Command; the Marine Corps established the Center for Irregular Warfare (2007). Taw underscores the "inherent opportunity costs" of these adaptations, warning that "a military cannot be all things at all times" (86–88). Increased training and education in politics, culture, language, and economics leaves less time to perfect conventional military skills.

More tangibly, these changes have affected procurement as well. Stability operations require equipment unlike that of RMA forces designed for conventional warfare. Defense procurement is inherently controversial, because it involves both money and politics. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates's 2012 fiscal year budget proposal recommended cancellation of such major—therefore expensive—conventional equipment programs as the Marine Corps's Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle, a variant of the F-35B fighter plane, and the Army's Surface Launched Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missile in favor of the Air Force's Remotely Operated Video Enhanced Receiver, the Army's Ground Combat Vehicle, and the Navy's Littoral Combat Ships—all intended for stability operations.

Chapter 4 is devoted to "Explaining the Military's Mission Revolution." Besides the seismic change in the post-9/11 international security environment, Taw identifies two key domestic factors behind the shift towards stability operations: the presence of a threat narrative and the role of politics. In an atmosphere of "securitized instability" (115), policy makers have devised a cyclical logic justifying stability operations. In the realm of politics, Taw alerts us to the notion of "institutional privileging" (124). Civilian institutions have far less personnel and money than military organizations. The Department of State budget is less than 10 percent that of the DOD, which has over two hundred times the personnel of the US Agency for International Development. Civilian institutions also lack the powerful constituencies that confer political influence. There are roughly 2.3 million active and reserve military personnel, over 640,000 civilian defense employees, and more than 23 million people otherwise associated with the military—veterans, retirees, contractors, and so on. Defense contractors exert influence by making large donations to political campaigns and awarding lucrative defense subcontracts to companies in specific congressional districts. In the absence of the sort of urgent role for conventional forces that existed during the Cold War, stability operations provide the military a useful rationale for increases in personnel and funding.

In chapter 5, Taw paints a picture of the "Implications of Military Revolution" in gloomy hues. She warns that the military's elevation of stability operations "guarantee[s] that U.S. forces will be faced with the most challenging, least conventional, and messiest of stability tasks, those that, in the past, have had the lowest success rates and the highest costs. Ultimately, these implications boil down to one dynamic: militarization" (141). She discerns two categories of consequences: "peacetime extension" and "fill-the-gap operations." The former is "a deliberate expansion of the armed forces' purview into conflict prevention through diplomacy and development," the latter a "related shift from involvement in big wars with defined ends to messier, ongoing conflicts where 'victory' may involve long-term nation-building efforts" (143). Peacetime extension includes the expansion of missions in both the US Africa Command and Southern Command to address underlying causes of conflict. Fill-the-gap operations include the military's post-conflict reconstruction role in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

Mission Revolution is a cautionary tale: "One could make a strong argument ... that the past two decades are functions of policy decisions that created involvement in stability operations, rather than that stability operations have been a necessary response to pressing international events" (185). Jennifer Morrison Taw has illuminated the shifting contours of the debate over the proper role of the US military both today and tomorrow.