



Army Diplomacy: American Military Occupation and Foreign Policy after World War II by Walter M. Hudson.

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This is a worthwhile book, but not the one its title promises. Parts of its second half and its conclusion focus on the postwar period and the practice of military occupation, but “army diplomacy” is touched on only in passing, usually with regard to relations between the US commanding general and his peers in lands divided among several occupying forces. However, the book does fill a serious gap in the fast-growing scholarly literature on military occupations: it is a perceptive institutional history of over a century of the US Army theory and planning for developments that ensue after wars end. It also demonstrates how plans formed over decades can, to paraphrase Clausewitz, quickly be undone by the fog of peace. A better title might be: “Preparation Meets Contingency: US Army Planning and Military Occupations from the Mid-Nineteenth Century to the Present.”

In his introduction, Walter Hudson (PhD, Kansas State Univ.), an Army judge advocate, succinctly explains his reason for writing, answers the “so what” question, and outlines the book’s structure. He writes that “in the immediate aftermath of World War II, the US Army became the principal executor of American postwar governance policy throughout the world” (1), supervising occupations of conquered and liberated nations throughout the northern hemisphere. These responsibilities placed over 300 million non-Americans under US military government. The author notes that the manner and the very idea of undertaking to rule over foreign populations had already been hotly debated for decades within the American foreign policy establishment. President Franklin Roosevelt had himself initially had misgivings about the army taking the lead in such endeavors. The central question as the Second World War drew to a close was who exactly should supervise any occupations after the ongoing war.

The book’s first three chapters¹ show Hudson’s skills as a researcher and institutional historian. In particular, he clarifies complex interagency politics and discusses the bureaucratic ascendancy of the War Department in postwar planning. Though it may seem logical that a large military force should take the lead in overseeing a conquered or liberated nation’s transition to peacetime conditions, Hudson adeptly shows that both ideological temperaments and personal rivalries made this an open question for policymakers. The War Department and the Army, he explains, took the initiative in creating training facilities, repeatedly arguing that other postwar goals had to take a back seat to “military necessity” (whatever that might mean in a given circumstance). A further point made in these chapters is that mid-ranking officers who engaged in classroom exercises often unwittingly laid the foundations of future postwar occupation policies.

Chapter 4, “North Africa and the Establishment of the Civil Affairs Division,” concerns the military governance of conquered or liberated territories. Oddly, given that it follows over a hundred pages explicating detailed plans for postwar occupations, it begins by stating that “relatively little planning for postconflict administration was done for the North African campaign” (129). What follows sets a

1. “Military Government Planning Prior to 1940,” “Military Government Doctrine, Training, and Organization, 1940–1941,” and “FDR, Interagency Conflict, and Military Government, 1941–1942.”

pattern for the remaining chapters: analysis of the failure of theoretical planning for given occupations due to unanticipated real world circumstances; an account of the handling of such contingencies by US commanders on the scene; and a survey of relations between those commanders and their superiors, civilian colleagues, and Allied counterparts.

In chapter 5, “Planning and Implementing Military Government in Germany,” Hudson makes his first substantive mention of US-Soviet relations in occupied Germany (161). If “army diplomacy” in the book’s title denotes relations among national governments, this is where Hudson’s discussion of the subject begins. Chapters 6 and 7 treat the same topic as chapter 5, but with regard to Austria and Korea. All three chapters concentrate on planning, with some treatment of how each occupation was conducted as well as biographical sketches of the generals in charge and their relations with key peers. The volume’s conclusion turns from World War II to evaluate how occupation planning and policy later evolved in the face of difficult contingencies in Vietnam, Iraq, and elsewhere.

Hudson convincingly stresses in his later chapters that, yes, contingency matters, but so do personalities. Gen. Lucius Clay, who oversaw the American sector in Germany, was an able and experienced administrator who maintained more collegial relations with his Soviet counterpart than most US diplomats could claim. Germany and Austria fit the presumptions of US Army occupation plans: they were comparatively familiar lands with placid populations and reasonably functional civil governments. To these factors Hudson attributes the relative success of American occupation policies in each country.

Gen. Mark Clark came to Austria straight from the Italian and North African campaigns, bringing with him considerable experience overseeing conquered and liberated territories. He, too, enjoyed a good rapport with the commander of Austria’s Soviet sector. He also allowed an Austrian leader acceptable to the Soviets—Karl Renner—to establish a provisional national government. This helps explain why Austria was the only country subject to a divided occupation that reunified immediately after its occupation (Hudson also observes that the USSR’s lack of interest in the country had much to do with this outcome).

Oversight of the occupation of Korea south of the Thirty-Eighth Parallel, by contrast, fell to Gen. John Hodge, who had considerable combat experience, but almost none in the administration of a civil government. He and his soldiers had received precious little training in the language and customs of the Korean people. This gave disproportionate influence to a few Anglophone Koreans—such as Syngman Rhee. Hodge also had little contact with the Soviet commander to his north, albeit not for lack of desire. Within weeks of the war’s end, the Thirty-Eighth Parallel had hardened into a sealed border permanently dividing what were intended to be temporary occupation sectors.

Hudson omits Japan from his analysis, because Germany, Austria, and Korea offered distinct case studies of, respectively, the conquered, the liberated, and something in between. But this is no cause for excluding Japan from his comparative study; quite the opposite. In justifying Japan’s omission, the author claims that “the US-Soviet dynamic ... simply did not exist” [[page?]] in Japan, because the Soviets did not take part in its occupation. True enough, but that does not mean the USSR was irrelevant to Japan’s occupation. Nor does the Soviet army’s absence rule out an analysis of the effectiveness of “army diplomacy” during an occupation, if one considers military-civilian relations, or military-civil government relations, as diplomatic endeavors.² The chapters on Germany, Austria, and Korea touch

2. As many recent scholars do: see, e.g., John Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (NY: Norton, 1999), Petra Goedde, *GIs and Germans: Culture, Gender, and Foreign Relations, 1945–1949* (New Haven: Yale U Pr, 2002), Maria Höhn and Seungsook Moon, eds., *Over There: Living with the U.S. Military Empire from World War Two to the Present* (Durham, NC: Duke U Pr, 2010), Rebecca Boehling, *A Question of Priorities: Democratic Reforms and Economic Recovery in Postwar Germany:*

on this meaning of army diplomacy, but Hudson does not explore it deeply enough.

Despite the disconnect between his book's title and its content, Hudson has provided a welcome, thorough longitudinal analysis of the evolution of US Army thinking and policy regarding postwar occupations. He presents a stunningly detailed breakdown of the complex institutional relationships within the US Army and between it and the nation's civilian government bureaucracies. The same may be said for his nuanced account of relations between American and other Allied commanders and civilian authorities. Hudson even summarizes his findings with admirable brevity, saying in his conclusion that:

Militarized decisions can sometimes be more pragmatic, less ideologically intense and polarizing, and more reflective of on-the-ground realities than those made at higher, purely civilian levels. When circumstances are right—a sophisticated and experienced senior military leader, and adequate and trained military force, a doctrine that makes sense in light of on-the-ground conditions—militarized decisions may produce better results than top-driven (civilian) ones. But if the military leader is not sophisticated and experienced, the force not so adequate and trained, and the conditions not so conducive to the applicable doctrine, then the weaknesses in militarizing otherwise high policy decisions are readily apparent. (274)

Walter Hudson has carefully supported each element of that argument in this worthwhile, if mistitled, book.

Frankfurt, Munich, and Stuttgart under U.S. Occupation 1945–1949 (Providence, RI: Berghahn Books, 1996), and Mary A. Renda, *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915–1940* (Chapel Hill: U North Carolina Pr, 2001).