

BOOKS



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GEORGE WASHINGTON'S OPPONENTS. Edited by George A. Billias. (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1969, pp. 362, \$7.50.)

Reviewed by Dr. R. W. Daly USNA

Paralleling his well-received *George Washington's Generals*, Professor Billias of Clark University has assembled another team of specialists to give the other side of the story.

Both content and general judgment appear in the chapter titles, which are: Thomas Gage, Weak Link of Empire; Sir William Howe: Conventional Strategist; Sir Henry Clinton: Paralysis of Command; Sir Guy Carleton: Soldier-Statesman; John Burgoyne: Ambitious General; Charles Lord Cornwallis: Study in Frustration; Richard Lord Howe: Admiral as Peacemaker; Arbuthnot, Gambier, and Graves: "Old Women" of the Navy; Sir Samuel Hood: Superior Subordinate; and Sir George Rodney: Lucky Admiral.

The book is interesting and replete with controversies, well and thoughtfully written. The viewpoints are more those of academicians than professional military, but, as the bicentennial of the American Revolution looms, books such as these may induce professional military men to undertake some research and writing. For instance, the civil-military relationship would seem productive, to say nothing of the recurrent problems of the regular vis-à-vis the guerrilla.

THE MEANING OF LIMITED WAR. By Robert McClinton. (Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1967, pp. 239.)

Reviewed by LtCol Conway J. Smith

Unprecedented demands for knowledge and understanding of the modern phenomenon of limited war have precipitated a deluge of publications. But it is a most difficult and complicated subject and only a few writers have had success in bringing the subject into clear focus. To make matters worse, in our time it has become acceptable for experts in one field to cross over to another and publish volumes of outrageous opinions and certificates of mental poverty to plague the newsstands and bookshelves in epidemic proportions. The

exact boundaries of this nonsense are hard to locate and the reader in search of the truth has an impossibly broad spectrum to cover. Robert McClinton's book is a welcome relief from all of this, indeed, it is an intellectual voyage of discovery.

Author McClinton has had more than thirty-five years experience with the State Department. His assignments have included posts in Panama, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, Vietnam, Cambodia and Lebanon. These countries cited are all associated with at least one aspect of limited war, past, present or promised. Mr. McClinton has had experience, too, with the United Nations, having filled important posts at several international conferences. Since 1964, he has been the State Department Representative to the Naval War College. His authoritative background and unique experiences qualify him as one of our most articulate spokesmen on the subject of limited war and its associated peripherals.

The author states that his purpose is to study the nature of past, present and probable war in the last half of the twentieth century. He is of the school of thought which believes that there will be no recourse to nuclear exchanges between the Communist Bloc and the Free World, but paradoxically enough, that nuclear weapons will be instrumental in generating small wars. He cites thirty military engagements since World War II and points to dozens of areas where limited warfare will probably ignite before the turn of the century. He believes that the American public ought to know what they face in the remainder of this millennium.

The Meaning of Limited War fulfills author McClinton's purpose, for it cites the historical influences of past wars, provides a perceptive analysis of our present one in Vietnam, and finally a clear warning toward the future possibilities of war by military vandalism. The book distills the knowledge and experience of many years of close association with the subject to give the reader a grasp of the character and scale of its threat. The work has both popular and scholarly appeal, and because of its timely theme and universal importance, it is even recommended for people who don't read books. This vital document is

an important expression of opinion, a book for discussion and a must for any concerned American. Military professionals will find it helpful in developing articulation in a field where the public expects answers of them.

Author McClinton is not a common scold, but he found it necessary to begin his book with a stern indictment of American tardiness in recognizing the many implications of the limited war climate we live in. Without resorting to hysteria, he describes our thinking of the 1950's and relates to us that limited war had not yet been accurately defined when the explosive decade ended, e.g., the Pentagon's official definition was:

Limited war is a conflict short of general war in which United States forces will use atomic weapons as required to achieve national objectives.

His own definition of limited war sounds more familiar:

Limited war is a conflict short of general war to achieve specific political objectives, using limited forces and limited force, i.e., an armed conflict short of general war.

In the early chapters, Author McClinton describes seven distinct varieties of limited wars and cites case studies to illustrate them. In later chapters, he uses a skillful combination of a topical and chronological approach to expand his narrative in giving deeper insights into past crises. Among these are the Civil War in Greece, 1946-1949, the Korean War, 1950-1953, the Arab-Israeli War in 1947-1949, the Sinai-Suez incident of 1956, the American Landing in Lebanon in 1958 (while he was Ambassador there) and both the French and American involvements in Vietnam.

Finally, Author McClinton sums up the lessons of limited war. He provides a few penetrating thoughts which, if translated into action, may not only challenge accepted ideas, but could change the policies and destinies of nations. He maintains that the United Nations has been more effective than commonly known and will continue to play a vital peace keeping role. The book ends with an essay on the value of sea power, that could not have been penned better by Hanson Baldwin. Totally, *The Meaning of Limited War* is one of the best of the "forward strategy" books.

The book has received favorable comment from Salvatore D. Nerboso, professor of political science at Bowie State College. He says, in the *Library Journal* March 1st, 1967, "Mr. McClinton examines the political objectives of limited war—cites their unusual characteristics including use of surrogate forces and