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U.S. Military Innovation since the Cold War: Creation without Destruction

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ABSTRACT

Naval War College professor Colin Jackson maintains that, even though the Army moved aggressively toward alternative visions of warfighting from 1999 through 2007, the shift "bore the imprint" of its underlying preference for conventional warfare. Chapter Five, contributed by MIT research associate Sanford Weiner, contends that expertise in communications, surveillance, and coordination technologies gives the Air Force a "leading position" in debates over interoperability and joint operations.

FULL TEXT

U.S. Military Innovation since the Cold War: Creation without Destruction
Harvey M. Sapolsky, Benjamin M. Friedman, Brendan R. Green (editors). New York, NY: Routledge, 2009. 202 pp. Illus. Notes. Index. \$140.

This book describes how "the U.S. military reacted to the 'Revolution in Military Affairs' (RMA), and failed to innovate in its organization or doctrine to match the technological breakthroughs it brought about." It examines internal politics of the services as well as civil-military relations.

The compact volume portrays transformational and technological trends - or the lack of them - and the status of the "five" services. Curiously, the Special Operations Command is treated as a separate service.

Chapter Three covers the difficulties the Army has faced since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Naval War College professor Colin Jackson maintains that, even though the Army moved aggressively toward alternative visions of warfighting from 1999 through 2007, the shift "bore the imprint" of its underlying preference for conventional warfare. In Jackson's view, the future of Army modernization in the coming decade "remains uncertain."

In Chapter Four, **Benjamin Friedman**, a Cato Institute fellow, argues that, contrary to the hopes of RMA advocates, the Navy has "seen little innovation" since the Cold War. In his opinion, we must remain capable of threatening enemies from the sea, even if it no longer requires extensive naval air and surface forces. Chapter Five, contributed by MIT research associate Sanford

Weiner, contends that expertise in communications, surveillance, and coordination technologies gives the Air Force a "leading position" in debates over interoperability and joint operations.

U.S. Military Innovation since the Cold War is not a smooth read. It needed much better editing to eliminate pretentious terminology, such as the "second interwar period," which in itself will drive most historians to distraction. Even so, the book makes a number of interesting points and highlights the political-military tensions that characterize our form of government.

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