

to a situation that was the closest the United States and the Soviet Union would ever come to nuclear war during the twentieth century.

The primary focus of the book is the invasion plan itself, OPLAN 316-62, and the many assumptions the Continental Army Command and XVIII Airborne Corps planners made. As it turns out, the United States had a very poor appreciation of the terrain and the disposition of Cuban and Soviet forces on the island, as well as the attitude of the Cuban population in their support for Fidel Castro. Compounding these problems was the magnitude of logistical resources that were needed to move U.S. forces from their various home bases to staging areas in Florida, and then into assault echelons for a multi-axis assault onto the island. As the planners started to war-game the deployment, the assault, and the post-attack stabilization phase, they quickly realized they lacked sufficient transportation assets to move tanks and other heavy equipment into position to keep pace with the intended assault timetable. As the war-gaming continued, they soon realized that if the Soviets fired even one tactical nuclear weapon against the U.S. forces attempting to invade the island, the invasion plan likely would be called off, and the conflict would become a quid-pro-quo battle of tactical nuclear weapons.

Other significant findings from the war-gaming included a high number of expected casualties on both sides. At that time, the combined Soviet and Cuban forces outnumbered the projected U.S. forces approximately three to one. And, if the U.S. forces were successful in defeating their adversaries on the island, the U.S. forces would likely remain there for months trying to restore order and services for the population—which the forces were not prepared to do.

Finally, the author plays out several “what if” scenarios. Each one is very plausible, but he determines all are essentially “lose-lose” cases for the United States, Cuba, and the Soviet Union.

The book is well written and easy to follow, and it cites credible sources. It was interesting from start to finish, and I would recommend it for field grade officers who will likely serve as military planners on division and higher staffs. It is an excellent study about the timeless importance of the necessity and validity of quality planning assumptions.

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**FAILED STATES AND THE ORIGINS OF
VIOLENCE: A Comparative Analysis of State Failure
as a Root Cause of Terrorism and Political Violence**

**Tiffany Howard, Ashgate Publishing Company,
Burlington, Vermont, 2014, 210 pages**

Along with poverty and political radicalization, what economic or sociopolitical factors bring about political violence and terrorism? To answer this, Dr. Tiffany Howard examines how state failure contributes to an individual’s decision to resort to political violence or terrorism. Specifically, what factors in the environment of state failure foster political violence?

Political scientists agree that isolated causes, such as poverty or physiological traits, do not necessarily lead to political violence—nor are there unified agreements regarding causes or definitions of terrorism. Observing these limitations, Howard assertively attempts to identify which factors, stemming from the failure of the state, lead individuals to engage in political violence, specifically terrorism.

Howard’s primary focus is on political violence and cases of terrorism in domestic contexts of failed states. She argues that individuals resort to political violence—and not always terrorism—as a method to ensure individual and group survival as well as to achieve a measure of security within a failing or failed state. Examining the factors that lead individuals to resort to violence is the key task of the book.

The first chapter of the book, “Breeding Grounds,” goes beyond a simple explanation of her thesis: The environment of state failure fosters political violence. Howard anticipates the potential “so what?” question by digging in to the broader consequences of state failure. This is accomplished through an analytical examination of the specific factors and characteristics of state failure that potentially lead to terrorist violence. These factors include grievances such as failed elections and inadequate representation, among many others. Not surprisingly, Howard finds that radical religious terrorism is prevalent in failed states; this is a phenomenon that political scientist David Rappaport considers to be the fourth wave of terrorism.

The remaining chapters of the book test Howard’s hypothesis in several global regions. These cases include

Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, Southeast Asia and South Asia, and Latin America. Howard bases her analysis of these regions on data gathered from Global Barometer data and the 2008 Index of State Weakness rankings. Howard uses logistical regression analysis, which is a tried and true methodology of political science; each region is systematically examined.

Those unfamiliar with analytical tools such as correlative analysis may still find the data useful to support qualitative projects involved in state failure or political violence. On a downside, her data sets from 2008 have been eclipsed by world events. The Arab Awakening of 2011, which is briefly touched on in the book's conclusion, dynamically changed many previously held assumptions about state failure and political violence. This demonstrates a weakness of the book. However, Howard does not deserve criticism in this regard; rather, this problem indicates how political science, along with other fields of research, struggles to keep up with world events.

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LENINGRAD 1943: Inside a City Under Siege

**Alexander Werth, L.B. Tauris, New York,
2015, 256 pages**

Alexander Werth's gripping narrative delves into the siege of Leningrad. It presents a poignant example of the cruelty and horrors that are unique to military operations in a city. Alexander Werth, a correspondent for the *London Sunday Times* and the British Broadcasting Corporation, was the first Western correspondent allowed into the city immediately after the blockade was broken by Soviet forces in September 1943. The book presents a graphic story of the viciousness and destruction produced during the battle within the city.

It must be remembered that Werth's visit was after the worst of the siege and while Leningrad was starting to recover; he did not directly experience the siege. However, he visited a number of buildings, including the apartment he had lived in as a youth, and conducted a mixture of formal and informal interviews with the people there (both civilians and soldiers). In this manner, he was able to hear their experiences directly

and weave them into an enlightening, comprehensive narrative. With its firsthand accounts, the book secures two positions in literature: first, as an authoritative historical document, and second, as a journalistic narrative of the overpowering grief and the futility of modern urban warfare. The book provides an unparalleled look at the conduct of modern warfare in heavily urbanized terrain.

Leningrad 1943 is written in Werth's perspective. He grew up in Leningrad and left Russia at the age of fifteen with his father, Adolph, in 1917, but he returned immediately after the "blockade" had been broken by the Soviet army in 1943. At that time, the German army was only three kilometers away in the suburbs south of the city.

The author uses his journalism skills to paint a vivid picture of the atrocities and the struggles that the population endured during the 872 days of battle. He interviewed ordinary people as well as members of the local government, and he toured selected military areas, which provided him the opportunity to better understand and to draw attention to the hardships the people faced—and survived—during the siege. He also addressed some of the survival tactics and strategies the people developed and employed to combat the never-ending bombardment.

One of the interesting points the author discusses focuses on how the Soviets developed and utilized urban camouflage techniques to confuse the German artillery spotters. It is such accounts that lift the book into the category of "noteworthy" when looking at urban combat from both the operational and strategic perspectives. The constant interviews and the barrage of places, names, and locations can become a bit overwhelming—especially when the author refers to the same location in both its pre- and post-revolution names. The repetitive references and comparisons to his childhood are a distraction. With this book, I recommend that the reader first peruse the entire introduction from Nicolas Werth, the author's son. The introduction fills in some of the story background and provides useful information.

I recommend this book for anyone interested in urban warfare and the lessons that may be applied to developing theories on combat in megacities, as well as for anyone interested in World War II on the Russian Front. My impression of this book is that it is well written and still relevant.

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