

advice from communications field operators in the media, military, and civilian sectors. One such piece of advice comes from journalist Richard Halloran, who counsels that the most important element in the relationship between the PAO and the journalist is the commander's intent. The commander who has an open or transparent communications attitude and fosters a similar command climate will enable the PAO and his subordinates to do their jobs. A commander who wants a "palace guard" to avoid the issues and avoid communication will get "bad" press and provide inaccurate information to the public.

Eder's discussion of strategic communication, an often ill-defined, overused expression that few understand and fewer know how to implement, is the best I have seen to date. She discusses the uses of new technology, social media, and trends in public opinion and weaves together a mosaic for both the professional and the layperson to grasp.

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**THE PAKISTAN CAULDRON:
Conspiracy, Assassination & Instability**
James P. Farwell, Potomac Books,
Washington, DC, 2011, 304 pages, \$29.95

THE PAKISTAN CAULDRON revolves around Benazir Bhutto's rise, her assassination, and the actions and reactions of the Musharaf administration in dealing with her. Pakistan's politics are tough to comprehend until one understands the role of the military (the corps commanders), the ethnic and class divides of the society, and the cultures of those divides and how they influence government and politics. Throw in relations with neighbors and allies, the Sunni-Shi'a split, the long history of government noninterference in the Western frontier regions, and the plunging economy, and the reader faces a very complex array. All of these factors are apparent to the author, although not to the average reader, who needs a better introduction to Pakistan and its environs. Once author James P. Farwell hits his stride, the book travels a smoother road and turns into a textbook on "strategic communications."

The military professional should read this book for three reasons. First, it is about a vital region that borders on Afghanistan. The border between

Afghanistan and Pakistan is a Western invention having little to do with the reality of the region and the lives of its populace. Yet a lasting solution to the Afghanistan conflict depends on the resolution of its border with Pakistan. Second, the book is about contemporary politics and U.S. influence on those politics. Americans understand little about Afghanistan yet deliberately exert their influence without sufficient regard for its culture, history, and geography. Third, Pakistan is a regional power in Southwest and Central Asia and a key Islamic country. The book's emphasis is on presidential strategic communications, not military information operations. However, some of the best U.S. contacts with Pakistan are military-to-military, and the U.S. military needs to learn more about a troubled and sometimes troublesome region.

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**ARC OF EMPIRE: America's Wars
in Asia from the Philippines to Vietnam**
Michael H. Hunt and Steven I. Levine,
University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill,
2012, 352 pages, \$35.00

THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION has captured significant attention in the last year. Events in the Middle East and Central Asia continue to vex U.S. foreign policy and military efforts, but they are increasingly becoming a landscape in the rear-view mirror as more emphasis on the greater Pacific region moves to center stage. *Arc of Empire: America's Wars in Asia from the Philippines to Vietnam* provides insight into this complicated region. Authors Michael H. Hunt and Steven I. Levine offer a thought-provoking study of the four U.S. wars in the Pacific.

Hunt and Levine contend that the war with the Philippines, the war with Japan, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War were not separate and unconnected, but "phases in a U.S. attempt to establish and maintain a dominant position in eastern Asia sustained over some seven decades against considerable resistance." Recognizing the provocative nature of this thesis, the authors devote their introduction to explaining how they use the term "empire." They provide an objective, historically

based definition of the loaded term and reinforce the definition with four case studies. The studies appear as chapters, one for each of the four wars, and provide an excellent overview of each conflict, drawing connections among them. Primary sources substantiate their perspective, and the book has a strong international emphasis that details both sides of each conflict.

Even though Levine and Hunt concede that U.S. involvements in the Pacific have demonstrated most of the features of an empire, concluding that the United States has engaged in intentional empire building is a stretch. Generous post-World War II agreements and American-led reconstruction efforts helped Japan achieve enough autonomy to become a formidable economic competitor in the late 1980s. Japan, whether rebuilt as a counterpoint to China or as a consumer for American exports, does not seem to be the result of a purposeful American plan for empire.

The authors do not discuss General George Marshall's efforts to broker a peace between the Chinese Communists and Nationalists in 1945, nor his request to Chiang Kai-Shek to halt his offensive against the Chinese Communists in June 1946. Would not a real empire have pushed the Nationalists to overcome the Red Army since the Nationalists were far more sympathetic to U.S. interests?

On the other hand, the United States did allow the French to regain control of Indochina after World War II. As the authors indicate, U.S. support for neo-colonialism in this instance had disastrous repercussions after the French lost Indochina after the battle for Dien Bien Phu in May 1954.

Professors and students of the Asia-Pacific will benefit from considering Levine and Hunt's thesis, even if they decide to disagree with it. Additionally, students will profit from reading a useful 15-page appendix, "A Guide to the Historical Literature" from 1898 to the present. Altogether, *Arc of Empire* is provocative and engaging and will challenge officers researching this complex region of the world.
CPT Nathaniel Moir, Fergus Falls, Minnesota

KONTUM: The Battle to Save South Vietnam

Thomas P. McKenna,
University Press of Kentucky, Lexington,
2011, 376 pages, \$34.95

IN LATE MARCH 1972, after most U.S. combat forces had withdrawn from Vietnam, the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) launched the Easter Offensive, a massive invasion of South Vietnam that included over 130,000 soldiers with 14 divisions and 26 separate regiments supporting massive numbers of tanks and heavy artillery. The attack focused on three objectives—Quang Tri in the area just south of the DMZ, An Loc in Binh Long Province just 65 miles from Saigon (where this reviewer served in 1972), and Kontum in the Central Highlands. Although the Easter Offensive was the largest enemy operation of the war, only a handful of books have been written about it, primarily because no U.S. ground combat troops were involved. Most books on this period make only a passing reference to the battle at Kontum. Thomas P. McKenna, who served as an advisor with the 23rd ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) Division during the battle, has written the only book focused solely on Kontum.

McKenna combines his personal experiences and extensive research from primary sources, media reports, and first-person interviews to produce a riveting account of the bitter fighting in the highlands. After addressing the background to the offensive and its opening phases, including the less than stellar performance of the ARVN at Tan Canh and Dak To in the early days of the battle in Kontum Province, the author turns his attention to the battle for the city of Kontum itself. During the course of the battle, three enemy main force divisions surrounded and attacked the ARVN defenders. It was a desperate battle for high stakes: if the North Vietnamese won, they would cut South Vietnam in half. McKenna, a small group of his fellow advisors, and the 23rd ARVN—with the help of U.S. airpower — found themselves in a fight against overwhelming odds as bombs fell on the defenders night and day. They repeatedly turned back human wave attacks supported by 36-ton Soviet-made main battle tanks. In the end, the South Vietnamese, despite some early missteps, triumphed over some of the best troops in the North Vietnamese Army.

Kontum: The Battle to Save South Vietnam is an insider book that reads like a novel. It is a story of courage and perseverance under extreme conditions in a level of sustained combat seldom encountered in the Vietnam War. This book is an invaluable