

divisions within the strategic emphasis of the Empire. Thus, Boston and the slave economy of Bridgetown, Barbados, symbolize Britain's early commitment to, and later turn from, the Atlantic, while Cape Town and Calcutta represent Britain's grown commitment to India during the turn of the nineteenth century. Other cities are emblematic of more ideological trends. For Hunt, Bombay's improved urban infrastructure is an expression of Britain's self-proclaimed civilizing mission, while Melbourne's white settler colony epitomizes the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century belief in a racial union between all Anglo-Saxons throughout the world. The chapter on Melbourne is particularly interesting as contemporary imperial promoters used Australia in general to show that colonization was the key to reinvigorating the Anglo-Saxon race. These expressed bonds were only strengthened by fighting for a common cause during World War I. Of course, the story of the decline of the British Empire is perfectly told in Liverpool's decaying cityscapes, a victim of Britain's modernization and turn to Europe rather than Empire.

Engagingly written, *Cities of Empire* reflects its author's concerns with the place of Great Britain in today's world—as British and American economic power is becoming overshadowed by growing Chinese and Indian capacity. Most of Hunt's cities, including Liverpool, are already being shaped by Chinese capital and trade. As imperial cities—part of the global urban economy—these cities gravitate toward the money. While there are a few oversights, notably regarding the military presence and purpose in some of the towns, Hunt has given an excellent primer on city development and British imperial governance.

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**VIETNAM'S YEAR OF THE RAT: Elbridge Durbrow,
Ngo Dinh Diem and the Turn in U.S. Relations,
1959–1961**

**Ronald Bruce Frankum Jr., McFarland, Jefferson, North
Carolina, 2014, 264 pages**

Vietnam's *Year of the Rat* investigates the turbulent relationship between Ngo Dinh Diem, then president of the Republic of Vietnam, and members of the U.S. Department of State during the

period from 1959 to 1961. The relationship, especially with Elbridge Durbrow, the U.S. Ambassador to South Vietnam, forms the backdrop for the Year of the Rat and explains how a series of diplomatic crises, a failed *coup d'état*, and a worsening security situation in South Vietnam contributed to the later escalation of U.S. forces in 1965.

The author's argument is that 1960 was "one of the many significant turning points in the war when the United States was presented with a choice on how to proceed and failed to live up to the challenge of making a different decision." These turning points, unfortunately, stemmed from Diem's troubled professional relationship with Durbrow. Their disunity centered on differing visions as to how to most effectively achieve security in South Vietnam and how to administer the republic.

Frankum describes how the problems between Durbrow and Diem, and issues resulting from their conflicting methods, extended to the relationship between Durbrow and the Department of State on one side and the Department of Defense on the other. The defense lead was Gen. Samuel T. Williams, the Military Advisory Assistance Group (MAAG) chief of staff, and later his successor, Gen. Lionel McGaar, with notable assistance from Edward Lansdale. These dissenting positions led to conflicting reports and recommendations, which were sent up the chain of command to the White House. Such reporting did not adequately provide President Kennedy with the information he needed in the decision-making process.

These troubled professional relationships were significantly and negatively influenced by two key events in 1960: the Caravelle Manifesto in April and the failed coup d'état by South Vietnamese paratroopers 11 to 12 November. The Caravelle Manifesto was a political tract written by a group of South Vietnamese intellectuals who publicly criticized Diem and his policies. The arguments presented in the manifesto were then manipulated by Durbrow to control resources allocated to South Vietnam and to leverage influence upon Diem. Understandably, Durbrow's work behind Diem's back was eventually recognized and rightfully regarded as acts of duplicity.

The most critical event, however, was the failed coup attempt in November 1960, which magnified the growing break between Diem's administration and the

United States. Later, Frankum argues, ambassadors and President Kennedy himself inherited a relationship and evolving crisis that was likely beyond repair by 1961. This central argument is convincingly described and clearly supported through meticulous research.

Another positive feature of Frankum's work is his writing; he explains complex series of events in a narrative fashion that is both interesting and informative. There are several books on this murky but important set of years. Notable titles include Robert Scigliano's *South Vietnam: Nation Under Stress* and Denis Warner's *The Last Confucian*. Frankum's effort is a positive addition to scholarship on this topic, and it positively benefits research on MAAG and the U.S. involvement in Vietnam prior to 1965.

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THE INVISIBLE SOLDIERS: How America Outsourced Our Security

Ann Hagedorn, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2014, 320 pages

Ann Hagedorn's *The Invisible Soldiers* is a remarkable investigation into the ascent of private military security companies (PMSCs). She contends that global conflicts have given rise to corporate warriors operating in the shadows without public scrutiny, and PMSCs are taking over U.S. security responsibilities. Her argument is presented with passion and thoroughness.

Hagedorn, an author and staff reporter for *The Wall Street Journal*, begins in London's ultra-secretive Special Forces Club. We're introduced to industry pioneers who have shaped global PMSCs—who developed the model for private security—and who held the interest of the United States.

In the book, the advent of the U.S. Army's Logistics Augmentation Program (LOGPAC) during the Reagan administration pushed the United States into the private security realm; LOGPAC was developed to bypass the Abrams Doctrine, which was conceived to prevent such a disconnect between the public and the military. Its inception opened the doors for corporations to

receive government contracts, effectively ushering in the PMSC era.

The book also claims that LOGPAC's Balkans' success, under the Clinton administration, invigorated the privatization of other services. PMSCs were financially and politically lucrative, and there was no longer a need to send reservists to conflicts; one could contract a private military contractor and fight for an eternity. We learn that Congress, the Department of Defense, and the Department of State were all complicit in the rise of PMSCs.

According to Hagedorn, the unveiling of PMSCs occurred in Iraq. There, the government surrendered security to corporations, which were now benefactors of war and, with that, a new, global war-fighting precedent emerged.

In 2007, the Nisour Square incident revealed PMSC activities in Iraq. However, when the media found other stories to cover, PMSC misconduct was no longer discussed. The checks continued to flow, and secrecy shrouded the industry again. Hagedorn presents evidence that the government continued working with the industry's sketchiest men, and knowing this did not prevent the government from awarding billion-dollar contracts to companies. To be fair, some officials attempted to eliminate PMSC contracts—without success.

Throughout the book, one wonders: Why was our security now in the hands of PMSCs? The answer is simple: there is profit in conflicts since the contracts are enormous. Furthermore, soldiers are too expensive. Cheaply, companies can hire a contractor per mission and fire the contractor afterward. Today, the battlefield is everywhere—as are the PMSCs. Consider their reach through various methods such as cyber, immigration, drones, bodyguards, and anti-piracy, to name a few. As regions become more complex, voids must be filled, and the PMSCs are obliged to fill those voids.

PMSCs prey on conflict and make a serious killing—literally and figuratively. I recommend this book if you can get past the prologue without being angered. While reading, consider the question: Whom are we fighting? In *The Invisible Soldiers*, the answer is clear and frightening. This is a must-read for military members and security enthusiasts.

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