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Guns and Violence: The English Experience (review)

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Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral William Owens played in advocating radical change. Surprisingly, however, she neglects the central (though quiet) role played by Andrew W. Marshall, the Pentagon's Director of Net Assessment, in sponsoring path-breaking research and analysis of the emerging RMA. In addition, while she notes the gap between the rhetoric and reality of U.S. defense modernization, the weight she accords to policy statements such as the Joint Staff's *Joint Vision 2010* leads her to overestimate the amount of transformation that the U.S. armed forces have undertaken.

The book's strongest section deals with international approaches to the emerging RMA. Sloan provides a useful overview of the Australian, British, French, and German defense modernization programs. She discusses more generally the growing capability gap that separates the United States from Canada and the European members of NATO. She also explores the relevance of the RMA to peace operations. While she correctly notes the utility of precision-guided munitions and advanced sensors, particularly when coupled with innovative doctrine and organization, one wonders whether new technology promises such an advantage that states with small and shrinking defense budgets will be persuaded to invest in them.

In short, Sloan has produced a useful overview of an issue of vital importance to the United States and its allies. Both the specialist and the generalist will read it with interest.

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***Guns and Violence: The English Experience.*** By Joyce Lee Malcolm. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002. ISBN 0-674-00753-0. Notes. Index. Pp. 340. \$28.00.

This work has little direct rapport with military history, being for the most part a study of crime patterns and arms legislation in England from the Middle Ages to the present, with more than half of the text dedicated to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; references to the British armed forces and the wars they engaged in are few. Still, weapons and violence have been constants in war, and readers can learn something further about them both here: for example, Joyce Lee Malcolm finds that when England was waging war abroad violent crimes at home declined, thanks to the temporary absence of turbulent and belligerent elements in its population; she likewise attributes the customary rise in postwar crime rates to the return of these same elements, some of whom have been further "brutalized" by their wartime experiences.

Then too, recent works on firearms and civil society have tended to collide with traditional viewpoints in a rather spectacular way. Thus in 2000

Michael Bellesiles published *Arming America*, a controversial book in which he toppled the Minuteman from his pedestal, propounding the near-heretical thesis that firearms were not widely owned in colonial and early national America and suggesting that they and their owners played at best a modest role in our history.

And now the sound and fury will continue. An academic historian publishing with an Ivy League press has produced a solidly documented and closely reasoned book that the National Rifle Association will no doubt greet with hosannas. Professor Malcolm offers this assessment of a century's legislative efforts at gun control in England: "Government created a hapless, passive citizenry, then took upon itself the impossible task of protecting it. Its failure could not have been more flagrant." In a chapter on "the American case," Professor Malcolm concludes: "the decline of violent crime in the United States and its rise in England serve to underline the fact that guns in and of themselves are not a cause of crime. Moreover, there is evidence that armed civilians, as thirty-three states believe, do reduce crime." Charlton Heston could not have said it better.

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*Les États-Unis: Hyperpuissance militaire à l'aube du XXIe siècle.* By Philippe Richardot. Paris: Economica, 2002. ISBN 2-2178-4451-1. Tables. Charts. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 292. €27.

*Les États-Unis: Hyperpuissance militaire* is part of a series published by France's Institute for Comparative Strategy to which the author, Philippe Richardot, is affiliated. Completed after the terrorist attacks of September 11, the book examines America's military establishment since the end of the Cold War. In it Richardot, a historian who specializes in defense issues, concentrates on the structure, organization, and technical capabilities of America's armed forces rather than the strategies or tactics that guide them.

The book is divided into two parts. Part one, which contains seven chapters, examines the structure of American forces; part two, which contains the final four chapters of the book, analyses the future of America's military forces, their doctrinal concepts, and their new arms. Intended as a general introduction to the subject, little of what appears in the book will surprise American military analysts. Unfortunately, the source base is exceedingly narrow. Although the book does not include footnotes, the bibliography indicates that it draws almost exclusively on *Jane's Defense Weekly* and *Aviation Week & Space Technology*. Moreover, while Richardot lists government publications and websites, he seemingly consulted few books in completing this study.

Despite his focus on the technical aspects of U.S. military might, the author manages to comment in the introduction and the conclusion on polit-