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Vieques, the Navy, and Puerto Rican Politics (review)

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the war, based on the integration of tanks, infantry, airpower, and artillery created the model for later Allied ground victory. With the Allies holding the majority of advantages, e.g., economic mobilization, the accession of Allied commanders like Field Marshal Sir Bernard Law Montgomery, mimicking this new warfare was the final element needed for victory.

Warren Chin's essay "The Transformation of War in Europe, 1945–2000," gives special attention to the war in Bosnia from 1992 to 1995. He makes valid points concerning warfare at the end of the twentieth century. For instance, during the last fifty years the purpose of the military has been to deter wars not to fight them. Western military establishments now require their governments to provide them with clear, achievable objectives. Regional warfare has become increasingly internationalized and the media has a new pronounced role in warfare, helping to shape the opinions of a politically active populace.

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Vieques, the Navy, and Puerto Rican Politics. By Amilcar Antonio Barreto. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002. ISBN 0-8130-2472-2. Tables. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xvi, 167. \$55.00.

This book deals with the political wrangling over the Puerto Rican island of Vieques, which has been used by the U.S. Navy since 1947 for training in Marine amphibious landings, naval surface fire support from offshore, and air-to-ground bombing from Navy and Marine Corps aircraft launched from carriers. The Navy has argued that Vieques offers training advantages unavailable anywhere else, an argument challenged by the Center for Naval Analyses in 2000. The tiny island is inhabited by some 9,400 people sandwiched between two firing ranges, a few of whom have been killed by training accidents. The matter of Puerto Rico's unresolved status (commonwealth, statehood, or independence) defines Puerto Rican politics. Since the 1970s, political opposition to the Navy's use of the island has grown in national and international clout. So much so that President George W. Bush declared in June of 2001 that the Navy should cease exercises on Vieques by May 2003 and find a suitable alternative elsewhere. Whether the timetable will be met is uncertain, though it would be practically impossible to see how Washington could allow continuing the exercises beyond that date, especially given the importance of the Hispanic vote.

Students of military history and strategy will find that Barreto's book offers mixed rewards. His broader purpose is to link the struggle over Vieques with the compelling political question of status and the rise of a distinct Puerto Rican identity and nationalism. Thus the book's reach is ambitious. Yet it is poor in reporting and analyzing history, often lapsing into sweeping unsubstantiated statements, e.g.: Vieques has been used as a train-

ing facility for the overthrow of Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala, the Bay of Pigs, the invasion of the Dominican Republic (1965), the overthrow of Allende in Chile, the invasion of Grenada, and Panama in 1989 (p. 27). Unsupported allegations do not serve the cause of eliminating the injustice that the *viequenses* have endured. The book is also poorly written, with excessive reliance on direct quotes to carry the discourse. This distracts the reader, impedes logical connectivity, and dilutes credibility. A good editor should have caught these problems.

The finest chapter in the book has to do with the notion that the struggle over Vieques promotes the development of “transnational identities,” a pattern that is eliminating cultural and political borders. Statesmen should ponder the policy implications of this form of globalization. In the meantime we must ask how the United States and Puerto Rico can continue a relationship based on unresolved political status and incomplete Puerto Rican political representation in the American democracy.

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The Revolution in Military Affairs. By Elinor C. Sloan. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002. ISBN 0-7735-2394-4. Glossary. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xi, 188. \$24.95 Can.

Much ink has been shed in recent years over the question of whether the growth and spread of information, precision guidance, and stealth technology is producing a revolution in military affairs, or RMA. Much of the literature has been dominated by American authors writing about the U.S. armed forces. America's European and Canadian allies have received much less attention. Elinor C. Sloan, an assistant professor of political science at Carleton University and a former defense analyst in Canada's Department of National Defense, helps remedy this deficiency in her book, *The Revolution in Military Affairs*, which thoughtfully explores the implications of the RMA for Canada.

The scope and impact of the emerging RMA have been much debated. In Sloan's view, it is the product of new technology (including precision-guided munitions, stealth, advanced sensors, and command and control systems) and “revolutionary” doctrine and organizations. Of course, exactly which technologies, doctrine, and organizations qualify as revolutionary is difficult to determine. Discontinuous changes in the character of war are more easily discerned in retrospect than in prospect. Sloan adopts a rather broad definition, one that colors her assessment of U.S. and allied defense modernization programs.

After defining the current RMA, Sloan provides a useful discussion of the origins of the emerging RMA in the United States. She emphasizes the important role that former Secretary of Defense William Perry and Vice