The scenario after 2030 depends on the shape of the East Asian Community. If the community were to be comprised of ASEAN+6 (China, Japan and South Korea, plus India, Australia and New Zealand), it would be easier for Japan to contain China’s ambition to become the regional hegemon. If the community comprised only ASEAN+3 – without India, Australia or New Zealand – China would be the next hegemon in East Asia.

The book is excellent in that it conducts a systematic analysis of the relative positions of China and Japan in their quest for supremacy in East Asia. However, there are some relevant factors it fails to consider. For example, the author does not analyse the differing capacity between China and Japan in terms of foreign diplomacy. As Hidetaka Yoshimatsu (in New Political Economy, 2010) demonstrates, the two countries’ different diplomatic approaches in the negotiation of free trade agreements with ASEAN resulted in different levels of influence in Southeast Asia. While China’s pragmatic diplomatic style with policy commitment strengthened its ability as an effective negotiator with ASEAN, and resulted in growing Chinese influence in the region, Japan’s inflexible diplomatic style – constrained by domestic political institutions such as the powerful agricultural lobby against free trade agreements – reduced Japan’s policy decisiveness and commitment and ultimately limited the growth of its influence in the region. As this case demonstrates, the difference in diplomatic capacity certainly affects China and Japan’s political influence and leadership role in East Asia. In addition, the author’s emphasis on Japan’s technological supremacy may be slightly exaggerated. He predicts it would take another twenty years for China to catch up with Japan in this regard. However, the economic dynamics of East Asia are already transforming the Japan-centred production system. For example, Chinese and Taiwanese electronics giants, Haier and Hon Hai (Foxconn), recently acquired the white goods division of Sanyo and the LCD panel division of Sharp respectively, when these large Japanese electronics companies were suffering from business difficulties. With an increasing number of such cases, Japan’s technological advantage may be reduced as a result of technology transfer and the bankruptcy of technology-rich subcontractors. China has benefitted most from regional economic integration and globalisation and (Greater) China’s economy has become more influential.

It remains to be seen whether China and Japan can institutionalise co-leadership in East Asia in the next two decades, despite their problematic history. It is also uncertain whether China will be the next regional hegemon, and thereafter compete with the United States for a hegemonic position beyond East Asia. Whatever the results may be, and despite a few shortcomings, the book is an excellent read that provides readers with essential information on which they can make their own judgements on the future of China-Japan rivalry in the quest for supremacy in East Asia.

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The Afghan Way of War Culture and Pragmatism: A Critical History
Rob Johnson
Hurst, 2011

Amidst a wave of books dedicated to Afghanistan, Johnson’s volume is one of the few which deal with war in Afghanistan from an analytical perspective, even if the largest portion of the book is dedicated to narratives of wars involving the Afghan peoples from the First Anglo-Afghan War onwards. The Second Anglo-Afghan War, the Tirah campaign of 1897–98, the Third Anglo-Afghan War, the Waziristan campaign of 1936–47, the Soviet war, the civil wars of the 1990s and the Taliban insurgency of 2002–11 are all dedicated some space.

The approach of the volume is to describe the different campaigns in some detail and then draw conclusions about the strategies and tactics which constitute the ‘Afghan way of war’. The author is cautious to avoid the trap of culturalism and stereotyping, and he eventually concludes that the Afghans, throughout the wars taken into examination, were adapting to the circumstances, using the human, financial and technological resources at their disposal in a relatively effective way.

The analysis of the author is quite balanced and he neither characterises the Afghans as invincible warriors nor as hopeless barbarians, as it happens so often in the more superficial literature. The book reads well and is written by a military historian with experience of service in the army, so military readers will find it of direct use. The aim of the author is quite ambitious, however, given that sources on Afghan strategy and tactics throughout the last couple of centuries are not abundant enough to be utilised in such a project.

The limitation in the sources is in fact the main problem of the book, although the author in general does a good job exploiting what he has. The sections dedicated to the period up to the Waziristan campaign are the best (most richly) documented, although the sources are unilateral (British only). Certainly, in these sections Johnson seems to have gathered whatever was available in terms of sources. The first two-thirds of the book, therefore, are the best part of the volume and represent a successful effort to make sense of a disparate literature and extract analytical conclusions from it.

The sections covering the Soviet war, the civil wars of the 1990s and the Taliban insurgency are, however, weaker, particularly the first two. While on the ongoing insurgency Johnson at least mobilises the relevant literature, in the case of the Soviet war and of the civil wars he misses out most of the huge literature in Russian and a more modest literature in Arabic and in the Afghan languages. This would have
been an opportunity to utilise sources from both sides in at least one of the conflicts taken into examination. The civil wars period in particular is poorly documented and much of the literature available superficial or biased. Although Johnson is not responsible for this lack of sources, his analysis suffers accordingly. He could instead have done more on the Soviet war, which is the most extensively documented of all the Afghan wars. The relatively narrow range of sources used leads Johnson to miss some important aspects, such as the military role of the Afghan security services, and to produce a rather unsophisticated picture of the Afghan mujahedeen; for example, the organisational dimension of the insurgency is not studied in detail.

Moreover, towards the end, the standards of the book in terms of sourcing seem to slip, with footnotes becoming rarer and rarer even when the author clearly draws from the existing literature. This last third of the book also suffers from several factual mistakes, which could have been avoided with more careful editing.

The weaker last third of the book notwithstanding, the volume remains a valid and stimulating contribution to the military history of Afghanistan, and more so generally to the literature on this country. The comments of the author are largely spot on and often illuminating. Any reader trying to improve his understanding of the current conflict in Afghanistan should certainly benefit from this volume. The book has some valuable pages, which describe the capabilities of the Afghan armies of the monarchy. Where the volume is strongest, however, is in describing how Afghan communities (as opposed to Afghan organisations), faced with external challenges, have over the years managed to cope in an adaptive way.


**War, Will, and Warlords:** Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan and Pakistan, 2001–2011

*Robert M Cassidy*

Marine Corps University Press, 2012

*War, Will, and Warlords* is an important read for all scholars, policy-makers, diplomats and military practitioners seeking to further understand the Afghanistan-Pakistan nexus. Colonel Cassidy provides a number of salient points concerning uneven US involvement in the region, the contradictions of Pakistan, and the counter-insurgency approaches implemented by both the American and Pakistani militaries. This book builds upon a portfolio of articles and monographs that Cassidy has published in various military journals on the subject.

The book is well researched, and the author’s soldier-scholar credentials are impeccable. Colonel Cassidy is a military professor at the US Naval War College with both scholarship and experience in irregular warfare and stability operations. With a PhD from the Fletcher School at Tufts University, he has served as a special assistant to two general officers, a special operations strategist, and has published two previous books, one on peacekeeping and the other on counter-insurgency.

In terms of the growing literature on this region, Cassidy’s book lies in the shallower, scholar-practitioner midfield between an academic research masterpiece like Antonio Giustozzi’s Koran, Kalashnikov, and Laptop and an in-depth investigative history like Steve Coll’s *Ghost Wars*. Cassidy’s work is unique in that it is the only book that currently compares the insurgencies in Afghanistan and Pakistan using a deliberate and consistent analytical framework. This comparison naturally raises the larger question of whether the conflict is really a single insurgency, given the tribal nature of both countries and the arbitrariness of the borders as drawn by previous colonial powers. Cassidy does not address this point, but offers a straightforward assessment of the struggle on both sides of the border.

For the United States, Cassidy elucidates how short-term and ill-advised American policies – the support of the mujahedeen and Pakistani President Zia to name just two – created the conditions that spawned Al-Qaeda and provided the Taliban on both sides of the Pashtun frontier with a popular support base. In essence, Washington backed undemocratic and corrupt Muslim leaders, while the middle and lower classes looked to more radical interpretations of Islam. This trend created fertile ground for Al-Qaeda and Taliban messages. Cassidy further demonstrates how continued US financial aid underwrites Pakistan’s military expenditures against India, which destabilises the entire region. He indirectly questions the whole ‘money buys loyalty’ approach characterising US foreign policy in the region.

No apologist for Pakistan, the author explores its security policies and how they contradict American interests. Pakistan is Janus – with one ‘face’ grudgingly supporting the United States with the Pakistan Army conducting operations against the Taliban on its side of the border, while the Pakistani intelligence service ‘face’ promotes and supports the Afghan Taliban as a proxy against the Karzai government and India on the other side.

Cassidy fortunately is too savvy to espouse the graveyard-of-empires worldview in terms of the American intervention in Afghanistan, but he delves into US problem areas of counter-