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Francis H. Marlo. *Planning Reagan's War: Conservative Strategists and America's Cold War Victory*. Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2012. ISBN: 978-1-59797-667-1 (cloth, \$29.95).

Gail E. S. Yoshitani. *Reagan on War: A Reappraisal of the Weinberger Doctrine, 1980-1984*. College Station, Texas: Texas A&M Press, 2011. ISBN: 978-1-60344-259-6 (cloth, \$35.00).

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Reviewed for H-Diplo by **Thomas R. Maddux**, California State University Northridge

Francis Marlo and Gail Yoshitani have made different but important contributions to the study of the foreign policies of the Reagan administration. Yoshitani, Academy Professor of History at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, focuses on the development of views within Ronald Reagan's first administration on the use of military force, culminating in a speech by Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger entitled "The Uses of Military Power" after the 1984 election. Weinberger advanced six tests that Washington policymakers should consider when making decisions on the use of military force. (xii) As a Professor Strategic Studies at the Command and Staff College of the Marine Corps University, Marlo explores the Reagan grand strategy for victory in the Cold War through the development of the beliefs, goals and tools of this strategy. Marlo presents an evaluation of the views of conservative Cold War strategists, Reagan's shared beliefs with them, and Reagan's leadership role with his advisers in implementing this strategy.

Both studies challenge several aspects of the historiography on the strategy and implementation of Reagan's policies in situations involving relations with the Soviet Union or the use of force. Marlo, for example, disputes contemporary studies of Reagan which question the depth of his understanding of foreign policy, the degree of his direction of decision-making, and suggestions that he relied extensively on advisers who disagreed more than they agreed on issues of objectives and appropriate means.¹ Marlo is far more supportive of

¹ Some of the examples that Marlo uses include John Karaagac, *Between Promise and Policy: Ronald Reagan and Conservative Reformism* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2000); Lou Cannon, *President Reagan: The Role of a Lifetime* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991); Kenneth A. Oye et. al., eds., *Eagle Defiant: United States*

assessments by some of Reagan's advisers and several authors who have advanced the "victory" assessment that the Reagan administration had a strategy to win the Cold War and undermine the Soviet Union.² In developing his thesis, Marlo relies extensively on published sources including the letters and writings of Reagan as well as declassified National Security Council strategy documents. What is missing from Marlo's study is engagement with recent assessments of Reagan's perspective on relations with the Soviet Union after he entered the White House and his management of relations with Moscow, as well as recent studies that make use of some Soviet documents on the policies of Leonid Brezhnev and Mikhail Gorbachev.³ Even when Marlo refers to assessments that are contrary to Reagan's anti-communist perspective and strategy, such as George Kennan's X-Article on "The Sources of Soviet Conduct" (12), Marlo omits Kennan's suggestion that containment might be successful in the end since Moscow would not be able to hold onto its new post-1945 empire in the face of nationalist forces. Marlo does mention two articles by John Gaddis but does not include or address Gaddis' *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* that provides a necessary background for Cold War strategy as well as a chapter in the revised edition on Reagan's strategy.⁴

Marlo study does provide significant contributions, most notably in developing Reagan's views on communism, the Soviet Union, and Cold War events when Reagan made the transition from New Deal liberal to conservative spokesman and political leader. Reagan's engagement with conservative writers and anti-Soviet intellectuals is carefully traced through his correspondence and his reading of their writings as well as the conservative *National Review* and *Human Events*. Reagan's anti-communism and faith in the eventual triumph of the U.S. in the global competition with Soviet-aided communism is persuasively presented.

Foreign Policy in the 1980s (Boston: Little, Brown, 1983); and Strobe Talbott, *The Russians and Reagan* (New York: Viking Books, 1984).

² See Peter Kengor, *The Crusader: Ronald Reagan and the Fall of Communism* (New York: ReganBooks, 2006); and Peter Schweizer, *Reagan's War: The Epic Story of his Forty-Year Struggle and Final Triumph over Communism* (New York: Doubleday, 2002), and *Victory: The Reagan Administration's Secret Strategy That Hastened the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (New York: Atlantic Monthly, 1994).

³ Marlo endorses the Reagan administration's emphasis on ideology as the key determinant of Soviet policy before and throughout the 1980s even longer than Reagan may have and depicts Mikhail Gorbachev as wanting to continue the Cold War until the end. For two recent assessments of Soviet policy that disagree on a number of issues and should have been consulted, see Jonathan Haslam, *Russia's Cold War: From the October Revolution to the Fall of the War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011) and Vladislav M. Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

⁴ See John Gaddis, "Reagan, Gorbachev, and the Completion of Containment," in *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (Revised and Expanded Edition, New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 342-379. Despite Reagan's repeated criticism of containment and the strategies pursued by his predecessors such as détente by Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger and Jimmy Carter's version of détente, Gaddis suggests that Reagan after entering the White House successfully combined elements of containment and "succeeded beyond all expectations" (343).

Marlo is less convincing with his central thesis that Reagan and his advisers developed a grand strategy to win the Cold War and undermine the Soviet state as well as his conclusion that Reagan never changed his strategy or views after the arrival of Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985 and during his negotiations with Gorbachev. (2-3, 26-27, 162-164) To support his version of the “victory” school, Marlo relies on National Security Decision Directive 75 (NSDD-75) and NSDD-32 (21-27) and interviews with Reagan’s advisers (vii). Marlo convincingly demonstrates that the Reagan administration abandoned the détente strategy of Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger and the Carter administration’s efforts to maintain and extend détente but he never documents a grand strategy of victory. Marlo is too selective in his interviews and his reliance on the memoirs of former Reagan officials who agree with him as opposed to those who did not observe a strategy for victory. Secretary of State George Schultz, for example, was not interviewed and his memoir receives very little attention.⁵ In order to support his thesis that Reagan never changed his strategy, Marlo significantly downplays Reagan’s views on Gorbachev and their negotiations. Even before Gorbachev took over in Moscow, Beth Fischer has demonstrated that Reagan, if not his conservative advisers, had already shifted toward the development of a more constructive relationship with the Soviet Union in order to reduce nuclear weapons.⁶ Gaddis also notes Reagan’s desire for talks with Moscow even as he approved a military build-up, the Strategic Defense Initiative, and covert operations against regimes aided by the Soviet Union, and gave speeches attacking the Soviet Union and its system.⁷ Marlo provides almost no analysis of the Reagan-Gorbachev negotiations and the resistance that Reagan encountered from conservatives within his administration, in Congress and the media who did not trust Gorbachev and wanted to stick with an enhanced Cold War strategy. Instead Marlo denies that Reagan ever changed his views on the Soviet Union and his strategy and accuses George H.W. Bush and Secretary of State James Baker of abandoning Reagan’s strategy (147, 162-163-169).

Yoshitani’s *Reagan on War* does not focus on grand strategy and presents less of an advocacy in favor of Reagan’s policies and statecraft than Marlo’s assessment. Instead, Yoshitani examines the evolving, and sometimes conflicting, views within the Reagan administration on

⁵ Marlo reports receiving assistance from Edwin Meese III, Richard Allen, Richard Perle, Roger Robinson, Frank Gafney, and the late Fred Ikle, Caspar Weinberger, and Jeane Kirkpatrick. (vii) In “US foreign policy under Reagan and Bush,” Beth Fischer points out that National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane, National Security specialist on the Soviet Union and Ambassador to Moscow, Jack F. Matlock, and Secretary of State George Schulz dismiss the thesis of a Reagan strategy to undermine the Soviet state. Fischer’s article is in Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, eds., *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, Vol. III *Endings* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 275-277. Gaddis suggests that Reagan wanted to weaken the Soviet Union and contribute to new leaders who would abandon Marxist-Leninist policies at home and abroad. What prompted Reagan to intensify his pursuit of negotiations with Moscow, according to Gaddis, was his growing concern about the threat of nuclear weapons and his increasing perception that Gorbachev shared this concern and was willing to negotiate. See Gaddis, 353-354, 359-362, 364-366

⁶ See Fischer, “US Foreign Policy,” 273-277 and Beth Fischer, *The Reagan Reversal: Foreign Policy Change and the Ending of the Cold War* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997).

⁷ Gaddis, 359-362. Gaddis also notes that NSDD-75 refers to negotiations with the Soviet Union as a major U.S. objective.

the relationship between military force and diplomacy. Yoshitani explores in sequence what the author describes as four doctrines in separate chapters: the “Casey Doctrine: Using Proxy Forces in Central America”; the “Pentagon Doctrine: Using American Military Power Decisively in Lebanon”; the “Shultz Doctrine: Using American Military Power to Support Diplomacy”; and the “Weinberger Doctrine: A New Pattern for Civil-Military Relations”. Whether the specific views of the named Reagan officials ever take on the significance of a doctrine is debatable.

Yoshitani makes use of the available secondary sources, memoirs and published documents, and limited unpublished primary documents, most notably the Reagan Presidential Papers, the Caspar W. Weinberger Papers at the Library of Congress, and the papers of General John W. Vessey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, at the National Defense University Library. What Yoshitani was actually able to read and use in her study is not entirely clear. For example, Yoshitani notes that few papers in the Weinberger records have been declassified, although on a number of occasions she provides lengthy lists of documents from the Weinberger papers and asserts that the documents examined “are supportive of the narrative presented” on a number of issues. (167-169, n. 33, 183, n. 26, and 185-186, no. 32) The implication is that the author read and used the papers but could not quote from them.

Yoshitani agrees with Marlo’s favorable view of the Cold War policies of the Reagan administration and offers a favorable assessment of Reagan and his advisers’ management of the relationship of force to diplomacy in two major areas, Central America and Lebanon in 1982-83. On Central America, Yoshitani emphasizes the restraints imposed on the White House’s deliberations by concerns about Congressional and public opinion, most notably the Vietnam syndrome which raised opposition to military intervention and the priority placed on successful approval by Congress of Reagan’s economic recovery program. Secretary of State Alexander Haig advanced the “Haig Doctrine” of taking quick and decisive action in Central America by going after Fidel Castro in Cuba and rejecting the “incrementalism” that doomed the Vietnam effort. (48-50) Haig recommend a high profile military build-up in the Caribbean with a “carrier group or two, maneuvering between Cuba and the Central American mainland to intimidate Castro and implement limited war if necessary” (51). Instead of Haig’s high-profile approach which raised doubts about its likelihood of success as well as concern about the domestic repercussions, Reagan and his advisers in November 1981 turned to William Casey, Director of the CIA, and a mixture of covert activities, aid to the El Salvadorian army and government against an insurgency, as well as aid to Honduras and the creation of the Contras as a force to interdict the flow of arms from the Sandinista government in Nicaragua to the insurgents in El Salvador and to disrupt the Nicaraguan economy.

Central America remained a cauldron of conflicting views within the Reagan administration in terms of objectives and tactics, battles with Congress, the Iran-Contra affair in 1985-1986 which raised the specter of Reagan either not having known what some of his subordinates were doing or having tacitly approved their illegal activities, and discord over whether or not to support a ceasefire and elections in Nicaragua until the last days of the Reagan administration. Yoshitani notes the vigorous efforts of the White House to sell its policies in Central America but does not pursue the diffuse course of the “Casey Doctrine” of covert action as the CIA Director energetically stepped up covert operations against the Soviet Union

and its allies from Poland to Angola in Africa to Afghanistan and the Khmer resistance forces against the Vietnamese in Cambodia.⁸ In 1985 the covert policy of aid to the Contras had become, in Reagan's words, "aid to freedom fighters" against communist regimes, and journalist Charles Krauthammer labeled this the "Reagan Doctrine." Yoshitani does not examine this doctrine since it did not end up as a formal component of the Weinberger doctrine.

Instead, Yoshitani shifts to Lebanon and the Middle East where the Pentagon, Secretary Schulz, Secretary Weinberger, and Robert McFarlane of the National Security Council attempted to relate force to diplomacy in an environment of religious, ethnic, and political strife among Lebanese groups; Israeli-Palestinian conflict culminating in the Israeli invasion of Southern Lebanon and occupation of Beriut; Syrian-Israeli conflict; the emergence of Iranian influence through the radical Shiite group Hezbollah, and Cold War interests with the Soviet Union backing Syria and the U.S. supporting Israel. By separating U.S. views into three perspectives, Yoshitani may suggest more coherence than actually existed and a greater degree of Reagan and his advisers being on top of the emerging issues than actually existed. Yoshitani provides a detailed background to the crisis which erupted when a tenuous ceasefire between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in Lebanon and Israeli broke down and in June 1982 Israel invaded, took out Syrian surface-to-air missiles sites and Syrian MiG fighters, and surrounded PLO forces in Beriut.

Yoshitani starts with the "Pentagon Doctrine" (60) when the White House considered U.S. military participation in a multinational force (MNF) to oversee the withdrawal of PLO forces from Lebanon. Schultz and Ambassador Philip Habib recommended a U.S. role, but Secretary Weinberger and General Vessey initially resisted U.S. participation, eventually supporting it as long as the U.S. troop role was limited to the removal of the PLO fighters and that 800 U.S. Marines would be withdrawn in thirty days. Vessey, however, worried about the White House's reference to the U.S. providing "assistance in the transition of authority to the Lebanese government" (77) which opened the door to an expansion of U.S. Marine involvement from aiding the rebuilding of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) to supporting the authority of the Lebanese government which did not extend very far even in Beriut. As frequently happened in Lebanon, U.S. decisions initially seemed successful but then fell apart. Although the PLO forces and Marines were removed by September 16, the Israelis, Syrians and other conflicting groups remained. Four days after the Marine departure the Lebanese president-elect Bashir Gemayel was assassinated and his Phalangist Party militiamen carried out a revenge massacre of more than 700 Palestinians over a two day period. Israeli forces had entered West Beriut in violation of the evacuation agreement with the PLO with the rationale that they would protect the Palestinian civilians from revenge by Gemayel's militia. Instead, Israeli forces did not prevent the massacre or intervene once it had started. The outrage over the massacre prompted Reagan to approve a second deployment of the U.S.

⁸ See Bob Woodward, *Veil: The Secret Wars of the CIA 1981-1987* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987). Woodward used his insider status and interviews of unnamed sources including Casey himself on his hospital deathbed to depict the CIA Director as meeting alone with Reagan on many occasions to update him on the latest CIA operations and then jetting off around the globe to ignite more anti-Soviet operations.

Marines and the next step in a series of deepening U.S. involvement in the expanding conflict in Beriut which neither Vessey nor Weinberger supported with much enthusiasm and, as Yoshitani demonstrates, Weinberger frequently tried to get the Marines out during relative quiet periods but failed to do so before a suicide terrorist bombing of the marine barracks at the Beriut International Airport that killed 241 Marines. (89, 98, 111)

Yoshitani's account of the U.S. intervention in Lebanon carefully covers all of the twists and turns and White House concerns about Congressional and public support for the U.S. involvement. However, it is doubtful that the Pentagon, Weinberger, and Schultz thought they were advancing anything remotely resembling a doctrine during the continuing debates within the administration over Lebanese policy. Furthermore, Yoshitani's account of the events in Lebanon should be considered in comparison with Lou Cannon's chapter on "Lost in Lebanon" in *President Reagan: The Role of a Lifetime* which captures more of the disagreements among Reagan's advisers, their maneuvering against each other on Lebanon and related issues, and the role that Reagan played during the conflict in Lebanon.⁹

In the aftermath of Lebanon and the successful military occupation of Grenada, Yoshitani focuses on the "Weinberger Doctrine" (xii). This is the only one of the four doctrines that Yoshitani discusses that received attention at the time and some press reference to it as a doctrine when Weinberger gave a speech on November 28, 1984 on "The Uses of Military Power" (137-140). Perhaps the most significant carrier of Weinberger's ideas which were reviewed by Schultz, Reagan, and the NSC was General Colin Powell, who was Weinberger's senior military assistant and served as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) under Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton and Secretary of State under George W. Bush. As Yoshitani notes, the most revealing of Weinberger's six tests on using military force was number six, "the commitment of U.S. forces to combat should be a last resort to be used only when other means have failed or clearly have no prospect of success." This reflected Weinberger's preferences affirmed by the Lebanon experience, but a point that was revised with the deletion of the rest of the last sentence after "last resort" in order to keep open the option of using military force with other tools of diplomacy (140).

Marlo and Yoshitani both make important contributions to the debate about the Reagan administration's strategy toward the Cold War with the Soviet Union and the difficult issue of the use of military force. The United States has concluded the Iraq War after over ten years with mixed results and has engaged in the Afghanistan conflict for over twelve years with a possible end to U.S. combat operations in 2014 with similar uncertainties about the results. Current policymakers and military leaders have more than sufficient experience with this issue; let us hope that their successors will profit from studies of the past as they deal with future challenges.

Thomas R. Maddux received a Ph.D. at the University of Michigan and is Professor of History at California State University Northridge. He serves as the lead Review Editor for H-Diplo.

⁹ Lou Cannon, *President Reagan: The Role of a Lifetime* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991), 389-457.

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