

turbulent UDI years, should make an effort to obtain a set of “Rhodesian Forces”.

Msasa Enterprises actually hold a large filmatic collection of Rhodesiana and for those who are interested in gaining more information on this topic a visit to Msasa’s website at www.rhodesianvideos.co.za is worthwhile. “Rhodesian Forces is available in both PAL and NTSC formats with a running time of approximately 75 minutes. My copies arrived at the Post Office in double quick time. You can order via the Internet or by writing to the following address:

Msasa Enterprises S.A.
P.O. Box 14642,
Farrarmere,
Benoni
1518,
South Africa

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THE MAKING OF STRATEGY; RULERS, STATES AND WAR

W. Murray, M. Knox, and A. Bernstein (eds.)
Cambridge University Press, Cambridge: 1997
704 pages
tables, maps
ISBN 0 521 56627 4
£17-95

The Making of Modern Strategy is the product of a spectrum of contributors working on the concept of strategy and in particular the strategy formulation processes. These contributors include not only historians but also political scientists, some of whom focus on security and strategic studies. Thus editors and contributors represent a necessary balance, as the making of strategy requires insights and understanding of both fields. Throughout the book the writers focus upon the historical

Selous Scouts and the Fireforce Commandos of the Rhodesian Light Infantry are all here. Viewers are treated to an exposé of their training regimes, weaponry and bush tactics. A point of note here is what Lt Col Ron Reid-Daly refers to as “that baboon” in his book – *Selous Scout; Top Secret War*. Well that baboon, or another one surprisingly similar, is a star attraction in the Pamwe Chete portion of this video – I found it revolting but aspiring bush battlers would probably disagree!

It is essential to point out that not everyone is going to have an equal appreciation for the material on these cassettes. The Rhodesian Bush War was a bloody and tragic civil war. There will never be one point of view on the war or even agreement on the issues that faced Rhodesia after her Unilateral Declaration of Independence. Potential viewers need to take note of the fact that these tapes do contain some very disturbing and rather violent images. It is an acknowledged fact that the Rhodesian government believed that by airing “body counts” after Security Force operations would boost the morale of Rhodesia’s population, particularly the supporters of the Rhodesian Front. As a consequence the television news footage is often far more explicit than one would have expected.

Having said that I found these videos fascinating. From the point of view of someone who is student of history and a military enthusiast, they were informative, entertaining and provided a hefty “blast from the past”. Few people today can imagine what Rhodesia must have been like, indeed, there are millions of those who are unaware of the fact that a country called Rhodesia ever even existed. These videos will give you a vivid idea, even the music is fitting and thoughtfully rounded off with a Clem Tholet song at the end. For those who have read extensively on the Bush War and Southern African history, these videos provide a fascinating insight into Zimbabwean history. In some instances I had the rather eerie sensation of seeing ordinary people whose photographs I had seen in books actually gaining life on celluloid. The point is that audio-visual mediums offer one something completely different to that which books offer. I would recommend that anyone who wants to know more about Rhodesia and experience something of its atmosphere at during the

development of the making of strategy using particular states as case studies.

Most of the contributors attempt either to describe the process by which strategy was formulated or alternatively focus this process upon the role played by a particular individual strategic theorist or great military leader. They concentrate on an historical examination of the ways in which political and military leaders formulate and articulate strategies in response to external challenges. This possibly accounts for their process approach to strategy - "a constant adaptation to shifting conditions and circumstances in a world where chance, uncertainty, and ambiguity dominate" (page 1).

The chapters coincide with the different spheres associated with the considerations and issues concerning strategy as the outcome of various forces, events and variables that each in turn influence and structure strategy, as an outcome, in its own unique way. The editors opted to use geography, history, nature of the regime, religion, ideology and culture, economic factors, governmental and military institutions as the influences that forge the making of strategy. These variables constitute the very building blocks of the seventeen chapters that constitute the body of the publication.

The chapters reflect a clear historic line from the Peloponnesian war (fifth century BC) through to the nuclear age. The first sixteen chapters depict a national strategic character in an effort to portray - by means of a country approach - how different countries formulated strategy over time: all under the influence of the variables reflected upon in the introduction. The last chapter deviates from the country approach and acknowledges the international impact of the potentially destructive nuclear era: a period of unique influence on formulation of national strategy.

In the conclusion the editors attempt to identify the forces that shaped strategy over the past 2400 years and assess its impact. These forces are bureaucracy, mass politics, ideology, technical and economic

power. This represents a shift away from those forces identified when the first of the chapters was written. The authors briefly conclude how these forces in their own right played a role in the shaping of strategy. In closing, the editors briefly outline other forces that may in future impact upon the making of strategy.

The real value of the publication lies in the confluence of the historic and political science dimensions in an attempt to promote an understanding of the processes involved in the making of strategy. The use of multifarious contributors facilitated the incorporation of variables presumed to underlie the process and arrive at an understanding of how particular countries over time used or rejected these factors. Simultaneously the selection of contributors enabled the isolation of new forces that played a definite role in the different strategies for which countries opted. The publication is of much value to academic departments for it already contains the fusion of history and the political sciences, particular time frames that allow both a selective approach as well as a generic component as a foundation or departure for understanding the strategies that evolved. As such it represents valuable insights into how states, politicians and soldiers viewed and blended ends, ways and means in their understanding and formulation of strategies according to their peculiar circumstances, threats and vulnerabilities.

The publication however tends to be dominated by the historic approach. This to some extent masks the security and deeper strategic considerations. The chapters tend to reflect a dominant continental approach with the maritime and air dimensions not enjoying their rightful place. The essays also have a dominant European and American focus with regard to both the participants as well as the particular choice of chapters. Asia, Africa and Latin America do not feature prominently whilst some of these regions do reflect their own unique approaches and events. The inclusion of the process whereby decision-makers formulated strategy according to circumstances unique to their regions might have widened the utility of the publication in terms of a wider audience.

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