

# Jeffrey Race

# **Guest Speaker / Panelist**

Wed., Mar. 27 at 6:30 p.m. - Ohio Statehouse Atrium Thur., Mar. 28 at 10:00 a.m. - Ohio History Center

#### U.S. Army Veteran from Somerville, Massachusetts



Jeffrey Race has gone from being the youngest U.S. Army Second Lieutenant in Vietnam in 1965 to become an author, university lecturer and government consultant.

Jeffrey served two years in Vietnam, and in his second year was a member of a rural advisory team in an isolated area of the country. He completed his active service but continued his Army career until his honorable retirement as a Reserve officer. This led to several short tours of duty on high-level U.S. Army

and Defense Department staffs during the 1970's and 1980's. In 1972, his book *War Comes to Long An* was published, and is still considered a definitive analysis of why the U.S. effort in Vietnam did not produce the intended results. Jeffrey's academic career has included research, writing and lecturing on U.S. foreign policy, technology transfer, political change and successful negotiating strategies. He also founded a high-tech telecommunications firm to manufacture an electronic product he designed.

Jeffrey was educated at Harvard and recently returned there to continue his research work after living 45 years in Asia. He volunteers at educational and spiritual activities in Asia and is a marathon runner. [AFTER-DINNER ADDRESS PRESENTED AT THE STATEHOUSE, COLUMBUS, OHIO ON THE OCCASION OF THE COMMEMORATION OF THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WITHDRAWAL OF AMERICAN COMBAT FORCES FROM VIETNAM]

MARCH 27, 2013

"THE VIETNAM WAR AS AN EARLY WARNING"

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS, FELLOW VETERANS, FRIENDS,

LET ME START BY THANKING OUR HOSTS FOR THEIR CONSIDERATION IN INVITING ME. LIKE MANY HERE, I'VE LIVED WITH THE VIETNAM EXPERIENCE FOR MANY DECADES.

SO IT'S A PLEASURE TO SHARE SOME THOUGHTS WITH YOU.

IN WHAT I AM ABOUT TO SAY I MAY USE UP SOME CREDIT WITH YOU, SO PLEASE LET ME BUILD UP MY ACCOUNT FIRST.

IN SEPTEMBER OF 1965 I WAS THE YOUNGEST SECOND LIEUTENANT IN VIETNAM, THROUGH A HUMOROUS SEQUENCE OF EVENTS RESULTING IN MY CASE IN AN EXCEPTION TO THEN-EXISTING POLICY BARRING THOSE WITH LESS THAN SIX MONTHS OF ACTIVE DUTY FROM SERVICE IN A COMBAT ZONE. AND NO DOUBT I WAS AMONG THE MOST IGNORANT BECAUSE I HAD NEVER BEEN OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES EXCEPT FOR A FEW DAYS ON A FAMILY VACATION.

SO INTRIGUED WAS I BY WHAT I ENCOUNTERED THAT AT THE END OF MY FIRST YEAR OF SERVICE, I ASKED TO STAY FOR A SECOND TOUR, TRANSFERRING TO AN INFANTRY POSITION FROM MY COMBAT SUPPORT BRANCH, SO I COULD JOIN A RURAL ADVISORY TEAM.

BEFORE LONG IT WAS CLEAR TO ME THAT THINGS WERE NOT GOING ACCORDING TO PLAN, AND NO ONE WHO OUGHT TO HAVE KNOWN WHY THIS WAS SO IN THE EMBASSY OR IN ANY OTHER OFFICIAL AGENCY COULD CREDIBLY EXPLAIN WHY THIS WAS SO

SO AFTER MY RELEASE FROM ACTIVE DUTY I RETURNED ON MY OWN TO SORT IT OUT FOR MYSELF.

#### **FIMAGE 17**

THE RESULT WAS A BOOK  $\it War$  Comes to Long  $\it An$  , first published in 1972. A REVISED AND EXPANDED VERSION WAS PUBLISHED IN 2010.

It's been continuously in print for 40 years and is widely assigned in senior service schools to explain why the war ended so badly for the United States.

I'M HERE BECAUSE I WROTE THAT BOOK.

IT ESTABLISHES WHAT YOU DO TO WIN SUCH A WAR, AND WHAT YOU DO TO LOSE.

AMAZON HAS PUT IT UP ON THEIR READING LIST OF MILITARY THEORY CLASSICS, ALONG WITH THE WORKS OF SUN TZU, THUCYDIDES, AND MAOTSE-TUNG.

THE BOOK HAS LED TO A LOT OF INNOVATIVE IDEAS, AND EVEN TO A BOOK ON AFGHANISTAN JUST BEING PUBLISHED THIS WEEK TITLED WAR COMES TO GARMSER, BASED ON WAR COMES TO LONG AN.

#### **FIMAGE 21**

SO IN SHORT, I'VE THOUGHT DEEPLY ABOUT THE MEANING OF THE VIETNAM WAR.

AND NOW I WILL SHARE THESE THOUGHTS WITH YOU.

#### [PAUSE]

THE VIETNAM WAR WAS A TRAGEDY FOR ALL INVOLVED BUT EVEN SO WE CAN GLEAN SOME GOOD FROM IT.

I BELIEVE THAT THE WAR'S OUTCOME WAS AN EARLY WARNING, IF ONE PAID ATTENTION, THAT ALL WAS NOT WELL WITH AMERICA'S POLICY PROCESSES.

AFTER WRITING MY BOOK I MOVED ON TO OTHER THINGS SINCE I THOUGHT THAT WE AMERICANS WOULD NEVER AGAIN EXPERIENCE SUCH AN ADVERSE SITUATION OF OUR OWN MAKING, BECAUSE THE STRUCTURE AND INNER WORKINGS OF THE PROBLEM WERE NOW SO CLEAR.

I THOUGHT THE DIFFICULTIES AROSE PARTLY BECAUSE WE HAD TOO FEW PEOPLE LIKE MYSELF FLUENT IN VIETNAMESE, AND TOO FEW EXPERTS, WITH TOO LITTLE ACCESS TO THE BUSY PEOPLE AT THE TOP.

"IF ONLY THE CZAR KNEW" I THOUGHT.

But as the years have passed I have noticed, as have others, that the disasters just keep coming, and not only in the national security arena. The 2008 financial crisis is an example in another domain of american life.

AS I THOUGHT ABOUT THIS I NOTICED SOME STRIKING ODDITIES.

FIRST IS THAT THOSE MAKING THE DECISIONS LEADING TO THESE DISASTERS ARE EXCEEDINGLY SMART PEOPLE, CREDENTIALLED FROM EXCELLENT SCHOOLS. INCLUDING, UNFORTUNATELY, MY OWN.

SECOND, THEY HAVE EXCELLENT STAFFS AND GENEROUS INFORMATION-GATHERING BUDGETS. THEY LACK NO INFORMATION TO MAKE SOUND DECISIONS

THIRD, THE ADVERSE OUTCOMES ARE REGULARLY PREDICTED.

FOURTH, THOSE MAKING SUCH PREDICTIONS ARE USUALLY DISMISSED AS

- CRANKS,
- IRRESPONSIBLE, OR
- "OUTSIDE THE MAINSTREAM."

SOMETIMES THEY ARE VILIFIED.

[PAUSE]

#### WHAT IS GOING ON HERE?

I CONSIDER THE VIETNAM WAR'S OUTCOME TO HAVE BEEN AN EARLY WARNING OF SOME ADVERSE TRENDS.

BUT IT WAS MOSTLY UNDERSTOOD AS A TIME-BOUND AND AREA-BOUND PROBLEM, RATHER THAN AS A LEADING INDICATOR OF LARGER CHANGES.

WHAT LARGER CHANGES?

FIRST IS A CLEAR DECLINE IN THE CONCEPTION AND EXECUTION OF AMERICA'S FOREIGN INVOLVEMENTS

I POINT YOU TO A STUDY JOHN CALDWELL IS NOW PREPARING FOR PUBLICATION.

HE IS A GOLD-CARD MEMBER OF THE DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENT, HAVING JUST RETIRED FROM THE NORTHRUP-GRUMMAN CORPORATION.

I CAME TO KNOW HIM WHEN WE BOTH WORKED FOR THE ADVANCED RESEARCH PROJECTS AGENCY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE IN BANGKOK IN 1968.

He's a keen student of military history and has spent a decade preparing an extremely detailed analysis of factors leading to differences in the outcomes of 4-1/2 different conflicts. (Afghanistan is the "half.")

(IMAGES 3-4)

HE ESTABLISHES METRICS FOR COMPETENCY IN VARIOUS COMPONENTS OF THE EFFORTS, BOTH MILITARY AND CIVIL.

HE GRADES THE CONFLICTS ON THESE METRICS

THE MATRIX SHOWN COLORCODES THE RESULTS OF THE GRADING

YOU CAN SEE THAT PERFORMANCE IS SUBSTANTIALLY DECLINING BY OBJECTIVE CRITERIA COMPARED TO THE WORLD WAR II BASELINE.

THIS IS VERY DISTURBING TO HIM, AND TO ME.

IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH REPUBLICANS OR DEMOCRATS BUT REFLECTS
THE LEVEL OF COMPETENCE OF AMERICANS AS A PEOPLE AND AS A NATION

SECOND, CONSIDER EDUCATION.

WE TALK ABOUT DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND "NEW NATIONS"

IN 1776 AMERICA WAS THE VERY FIRST "NEW NATION" WHEN WE WENT OUR OWN WAY FROM ENGLAND.

WE WERE THE FIRST COUNTRY TO INTRODUCE UNIVERSAL PUBLIC EDUCATION.

THE FIRST FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY WAS IN BOSTON.

AMERICA'S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM WAS ONCE THE BEST IN THE WORLD, AND IT WAS CRITICAL TO ACHIEVING OUR POSITION OF WORLD PREEMINENCE.

NOW IT'S JUST AVERAGE, AS MEASURED BY THE "PROGRAM IN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ASSESSMENT." GOOGLE ON 'PISA' TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS.

SOME SIMPLE EXAMPLES: THE BROKEN ENGLISH YOU HEAR BY NATIVE SPEAKERS ON NATIONAL TV OR READ EVEN IN THE NEW YORK TIMES.

WEEKLY I SEND ONE OR TWO PRIVATE RANTS TO THE AUTHORS OF ARTICLES AT THE TIMES OR AT OTHER PUBLICATIONS WHERE THE WRITERS OUGHT TO KNOW BETTER. SOMETIMES THEY IGNORE ME, SOMETIMES THEY APOLOGIZE FOR A SLIP.

SOMETIMES THEY WRITE BACK "WHAT WAS WRONG WITH THAT SENTENCE?"

ONCE I SUGGESTED TO A SENIOR STAFFER AT THE BOSTON *GLOBE* THAT THE PAPER SHOULD SEND SUCH AUTHORS TO A REMEDIAL ENGLISH COURSE. SHE REPLIED THAT THERE WAS NOT SUFFICIENT SPACE IN THE CLASS FOR ALL THOSE WHO NEEDED REMEDIAL TRAINING. BOSTON, MIND YOU!

THIS IS ALARMING.

IT RESULTS FROM THE POLICY DECISION NO LONGER TO TEACH ENGLISH GRAMMAR IN AMERICAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS, RELYING INSTEAD ON LEARNING THEORY THAT ONE CAN EFFORTLESSLY ABSORB PROPER FORMS BY WATCHING TELEVISION OR READING THE NEWSPAPERS.

IN A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT DOMAIN:

OUR PERIODIC FINANCIAL CRISES ARE GROWING EVER MORE SERIOUS.

AND WORSE IS COMING.

ANY ONE OF THESE DETERIORATING TRENDS WOULD FILL MANY EVENINGS OF DISCUSSION.

I JUST PUT THEM TO YOU HERE AND ASK TO ELABORATE A BIT ON HOW WE MIGHT RESPOND

#### [PAUSE]

SOME ALTERNATIVES TO PONDER

I REEMPHASIZE: THE FOLLOWING IS UNRELATED TO THE POLITICS OF THOSE INVOLVED.

IT RELATES INSTEAD TO OUR LEVEL OF COMPETENCE AS A PEOPLE AND AS A NATION.

#### [ONE]

THE DECISION-MAKERS IN THESE CASES DID NOT LACK INFORMATION OR PROCESSES TO DEAL WITH THE INFORMATION. THEY LACKED WISDOM,

WHAT IS WISDOM IN THIS CONTEXT?

WISDOM IS A PROFOUND UNDERSTANDING OF

- HOW HUMANS RELATE TO ONE ANOTHER

#### AND

- WHY THEY BEHAVE AS THEY DO

MUCH OF OUR EFFORT IN VIETNAM, AND MANY OF OUR HOPES FOR SUCCESS, WERE BASED ON THE IDEA THAT REVOLT GREW OUT OF POVERTY.

THIS IDEA CONTINUES IN OUR EFFORTS IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN.

THE IDEA IS COMPLETELY FALSE.

#### [TWO]

THIS UNWISDOM CONDEMNS US TO INADEQUACY IN THE FACE OF OUR CHALLENGES.

IF YOU WANT SUBSTANTIALLY MORE COMPETENT DECISIONS, YOU MUST INVEST SUBSTANTIALLY MORE IN COMPETENCY.

THAT MEANS YOU MUST DIVERT RESOURCES FROM THEIR PRESENT USE
-- NOT MARGINALLY BUT <u>SUBSTANTIALLY</u>.

THAT MEANS THAT AMERICANS MUST STOP DOING MANY THINGS THEY'RE NOW DOING AND START DOING MANY DIFFERENT THINGS.

THERE'S PLENTY OF SCOPE FOR THIS.

AMERICAN LIFE IS FILLED WITH FRIVOLITIES TO ABANDON.

AMERICANS REALLY HAVE TO CHANGE THE WAY THEY LIVE TO RISE TO THE LEVEL OF THE CHALLENGES THEY ARE COMING TO FACE.

WE HAVE DONE IT HISTORICALLY.

REMEMBER, WE REACHED OUR PAST GREAT ACHIEVEMENTS WHEN WE WERE A MUCH POORER COUNTRY.

BUT WHO IS CALLING FOR US TO DO THIS TODAY?

FROM WHOM DO WE HEAR A CALL TO GREATNESS, WHO PLAINLY SAYS
"WE MUST SUBSTANTIALLY CHANGE SOME ASPECTS OF OUR LIVES"?

#### [THREE]

ANOTHER POINT

A GENEROUS SPIRIT AND A MIND OPEN TO ALTERNATIVES ARE ESSENTIAL FOR SUCCESS. YOU NEED GOOD PERSONAL RELATIONS.

CURRENTLY THERE IS A FASHION IN PUBLIC DISCOURSE OF ENMITY, OF PERSONAL ATTACKS, OF IMPUGNING THE VIRTUE OF THOSE WHO THINK DIFFERENTLY

ALL THESE BEHAVIORS IMPEDE COMMUNICATION AND UNDERSTANDING.

SMART PEOPLE WITH CONTRARY VIEWS HAVE GOOD REASONS TO THINK AS THEY DO. EVEN IF YOU DON'T FOLLOW THEIR PROPOSALS, SPINNING OUT THEIR REASONING CAN CLARIFY YOUR OWN,

DON'T DISS THEM OR DISMISS THEM.

THIS IS WIDELY VIOLATED NOW IN AMERICA'S PUBLIC LIFE.

WE ARE WEAKER FOR IT BOTH IN OUR UNDERSTANDING AND IN OUR NATIONAL UNITY IN THE FACE OF SERIOUS EXTERNAL CHALLENGES.

CONSIDER THE EXAMPLES OF DANIEL ELLSBERG AND OF NOAM CHOMSKY, BOTH OF WHOM I KNOW PROFESSIONALLY AND PERSONALLY.

BOTH ARE EXTREMELY SMART. SOME OF THEIR IDEAS WERE OR ARE EXCELLENT. BUT THOSE USEFUL BITS ARE LOST IN PERSONAL VILIFICATION

[FOUR]

ANOTHER POINT

ACT ONLY ON THE FOUNDATION OF EVIDENCE-BASED RELATIONSHIPS.

THE JARGON TERM IS "INPUT/OUTPUT STRUCTURE" OF THE "BLACK BOX" SIMULATING SOME TARGET PROBLEM OR SITUATION.

SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF EVIDENCE TELLS YOU THE I/O PATTERNS. YOU KNOW WHAT DIALS TO TURN ON THE LEFT SIDE OF THE BOX TO CAUSE THE LIGHTS TO FLASH ON ITS RIGHT SIDE.

VIOLATING THESE PRECEPTS IN THE VIETNAM AND AFGHAN CASES DASHED HOPES AND WASTED ENORMOUS RESOURCES, FROM A FAILED UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN MOTIVATION

OR CONSIDER THE HISTORY OF AFGHAN TRIBAL SOCIETY:

THE WAYS PEOPLE BEHAVE TOWARD ONE ANOTHER IN PERSONAL AND POLITICAL RELATIONSHIPS DIFFER DRAMATICALLY FROM OURS AND FROM WHAT HAS MADE POSSIBLE OUR TRADITIONS OF PUBLIC LIFE

It's been that way since before the time of Alexander the Great.

THAT'S ALMOST TWO AND ONE-HALF THOUSAND YEARS.

THE IDEA THAT AMERICA COULD SOMEHOW INTERVENE MILITARILY AND ECONOMICALLY TO CHANGE THOSE BEHAVIORS SIGNIFICANTLY WITHIN TEN YEARS WAS <u>PREPOSTEROUS ON ITS FACE</u>.

AND YET SMART PEOPLE CHOSE THAT PATH.

IF ONE HAD TWO RULES IN POLICY-MAKING

"ACT ONLY ON EVIDENCE"

"IF YOU'RE NOT SURE OF THIS, AT LEAST DO NO HARM"

THEN WE WOULDN'T HAVE THESE DISASTERS.

THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT NOTHING CAN OR SHOULD BE DONE. IT'S RATHER A FILTER TO DO NOTHING STUPID.

THESE RULES EXIST IN MEDICINE AND ARE BEING APPLIED EVER MORE STRINGENTLY. YOU MAY WANT TO LOOK AT THE WORK OF DR. ATUL GAWANDE TO SEE HOW IT'S DONE WITH STARTLING RESULTS.

BUT THESE RULES AREN'T ENFORCED, <u>IN FACT ARE NOT EVEN KNOWN</u>, IN WASHINGTON POLICY-MAKING.

THAT'S WHY THE DISASTERS KEEP COMING.

#### [IMAGE 5]

MY CURRENT BOOK WILL IN DUE COURSE BE PUBLISHED UNDER THE TITLE THE BONFIRE OF THE VERITIES.

I CALL THEM 'VERITIES' BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT THEY ARE.
PUNCTILIOUSLY FOLLOWING SOME TEN SIMPLE RULES WILL AVERT THE
DISASTERS.

THEY WERE NOT FOLLOWED IN VIETNAM, THAT LESSON WAS NOT LEARNED, AND THEY ARE NOT BEING FOLLOWED NOW.

VIETNAM WAS A WARNING, WHICH WE FAILED TO HEED.

#### [PAUSE]

SO IN CONCLUSION:

THESE BAD THINGS KEEP HAPPENING TO US BUT THEY ARE NOT RANDOM. THESE EVENTS HAVE CAUSES.

THE EVIDENCE IS PLAIN THAT THE QUALITY OF OUR NATIONAL DECISION-MAKING IS INADEQUATE.

THE ONLY ANSWER IS IN FACT THE WISDOM THAT AMERICA OFFERED TO THE WORLD MORE THAN TWO CENTURIES AGO: AN INFORMED AND ACTIVE CITIZENRY DEMANDING AND ENFORCING HIGH STANDARDS ON ITS LEADERS.

BUT WE HAVE FRANKLY BECOME LAZY, LIKE THE RICH MAN'S SON. THIS ACCOUNTS FOR THE TYPES OF DETERIORATION I JUST MENTIONED.

AS A PEOPLE WE HAVE DIVERTED TOO MUCH ATTENTION TO AMUSEMENTS, AND TO ENTERTAINMENTS, AND TO FRIVOLITIES AND TO TRIVIALITIES.

YOU CAN LIVE THAT KIND OF LIFE IF YOU ARE A DECLINING OR FALLEN EUROPEAN STATE. THINK AUSTRIA, WITH ITS BEAUTIFUL PALACES, WONDERFUL MUSIC, AND PLENTY OF GOOD FOOD AND ENTERTAINMENT.

BUT YOU CAN'T DO IT IF YOU WANT TO MAINTAIN YOUR GREATNESS WHEN CONFRONTED WITH THE COMPETITION WE FACE.

I'VE LIVED IN ASIA FOR 45 YEARS. I'VE RAISED THREE GIRLS THERE, WHO ALL CAME TO COLLEGE IN AMERICA. IN HER OWN WORDS EACH ONE TOLD ME "DADDY, I'M SO GLAD I GREW UP IN ASIA. IT'S SO EASY FOR ME IN AMERICA."

WHEN I HEARD THEM SAY THAT, I WAS GLAD FOR MY GIRLS.

BUT I FEAR FOR AMERICA.

WE CAN INDIVIDUALLY AND COLLECTIVELY CHOOSE TO RETURN TO PREVIOUS LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE.

I'M HARD AT WORK ON MY OWN PROJECT TO CONTRIBUTE TO THIS.

AND WE HAVE A SMALL GROUP WHO HAVE SOME IDEAS FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION.

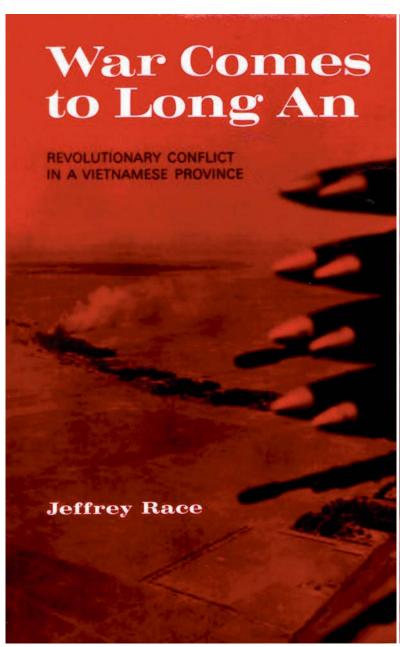
THOSE INTERESTED MAY VIEW PERIODIC UPDATES AT

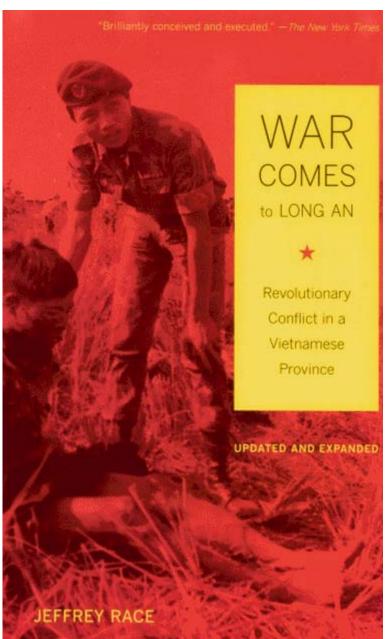
<http://www.jeffreyrace.com>

I THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR ATTENTION, AND HOPE I HAVE GIVEN YOU SOME THOUGHTS TO TAKE HOME FROM THIS EVENING'S SPLENDID MEAL TOGETHER.

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[ONLINE VERSION AT <a href="http://www.jeffreyrace.com/document/race\_oh.pdf">http://www.jeffreyrace.com/document/race\_oh.pdf</a> with minor edit April 9, 2013] Jrace@attglobal.net



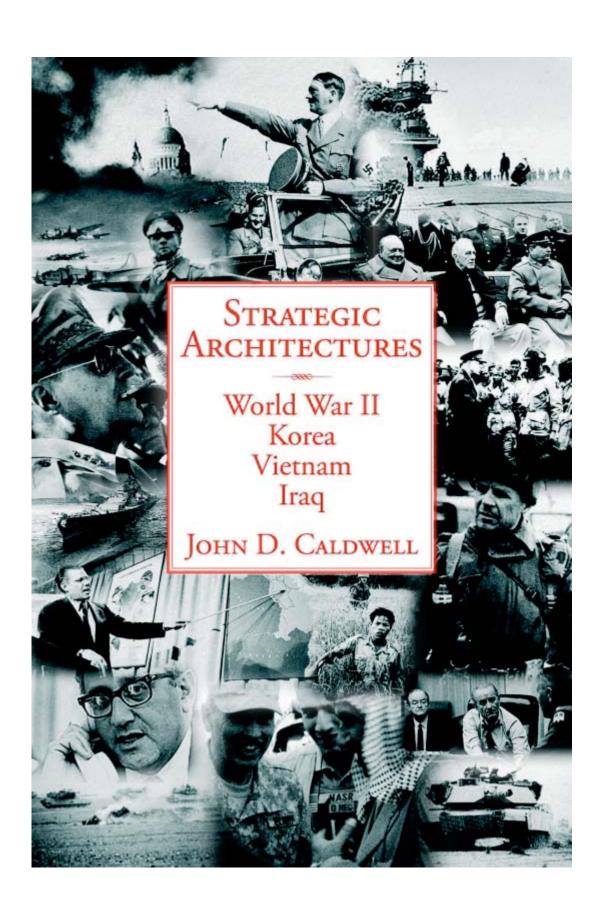


# WAR COMES TO GARMSER

THIRTY YEARS OF CONFLICT ON THE AFGHAN FRONTIER

CARTER MALKASIAN





### Strategic Architectures Scored

Discriminators/Differentiators Scored	WW II Box 13	Korea Box 15	<b>Vietnam</b> Box 17	Iraqi Wars				Afghan-
				War I Box 18	<b>War II</b> Text, pp. 477- 480	War III Box 20	War IV Box 20	istan Text, pp. 480-486 & 583-591
Strategic Leadership								
Military Staffing								
Execution – Military/Opnl Learning								
Execution – Industrial/Technological								
Political Accommodation								
Communication								
Color Codes: Superior Performanace Good Enough Marginal or irrelevant to Outcome Poor								

Amazon's Ten "<u>Best Military Theorists</u>" reading list

Sun Tzu Thucydides Michael Howard ... Sir Julian Corbett ... Jeffrey Race Mao Tse-tung

## **Current Projects and Forthcoming Publications of Jeffrey Race**

#### Recently published in the February 2013 issue of

World History Connected

Writing Historical Classics for Dummies [informal title]

in which a reproducible method is explained by which to write historical classics about controversial topics without upsetting anyone and without ever being asked to become a Talking Head;

#### And in a forthcoming issue of Thailand's





Fighting 'Corruption' with What Really Works: Lessons from Today and from History

in which is explained the chronic persistence of widespread corruption despite nominal state commitment to the rule of law and extensive notionally remedial programs and

in which is further explained what has actually worked, and why coercive programs founded on the economist's calculatingmachine view of man must fail and must continue to fail, and why what works is the opposite of current programming, which wastes time and resources and perpetuates false hopes. Clearly demonstrates the worth of knowledge of the classics.

Published in the January 10, 2012 issue of the Bangkok Post



A Culture of Ineducation

Current project:

<u>Pathologies of Public Decision-Making</u>

(and what to do about them)



