"rather arrogant stance" of the American Expeditionary Force detected by Coffman (91) not only in relation to its bosses in Washington but toward its allies on the Western Front.

Coffman used his researches in this period as a basis for his broader interpretation of the US military tradition and his two social histories, *The Old Army* (1986) and *The Regulars* (2004), which may well form his most lasting achievement. Coffman has always demonstrated an ability to range across the entirety of American military history, and two of the most absorbing essays in this volume are "The American Army in Peacetime" and "The Duality of the American Military Tradition: A Commentary." The interest of the first is self-evident. "It should," Coffman writes, "be of value to know how the army has coped with the problems of decreased budgets and strength in the past." But Coffman, like all good historians, is always reluctant to prognosticate on the basis of such comparisons. He admits that "the continuous, ever-changing inter-play of . . . factors is complex," making "predictions tenuous" (13). In the second piece he surveys the often tetchy relationship between the regular army and the volunteers. Coffman notes that the National Guard has revived in recent decades as the regulars have been reduced.

In his reflections on his own techniques, Coffman gives pride of place to oral history. He believes that oral history "provides a human touch and richness that one cannot get from paper documents"; in his study of the latter he warns that "if a policy is at stake or a reputation is in danger, be suspicious" (134, 146). One could say the same about interviews—an ideal forum in which to rehearse a retrospective justification for both. But in the main, this is a wise, stimulating, and most interesting book. It reflects the outlook, technique, and interests of its distinguished author—a man who has adorned his profession with wit, humanity, and modesty. It should be of absorbing interest to all interested in this subject; not least to all scholars old and young. As Coffman sums up with characteristic wit: "when you sit down and face the blank sheet of paper"—or screen—"you welcome any help you can get" (152).

–Brian Holden Reid
King's College London

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James H. Lebovic: *Flawed Logics: Strategic Nuclear Arms Control from Truman to Obama*. (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013. Pp. 289.)

Rebecca Slayton: *Arguments That Count: Physics, Computing, and Missile Defense, 1949–2012*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013. Pp. 325.)

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Today we look back and contemplate the awful shakiness of the world during the Cold War, when we were constantly rocking on the edge of a nuclear war.

As we all know, leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union somehow managed to engage in a mostly bloodless rivalry (in comparison with the two previous wars) and avoided another devastating conflict. Today we don't always fully realize how close we were to another military clash, unprecedented in its implications. *Arguments That Count: Physics, Computing, and Missile Defense, 1949–2012* by Rebecca Slayton, and *Flawed Logics: Strategic Arms Control from Truman to Obama* by James H. Lebovic open the reader's eyes to the complex and chaotic process of American policymaking during the Cold War.

Flawed Logics critically assesses the decision-making process during the arms-control negotiations with the Soviet Union and demonstrates defects in the logic of the US leadership. Lebovic posits that decisions regarding nuclear weapons and policies toward Russia were based not on factual, unbiased assessments, but on policymakers' expectations and assumptions. However unlikely it may sound, the decision-making process of the American "hawks" and "doves" regarding the Soviet Union relied almost solely on their beliefs, interpreting the actions of the Russian policymakers accordingly.

Slayton's *Arguments That Count*, in turn, focuses on the ways scientific advisors—computer scientists and physicists—made their assessments of new, complex technologies, and how they managed to make their arguments heard in an ever-changing political environment. Slayton argues that different disciplines have their limitations in assessing the risks of failure in complex technological systems, and thus only a combination of complementary disciplines can provide reliable analysis. *Arguments That Count* is about an intricate process of defense-policy shaping with an emphasis on the competition behind the scenes between key players. Slayton argues that while most of the American government's attention and finances were devoted to the missile defense (MD) development from the 1950s until Obama's presidency, it never became a reliable technology capable of ensuring security and promoting peace.

Both authors have taken the difficult task of describing and explaining the chaotic process of decision making regarding the most-debated issues in the American government during the Cold War. They approach their research through the conceptual lenses of bureaucratic and organizational politics, unearthing and demonstrating the tangled mechanisms of defense policymaking. Slayton's book reveals the chilling superficiality of the MD policy development in its early stages, showing how competition between organizations within the government led to suboptimal decisions and outcomes. Besides the turf battles, the government's decisions were influenced by belief in America's technological prowess, reflecting American exceptionalism, preventing the policymakers from acknowledging the difficulties software engineers and physicists faced. Lebovic sees the root of ineffective nuclear policy and troubled negotiations with the Soviets in the political

divisions within the presidents' administrations that led to a misperception of the goals of the Soviet Union.

According to Lebovic, hawks and doves saw the arms-reduction treaties in black and white terms, misinterpreting the reality. Until the 1980s, American hawks failed to recognize the transformation of the Soviet Union. They saw the USSR as a country led by malicious zealots ready to risk everything to reach their goals at the expense of the United States. Hawks were blind to the Soviet Union as another state with complicated domestic politics, but saw it instead as a unitary actor whose only goal was to expand its territory and defeat the United States in the battle for world influence. Conversely, doves saw the Soviet Union in an overly positive way, claiming that the country did not aim to compete with the United States, meaning the American leadership should trust the Soviets more. Lebovic demonstrates that after Russia opened its Cold War–era archives it became clear that the doves were closer to the reality. The United States encouraged an arms race, while the Soviet Union merely tried to compete with the United States for sake of deterrence, not in order to prevail.

Slayton focuses more on the technical side of MD policymaking, and brings the competition among scientific advisors into the equation. She demonstrates that before computing became a separate science, risk estimations were made without paying any attention to the complex software, making estimates gruesomely inaccurate. Even by the 1980s, methods of risk assessment were still imperfect, bringing theorists, physicists, and computer scientists together, but without a unified assessment plan and repertoire. Software engineering—today admittedly the most complicated part of MD—was ignored merely because influential physicists and key policymakers considered it to be the easiest part of MD production. As soon as software engineers gained influence and credibility in advisory groups after years of turf battles within the government, the flaws and "appalling complexity" of MD became evident. Slayton thus demonstrates that disciplinary repertoires shape people's understanding of risks, and depending on which one is applied, the outcomes may vary dramatically.

Lebovic's argument is related to Robert Jervis's thesis in *Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton University Press, 1976), bringing cognitive factors into the discussion of policy analysis. *Flawed Logics* offers a zoomed-in picture of the United States' arms-control policymaking, applying a concept of a "cognitive miser" that reveals the influence of policymakers' biases on their decisions, as well as the role of assumptions and expectations. Lebovic dissects the decision-making process of the policymakers and arms-control negotiators, explaining why and how the American leaders arrived at their historical decisions.

Slayton, although focusing on technical flaws of MD policymaking, also demonstrates how wishful thinking and the belief in American supremacy in every field, including technology, resulted in the deployment of ineffective and untested defense systems. It becomes evident from both works that the

United States and the American people were not adequately protected, and that Washington's arms-control policies were often disadvantageous and inefficient. Dreadful illogic and irrationality of scientific advisors and policymakers contributed to escalation of tensions among policymakers in Washington and between the US and the USSR, and led to suboptimal decisions regarding American security. While suboptimal decisions sometimes are sufficient in international relations, when it comes to national defense such decisions can prove to be lethal for millions of people.

Both *Flawed Logics* and *Arguments That Count* are neatly organized, chronologically presenting the debates over arms control and missile defense within the US government as the Cold War progressed. They are not merely historically descriptive; Lebovic and Slayton offer rigorous and clever analyses of the events, demonstrating the appalling reality of policymaking. Both authors, who had access to declassified documents from the Cold War era as they wrote their books, note that the Soviet Union and the United Stated avoided war only by a miracle.

With the Cold War long past, American policymakers still rely on their beliefs and expectations to make decisions. The longer a conflict persists, the stronger biases grow and the more polarized views become. Lebovic's argument is particularly relevant today as the United States faces a stalemate over North Korea's and Iran's nuclear programs. *Flawed Logics* reminds the reader how often policymakers dismiss relevant facts in deference to their convictions. Slayton, in turn, demonstrates the predominance of wishful thinking among the American policymakers, and how biased leaders and their advisers can put a country in danger. Slayton shows how wishful thinking and belief in American exceptionalism negatively affected Washington's logic during the Cold War. However, today we can still see the role of such biases in American foreign policy. The United States' failures in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan are the results of Washington's unjustified expectations, shortsightedness, and belief in its invincibility in the international arena.

These books are highly recommended to students of all levels of expertise, as well as politicians and members of academia.

–Natalia Sharova
University of Wyoming