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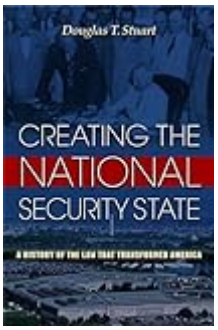

Douglas T. Stuart. *Creating the National Security State: A History of the Law That Transformed America.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008. 358 pp. $35.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-691-13371-3.

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The National Security Bureaucracy: An Introduction

With *Creating the National Security State*, Douglas T. Stuart, professor of political science and international studies at Dickinson College, has written a provocative book focusing on the history of the National Security Act of 1947, that he believes is the most important piece of legislation in modern U.S. history after the Civil Rights Act of 1964. After explaining the disagreements and compromises leading to congressional approval of the act and President Harry Truman's signature on July 26, 1947, Stuart traces the evolution or devolution of some of the entities the law authorized: the National Military Establishment, with its Office of the Secretary of Defense, Munitions Board, and Research and Development Board; the National Security Council; the Central Intelligence Agency; and the National Security Resources Board. The general scope of the volume ranges from 1937, the start of President Franklin Roosevelt's war preparedness campaign, to 1960, the final year of President Dwight Eisenhower's administration.

In his introduction, Stuart presents bibliographic analysis citing other books dealing with the post-World War II national security state, and compares and contrasts his volume to previous works. He singles out Michael Hogan's *A Cross of Iron* (1998) for showing the basis of early Cold War debates as disagreement between those with a new national security ideology and those who embraced a traditional ideology opposed to statism and militarism. Stuart disagrees with Hogan and presents his own thesis called the "Pearl Harbor system" to explain the nature of the postwar debates. Although he does not fully establish his thesis, he asserts that the Pearl Harbor attack was a "turning point in modern American history," sweeping away traditional concepts of national security that included suspicions about the dangers the nation faced from a large, peacetime army (p. 2). According to Stuart, "Pearl Harbor convinced the American people that preparing for the next sneak attack was everybody's business, all the time, at home and abroad. In the jargon of contemporary constructivist scholarship, America has been 'securitized' ever since" (p. 3).

The attack produced a set of lessons that profoundly influenced government officials as they crafted and de-

bated the various versions of the proposed legislation that eventually emerged as the National Security Act of 1947. The network of institutions created by the act rightly can be called the "Pearl Harbor system." Stuart's thesis about the Pearl Harbor system is thought-provoking, but in the end more suggestive than proven. He presents four lessons from the Pearl Harbor disaster, but does not explain the cause and effect relationship between the lessons and the attack; he does not relate the lessons to the conclusions and recommendations in the July 1946 report of the Joint Congressional Committee on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack; and he does not prove that the lessons originated with the Pearl Harbor "sucker-punch" experience as distinct from the total war experience of World War II. Clear explanations linking the lessons to the surprise attack, as opposed to the global conflict and its outcome, are especially needed for Stuart's second lesson ("Washington needed to provide military leaders with a permanent and influential role in the formulation of peacetime foreign and security policy") and his fourth lesson ("America needed new procedures for harnessing the energies of its factories and its scientific laboratories in support of national security") (p. 7).

The book also lacks evidence showing that the Pearl Harbor experience and its lessons were the driving force producing the National Security Act. Stuart devotes a chapter to the Eberstadt Report, nearly the blueprint for the act, and concludes that the study "provided the Navy with the ammunition that it needed to challenge the efforts by Truman and the Army leadership to achieve 'true unification' of the military services" (p. 274). In Stuart's book (as in Jeffery Dorwart's *Eberstadt and Forrestal* [1991], Demetrios Caraley's *The Politics of Military Unification* [1966], and Amy Zegart's *Flawed by Design* [1999]), the unification battle between the Navy and Army dominates the drafts, debates, and passage of the National Security Act. Indeed, Stuart presents such a richly textured narrative that his book can be used to strongly suggest, if not prove, the thesis that the interlocking system of national security agencies that emerged from the National Security Act represents the triumph of the Navy organizational system and should be regarded as the Navy system, not the Pearl Harbor system.

In three chapters, Stuart presents historical sketches of some of the organizations authorized by the National Security Act, excluding the pre-existing Joint Chiefs of Staff for which the act provided a statutory foundation. He combines, in the same chapter, narratives of the National Security Council and Central Intelligence Agency, showing the close institutional relationship between the two agencies. Stuart includes the explanation that although the 1947 law did not explicitly state that the CIA could conduct covert operations, it did authorize them. This lack of an explicit authorization sometimes trips up authors not well versed in CIA history. Although he discusses the importance of the U-2 flights, he overlooks the CIA's involvement with the CORONA reconnaissance satellites.

The author's title for chapter 6 is perplexing if not incorrect: "From the NME to the Office of the Secretary of Defense." The NME (National Military Establishment) was renamed the Department of Defense (DoD) in 1949. The Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) organizationally sat atop both the NME and DoD and co-existed with both. (The office received statutory authorization in 1986 with the Goldwater-Nichols legislation.) Stuart's sketch of the OSD correctly emphasizes the authority conveyed to the secretary of defense with the 1949 amendments to the National Security Act of 1947, the 1953 Reorganization Plan No. 6, and the 1958 DoD Reorganization Act. He slights the already short history of the Munitions Board, but explains how the military services and the Joint Chiefs of Staff rendered the science-oriented Research and Development Board practically irrelevant.

Stuart overlays on the already complex story of the National Security Act and his arguments about the Pearl Harbor system, an ongoing discussion of the ideas of Professor Edward Pendleton Herring of Harvard University, author of *Public Administration and the Public Interest* (1936) and *The Impact of War* (1941). Stuart claims that, through his scholarly writing (especially *The Impact of War*), Herring "had been one of the first people to make the case for a new way of thinking about America's place in the world–based on the concept of national security rather than on the time-honored concept of national interest" (p. 10). Herring was instrumental in providing the 1945 Eberstadt Report with its framework, but Stuart unduly inflates Herring's influence. As one of a few examples, Herring published *The Impact of War*, maintaining that the nation could be placed on a massive military footing during peacetime without destroying democracy, well after Secretary of War Henry Stimson and Army Chief of Staff General George Marshall had been leading the president's preparedness campaign and winning passage of the 1940 Selective Training and Service Act, the first peacetime draft in U.S. history. Stuart claims that Stimson and Marshall agreed with Herring instead of the more modest observation that Herring agreed with Stim-

son and Marshall.

Stuart appropriately describes his book as an introduction to the discussions leading to the establishment of the national security bureaucracy. While not definitive, and without a proven Pearl Harbor system thesis, the value in *Creating the National Security State* is the extensive analysis of the debates leading to the passage of the 1947 National Security Act and the fate of the act's institutional components.