H-Net Reviews
in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Campbell Craig. *Destroying the Village: Eisenhower and Thermonuclear War.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1998. xiv + 216 pp. $31.00 (paper), ISBN 978-0-231-11123-2; $70.50 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-231-11122-5.

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Published on H-Review (June, 1999)

Campbell Craig does an impressive job of setting the historical record straight in his interesting and well-documented first book, *Destroying the Village: Eisenhower and Thermonuclear War.* A former student of John Lewis Gaddis, Craig presents a concise account of the Eisenhower administration's approach to nuclear weapons. Along the way, he rebuts several widely held notions about U.S. nuclear policy of the early Cold War.

Most instructive in Craig's history is his account of the internal divisions within the Eisenhower administration over the president's "New Look" security policy, which downgraded the role of conventional forces while promoting nuclear weapons as the centerpiece of U.S. national security. It is widely understood that Eisenhower was impressed with the ability of nuclear weapons to provide "more bang for the buck" and thus to ensure security while responding to Republican concerns about the federal budget.

While this economic aspect of Eisenhower's "New Look" is not disputed, Craig makes it clear that the president's all-or-nothing reliance on nuclear weapons, captured by the term "massive retaliation," provoked sustained criticism from his senior advisers (not to mention from security analysts outside the administration). Most notable was the ongoing and unresolved schism between Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, who is portrayed as a strident voice of opposition, and often an effective obstructionist to Eisenhower's policy.

This view of Dulles is particularly insightful given Dulles's reputation as a loyal advocate of Eisenhower's "New Look." On this critical point, Dulles openly rejected the president's position, which was codified in a series of National Security Council decrees in the mid-1950s. To Dulles, U.S. security policy required the simultaneous expansion of conventional and nuclear forces, and military planners needed to have a variety of options at their disposal to deter aggression against the United States and its allies at any level. Without these options, Western forces would be unprepared to resist small-scale incursions from the Soviet Union, China, or their communist allies.

Craig provides thorough detail regarding Eisenhower's steadfast refusal to budge on this crucial question. In so doing, he gives Eisenhower the benefit of the considerable doubts about the U.S. policy of massive retaliation. In Craig's sympathetic interpretation, Eisenhower was understandably concerned that blurring the distinction between conventional and nuclear forces would lead to a rash of "brush-fire wars" that would likely escalate into direct superpower confrontation. Far from being a reckless nuclear militarist, Eisenhower is viewed as a prescient military strategist driven by his fear of nuclear Armageddon and unwavering in his belief that only the promise of full-scale nuclear war would prevent one from taking place. This somewhat perverse policy of "nuclear evasion" receives praise by the author.

Craig further debunks the conventional wisdom that the incoming Kennedy administration initiated the move away from massive retaliation and toward flexible response. In his account, Craig traces the term to former Army Chief of Staff Maxwell Taylor, who argued in his 1959 book, *The Uncertain Trumpet*, that Eisenhower's policy "offers no alternative other than reciprocal suicide or retreat in the face of the superiority of Soviet forces."[1] Such an argument, of course, was made earlier by Eisenhower's critics, most notably by Henry Kissinger in his 1957 book, *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy.*[2] What becomes clear in Craig's analysis, however, is the extent to which these arguments were adopted and refined, rather than invented, by Kennedy's national security team, specifically Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara.

As Craig acknowledges, this ongoing debate over nuclear strategy has a nagging counter-factual quality given that, mercifully, no general thermonuclear war has yet broken out despite the constant ebbs and flows of strategic forces and doctrines. In this respect, it cannot be "proven" which approach, massive retaliation or flexi-

ble response, was more suitable during the Cold War, or which approach is appropriate in today's strategic environment. For this reason, lessons to be drawn from this account are elusive, although Craig's account of bureaucratic infighting is surely relevant to the current caretakers of U.S. foreign policy.

Despite its short length, *Destroying the Village* is filled with specific historical points that may not be of interest to a general audience. For advanced students of U.S. history and foreign policy, however, this will serve as an important resource for many years to come.

Notes

[1]. Maxwell Taylor, *The Uncertain Trumpet* (New York: Harper, 1959), p. 137.

[2]. Henry Kissinger, *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* (New York: Harper, 1957).

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Citation: Steven W. Hook. Review of Craig, Campbell, *Destroying the Village: Eisenhower and Thermonuclear War*. H-Review, H-Net Reviews. June, 1999.
URL: http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=3125

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