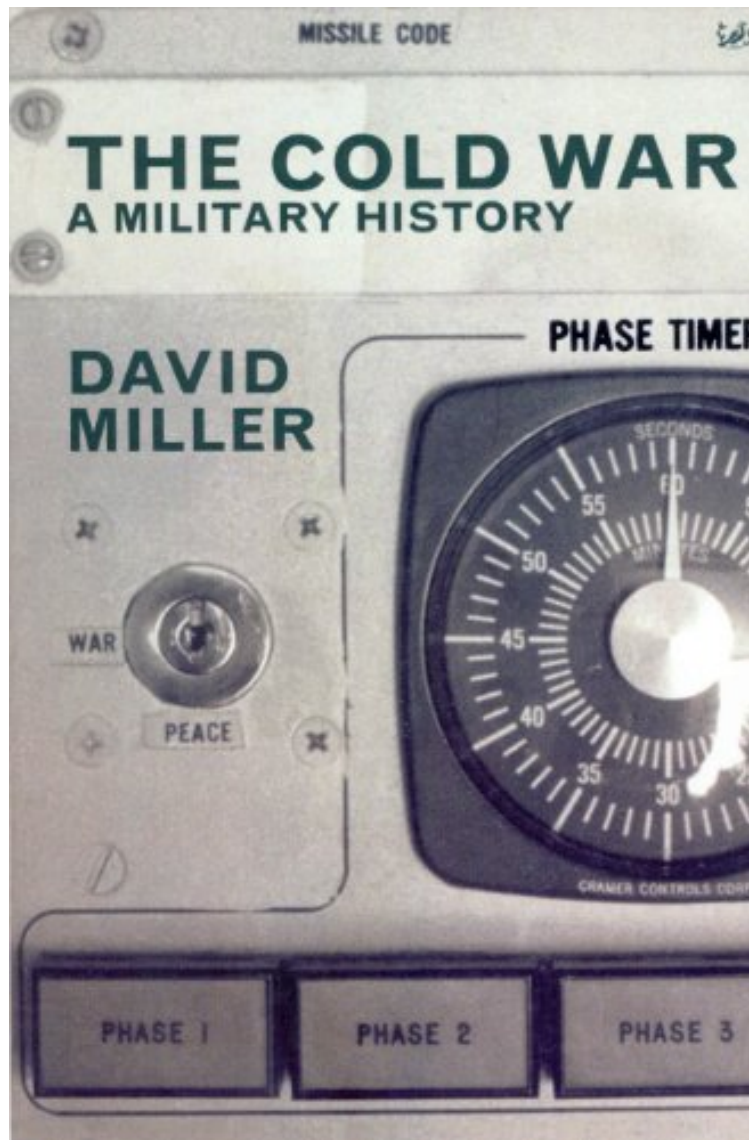


(Download ebook) The Cold War: A Military History

The Cold War: A Military History

Von David Miller

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Von David Miller : The Cold War: A Military History before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Cold War: A Military History:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. An Encyclopedia, Not a NarrativeVon Dwayne A. DayThis book is more of an encyclopedic listing of major weapons systems deployed by the United States and the Soviet Union than a proper history. Such a reference is certainly needed and this one is pretty comprehensive. Unfortunately, what is really needed is a true encyclopedia, complete with

photographs, diagrams and extensive cross-references. This book is not it. One gets the sense that Miller was originally trying to write something similar to the Janes series that he has worked on, but the publisher nixed the idea of a glossy, heavily illustrated reference book and wanted something that looked more like a conventional history. Miller does provide comprehensive coverage of the topic and provides a lot of interesting details. There are also many useful tables and appendices at the back of the book. Despite this wide-ranging coverage, however, Miller almost completely ignores the role of satellites during the Cold War. Although highly classified, they played significant roles in treaty verification and also improved stability. For instance, the "missile gap" of the early 1960s was eliminated by the first American reconnaissance satellites and as a result, the United States did not build thousands more ICBMs. One thing that bothered me was the limited references provided for the information. He has only a handful of references for each chapter, despite the fact that the chapters are packed with information. This makes it impossible to look up further information (or check the information in the book). Where, for instance, does Miller get the reliability rates for the Navy's Polaris missiles? That's a fascinating detail, but I wanted to read more about it. Yet he has only two footnotes for the entire chapter.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich.
Massive Schwächen, einige Stärken
Von Ralf Raths
David Miller's *The Cold War: A Military History* ist ein Buch für den dritten Blick. Auf den ersten Blick scheint das Buch eine wunderbar klassische, sehr konkrete Nuts-and-Bolts-Darstellung der (großen) Handwerkszeuge der beiden Blöcke zu sein, angereichert um einige Kapitel, die sich um allgemeinere Fragen von deren Verwendung drehen. Auf den zweiten Blick ist das Buch eine einseitige und mangelnde Darstellung, die teils durch die politische Brille, teils durch Unkenntnis verformt und verzerrt, so dass eigentlich nur ein besseres, aber nutzloses Quartett in Buchform übrig bleibt. Auf den dritten Blick wird deutlich, dass das Buch trotz seiner Schwächen und wegen spezifischer Stärken nicht gänzlich nutzlos ist, sondern durchaus gewinnbringend gelesen und vor allem als Einstieg und grob-orientierendes Nachschlagewerk für die jeweiligen Themen genutzt werden kann. Leider, und hier zeigt sich die erste und größte Schwäche, muss man dann selbst weiterarbeiten, denn die Belegarbeit ist ein schlechter Witz, die in keiner Hausarbeit akzeptiert würde. Eine bis fünf Fußnoten pro Kapitel, und die oft auch noch fragwürdig. Man muss erstmal alles glauben, anders geht es nicht. Und wenn man mehr wissen will, muss man seine eigenen Recherchefähigkeiten nutzen. Das sollte man auch tun, denn allein in dem Teil, in dem ich fachlich zu Hause bin, habe ich einige Fehler, Ungenauigkeiten und offensichtliche Flüchtigkeiten von Unverständnis gefunden, allerdings alle minder- bis mittelschwer. Ich halte es aber für ausgesprochen plausibel, dass die selbe Quote, und vielleicht schwerwiegender, auch in vielen anderen Kapiteln zu finden ist. Man muss das Buch also mit Vorsicht nutzen. Überhaupt merkt man der Struktur des Buches an, dass Miller immer da viel schreibt, wo er gerade Material zu Hand hat oder persönliche Erfahrungen einfließen lassen kann. So gibt es beispielsweise eine Case Study zu den Rohr-Flak-Systemen von NATO und WVO. Sonst keine. Die Case Study ist also offenkundig kein didaktisches Element, das in allen oder auch nur vielen Kapiteln vorkommt, sondern eine Entschuldigung, Detailwissen zu positionieren, das sonst nicht passt. Und das ganze Kapitel über Berlin ist eine alberne Seitenschinderei. Der ganzen Darstellung merkt man ohnehin an, dass ein alter NATO-Mann sie geschrieben hat. Das geht bei den relativen Quantitäten der Vergleiche los, und ist auch in den Vergleichen spürbar. Einerseits kann man dem Buch zugute halten, dass es schon 15 Jahre alt ist und die Literatur zum WVO damals natürlich noch spärlicher war als heute. Aber es gab sie schon und für mehr hätte es sicher gereicht. Teilweise ist seine tendenziöse Art ganz offen: Wenn er beispielsweise ausdrücklich alle stlichen Waffensysteme NICHT mit ihren zeitgenössischen WVO-Bezeichnungen benennt, sondern mit den NATO-Codes, weil das einfacher sei. Manchmal merkt er vermutlich überhaupt nicht, was er da tut. Dabei ist aber wichtig, dass Miller geistig und ideologisch keineswegs in den Gräben des Kalten Krieges sitzengeblieben ist: Wieder und wieder preist er die Kühnheit und Innovation sowjetischer Ideen und Entwicklungen, preist ihre Praktikabilität an und verliert trotzdem nie seine kritische Distanz. Das ist dann eine eindeutige Stärke seines Textes. Das Ganze ist naturgemäß eine ewige Abfolge von Modellen, Technologien, Konzepten und als Gesamtdarstellung eigentlich kaum lesbar bzw. durchaus lesbar, aber nicht memorierbar. Hier ist dann das Konzept des Nachschlagewerkes einschlägig. In vielen Bereichen sind die Darstellungen auch einfach belanglos. Wenn eine britische Studie über die potentielle nukleare Vernichtung Birminghams zitiert wird und das Ergebnis ist, dass die Stadt devastated und public services and transport zusammengebrochen waren, ist das jetzt nicht so überraschend. Viel mehr kommt dann aber auch nicht. Und doch lohnt das Buch: Denn man bekommt einen Nuts-and-Bolts-Blick in ungeahnter Breite (wenn eben auch sehr flach). Und in diesem Text sind unheimlich viele Konzepte, Fakten und Infos verborgen, die gerade Einsteiger zum Kalten Krieg eben nicht so leicht anderswo finden. Gerade das Kapitel über strategische Atomwaffen rüttelt viele der simplifizierten Overkill-Visionen der Kinder des Kalten Krieges zurecht, hier ist wirklich viel zu finden. Sind da Fehler drin? Vermutlich. Aber als Startpunkt ist es erhellend, interessant und macht (ironischerweise gerade wegen seiner mangelnden Substanz) Lust auf mehr: Ich zumindest lese als nächstes Freedman's *Wörter über Atomwaffen*.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich.
Far from the Final Word on the Cold War's Military History
Von Steven S. Berizzi
Any author seeking to write a military history of the Cold War has undertaken a very formidable task. The intense and extensive military rivalry - and its related political, economic, and diplomatic competition - between the American and Soviet superpowers and their respective allies lasted nearly fifty years and was "fought" on practically every continent. So the fact that David Miller's *The Cold War: A Military History* is highly selective in the

themes it addresses does not, in principle, trouble me. As a practical matter, that is the only way that a military history of the Cold War could be fit into one volume. But this book is not really history. It is, instead, a collection of relatively short essays, mostly about weapons and weapons systems developed and used to arm the Cold War military forces. As an introduction to those subjects, this book probably has some value, but it is not the narrative of Cold War military events which the title suggests. I also take issue with the book's narrow focus: According to Miller, "central Europe best symbolizes what went on during the Cold War and is the most likely place for the fighting to have started." That assertion will come as a surprise to men and women who served in the American armed forces in Korea and Vietnam, as well as to their Soviet counterparts who served in Afghanistan. Miller's approach probably works for most of the period called the "high Cold War," which lasted from the first Berlin crisis in 1948 until the Cuban missile crisis in 1962. But from that point in time until the demolition of the Berlin Wall in 1989, I would suggest that the Cold War in central Europe was relatively stable. In contrast, during the last three decades of the Cold War, there were serious and lengthy Cold War conflicts "by proxy" in Vietnam and Afghanistan, as well as "hot spot" crises elsewhere in Asia, as well as in Africa and central America. Any book purporting to be a general military history of the Cold War which focuses exclusively on central Europe is going to mislead, and that is precisely what I consider one of this book's most serious shortcomings. Miller's emphasis on events in central Europe also is of limited value because he devotes too much space to the possibility of conventional war. During the formative period of the Cold War, from the end of the Second World War in Europe until the first Berlin crisis, the Soviet Union maintained huge tank armies and infantry forces in eastern Europe. Precisely in order to deter conventional war, first the United States and, later, Great Britain and France, developed atomic weapons. We will never know, of course, what would have happened if the Soviet Union's tanks and infantry had invaded western Europe, but I believe it is virtually certain that the United States would have responded with strategic and/or tactical atomic weapons. Indeed, according to Miller, "at least in public, NATO regarded battlefield nuclear weapons either as a reasonable response to Soviet first strike or as a last resort in the face of imminent conventional defeat." Nevertheless, Miller deserves credit for making this significant point: "The perceived threat from the Soviet Union caused the European nations and those of North America to draw together through NATO in a way which had never previously proved possible, even in the face of war." Miller writes: "In the mass of documents released since the end of the Cold War, no evidence has been found of any Warsaw Pact defensive plans, except for a few formulated in the three final years, after President Gorbachev had insisted that the General Staff prepare them. Instead, all plans concentrated on a series of massive attacks, which were aimed at securing Soviet control of the entire west-European land mass." That is interesting! However, this next point demonstrates Miller's discussion of protracted conventional war between NATO and the Warsaw Pact nations is superfluous. Miller writes: "According to Soviet and East German planning documents, the major plan for the Central Front aimed at reaching the German-French border in between thirteen and fifteen days, and then of overrunning France so that the leading troops arrived at the Atlantic coast and the Franco-Spanish border by the thirty-fifth day." Does anyone believe that the United States would have permitted the Soviet Union's tanks to race across Germany and then on to the Atlantic without using every weapon in its nuclear arsenal to prevent? When Miller decided to concentrate on weapons and weapons systems, in my opinion, he also should have decided to provide more information about their awesome expense because continuously developing and upgrading equipment was the key feature of the political economy of the Cold War. Only in his final chapter does Miller address "The Financial Cost," which may, in the long run, prove to be the most important aspect of the entire Cold War. But he provides virtually no details, except to state: "The true costs of defence equipment were virtually impossible to calculate." Miller concludes: "What was certain...as judged by the eventual collapse of the U.S.S.R., was that the cost proved to be unaffordable." I believe that will be one of the great historiographical debates of the coming century: Whether Soviet Communism was simply an ideology whose time came and went or whether the economic demands of the Cold War simply proved too much for the Soviet state to sustain? Furthermore, I believe Miller might have offered some comments about the nearly-indiscriminate distribution of weapons by the Cold War antagonists to Third World countries because I believe that is going to prove to be one of the most serious legacies of the Cold War. I would recommend David Miller's *The Cold War* to novices and students who want some basic information about weapons, weapons systems, and their impact on certain issues of strategy. But, the title notwithstanding, this book is far from the final word on the Cold War's military history.

Kurzbeschreibung From 1949 to 1991 the world was overshadowed by the Cold War. Repeatedly it seemed that in days, even hours, global nuclear conflict would sweep away much of the United States, the Soviet Union and Europe. They would be obliterated in what President Carter described as 'one long, final and very bleak afternoon'. When the Cold War ended, the Warsaw Pact was wound up and the vast military forces which had flourished for over forty years were disbanded. As with all wars, however, it was only then that the realities of what had been involved began to emerge; indeed, much has remained hidden until now. In *The Cold War*, David Miller discloses not only the vast scope of the military resources involved, but also how nearly threat came to terrible reality. Most chillingly of all, he reveals

that while the menace of nuclear war predominated, it was actually little understood even by the experts. The book examines each military area in turn, covering the formation of the two great alliances, and the strategies and major weapons in the rival navies, armies and air forces. That the Cold War ended without a conflict was due to professionalism on both sides. The result, Miller suggests, would have impressed the Chinese military strategist, Sun Tsu, who, writing in the fifth century BC, said that 'to subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill'. The end of the Cold War was as dramatic as it was unexpected. At the beginning of 1989 no one in their right mind would have predicted the demise of the Soviet empire, and yet by the end of the year almost every Warsaw Pact regime throughout eastern Europe had been toppled. Some isolated events of that year, such as the knocking down of the Berlin Wall and the execution of the Romanian dictator, Nicolai Ceausescu, remain vivid, but a decade later it is hard to recapture exactly it felt like to be living under its shadow. The Cold War ended so suddenly that there was little time to absorb what its passing meant, and there's a tendency to play down the threats and to say that the danger really ended with the Cuban missile crisis in 1962. David Miller's history of the Cold War is a timely reminder that this was just not so. As the book's title suggests, Miller doesn't go in for any sociological or political analysis of the Cold War, restricting himself solely to a military analysis. At first this feels somewhat self-limiting and you yearn for a wider perspective; but as the book goes on, its narrow focus becomes compellingly powerful. Miller spent 36 years in the army and he writes in the unquestioning style of someone who is well-acquainted with weapons of mass destruction. But to the lay person, much of what he writes will come as a shock. Most of us only got through the Cold War years thanks to an inbuilt capacity for self-deception. We knew that both sides had vast arsenals, but we managed to kid ourselves that even if the worst came to the worst and war did break out, we'd probably survive one way or another. Miller makes it abundantly clear that we wouldn't. The Cold War presents a detailed catalogue of each country's military capacity; the conventional weapons alone make fearsome reading but we enter a different dimension when he moves on to nuclear capabilities. In the early 1960s, a UK think-tank predicted that a heavy attack on Britain would have killed 90 per cent of the population. Such an attack would have used only a fraction of the Soviet Union's nuclear arsenal. Successive governments' obsession with developing bigger and better military hardware was one of the defining characteristics of the Cold War, and yet by 1965 we all had more than enough weapons to wipe each out several times over. So why did we carry on? The simple answer is that the Cold War generated an irrational momentum of its own. Every nuclear scenario the experts came up with always ended in the same way--a holocaust with no winners--and yet that did not stop politicians in both the East and West in publicly defending the legitimacy of the nuclear option. It was madness on a grand scale, with Joe Public the unsuspecting pawns. Miller ends his fine book by declaring that it was only the skill of the military and political leaders that prevented war from breaking out, though the questionable trustworthiness of those leaders makes you feel lucky to still be here. --John Crace

Pressestimmen David Miller's military history of the Cold War is awesome in every sense. Evening Standard