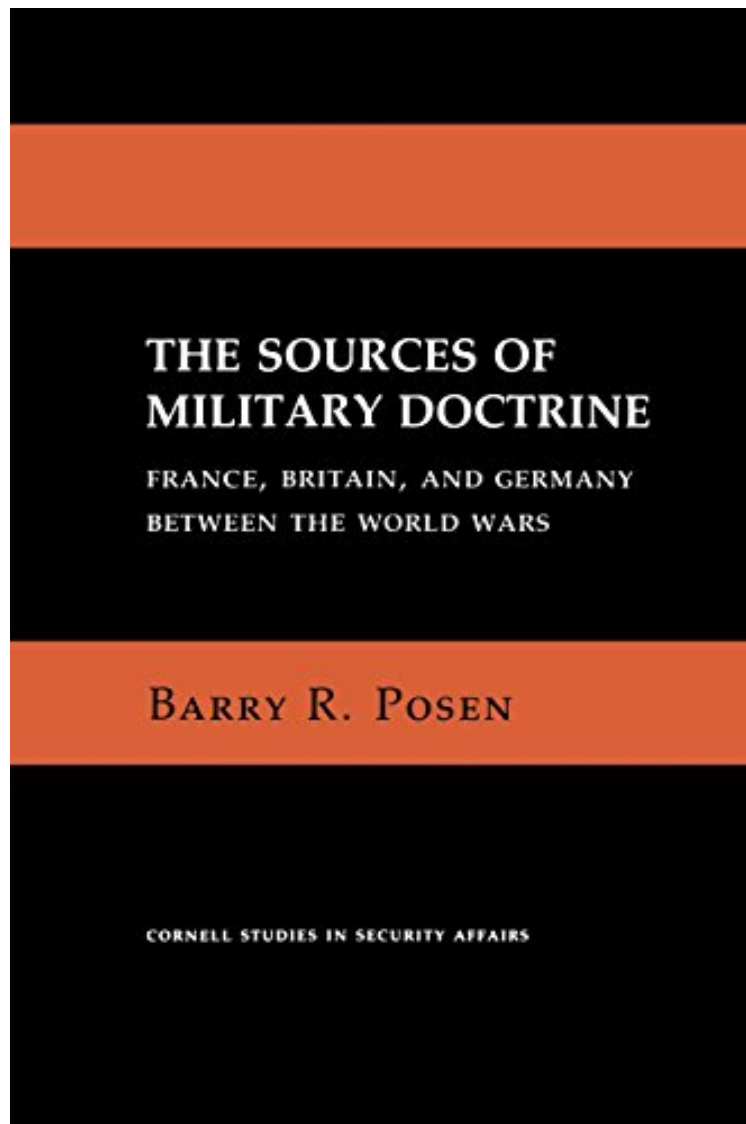


[Library ebook] The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany Between the World Wars (Cornell Studies in Security Affairs)

The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany Between the World Wars (Cornell Studies in Security Affairs)

Barry R. Posen

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Barry R. Posen : The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany Between the World Wars (Cornell Studies in Security Affairs) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany Between the World Wars (Cornell Studies in Security Affairs):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. The Title Says it All By C.P.M. In this book Mr. Posen draws heavily on "Balance of Power" and organizational theories on how military doctrine is created and implemented. Using these theories, Mr. Posen analyzes how Germany, France, and Great Britain formulated their military doctrines with the results of World War II in 1940 showing how well those military doctrines served their countries' grand strategy. Mr. Posen shows how militaries tend to keep doctrine just as they want it when civilian leadership doesn't push hard for innovations and he also shows how disastrous it can be when both civilian and military leadership fail to match their military doctrines with their overall grand strategies. Obviously, France scores low marks here as her political leaders couldn't match the two, while Britain receives the highest marks due to the push by the civilian leadership in the last years of the interwar period to innovate its military doctrine. Germany receives mixed marks because Hitler's push for highly offensive warfare ("Blitzkrieg") served Germany well against France, but poorly when it was time to deal with Britain. Although I am not fond of balance of power theories, it is hard to deny Mr. Posen's conclusions. This book could also stand a little update since it was first written in the mid-1980s. Though I doubt Mr. Posen's conclusions would change, it would be interesting to see how he might try to fit his conclusions in with how the world has changed since the end of the Cold War. Although this book has a lot of political scientist jargon, it is still a fine book that I highly recommend to anyone interested in the theories behind military doctrines and strategies.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Political science meets defense policy studies By T. Graczewski This is a scholarly work of political science written in the late 1980s that is perhaps best known for a few ancillary conclusions on the nature of military innovation in peacetime, which was a topic of great interest in the 1990s. The purpose of the book was to explore how and why states develop their military doctrine and to assess whether organizational theory (a theory quite popular at the time) or balance of power theory best explained the behavior of French, British and German military and civilian policymakers during the interwar period. Much of the book explores the assumptions each theory holds as to likely state behavior. For instance, organizational theory suggests that military services tend to pursue offensive doctrines that maximize their autonomy and their slice of the defense budget, and that doctrine is often non-innovative as those in positions of authority in hierarchical organizations usually stick with what they know. One of the conclusions reached by Posen is that militaries tend not to innovate and when they do, it is usually due to a combination of direct civilian interference in military affairs along with the support of a maverick, often unpopular, military officer who challenges convention and "breaks crockery" in his attempt to instill a new way of waging war. The two cases of such unlikely innovation addressed by Posen are the development of the Royal Air Force (RAF) Fighter Command for strategic air defense, which has been credited for winning the "Battle of Britain" in 1940, and the development of blitzkrieg by the Germans, which was responsible for the stunning German conquest of France in 1940. Posen argues that both the fledgling RAF and the rebuilt Wehrmacht opposed these innovations. Instead, they promoted and supported doctrines precisely as organization theory would suggest. The RAF was a proponent of strategic bombing, even though when pressed the military air leaders could not articulate precisely how they would threaten Germany - although their prognostications of the destruction that bombers could rain down on cities was not lost on civilian leaders, especially their general assumption that for every 1 ton of munitions dropped there would be 50 civilian casualties. Thus, the civilians insisted on an aggressive air defense plan to ensure that Britain could survive any potential knock-out blow. Posen maintains that it was this civilian insistence on a robust air defense strategy and the leadership of General Hugh Dowding that resulted in the integrated air defense system that held back the improvised strategic bombing campaigns of Hermann Goering and the Luftwaffe in 1940. The German army may have toyed with motor transport and other proscribed technology under Hans von Seeckt during the Versailles period of the 1920s, but Posen argues that these experiments merely applied new technology to the old "Hutier" infiltration tactics developed during the later years of WWI. It was the combination of Hitler, who demanded a rapier force to make his "avalanche diplomacy" all the more intimidating and genuine, and the armor revolutionary Heinz Guderian, to make blitzkrieg a reality. These conclusions were challenged by Stephen P. Rosen and others in the 1990s as the concept of military transformation and a revolution in military affairs (RMA) gathered force. In closing, "The Sources of Military Doctrine" was quite a bit different than I was anticipating, I must admit. After seeing it cited and quoted so many times, I felt like I knew the content. Clearly I didn't. This book has value for political scientists interested in organizational and/or balance of power theory or defense policy wonks looking to develop a solid foundation in concepts of military innovation. If you don't fit neatly into one of these two groups "The Sources of Military Doctrine" likely isn't for you.

8 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Why Organizational Theory Does Not Explain Military Doctrine By A Customer Barry Posen's work is a comparison of 33 hypotheses drawn from organizational theory and balance of power theory. The test of these hypotheses is the military strategy of interwar France, Germany and Great Britain. While Posen's work has great explanatory value for the formation of military doctrine, what it does in actuality is refute the richness of organizational theory for explaining the sources of military doctrine. The problem is that Posen did not seemingly intend to refute organizational theory. The book offers a well balanced response to the work of Jack Snyder on the ideology of offensive military strategy. I would highly encourage graduate students and faculty of international relations and military science to read this work.

Barry R. Posen explores how military doctrine takes shape and the role it plays in grand strategy?that collection of military, economic, and political means and ends with which a state attempts to achieve security. Posen isolates three crucial elements of a given strategic doctrine: its offensive, defensive, or deterrent characteristics, its integration of military resources with political aims, and the degree of military or operational innovation it contains. He then examines these components of doctrine from the perspectives of organization theory and balance of power theory, taking into account the influence of technology and geography. Looking at interwar France, Britain, and Germany, Posen challenges each theory to explain the German Blitzkrieg, the British air defense system, and the French Army's defensive doctrine often associated with the Maginot Line. This rigorous comparative study, in which the balance of power theory emerges as the more useful, not only allows us to discover important implications for the study of national strategy today, but also serves to sharpen our understanding of the origins of World War II.

"This is a scholarly and conceptually ambitious work which seeks to explain how military doctrine takes place and its role in 'grand strategy.' The core of the study examines military doctrines in the interwar period, discussing the German blitzkrieg and British air defense system as successes, and the French army's Maginot Line doctrine as a great failure. Posen develops many intriguing ideas and theoretical insights, and debates those of his academic peers, in a rich volume that has to be studied as well as read."?Foreign Affairs

About the Author Barry R. Posen is Ford International Professor of Political Science and director of the Security Studies Program at MIT. He is the author of *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany between the World Wars* (winner of the Furniss Award and the Woodrow Wilson Foundation Award), *Inadvertent Escalation: Conventional War and Nuclear Risks*, and *Restraint: A New Foundation for U.S. Grand Strategy*, all from Cornell.