

## The Greening of the U.S. Military Environmental Policy, National Security, and Organizational Change

By Robert F. Durant

Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2007. 283 pages.

### Reviewed by BRIAN SMITH

**Brian D. Smith** is currently with a major consulting firm and has served as a contractor to the U.S. Department of Defense, supporting environmental issues, for more than 10 years. He provided technical support to a number of activities sponsored by several of the offices under the leadership of individuals referred to in *The Greening of the U.S. Military*.

*The Greening of the U.S. Military: Environmental Policy, National Security, and Organizational Change* is a carefully constructed and well-organized account of the regulation of environmental issues within the Department of Defense (DoD) and the armed services. Author Robert F. Durant recounts and analyzes the organizational changes that took place as the defense establishment moved to comply with significant parts of the environmental regulatory framework that governs civil enterprises. Though it looks as far back as the Truman administration, the book focuses on the administrations of George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton, as well as the early parts of the George W. Bush presidency.

The book is organized around a few broad themes that are carefully threaded through a series of issue-based case studies in self-contained chapters. Each of the chapters examines a particular issue—such as base cleanup or the Military Munitions Response Program—using authoritative secondary sources and official documentation; explains the issue’s historical context and relationship to other issues; and then discusses how that issue exemplifies a number of important concepts in the literature

on organizational change. As an organizational change textbook built around a well-vetted set of historical cases, the book—which is well-written and easy to follow—succeeds admirably. However, based largely on my experiences and the experiences of my colleagues as contractors working on this process, I found a few important areas where I thought the book was lacking or inaccurate.

Durant provides a generally accurate description of major events and significant movements, including the Republican victory in the 1994 congressional elections and the subsequent retrenchment by the Clinton administration—probably one of the most important reasons for the halting progress made during that time. Efforts by the Clinton administration to reap the post-Cold War “peace dividend” by reducing military budgets—and the pressure from Congress and local interests to quickly deal with facilities targeted for realignment and closure—were key drivers toward realizing the benefits of a more environmentally friendly approach to the management of military facilities and the acquisition of future systems. However, these drivers were also serious impediments to significant and systematic changes in defense culture and the attitudes both within DoD and the armed services toward remediation and restoration efforts. Durant’s description lacks a discussion of changes to the force structure itself and the cultural behavior of the military in the face of heightened regulatory pressure and reduced budgets.

Durant suggests that reduced military budgets beginning in the early Clinton administration led to reductions in the emissions of regu-

lated pollutants and toxic materials; however, he misses some key factors. When the budgets were reduced, existing forces—including active Army divisions, Navy carrier battle groups, and Air Force wings—were also reduced, in order to pay for the research, development, and procurement of the next generation of weapons systems. The military chose to retain and maintain its newer systems and retire older systems that had been in service since Vietnam. While some older systems were preserved, the overall reductions resulted in a younger—and in many cases, less polluting—inventory of systems than those used in Desert Shield and Desert Storm. The military’s response to the reduced budget was as important to the reductions in effluents as the budget reduction itself. If, instead, the military had decided to take the cuts across the board or largely out of research and development, the budget reduction might have led to increased emissions, given the increase in operational tempo during this time. The reduction tended to preserve the older, pre-compliance ethic toward regulation of the military’s environmental performance. Faced with dealing with a number of significant changes in a short period period of time, the military culture was only able to internalize so many. A discussion of that trade-off and decision process is largely missing from *The Greening of the U.S. Military*.

Durant appears to suggest that the military conspired to systematically obstruct the application of federal environmental regulations to its facilities and operations. He does not adequately address an alternative hypothesis: that the DoD and the armed services were not adequately prepared to assimilate and operationalize these regulations. Much of his analysis is focused on a “post-compliance ethic” as the benchmark for performance, when in reality, reaching a “compliance ethic” would have been a more appropriate threshold. He assumes that the defense establishment, acting as a nearly monolithic whole, should have been prepared to accept the regulatory regime, based in evolving case law, and transparently, rationally, and quickly apply

the law to their specific cases. In many cases, such as the munitions rule, the military and the regulatory agencies (notably the Environmental Protection Agency) found themselves in the uncharted territory of managing significant risk to future operations.

Already a conservative organization, when confronted with the possibility (real or perceived) of having its operations curtailed, the military should be granted some leeway for moving slowly and cautiously. The unsettled global strategic environment put enormous pressure on the defense establishment to be prepared to deal with the unexpected, and thus maximize its options. While such slow and cautious movement could be interpreted as obstructionist, I believe that it instead reflects the great difficulty faced by the DoD and the armed services in adjusting their operational cultures in a consistent and uniform fashion.

While Durant correctly identifies senior civil servants as key to successful organizational transformation, he does not address the expanded role of contractors and their impact on organizational change. This role deserves more in-depth discussion, as it is a major feature of current day-to-day operations in the defense establishment. He briefly addresses the firms that develop, build, and support the systems in the defense inventory (“metal benders”). However, the service contractors’ role in transformation has greatly increased since the early 1990s, as more technical, analytical, and support work has moved from the government to private industry. Contractors have evolved from providing systems and system-specific support to providing general staff support and specialized technical and analytical support. In many cases, contractors become the organization’s institutional knowledge in times of change among the senior leadership.

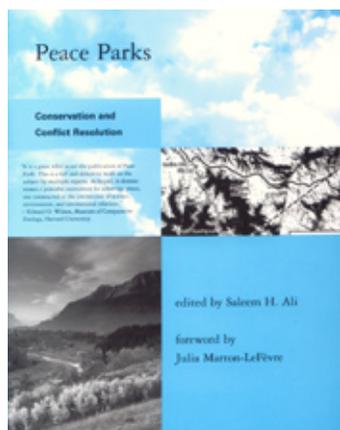
Finally, I found it curious that despite his extensive research, Durant did not interview many of the key decision-makers referred to in the book. While making extensive use of secondary materials and official documents, he regularly attributes strategies, beliefs, and actions



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to individuals without having conducted interviews with them; notably, he did not speak to Sherri Goodman and Gary Vest, whose insights

I believe would be central to understanding the opportunities for and impediments to greening the U.S. military.



## Peace Parks: Conservation and Conflict Resolution

*Edited by Saleem H. Ali*

Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007. 377 pages.

### Reviewed by ROLAIN BOREL

**Rolain Borel** heads the Department of Environment, Peace, and Security at the University for Peace in Costa Rica, where his main interests and teaching duties lie in the field of environmental conflict resolution.

In *Peace Parks: Conservation and Conflict Resolution*—brilliantly conceived and edited by Saleem H. Ali—31 authors explore the multiple ways in which environmental conservation zones can facilitate the resolution of territorial conflicts. Ali concludes with “a sense of optimism” because the concept of international peace parks (sometimes known as transboundary protected areas or trans-frontier conservation areas) is expanding rapidly (p. 341). The 17 case studies gathered in this volume show that ecological factors have the potential to become instrumental in peacebuilding; however, much of the evidence is not fully conclusive, and the role of peace parks in international affairs remains in the realm of the possible, not of the certain.

*Peace Parks* is both broad and deep: Part I provides a historical overview and methodological and theoretical perspectives; Part II presents cases of bioregional management and economic development in existing peace parks; and Part III offers several visions of future peace parks. While most chapters are engaging, some contributions are too long and burdened by unneces-

sary digressions. Although the majority of the authors are from the United States, and only seven are from the Global South, the cases cover a wide geographical range.

Two main factors explain the growing interest in international peace parks. Anne Hammill and Charles Besançon claim it reflects on the growing commitment to bioregionalism and the need to increase the geographic scale of conservation areas beyond national borders. On the other hand, Rosaleen Duffy argues that peace parks are being promoted as a form of global environmental governance, reflecting the wider shifts in global politics from state governance to networks of international organizations. According to Duffy, this governance model is also related to the “extension of neoliberal market-oriented forms of economic management”—i.e., revenues generated by ecotourism (p. 57).

Several of the articles address territorial issues: Raul Lejano stresses that “territoriality has been the subtext for violent conflict” and that it is “ironic that territory is now being turned on its head as an instrument of peace” (p. 41). In their respective chapters, Ali, Michelle Stevens, and Ke Chong Kim point out that international peace parks can act as physical buffers (e.g., the Sierra del Condor between Peru and Ecuador; the demilitarized zone between North and South Korea) or as sites of collaborative exchange (e.g., “the informal exchange of