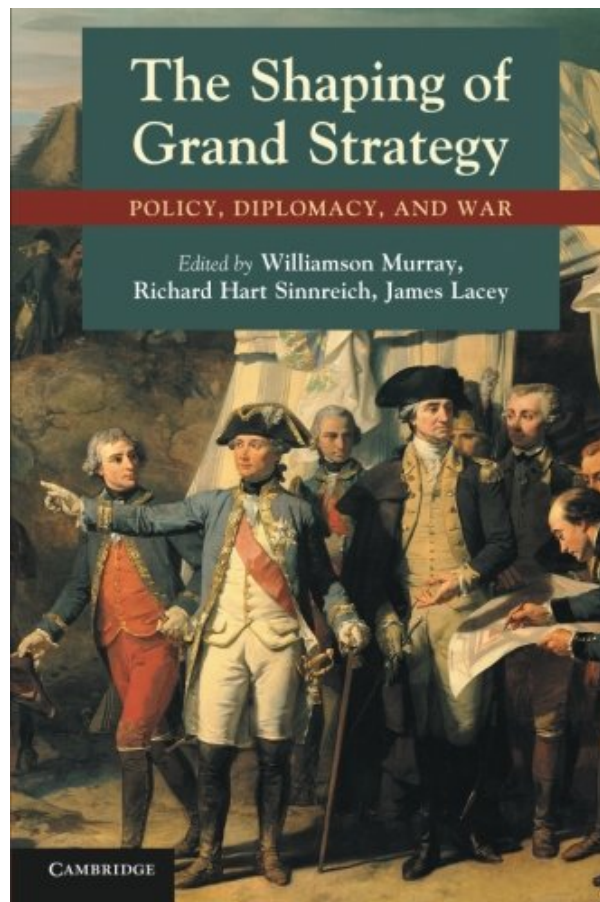
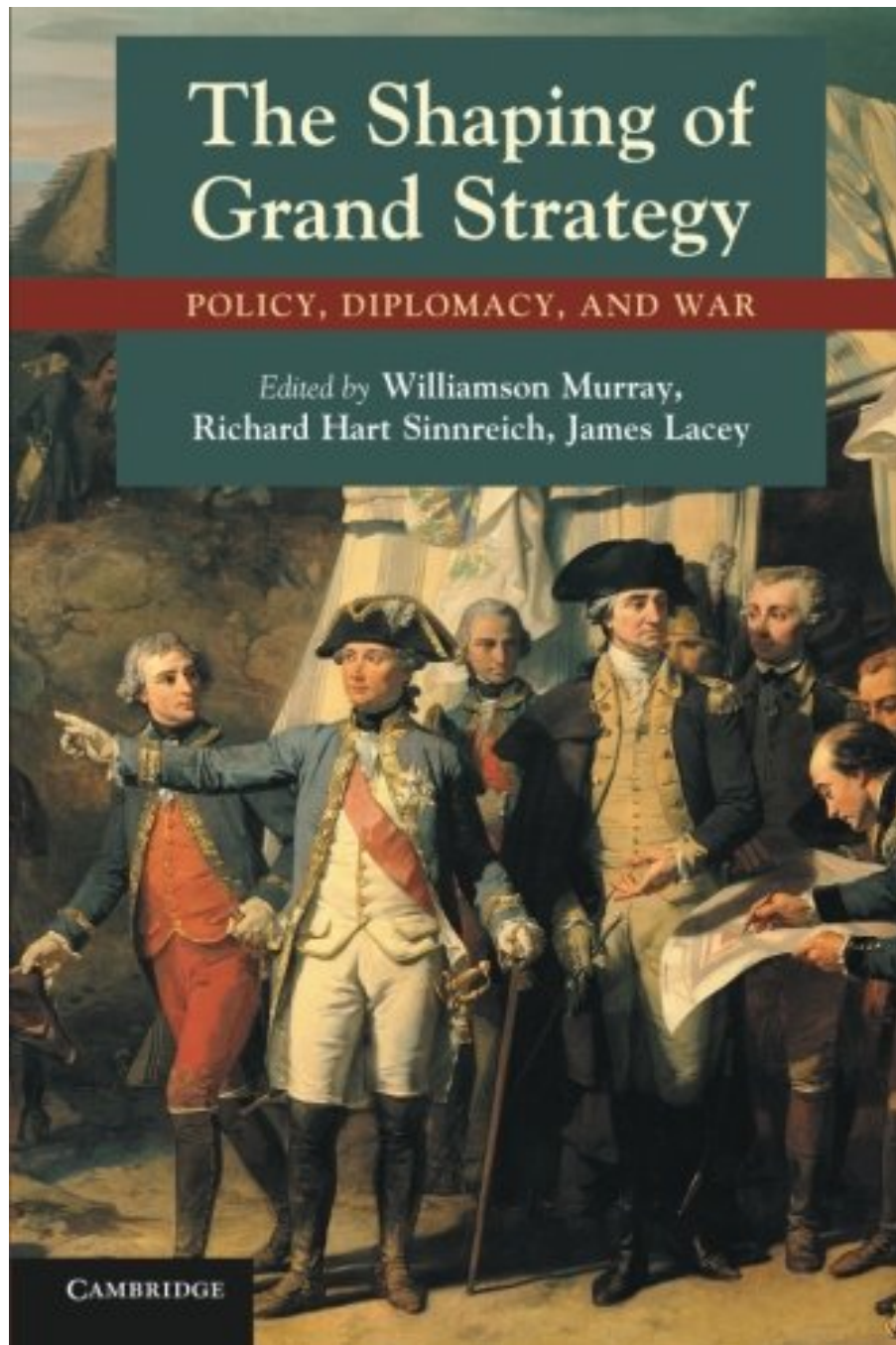


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Review

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About the Author

Williamson Murray is Professor Emeritus of History at the Ohio State University. He has also been the Centennial Visiting Professor at the London School of Economics, a Secretary of the Navy Fellow at the Navy War College, the Horner Professor of Military Theory at Marine Corps University, and the Harold Johnson Professor of Military History at the Army War College. At present he is a defense consultant and commentator on historical and military subjects in Washington, DC. Murray is co-editor of *The Making of Peace* (with Jim Lacey), *The Past as Prologue* (with Richard Hart Sinnreich), *The Dynamics of Military Revolution, 1300-2050* (with MacGregor Knox), *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period* (with Allan R. Millett), and *The Making of Strategy* (with Alvin Bernstein and MacGregor Knox).

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Within a variety of historical contexts, *The Shaping of Grand Strategy* addresses the most important tasks states have confronted: namely, how to protect their citizens against the short-range as well as long-range dangers their polities confront in the present and may confront in the future. To be successful, grand strategy demands that governments and leaders chart a course that involves more than simply reacting to immediate events. Above all, it demands they adapt to sudden and major changes in the international environment, which more often than not involves the outbreak of great conflicts but at times demands recognition of major economic, political, or diplomatic changes. This collection of essays explores the successes as well as failures of great states attempting to create grand strategies that work and aims at achieving an understanding of some of the extraordinary difficulties involved in casting, evolving, and adapting grand strategy to the realities of the world.

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Outstanding (But This Is A Limited Review)

By A. B. Systems

Note: This is a limited review because I purchased this book specifically for the interwar and WW II period, and do not comment here on the remainder of the book.

This ensemble book consists of essays by six eminent historians well familiar with their subject matter. My interest at this time is limited to the run up to WW II. The chapter entitled "British Grand Strategy, 1933-1942" by Dr Williamson Murray is simply brilliant.

Dr Murray has a rock-solid grasp of what grand strategy is, and the events, issues and British political leadership behaviors of the late interwar period. Equally important, he writes clear and cogent prose--a gift not many university professors can claim.

I particularly recommend reading this chapter to gain a quick and clear understanding of the brutal consequences of an ideological worldview that is unable to process obvious facts. The dangers of spinning world events to meet your worldview are manifest, and history provides examples aplenty.

Clearly essays of this length cannot possibly cover every aspect of grand strategy during the periods covered. Nonetheless, this book--at least the British Grand Strategy chapter--provides a useful and insightful overview with enough detail to satisfy. If you want to dive deeper, footnotes and references provide a wealth of resources for expanded study.

Dr Murray is professor emeritus of history at Ohio State University and has served as the Harold Johnson Professor of Military History at the US Army War College in Carlyle, PA. I have no connection to Dr Murray whatsoever, except as a reader and student of his writing.

I'm less impressed with the chapter on early WW II American grand strategy development, but I'm sure many will find it useful. Skimming the other chapters suggests their quality and clarity is similar to Dr Murray's chapter, but I have not studied them and cannot comment with assurance.

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