

Note from AFA President – AU, AU Press, SSQ, Payne

AFA members, Congressional Staff members, Civic Leaders, DOCA members, I have used these notes to help educate you on the importance of Airpower and a strong national defense. Periodically, I have recommended books for you to consider. With this note, I'd like to ask you to take a look at the online resources at the Air University. I have bookmarked their web site and refer to it often. See: <http://www.au.af.mil/au/>

One of the many sets of resources is the AU Press ... where ...AU Press publications (up to 10 titles) are available *free of charge* to US Department of Defense personnel, organizations and employees of other federal government agencies, and retired military personnel. You can find their site at: <http://aupress.au.af.mil/>

Another AU site I keep handy is the Strategic Studies Quarterly. Its articles are thought provoking and topical. You can find it at: <http://www.au.af.mil/au/ssq/>

Finally, I'd like to recommend one article from the most recent SSQ. It was written by a giant in the field of nuclear deterrence, Dr. Keith Payne – who is now the President of the National Institute for Public Policy and professor and head of the Graduate Department of Defense and Strategic Studies at Missouri State University (Washington Campus). The piece covers the essence of nuclear deterrence and provides thoughtful reasons why nuclear weapons are necessary for US deterrence and assurance strategies. A few quotes from the piece to interest you:

- At the risk of shattering widespread illusions, it is important to understand an inconvenient truth: there is no basis for confident, definitive answers to any of these fundamental [deterrence] questions.
- The logic of deterrence transcends any particular era or enemy.”
The problem with this convenient, comforting narrative is that American observers neither control nor often understand how opponents will perceive deterrence threats or what will constitute “rational” decision making and behavior according to their Weltanschauung. [OK ... I had to look this word up. It means world-view or philosophy of life.]
- Conventional deterrence has been manifestly effective on occasion, but it also has an unfortunate 2,000-year record of periodically failing catastrophically: most recently, there were no nuclear weapons to deter war in 1914 and 1939. What followed were approximately 110 million casualties in fewer than 10 combined years of warfare. The subsequent 6-1/2 nuclear decades compare very favorably to that horrific prenuclear record.
- It is useful to close with the observation that our preferred force numbers and types should follow the demands of strategy, not the reverse. This is no less true when that strategy is deterrence. Credible deterrence is a precious product that defies easy or precise prediction. But, we do know that in the past, nuclear deterrence contributed to preventing conflict or escalation, and it may be necessary to do so again when we face severe risks. Consequently, the maintenance of credible nuclear deterrence should continue to be a national priority.

The piece is a bit long – recommend you print it. You can find it at: <http://www.au.af.mil/au/ssq/2011/summer/payne.pdf>.

For your consideration.

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