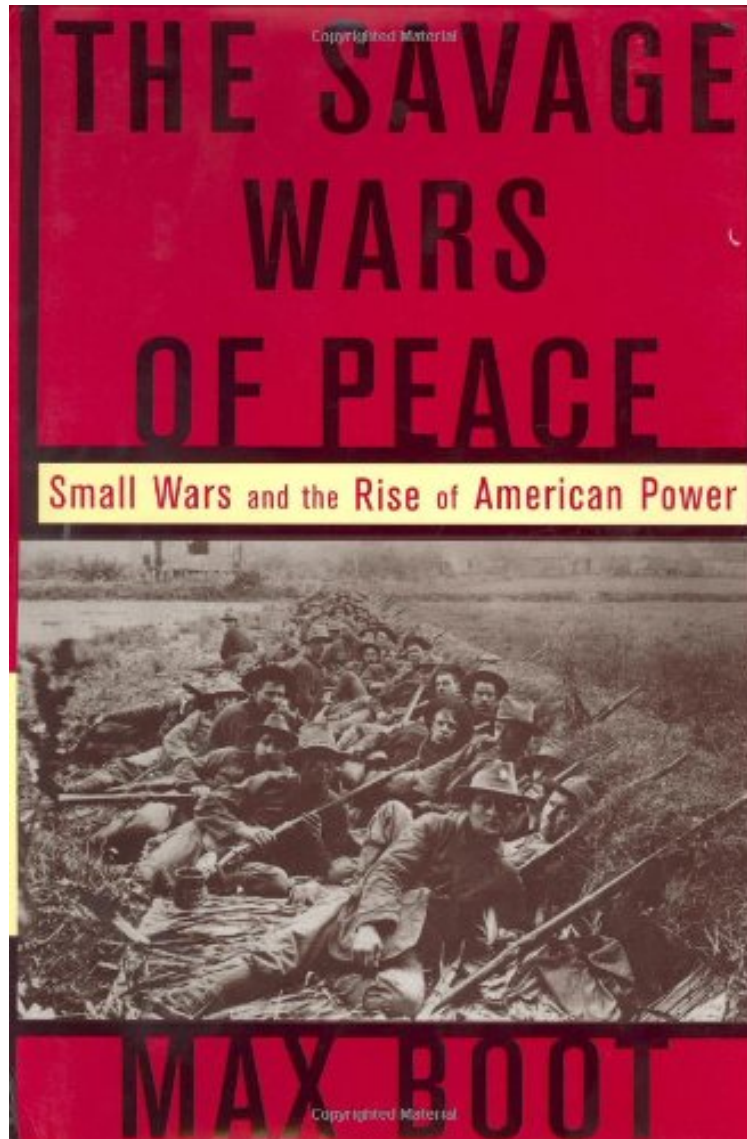


The Savage Wars Of Peace: Small Wars And The Rise Of American Power

Max Boot

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Max Boot : The Savage Wars Of Peace: Small Wars And The Rise Of American Power before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Savage Wars Of Peace: Small Wars And The Rise Of American Power:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. The Top Study of InsurgencyBy Illinois ReaderMax Boot is a Neoconservative, but don't let that stop you from taking this book seriously. In this book argues that the affairs at

Omaha Beach and Gettysburg are aberrations, flukes, exceptional events in warfare. The most common form of war is insurgency. An insurgency is a conflict which takes place between a stronger force—normally the organized government or an imperial power and a smaller bunch, typically an oppressed ethnic group or conquered people. Insurgencies don't get 'won' instead they linger on, often for decades. It is best described as a crime fighting war. Boot describes insurgencies that the United States faced in the past that are outside the American experience with Indian Insurgencies. He thus focuses on the Regulars—especially the United States Marine Corps and their far flung story. He brings to life obscure action—China in the 1920s, the American occupation of Veracruz, the anti-Bolshevik defense of Arkhangelsk, Russia. It should be read by every member of the military.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A Great Historical Read By Eric S. Cook This book was not only informative, but interesting and hard to put down as well. Max clearly illustrates America's past in fighting small wars, mainly in the Caribbean and Central America, and shows that our future is destined to be the same as we take a more aggressive foreign policy. Max writes in a way which allows the reader to feel he or she is really in the trenches with the soldiers and Marines he writes about. You seem to get a more complete picture of the conflict as it happened. Max's main theme with the publishing of this book is to break the mold that many believe of America going Isolationist until the World Wars, which is false as the Marines were used so often in Central America that they were jokingly called a part of the State Department. You really get the feel of how much America supported their business interests during the times before the 1st World War when you see all the conflicts the military was sent in to quell in the interest of local American businesses. This book is highly recommended to anyone looking to research the less than advertised conflicts America has engaged in.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. An Education and a Good Read By Grant Fritchey Max Boot's book the Savage Wars of Peace is chock full of fascinating information about America's history of small wars, fought overseas without the serious attention of the nation. Sound familiar? It should. Mr. Boot wrote the book with the intention to educate people that our current situations overseas are not exactly unique in our history. He succeeds quite well. What's more, he's able to, by drawing on history, provide some insights into what should work and what won't work in our ongoing wars against fundamentalist Islam. The book is broken down in rough chronological order and by region of the world. It goes from the famous conflicts, such as the fight against the Barbary pirates (... to the shores of Tripoli ... from the Marine Corps hymn) to the obscure, our fights in Nicaragua (which I'd never heard about before). In between are other events that aren't covered in a lot history books, our attempts at the overthrow of the Soviets during World War I in Archangel and our part in the fights in China during the Boxer Rebellion are just a couple of examples. Throughout the book, the writing is interesting and facts are riveting. The lessons learned and lost by our military are recounted at length. For some, who may not be students of this type of history, many of these lessons might be a bit surprising. For others, the lessons could be a reinforcement of beliefs held without good information to back them up. Regardless, readers should come away with an education into America's rich history of involvement in the small and nasty wars overseas during the last two hundred years.

Max Boot's new book is a history of those smaller, undeclared wars that, he argues, have always played a key role in American international affairs. This story, he shows, has special relevance to the current "war on terrorism" and the future of American conflicts around the world. Written with a rare eye for both political nuance and real humor, this book introduces us to heroes and exploits from the forgotten side of America's military history. We meet Stephen Decatur, who destroyed a captured American warship under the Pasha of Tripoli's nose, Army Lieutenant George S. Patton, who shot it out, ivory-handled pistol in hand, with Mexican bandits at an isolated hacienda in 1916, and many other fascinating characters. Boot locates America's failure to win the Vietnam War in the American military's failure to heed the lessons of "small wars" of the past, and warns against repeating this mistake in the future. Reminding us that the small wars of the Clinton presidency--Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo --fit squarely in an established military tradition, *The Savage Wars of Peace* is a compelling read that also delivers an important new argument about the future of American intervention abroad. Among the Marines, it was said that Smedley [Butler] was dispatched to the National Palace to obtain [Haitian President] Dartiguenave's signature. The president tried to hide in his bathroom. The Marine waited outside the door for an hour. Growing impatient, Butler walked outside, grabbed a ladder, propped it against the palace wall, and climbed up to the window of the bathroom to discover Dartiguenave sitting on a porcelain commode, fully dressed in pinstriped trousers, morning coat and top hat, smoking a cigar and reading a copy of *Petit Parisien*. Wasting no time, Butler supposedly leaped through the window to present the treaty and a fountain pen to the startled president. 'Sign here,' he commanded, and the president did. There is no sense inquiring whether this 'gorgeous legend' is literally true; it gives an accurate flavor of how the U.S.-Haiti Treaty of 1915 came into being.

.com Whether fought for commercial or strategic concessions or even moral reasons, whether little-known or well-publicized, America's "small wars"--against, say, the Barbary pirates and the rebellious Boxers--played a large part in the development of what historian Max Boot does not hesitate to call an American empire. All arguments to the contrary, Boot insists, America has never been an isolationist power; it has "been involved in other countries' internal affairs since at least 1805," when American marines landed on the shores of Tripoli, and it has "never confined the use

of force to those situations that meet the narrow definition of American interests preferred by realpolitikers and isolationists." Closely examining the record of those small wars, which far outnumber major conflicts, Boot argues that Americans have a historic duty to deliver foreign nations from aggression, even to intervene in civil wars abroad, especially if the product is greater freedom--for, he writes, "a world of liberal democracies would be a world much more amenable to American interests than any conceivable alternative." Readers may take issue with some of Boot's conclusions, but they merit wide discussion, especially in a time when small--and perhaps large--wars are looming. Boot's book is thus timely, and most instructive. --Gregory McNamee

From Publishers Weekly

As editorial features editor of the Wall Street Journal, Boot (*Out of Order: Arrogance, Corruption, and Incompetence on the Bench*) has a reputation as a fire-breathing polemicist and unabashed imperialist. This book addresses America's "small wars" in chronological order, dividing the action from 1801 to the present into three sections ("Commercial Power," "Great Power" and "Superpower") to argue that "small war missions are militarily doable" and are now in fact a necessity. Beginning with a description of going to work on September 11 as the World Trade Center tragedy displaced the WSJ newsroom, Boot quickly gets down to some historical detail: from the U.S. expedition against the Barbary pirates to violent squabbles in Panama, Samoa, the Philippines, China, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Mexico, Beirut, Grenada, Somalia and Bosnia. Examples of wars "that were fought less than `wholeheartedly,'" of wars "without exit strategies" and wars "in which U.S. soldiers act as `social workers'" are decried. Each of the 15 short chapters might have been the focus of a separate in-depth book, so Boot's take is once over very lightly indeed. While America's and the world's small wars certainly seem more and more related, Boot's historical descriptions are too thin to provide a solid foundation for relating one war to another.

From Library Journal

The United States has the opportunity to establish a Pax Americana in today's world by jettisoning the Powell doctrine, named after Colin Powell when he was chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and emphasizing military deployment under limited conditions, and instead instituting an aggressive "small wars" strategy. So argues Boot, Wall Street Journal editorial features editor and author of *Out of Order*. Boot says that small wars, or "low-intensity conflicts," are about "the tactics employed, not the scale of combat" and that they have long been a part of the American story he in fact details several of the more than 100 small wars that America has waged since 1800. Boot claims the marines once had a small-wars manual and were such masters of small-wars tactics that, had such tactics been applied widely in Vietnam, America might have won that war. Although the political-moral ramifications of his argument as related to domestic affairs need more exploration, Boot has written a readable and thought-provoking book one that might well influence the behind-the-scenes debates over the future of military policy, as he hopes. Recommended for public and academic libraries.

Charles L. Lumpkins, Pennsylvania State Univ., State College

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