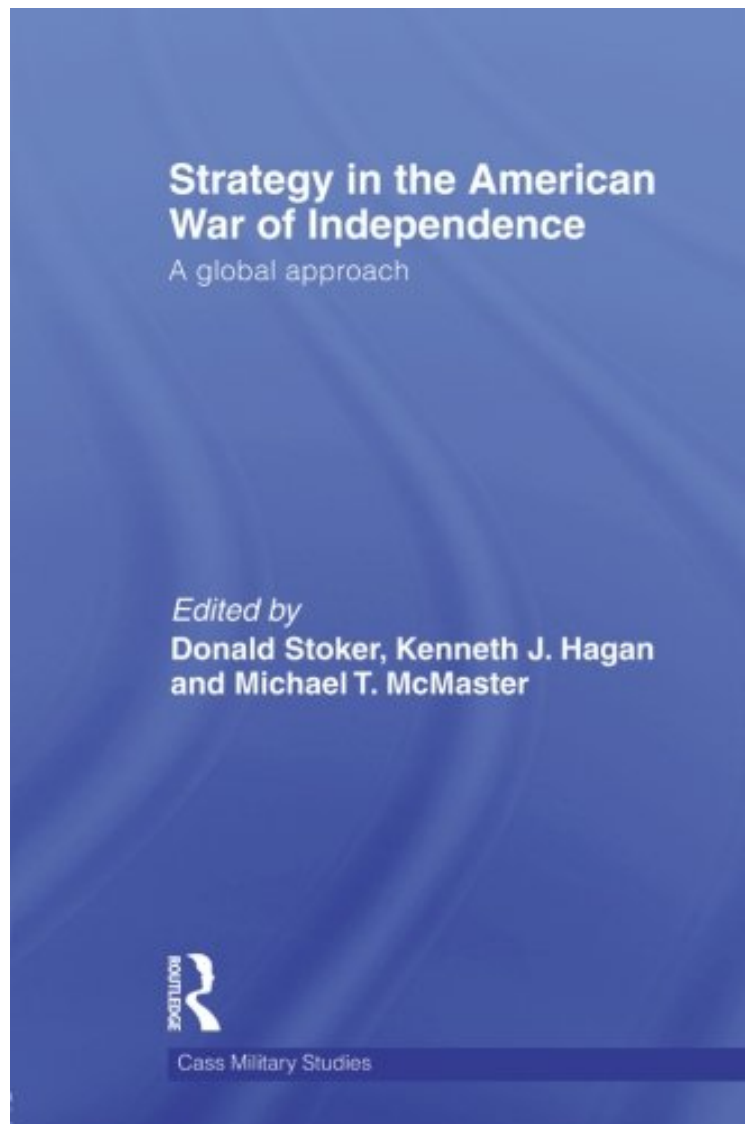


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Strategy in the American War of Independence: A Global Approach (Cass Military Studies)

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Albert A. Nofi
A summary of the review on StrategyPage.Com: 'For this volume in the series "Cass Military Studies," the editors, professors at the U.S. Naval War College, have brought together contributions by a dozen scholars from several nations to examine the strategic conduct of the Revolutionary War. Two essays address the development of colonial military and naval strategy, three look at British military and naval strategy and the role of the Loyalists in their political strategy. In addition, separate essays look at the participation of Native Americans, the French, the Dutch, the Spanish, and the "League of Armed Neutrality" in the war. This helps to remind us what began as an insurrection in some of Britain's American colonies soon grew into a global war, and that as it grew, strategy changed, particularly Britain's. The essays are well-written, thoughtful, and often very insightful (e.g., historically, the most important victory of the French Navy may have been the Battle of the Capes, etc.). Despite a deplorable lack of maps, this is a worthwhile read for the serious student of the Revolutionary War or of strategy.' For the full review, see StrategyPage.Com

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Wider Still And Wider
By Charles Vasey
This is one of those expensive Cass Military Studies but one that I think is worth the money. It takes a look at the global war that surrounded the American War of Independence, not by a simple recounting of the events but by examining the strategic policies of the various nations. The interaction of these strategies is what gives us the actual events, but to see them before (as plans always do) they crumble on first meeting the enemy is an interesting exercise. All parties to the war had a number of constraints and a number of advantages and disadvantages. How they sought to use these to achieve their aims is the subject of the book. This is especially interesting in a war fought by tiny bureaucracies, across enormous distances, by states often without proper funding, and in one case only just being born as a state. The complex nature of these strategic relationships means that the American theatre of war is simply one of many. Indeed, the war continues after all land actions in the USA had practically ceased. The ten chapters each take a look at one "interest group". The colonial strategies are examined within the limits of a new state with no armies, many lawyers, and a difficult financial position; battle-seeking, force-in-being and guerrilla warfare were all possibilities. The second chapter on American naval strategy is something of a continuation of the first; in both cases the Patriot forces could not often face-down the British without first preparing them, but equally a failure to act at all would have been fatal. The result was perhaps less than spectacular, but equally suffered no major defeat. British military strategy decided at a distance and implemented by men with other views forms the third strategy. Repression, negotiation, battle-seeking, and blockade; Britain tried them all but not necessarily in the right order. The book suggests financially Britain was in good shape in 1781 but politically the ministry had lost its game. The fourth chapter follows up with British naval strategy in a war that had become global and where the American theatre did not have primary value. Here the Old Enemies were to be faced and faced without the advantage of numbers; the Bourbons were in the Channel. The Patriot cause is not taken as being the only American view. A chapter on the Loyalists and one on the Native Americans both remind us that the only thing worse than fighting a war with allies is one without allies. Decisions made in other strategies all had an effect on the actual (and potential) strategies with these parties. With the British and Americans covered the last four chapters consider the French, Spanish, Dutch and Neutral views. The French are shown to be playing a good game, but one in which their allies dictate and limit strategy. The Spanish are needed to maintain fleet numbers, but they want Gibraltar. France must support them. The Americans need support and, ultimately, make a separate peace. France must support them. The Spanish are portrayed as careful planners with a clear idea of what they want and need. They had clearly decided to win Gibraltar on the Plains of America. Unfortunately the chapter ends with the American success and leaves aside later actions. The Dutch chapter is a sad reflection on a lost Golden Age. Insufficiently strong to be a major player, but large enough to be a victim, split by faction and the desire for profit it certainly comes out poorly from a difficult hand. The final chapter on neutrals and the League of Armed Neutrality is a fascinating study of how it is perfectly possible to follow two opposite policies at the same time. Histories of this war are often full of political views, sieges and marches. This book is warfare as it was fought by ministers, financiers and admiralities. Considerations of political faction, financial strength and the post-war world all conspire to provide a different but complementary picture to the images of Bunker Hill or Yorktown.

3 of 20 people found the following review helpful. Ridiculous price!
By ukjetsfan
How can the Kindle version of this book actually cost more than the hardback version? What possible justification can there be for charging two dollars MORE to get less than a megabyte of data than you would to get an actual book. The Kindle version should be a fraction of the cost. Why would anyone choose this over the real book?

This book examines the strategies pursued by the Colonies and the other combatants in the American War for Independence, placing the conflict in its proper global context. Many do not realize the extent to which the 1775 colonial rebellion against British rule escalated into a global conflict. Collectively, this volume examines the strategies pursued by the American Colonies, Great Britain, France, Spain, and Holland, and the League of Armed Neutrality, placing the military, naval, and diplomatic elements of the struggle in their proper global context. Moreover, assessing how each nation prosecuted their respective wars provides lessons for current students of strategic studies and military and naval history. This book will be of great interest to students of strategic studies, American history, Military History and political science in general. Donald Stoker is Professor of Strategy and Policy for the US Naval War

Colleges Monterey Program in Monterey, California. He joined the Strategy and Policy faculty in 1999 and has taught both in Monterey and Newport. Kenneth J. Hagan, Professor Emeritus, the U.S. Naval Academy, is currently Professor of Strategy and Policy for the U.S. Naval War Colleges Monterey Program. Michael T. McMaster is a Professor at the U.S. Naval War College in Monterey. He is a retired U.S. Navy Commander.

A thoroughly competent, multifaceted collection of essays that throw light on a complex campaign and which, as a bonus for modernists, raise uncomfortable questions about current campaigns as well. Geoffrey Till, *Diplomacy Statecraft*, Vol. 22, 2, June 2011 '...the book provides a unique product that contains insightful analysis for those attempting to understand the strategic context of the American Revolution from the perspectives of both major and minor participants.' - *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 2, 283, April 2011 'All of the essays are interesting, scholarly and engaging. The editors have performed an excellent job in avoiding the repetition or duplication of material. The volume will be of great use to lecturers teaching third-year undergraduate and postgraduate courses; the engaged general reader will find much of interest in it. Perhaps the only criticism that can be made would be that some idea of what "strategy" might have meant to Washington or Greene would have made an interesting chapter: an exploration of their understanding of history and war might have been illuminating.' Philip Williams, *The Northern Mariner/Le Marin du Nord* 'Strategy in the American War of Independence will prove valuable reading for anyone seriously interested in the Revolutionary War or strategy.' Albert Nofi, *The NYMAS About the Author* Donald Stoker is Professor of Strategy and Policy for the U.S. Naval War College's Monterey Program in Monterey, California. His *The Grand Design: Strategy and the U.S. Civil War* (Oxford, 2010), won the distinguished Fletcher Pratt prize for the best non-fiction Civil War book of 2010. His most recent book is *Clausewitz: His Life and Work* (Oxford, 2014).