rights protections. She offers an analogy between families and states, in that both stand as moral bulwarks against casual outside interference. This is why interference with the state to protect rights, as in the case of humanitarian intervention, is justified only when the violation of those rights is extreme. This is the most underdeveloped part of Pavel’s argument. She does not make clear what “collective rights of self-determination” are or how they compare with and are to be balanced against the individual rights she is concerned to protect, or indeed how they constitute a normative obstacle, as distinct from a practical obstacle.

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In the four decades since Russell Weigley published The American War of War: A History of U.S. Military Strategy and Policy, the notion that the United States thinks about and fights wars in a distinct fashion has come to be accepted as true by virtually all who study American military affairs. Received wisdom on the point suggests that when the United States goes to war, it fights with an apolitical, single-minded focus on achieving decisive victory through the application of overwhelming force. Antulio J. Echevarria’s new contribution to this literature issues a powerful challenge to established thinking on all fronts, suggesting that the United States may not fight its wars in a consistent fashion, and if it does, its approach is almost certainly not that which existing analyses suggest.

In the first third of the book, Echevarria carefully establishes why readers should be skeptical that any country—but particularly the United States—might have a unique way of war, arguing that the theoretically prior concepts of strategic culture and military art are both surprisingly fragile. These aptly named preludes are followed by the most significant contribution of the book: a survey of how Americans have used force in more than 40 conflicts since the Revolutionary War. Through it, Echevarria demonstrates that the United States was never apolitical in the use of its military; whether during the War of 1812, President John F. Kennedy’s strike against Cuba in 1961, or recent operations in Afghanistan, the international and domestic political dynamics of the era determined the timing, intensity, and conclusion of conflicts (pp. 71–76, 137–138, 150–153). Similarly, Echevarria shows that American policymakers consistently sought to minimize political risk during
conflicts and tended to employ sufficient, “credible” strength rather than overwhelming force (p. 169).

Somewhat less persuasive, however, is Echevarria’s argument that the conventional notion that the United States often fights without a clear strategy for victory beyond the destruction of the enemy is also erroneous. The book’s recounted history of American uses of force highlights how the United States has used a variety of strategies in the wars it has fought, including some—decapitation, terror, graduated pressure, and clear-hold-build counterinsurgency methods—that do not necessitate the destruction of the enemy to achieve ultimate victory. Thus, there does seem to be a need for greater nuance in conventional descriptions of the strategy of an American way of war. Echevarria also points out, however, that virtually all U.S. uses of force have been informed by a deeper strategic approach blending Antoine-Henri Jomini’s emphasis on gaining positional advantage with Carl von Clausewitz’s focus on destroying enemy forces (pp. 165–167). That both Jomini and Clausewitz privilege the use of battle in achieving these ends leads Echevarria to conclude, “If the American way of war has shown any consistency over time, it is [the] belief that tactical victory redounds in favor of strategic success” (p. 174). While this conception of American strategy does emphasize tactical success rather than destruction of the adversary as the prerequisite for broader achievements, it nevertheless seems more like an adjustment to conventional wisdom than a rebuttal.

On the whole, Echevarria’s book represents an important contribution to the debate over the American way of war. While requiring careful reading and a fair degree of familiarity with the topics covered, its rapid-fire dissection of ideas underpinning the notion of an American way of war and brief but impressive survey of U.S. military history offer an intellectual payoff that is well worth the effort.

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Why do some foreign policy hawks evolve into doves? This is the central question motivating Yael S. Aronoff’s examination of six Israeli prime ministers. While scholars have spent considerable energy focusing on why leaders opt for conflict, we know less about why hard-liners undergo a transformation that leads them to pursue negotiations in good faith. To address this question, Aronoff constructs a typology of decision making that