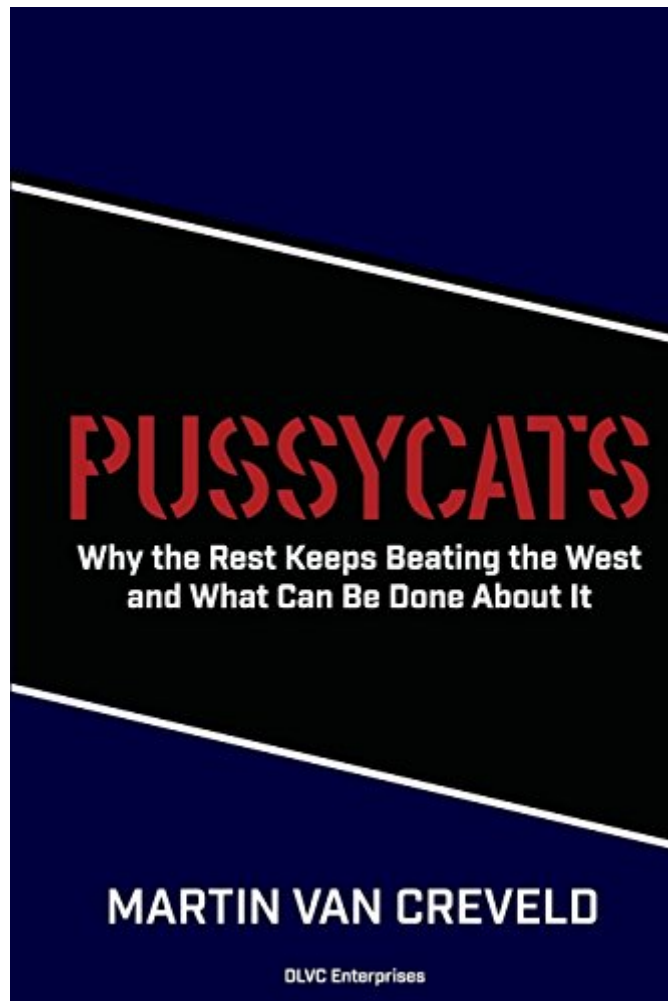


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Pussycats: Why The Rest Keeps Beating The Rest, And What Can Be Done About It



Synopsis

In the kingdom(s) of the West, something is rotten. Collectively, the countries of NATO are responsible for almost two thirds of global military spending. In terms of military technology, particularly electronics, communications and logistics, they have left the rest so far behind that it is no contest. Yet ever since the Korean War ended in 1953, almost every time they went abroad and fought non-Westerners they were defeated and had to withdraw. As happened, to cite but two recent cases, in Iraq and Afghanistan; and as may yet happen if and when Islamic terrorism spreads into Europe, as it is quite likely to do. What went wrong? How did the ferocious soldiers who, between 1492 and 1914, brought practically the entire world under their sway, become pussycats? The present study, unique of its kind, seeks to answer these questions. Chapter I, "Subduing the Young," focuses on the way Western people raise their scanty offspring. Infantilizing them, depriving them of any kind of independence, and, in the words of a recent best-seller, turning them into "excellent sheep." Chapter II, "Defanging the Troops," shows how the same is happening in the military. Chapter III, "The War on Men," examines the way in which the forces are being feminized affects, indeed infects, their fighting power. Chapter IV, "Constructing PTSD," looks at the way returning soldiers are almost obliged to develop Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Finally, chapter V outlines the emergence of modern societies which, exalting rights and forgetting about duty, have come very close to delegitimizing war itself. The book is about 73,000 words long. It is written in jargon-less language laymen can understand. It is also thoroughly documented. Readership should include anybody with an interest in national security, and then some.

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Customer Reviews

Van Creveld's fascinating book, *Pussycats*, is one more piece in a series of fundamental texts. Prominent among those are Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Oswald Spengler's *Decline of the West*, and Paul Kennedy's *Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, which together did so much to shape Western thought over the last two and a half centuries or so. All these outstanding works share the idea that the relative power of nations is not fixed. Instead it is influenced by cultural, social and economic processes inside each country. These processes generate weakness or strength, entropy or sudden outbursts of energy. Such outbursts in turn enhance both the nation's power and its quest for even greater power. History points to the existence of close links between cultural, social and economic affairs on one hand and military-political power on the other. A country that does well on the former front will likely do well on the latter, too. The way van Creveld sees it, Europe's triumphal march, which lasted almost five hundred years, provided one example of the links in question. The march got under way just before 1500 when the Ferdinand and Isabel did away with the last Muslim kingdom in the Iberian Peninsula. It culminated in the first decade of the twentieth century when five European Powers, plus the European-derived US, ruled over 80 percent of the earth's land mass and 100 percent of its oceans. The decline of Europe after 1945, and that of the US in recent years, was accompanied by the miserable failure of its armed forces on countless battlefields, starting in Indochina and ending in Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria. As van Creveld says, in the capitals of the West something is rotten.

Dr. Martin van Creveld asks: "... How did the ferocious soldiers who, between the discovery of America in 1492 and the outbreak of War I in 1914, brought practically the entire world under its control, turn into pussycats? ..." Thus the title of his latest book: *Pussycats: Why the Rest Keeps Beating the West and What Can Be Done About It*. The book is wide ranging in analyzing the West's reasons for its inability to successfully counter the rest. From mis-raising male children; using the military as a social laboratory; the infantilization of Western society; defanging the West's armed

forces--in van Creveld's terminology; the devastating effect of women in the military is having on Western armed forces; and, and an excellent analysis on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder [PTSD], which is a modern phenomenon noted in the past when killing one's foe during face-to-face combat was the norm; the escalation of so-called rights over duties of individuals; plus the delegitimization of war; are brilliantly noted and put to pen in clear, cogent writing, easily understood by readers. van Creveld skillfully ties these different themes together to argue his main theme, in my words, that the West, and especially the US, has lost its way and to continue on its present path will have dangerous and disastrous consequences. His arguments in support of his main theme are clear and concise but don't fit in with the thoughts of the Pentagon, Congress, the White House, think tanks and education elites, nor the Defense industry. All who have a stake in the current status quo. As our long efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq, with their high costs in blood and treasure show, the status quo isn't cutting it. Proceeding down the same path only promises, or even worse, bad consequences.

In this book Martin van Creveld focuses on an existential question: Is the West still able to defend itself, and does it still have what it takes to use military force to protect its vital interests against a powerful adversary? A look at the history of the last few decades does not provide grounds for optimism. In many Western parliaments pacifists form a majority. They dominate the political class, the educated classes, and the media. The Europeans in particular are vulnerable. As former German foreign minister Joschka Fisher once said, they are old, weak, and rich. Many of their armed forces are unsuitable for modern, complex operations. None less so than the German Bundeswehr. The old left-wing demand for a structural inability to attack has long since been met. Western, free and democratic societies have lost precisely the kind of fighting power and resilience needed to meet the challenge of Islamic terrorism. Western troops simply perform their duty; not so many irregular warriors around the world who are still capable of experiencing the joy of battle. That is why they so often beat their opponent and are able, as Mao Tze Dong once put it, to make political power grow out of the barrel of a gun. Whereas Western troops are bound by international law, UN mandates, and rules of engagement, their opponent have a free hand. Whereas Western staffs and headquarters have built up unimaginably complex bureaucratic structures, rarely do irregulars suffer from that problem. Their command-and control systems tend to be lean and decentralized. The teeth to tail ratio is optimal. They have neither elaborate medical rescue chains reaching far to the rear (often, halfway around the globe) nor expensive logistics, artillery, and air support.

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