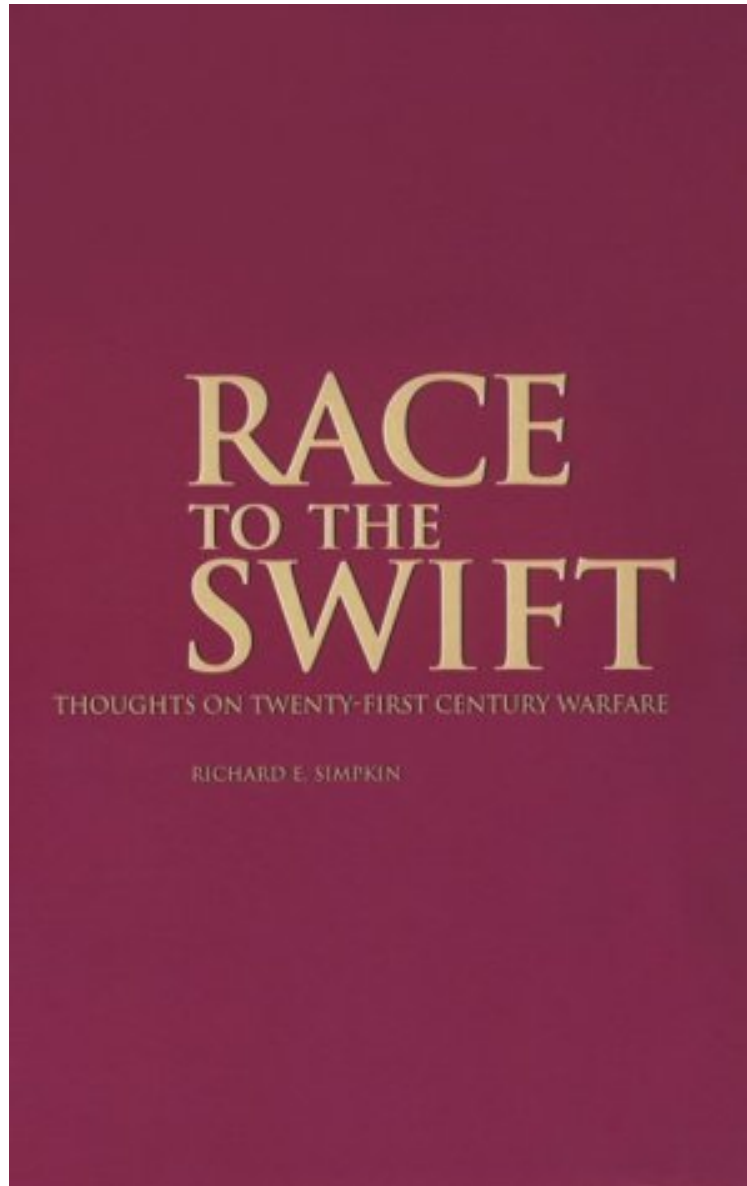


Race to the Swift: Thoughts on 21st Century Warfare

Richard E. Simpkin

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#1978403 in Books 1998-09Ingredients: Example IngredientsOriginal language:EnglishPDF # 1 1.28 x 6.19 x 9.221, .1 #File Name: 1857531353376 pages | File size: 68.Mb

Richard E. Simpkin : Race to the Swift: Thoughts on 21st Century Warfare before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Race to the Swift: Thoughts on 21st Century Warfare:

15 of 15 people found the following review helpful. Powerful, forward thinking military theoryBy Customer"Race to the Swift" is a sweeping review of military strategy, organization and logistics that has suffered little for being 15

years old. Yes, the NATO references are dated, but they in no way impact a core thesis that is even today ahead of its time. That said, this not an easy book to read; in spite of Simpkin's rather engaging, almost conversational writing style, the material is technical and dense. Moreover, given the comprehensiveness of the work, the reader will sometimes find himself or herself losing focus. However, if you are a student of military theory, and comfortable with the field, this is a book well worth the time it takes to read. As one might imagine, "Race to the Swift" is a call for speed and stealth in military action. It's not just about technology, however; Simpkin goes to great lengths to examine political/home-front issues, logistics, and military hierarchy. Ultimately, though, these all serve as supporting evidence for his core argument: that the current heavy mechanized divisions of today are too slow in light of the incredible increase in available firepower on the modern battlefield. As an alternative, he calls for armored, stealthy, heliborne cavalry. Traveling in something akin to airborne tanks, capable of deploying on conventional tracks when necessary, these new formations would deploy off of submersible helicopter carriers. Obviously, this thinking is more revolutionary than evolutionary, some of it even smacks of science fiction, but the core validity of his argument, that an exponential increase in speed is called for, is undeniable. Of particular note for the times we live in are the final few chapters, especially the last one. In them he examines what it means to "wage war" in the age of non-state actors. His arguments on the use of Special Forces backed by the appropriate application of conventional forces seems to have been borrowed wholesale by the planners of our operations in Afghanistan. Also very interesting is Simpkin's exploration of the legal language necessary to maintain the integrity of our western values in our post September 11th world. In the end this is a work of immense value. As I said earlier, though, the reader has to be committed to taking something out of it. When you are, when you look past the Central European staging for the writing, you will find a work that is rich in both theory and practical application. The way in which it relates to our current situation is almost uncanny, and the guideposts it offers for the future are immensely valuable. I suspect that in the years to come we will hear many of Simpkin's ideas being revisited. The nation in general, and our leaders in particular would do well to pay them heed sooner rather than later.

3 of 5 people found the following review helpful. The sharp edge of the cutting edge
By Sam Damon Jr. Brigadier Simpkin in this work takes us to the cutting edge of battle asking for 3-D maneuver-capable "airmechanized" forces. These are forces that would have a combination flying aircraft and armored tank. This is still way ahead of its time as we are still struggling to get fixed and rotary-wing aircraft together with light tracked Armored Fighting Vehicles (AFVs) as the new book Air-Mech-Strike: 3-Dimensional Phalanx by Dave Grange's group quotes Simpkin heavily. Simpkin is right though, we could create a LIGHT armored personnel carrier with rubber "band tracks" that could fold its rotors after flight if the same turbine engine that powered flight was geared to charge electric batteries/motors for silent stealthy operation--it would be a superb scout/recon machine that wouldn't have to burn fuel constantly to remain in a hover like today's scout helicopters, but could set down on the ground and revert to a less energing demanding ground vehicle operation. The entire Air/Land Fighting Vehicle would be made out of non-metallics and be radar-invisible. We could do this if we had the WILL in America to do great things, we certainly have the know-how (TECHNOLOGY) ; we only have to look at nature to see many types of flying insects that are dual ground/air movement capable. If we were to read Simpkin's book and allow ourselves to be re-inspired perhaps we could once again lead the way with conceptual greatness again in America. THE RACE BELONGS TO THE SWIFT, BRIGADIER SIMPKIN!

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Finally Back in Print
By Kent Smith Not for your average Joe, but Simpkin's thesis should not be lost on anyone: swiftness. Since first published, the world has witnessed numerous conflicts which either could have been avoided, concluded earlier, or fought more decisively if effective forces could have been deployed much faster. It is incredibly pertinent in the emerging era of the asymmetrical approach, where threats emerging faster and in a wide variety of terrain. (We can't expect future adversaries to give us months to build up massive mechanized forces in ideal terrain like Hussien did!) Simpkin points out very practical limitations to our current heavy forces -- like getting a 70 tonne tank over a third-world bridge or down a narrow twisting road. As the US Army begins retooling for the 21st century, Simpkin's work is incredibly relevant. Not the easiest book to follow, but worth the effort.

This reprint of the 1994 edition looks at the possibilities for warfare in the 21st century.