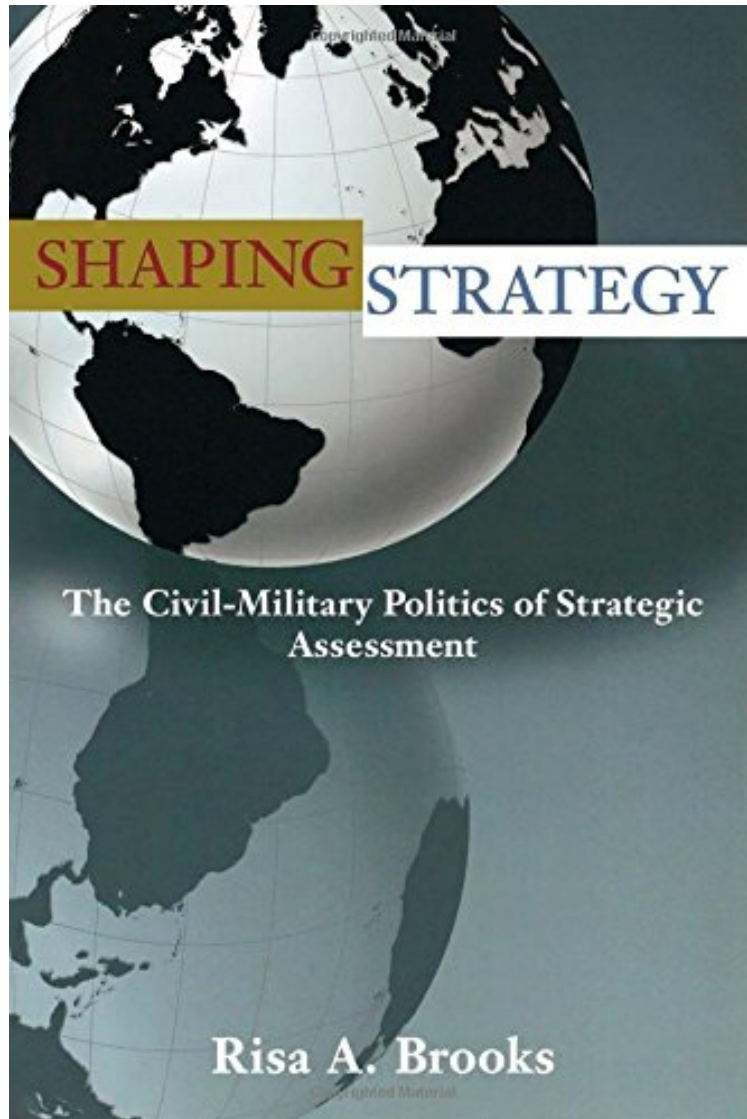


# Shaping Strategy: The Civil-Military Politics of Strategic Assessment

*Risa Brooks*

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**Risa Brooks : Shaping Strategy: The Civil-Military Politics of Strategic Assessment** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Shaping Strategy: The Civil-Military Politics of Strategic Assessment:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Phenomenal work. Must read for students of civil-military relations ...By ERIC ALAN REIDPhenomenal work. Must read for students of civil-military relations.

Good strategic assessment does not guarantee success in international relations, but bad strategic assessment dramatically increases the risk of disastrous failure. The most glaring example of this reality is playing out in Iraq today. But what explains why states and their leaders are sometimes so good at strategic assessment--and why they are sometimes so bad at it? Part of the explanation has to do with a state's civil-military relations. In *Shaping Strategy*, Risa Brooks develops a novel theory of how states' civil-military relations affect strategic assessment during international conflicts. And her conclusions have broad practical importance: to anticipate when states are prone to strategic failure abroad, we must look at how civil-military relations affect the analysis of those strategies at home. Drawing insights from both international relations and comparative politics, *Shaping Strategy* shows that good strategic assessment depends on civil-military relations that encourage an easy exchange of information and a rigorous analysis of a state's own relative capabilities and strategic environment. Among the diverse case studies the book illuminates, Brooks explains why strategic assessment in Egypt was so poor under Gamal Abdel Nasser prior to the 1967 Arab-Israeli war and why it improved under Anwar Sadat. The book also offers a new perspective on the devastating failure of U.S. planning for the second Iraq war. Brooks argues that this failure, far from being unique, is an example of an assessment pathology to which states commonly succumb.

"Risa Brooks develops a novel theory of how states' civil-military relations affect strategic assessment during international conflicts. And her conclusions have broad practical importance."--Spartacus Educational"*Shaping Strategy* is a major contribution."--Todd S. Sechser, *Perspectives on Politics*From the Back Cover"Brooks has made a significant contribution to the study of decision making and military strategy. Her case studies repeatedly demonstrate how pathologies in civil-military relations produce ineffective decisions in crises and conflicts."--Scott D. Sagan, Stanford University"Brooks articulates the problem of strategic assessment in a new way, does a very good review of the literature, introduces a simple model with profound implications, and makes a compelling case for her claims. Her general argument--that strategic assessment varies with the balance of power between civilian and military leaders and the degree to which their preferences diverge--is intriguing."--Deborah Avant, University of California, Irvine"Risa Brooks's theory of why some states are good at strategic assessment while others are not is novel, persuasive, nuanced, and elegant. Her discussion of the failure of U.S. strategic assessment following the second Iraq war shows that this issue is of much more than theoretical relevance. This book is an important contribution to the study of civil-military relations and strategic decision making."--Michael Desch, Texas AM UniversityAbout the AuthorRisa Brooks is assistant professor of political science at Northwestern University.