

Book Review: Bleddyn E. Bowen's *War in Space: Strategy, Space Power, and Geopolitics*

Bleddyn E. Bowen, *War in Space: Strategy, Space Power, and Geopolitics*. Edinburgh University Press, 2022. 316 pages. \$24.99. ISBN: 978-1-4744-5049-2

Reviewed by Mohammad Tasrif Khan

ERAU, Master's of Science in Cyber & Space Operations Major

The *War in Space: Strategy, Space Power, and Geopolitics*, written by Bleddyn E. Bowen, is an interesting work that analyzes the strategic consequences and geopolitical aspects of space warfare. This is a carefully researched and thought-provoking book in which Bowen distinctly explores the changing role of space in military strategy exposing the intricacies of space power and its influence on the world order. Coming from Edinburgh University Press in the United Kingdom, this book is an insightful addition to the area of study as it brings several historical perspectives, technological advancements, and strategic foresight.

Bowen starts his journey by defining the historical roots of space power, from the early Cold War period to today's geopolitical landscape across the globe. The author highlights a comprehensive account of how space has gone from relatively unmanned arena to terribly important grounds for military campaigns. He then traces back to famous historical events such as the space race and satellite technology development, to put in place a sound un-

derstanding of the current state of space power. It finishes with a forward-looking judgement on space power's future, providing unrivaled perspectives on the space warfare development scenarios and their consequences for the world's security. The realistic nature of Bowen's assessment is evident from his fact-based appraisal of space technology development and unpredictable geopolitical changes that might alter the global landscape. This future-looking aspect gives the book a whole new dimension and makes it a time-relevant and useful tool for researchers, policymakers and anyone seeking to understand the role of space in geopolitics.

Space warfare was never an easy topic, but in the book, it is made accessible even to the ordinary audience. Bowen capitalizes on the practicality of space technologies, military concepts, and satellite strategies, which she illuminates in a comprehensive and understandable way. By adopting this approach, we not only introduce readers who are represented in a varying range of expertise but also staying on track in the overarching context of global politics.

Particularly noteworthy in such an analysis from Bowen is his reference to the space technology dual-use nature. He addresses how satellites, previously conceived as a means of communication and surveillance only, have become vital components for both civilian and military operations. The existence of a dual use nature in this area only increases the many complexities inherent in the concept of strategic planning, where everyday activities are increasingly dependent on the use of space assets and also serve as basis of military supremacy.

The book further touches upon the twenty-first century space power, and its shifting nature as a potential domain of contest. Bowen breaks down the strategic deliberations of major space faring entities, such as the United States, China, and Russia divining their policies, capabilities, and aspirations in space. Bowen skillfully reconciles the geopolitical explanations with technological trends, giving readers a complete perspective about the present and future circumstances of space warfare.

A crucial part of the book's content is the discussion of space being converted into a new battleground for dominance among the superpowers. Bowen reaches a conclusion that space power is an essential issue of a geopolitical standoff, being an initial factor affecting not only military strategies and diplomatic relations, but also the global governance. Rather, the book prompts the readers to redefine the conventional understanding of security and power; a time when space is no longer just an envy zone.

The style of writing which Bowen uses is catchy and provoking, to some extent it evokes readers to analyze possible moral consequences of space war. He takes into account the problems of the arms race in space and explains the implications for the world's stability. The author argues to establish the convergence of norms and rules that should govern space activities, inviting the international community to engage and handle its militarization of space.

Although *War in Space* undoubtedly encompasses all sides of this discussion, an explicit mention of the part played by newly emerged space actors—private companies and non-governmental organizations—would make the work even more comprehensive and insightful. An additional discussion on the rise of emerging space powers from the Second and Third World areas with countries, such as India, Japan, Korea, and Pakistan, and their role to global space security would also have been beneficial, even at a limited level in comparison with major space leaders, such as the United States and the United Kingdom. Engagement of non-governmental actors to space activities too adds another layer of complexity to space power dynamics and, in-depth investigation of the topic, would have added useful contributions to the analysis.

Regarding structure, the book has a clear logical progression from chapter to chapter, each chapter laying a foundation for the next one and thus making a consistent account. Bowen's writing style is quite accessible, which means that he is able to cover even the most complicated concepts without be-

ing too much out of depth. Moreover, the addition of case studies and illustrative examples adds to the notion of this book being a practical guide and applicable on a daily basis. Both the author and Edinburgh University Press have priced the book at a reasonable level, so that all those who are seeking more domain knowledge on cyber and space operations can afford it.

Consequently, *War in Space: Strategy, Space Power, and Geopolitics* is a gem of a book, which does a superlative work in the field of space warfare and geopolitics. Through his comprehensive research, the author demonstrates his knowledge and talent, providing readers with enough information to discover the strategic

qualities of space. While the text is informative for educational purposes, the significance of the work extends far beyond academic circles. Therefore, it is a valuable reference book not only for policymakers, but also for military professionals, and everyone interested in learning about this global cause that involves the future of space exploration and security in the long run. With the space and cyber domains evolving into a more and more competitive arena for state as well as non-state actors alike, Bowen's writing is an up-to-date and priceless sort of assistance that also helps current and future spacefarers to understand the complex relations between space and geopolitics.