



Building a 21st Century SES Ensuring Leadership Excellence in our Federal Government

**Edited by Dr. Ronald P. Sanders with
Dr. Elaine S. Brenner and Frederick S. Richardson**

The National Academy of Public Administration, 2017, 327 pp.

Reviewed by Ralph Erwin
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Building a 21st Century SES Ensuring Leadership Excellence in our Federal Government provides some valuable insight into the thought processes, experiences, and analysis behind decisions that senior government officials have had to make in the pre-9/11 era. In addition to chapters from various senior government officials, the editor provided ample introductions with a bottom line up front, numerous challenges, much commentary, many recommendations, and a conclusion. I did grasp many “war stories” and very few 21st century course-charting anecdotes. Very few short articles actually addressed building blocks or a way ahead for future government leaders.

In their writings, it appears that some of the senior government officials were not in touch with a Generation X and Y workforce that has different aspirations. These generations have to be developed much differently than the Baby Boomers, and I mean this as a revolutionary transformation requirement. Stephen Shih did provide a possible road map for the next generation:

...SES leaders will need to possess heightened people skills to manage and influence a multigenerational workforce and diverse multisector groups of national and often international stakeholders. Federal agencies and other organizations will no longer succeed with only a local or even regional focus, nor can they be led only by senior leaders with conventional competencies involving traditional top-down project management approaches confined to local silos and narrowly confined operational responsibilities.

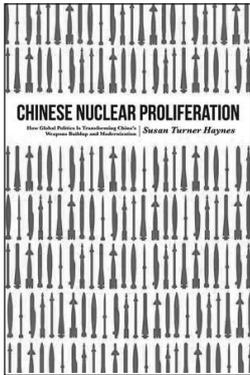
There seemed to be abundant discussion of Executive Core Qualifications and very little discussion of how to achieve those qualifications. Ms. Long and Admiral Allen did talk about talent management development and lifelong learning, which led me to assess that those on hiring panels won't get to the most capable individual because their executive model is stuck in the 20th century standards. Robert Tobias clearly addressed the urgent requirement for collaboration, self-development, and self-awareness – some qualities of emotional intelligence for the individual. Robert Corsi approached SES development by discussing key positions, mobility, career broadening, and even following the military officer development model. Suffice it to say, not all U.S. military officer development programs are managed the same or efficient.

As with many government mandates, if the well-defined goals of the December 15, 2015, White House-issued Executive Order on *Strengthening the Senior Executive Service* are followed by current senior executives, the annual talent management and succession planning process to assess the development needs of all SES members as appropriate would help to inform readiness decisions

about hiring, career development, and executive reassignments and rotations.

Robert Goldenkoff provides important counsel when he states “Instead of a position-based approach to succession planning, they [GAO] use a more strategic, scenario-based approach that emphasizes strengthening both current and future organizational capacity, focusing on the skills and competencies necessary to carry out today’s mission and over-the-horizon requirements.”

I recommend that both aspiring government leaders and those managing these executives-to-be, review the Executive Order and note the recommendations of the editor, which is the most valuable part of this paper. **IAJ**



Chinese Nuclear Proliferation: How Global Politics Is Transforming China’s Weapons Buildup and Modernization

Susan Turner Haynes

Potomac Books, 2016, 198 pp.

Reviewed by Kailah Murry

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Susan Turner Haynes tackles the issue of Chinese nuclear proliferation in *Chinese Nuclear Proliferation: How Global Politics Is Transforming China’s Weapons Buildup and Modernization*. This book attempts to answer, “Why [is] China the only nuclear weapon state recognized under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty that continues to pursue qualitative and quantitative advancements in its nuclear force.” Haynes endeavors to provide background and clarity to China’s buildup of its nuclear weapons program through utilizing primary sources. This book is a great read for those who do not have a firm grasp on politics or national security studies with a focus on China.

Haynes begins by introducing the reader to the need for the research, essentially, “China is the only state that has chosen to pursue... advancements to its nuclear force since the end of the Cold War.” Which, according to the author, is unlike the United States, Russia, Great Britain, and France; all of whom have reduced their arsenal. Various policies are then discussed, noting that the surprise to the advancements rests in the fact that China has “repeatedly emphasized a desire for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons.” The introduction provides the initial context for the data presented in the rest of the book.

The rest of the book follows what one would find in a normal thesis format. Chapter one is a literature review on nuclear strategy; specifically Haynes goes into depth on deterrence strategy, existential deterrence, minimum deterrence, limited deterrence, extensive deterrence, and maximum deterrence. Chapter two outlines empirical evidence while examining the capabilities and nuclear force levels of the United States, Russia, Great Britain, France, and China. Chapter three expands on how China defines and implements deterrence and what type of nuclear strategy it is following while discussing the impetuses behind any nuclear evolution China is making. The remaining chapters discuss the influence of the United States, other regional powers, and the idea of prestige and how