pointing out the strengths and weaknesses of careers, assess the evolution of borderland U.S.-Mexico border. Samuel Truett and Elliot vigorizes our conceptual understanding of the cobbled together a series of essays that rein-

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Hendrickson’s main sources are interviews, some anonymous, with diplomats and other political and military officials. It is a first attempt to study the post–cold war office of NATO’s secretary general. Although a more complete and nuanced study will have to wait the opening of archival sources, he has produced a work that will primarily interest scholars of international relations and NATO.

Truett, Samuel, and Elliot Young, eds.

Continental Crossroads: Remapping U.S.-Mexico Borderlands History

Dunham: Duke University Press

Publication Date: December 2004

With so much political attention focused on Mexican immigration these days, it is only fitting that a new generation of borderland scholars should redirect our attention to the complexities of the almost two-thousand-mile border that divides the United States and Mexico. The editors of this anthology have cobbled together a series of essays that rein-

Truett and Young have produced a theoretically savvy anthology that will promote additional research and writing about the U.S.-Mexico border. Their edited volume will find an eager audience among college students and professional historians alike, especially since each contributor has shown how far we have come since the days of Herbert Eugene Bolton.

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Osgood, Kenneth

Total Cold War: Eisenhower’s Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad

Lawrence: University Press of Kansas

Publication Date: February 2006

In his first book, assistant professor of history at Florida Atlantic University Kenneth Osgood covers ground that cold war scholars often identify but rarely traverse. His study, Total Cold War: Eisenhower’s Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad, surveys the terrain where American officials waged psychological war for hearts and minds with their Soviet counterparts. It persuasively argues that President Dwight David Eisenhower emphasized the importance of psychological considerations in a conflict that he perceived as no less “total” than World War II. Eisenhower recognized that this war’s ideological nature demanded a “different kind of mobilization,” one that required “persuasion and inducement” along with the “covert manipulation of perceptions and politics” (368).

Total Cold War responds to Walter L. Hixson’s Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War, 1945–1961 (1997), which chronicles the development of an American cultural diplomacy that aimed to infiltrate the Communist world with the core values of the West. Hixson contends that this effort remained “on the margins of American diplomacy” (xiii). Osgood’s work counters by offering that the psychological dimension of international relations operates on “two levels” (8). When considered in its entirety, as programming and an as influence on the policymaking process, Total Cold War illustrates that a broad psychological offensive “emerged as a significant component” of Eisenhower’s foreign relations (4).

Historians have either neglected Eisenhower’s psychological initiatives or have defined them narrowly, focusing on the overt programs carried out by the United States Information Agency (USIA). Osgood chronicles Eisenhower’s creation and use of USIA, but his work also identifies “camouflaged” activities that officials set in motion by using independent news media, nongovernmental organizations, and private individuals as “surrogate communicators” for carrying “propaganda messages” (5). Moreover, Osgood demonstrates that for the Eisenhower administration, psychological strategy signified the interconnectedness of “international public opinion, persuasion, and national security policy” (81).

Osgood’s ability to show Eisenhower’s comprehensive conception of propaganda is illuminating. It sheds light on such initiatives as the People-to-People program, which not only aimed to win support overseas but also worked to sustain domestic backing for cold war policies. It also clarifies the intentions behind Eisenhower’s gestures of peace toward the Soviet Union. This area has been a murky one for historians. Revisionists see Eisenhower’s disarmament proposals as attempts at peace.
while post-revisionists see only clever propaganda tricks. Osgood’s work reveals these efforts as both “sincere initiatives and propaganda” (185). Eisenhower understood the latter’s value derived wholly from the former. With this insight, Osgood forces his readers to reconsider Eisenhower’s cold war strategy within the context of “total war.” He also provides them with a tool for evaluating America’s struggle for hearts and minds today.

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McPherson, Alan
Intimate Ties, Bitter Struggles: The United States and Latin America since 1945
Washington, DC: Potomac Books
207 pp., $45.00, ISBN 1-57488-875-7
Publication date: February 2006

The unbalanced interdependence of the United States and Latin America is one of the more difficult relationships in today’s world, and it is bound to grow even more difficult in the future. Hence, a history of the relationship since its distortion under the impact of the cold war, analyzed by Alan McPherson with admirable clarity and conciseness, is an indispensable guide for understanding where the relationship is heading and why.

The author, a professor at Howard University in Washington, DC, presents a competent and informative overview, with a better feel for the Spanish-speaking America than for the peculiarities of Brazil. Not surprisingly, he has little to commend about past U.S. policies. Indeed, he shows how even some of the best minds and best-willed among policymakers—George Kennan, John F. Kennedy, Jimmy Carter, to name but a few—faltered when it came to understanding Latin America. The author may sometimes go too far in apportioning the blame to the giant of the North while giving the benefit of the doubt to its left-wing critics in the South. But a more important shortcoming is a conceptual framework, implied in the book’s title, which presumes the centrality of both intimacy and struggle.

In fact, recognizing the depth of the cultural disparity and resulting alienation of the two parts of the continent is more important in grasping the roots of the often bitter relationship. It is the extent of mutual ignorance and relative isolation that determined the divergent ways in which the respective societies were evolving for most of their history. The recurrent clashes between them in different spots, while bitter enough, were much overshadowed by the impact of internal factors, for better or worse.

The most important point that should have been emphasized and elaborated on in the conclusion—instead of the silly rumination about popularity of Coca-Cola and tacos—is that the historic patterns have finally been changing. One factor has been immigration, which will soon make the United States the third largest Latin American country in terms of population and which, in view of the proximity of the home and adopted countries, is bound to reduce the cultural gap for the benefit of both sides. The second is globalization, whose potential for overcoming Latin America’s wrenching poverty gap is underestimated by both the author and some, though by no means all, segments of public opinion in the region. How to make the irresistible progress of globalization beneficial for both sides will be the main challenge for future U.S. and Latin American policymakers, to both of whom McPherson’s book is to be recommended as good introductory reading.

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Spiller, Roger
An Instinct for War: Scenes from the Battlefields of History
Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press
Publication Date: October 2005

Reading this book cues a sequence of films on the mind’s screen. First is Patton (1973) wherein the general, who will later admit that he loves war, visits the site of Carthage, narrates the battle, and says to his companion Omar Bradley, “I was here.”

In Saving Private Ryan (1997), the chemistry of duty and brotherly love leads young men to do things otherwise irrational even in war. In the 1966 Star Trek episode “A Taste of Armageddon,” a centuries-long war between two neighboring planets has become a computer game; inhabitants selected as casualties willingly walk into death chambers to avoid total planetary destruction. Several 1950s sci-fi classics have the cold war ending in cooperation to defeat an alien invasion or avert a planetary collision. Like the films, this book is highly creative, reflective, and sobering.

Professor Roger Spiller, in a unique book for scholars and the general reader, examines a number of themes that have shaped our thinking about war. One is continuity, as he moves from ancient battles to a future Armageddon with five hundred million casualties. Another is progressive intensity. Here Spiller describes how the conduct of war, and its motivation, has grown in savagery as killing becomes more and more efficient. The human dimension is central for Spiller, whose book is a thirteen-chapter essay on how men, whether private soldiers or generals, have thought about their wars. It therefore searches for meaning, though not conclusive answers.

“Some of this actually happened and some of it didn’t, but all of it is as true as I can make it,” says the author. War is one of the most universal subjects for stories, and Spiller is an accomplished storyteller. In ancient China, a court historian debates the emperor on the permanence of war. Thucydides uses his failures to educate younger officers. A surgeon convinces Napoleon that what appears to be cowardice was really the result of friendly fire. A mutually self-serving conversation between Baron Jomini and a young George McClellan presages the general’s failure on the Peninsula. A Japanese war criminal taunts a JAG officer with a prediction of another war in which Asian moral superiority will win.

Each chapter advances all of the main themes, and all of the chapters are necessary as a prelude to the final one. “The Discovery of Kansas” is a grim sketch, with current policy references, of a future war between America and unidentified enemies, beginning with attacks on Washington and New York, employing radiological, biological, and chemical weapons, and lasting for decades. The narrator winds up in Kansas, where a library of thousands of books, mostly about war, have survived an attempt to destroy all centers of knowledge left in North America. Spiller is retired from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College—at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

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