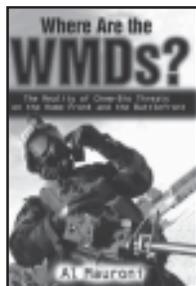


Book Reviews

By Mr. Reid Kirby



Where are the WMDs? The Reality of Chem-Bio Threats on the Home Front and the Battlefront, Albert J. Mauroni, Naval Institute Press, 13 June 2006.

During World War I, before the formation of the Chemical Warfare Service, our Nation was in disarray in its approach to chemical warfare. Dividing tasks among numerous offices, many without the complements necessary to execute their functions, proved ineffective. Reading Al Mauroni's book leaves one with the impression that we are in even more peril.

For the novice reader, the unfortunate part of this book is the use of "Pentagon-speak" terminology. Numerous acronyms are embroiled in the book, often accompanied by parenthetical acronyms. Nonetheless, for Chemical Soldiers looking at future assignments at the Pentagon, this is an inside look and an essential orientation tool.

The term *weapons of mass destruction* (WMD) has been around since World War II. It was a problematic term during the Cold War, with the Department of Defense at one point officially declaring it a misnomer not fit for use. Later, it was identified as a dangerous term that allied U.S. capabilities into a Soviet doctrinal framework. Mr. Mauroni's book is far more contemporary in its treatment of the term, noting the recent proclivity and how it is isolated to nuclear weapons by policy makers. Discussions on WMD lead to natural debates regarding CBRN threats from terrorists and military forces.

The subterfuge of the book is the preventative war in Iraq and the worst-kept secret in Washington on prewar intelligence. While many will dwell on this plot alone, the author returns the focus to chemical-biological security and the problems our Nation encounters. The book is replete with recent debacles on Decontaminant Solution 2 (DS-2), Sandia decontamination foam, and other issues.

This book is for Chemical Soldiers, demanding leadership regarding a national problem. Will the Chemical Corps return as the leader and provide the simplicity and unity in command that is needed against CBRN threats?