

Have the lessons of Iraq been fully evaluated, taken to heart, and transferred to Afghanistan. Richard North - an occasional contributor to Defence Viewpoints and an assiduous blogger under Defence of the Realm - published a book "Ministry of Defeat, aiming squarely at this question, which was published in hardback on 31st May.

A reviewer wrote:

"Ministry of Defeat" is the first and only forensic examination of the political and military failures by the British in Iraq. As the government, the media and the army were quick to downplay the unfolding catastrophe as the birth pangs of democracy, the evidence from the front line was telling a very different story. Ministry of Defeat explores that evidence and paints a picture of Southern Iraq very different to the popular narrative.

Richard North highlights the political indifference to military procurement and outlines the staggering, willful ignorance of the media and senior members of the government who should have known better. He also points the finger at a military establishment, untouchable in its arrogance, which not only refused to respond to threats but actively denied them.

North demonstrates how procurement has a direct impact on any force's ability to wage a successful campaign and highlights the critical failures which lead to the deaths of scores of soldiers and countless Iraqis. He also shows how the political realities in Iraq were swept under the carpet to the detriment of public debate and subsequently policy. Unlike any soldier's eye view, in Ministry of Defeat we get a holistic view of situation on the ground and how it relates to events in Westminster; A tale of political opportunism, military incompetence and most damningly of all, a systemic parliamentary failure to scrutinise military affairs.

This is a unique perspective on the British experience, not swept up by the macro politics of the Iraq war or the decision to invade and it brings to light the much neglected questions pertaining to inadequate armoured vehicles, namely the Snatch Landrover, counter terrorist strategy and the stagnation in the chain of command. North was one of the few asking not how do we pull out, but how do we win?

Ministry of Defeat can be purchased on line via

http://www.amazon.co.uk/Ministry-Defeat-2003-2009-British-Iraq/dp/1441169970/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1239794555&sr=8-1

Other reader reviews can also be found there