



Rhetoric and reality in air warfare [the evolution of British and American ideas about strategic bombing, 1914-1945 /

Biddle, Tami Davis (1959-)

Princeton University Press, c2004

Electronic books

Monografía

A major revision of our understanding of long-range bombing, this book examines how Anglo-American ideas about "strategic" bombing were formed and implemented. It argues that ideas about bombing civilian targets rested on--and gained validity from--widespread but substantially erroneous assumptions about the nature of modern industrial societies and their vulnerability to aerial bombardment. These assumptions were derived from the social and political context of the day and were maintained largely through cognitive error and bias. Tami Davis Biddle explains how air theorists, and those influenced by them, came to believe that strategic bombing would be an especially effective coercive tool and how they responded when their assumptions were challenged. Biddle analyzes how a particular interpretation of the World War I experience, together with airmen's organizational interests, shaped interwar debates about strategic bombing and preserved conceptions of its potentially revolutionary character. This flawed interpretation as well as a failure to anticipate implementation problems were revealed as World War II commenced. By then, the British and Americans had invested heavily in strategic bombing. They saw little choice but to try to solve the problems in real time and make long-range bombing as effective as possible. Combining narrative with analysis, this book presents the first-ever comparative history of British and American strategic bombing from its origins through 1945. In examining the ideas and rhetoric on which strategic bombing depended, it offers critical insights into the validity and robustness of those ideas--not only as they applied to World War II but as they apply to contemporary warfare

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Título: Rhetoric and reality in air warfare electronic resource] the evolution of British and American ideas about strategic bombing, 1914-1945 Tami Davis Biddle

Edición: Core Textbook

Editorial: Princeton, NJ Woodstock Princeton University Press c2004

Descripción física: 1 online resource (416 p.)

Mención de serie: Princeton studies in international history and politics

Nota general: Originally published: 2002

Bibliografía: Includes bibliographical references and index

Contenido: Frontmatter -- Contents -- Acknowledgments -- Introduction -- Chapter One. The Beginning: Strategic Bombing in the First World War -- Chapter Two. Britain in the Interwar Years -- Chapter Three. The United States in the Interwar Years -- Chapter Four. Rhetoric and Reality, 1939-1942 -- Chapter Five. The Combined Bomber Offensive, 1943-1945 -- Conclusion -- Notes -- Bibliography of Archival Sources -- Index

Lengua: English

ISBN: 1-4008-1414-6 1-282-08725-8 9786612087257 1-4008-2497-4

Materia: Air power- Great Britain- History Air power- United States- History Bombing, Aerial- History World War, 1914-1918- Aerial operations, American World War, 1914-1918- Aerial operations, British World War, 1939-1945- Aerial operations, American World War, 1939-1945- Aerial operations, British

Enlace a formato físico adicional: 0-691-08909-4 0-691-12010-2

Punto acceso adicional serie-Título: Princeton studies in international history and politics

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