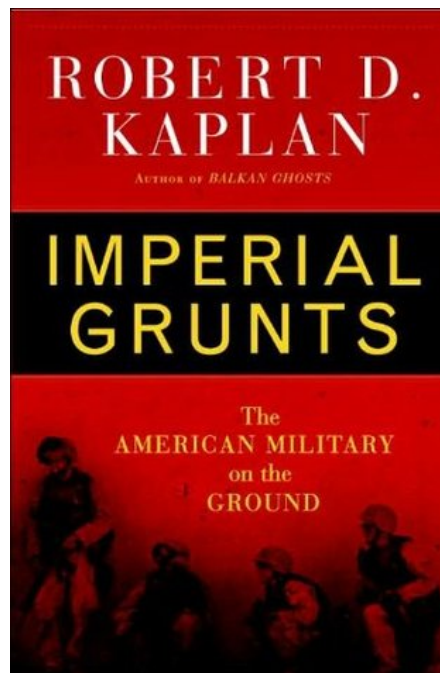




Imperial Grunts: The American Military on the Ground

Robert D. Kaplan

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In this landmark book, Robert D. Kaplan, veteran correspondent for The Atlantic Monthly and author of *Balkan Ghosts*, shows how American imperialism and the Global War on Terrorism are implemented on the ground, mission by mission, in the most exotic landscapes around the world.

Given unprecedented access, Kaplan takes us from the jungles of the southern Philippines to the glacial dust bowls of Mongolia, from the forts of Afghanistan to the forests of South America—not to mention Iraq—to show us Army Special Forces, Marines, and other uniformed Americans carrying out the many facets of U.S. foreign policy: negotiating with tribal factions, storming terrorist redoubts, performing humanitarian missions and training foreign soldiers.

In **Imperial Grunts**, Kaplan provides an unforgettable insider's account not only of our current involvement in world affairs, but also of where America, including the culture of its officers and enlisted men, is headed. This is the rare book that has the potential to change the way readers view the men and women of the military, war, and the global reach of American imperialism today.

As Kaplan writes, the only way to understand America's military is "on foot, or in a Humvee, with the troops themselves, for even as elites in New York and Washington debated imperialism in grand, historical terms, individual marines, soldiers, airmen, and sailors—all the cultural repositories of America's unique experience with freedom—were interpreting policy on their own, on the ground, in dozens upon dozens of countries every week, oblivious to such faraway discussions. . . . It was their stories I wanted to tell: from the ground up, at the point of contact."

Never before has America's overarching military strategy been parsed so incisively and evocatively. Kaplan introduces us to lone American servicemen whose presence in obscure countries is largely unknown, and concludes with a heart-stopping portrait of marines in the first battle in Fallujah. Extraordinary in its scope, beautifully written, **Imperial Grunts**, the first of two volumes, combines first-rate reporting with the sensitivity and insights of an acclaimed writer steeped in history, literature, and philosophy, to deliver a masterly account of America's global role in the twenty-first century.

- Imperial Grunts paints a vivid picture of how defense policy is implemented at the grassroots level.
- Kaplan travels throughout the world where U.S. forces are located. This is not just a book about Iraq or Afghanistan.
- Rather than debate imperialism, Kaplan relies on a keen understanding of history, philosophy, and in-the-field reporting to show how it actually works on the ground.
- Imperial Grunts escapes Washington and shows us what it's like to live with the grunts day to day.

Praise for *Imperial Grunts*

"One of the most important books of the last several years. Robert Kaplan uses his prodigious energy and matchless reporting skills to takes us on to the front lines with the new warrior-diplomats who use weapons, imagination, and personal passion to protect and advance the interests of the United States. This is a generation every American should come to know."

–**Tom Brokaw**

“Robert Kaplan has brilliantly captured the story of today’s U.S. military operating in far-flung places on strange missions. Imperial Grunts is the most insightful and superbly written account of soldiering in the New World Disorder to date. It is a must read for all Americans.”

–**General Anthony C.**

Imperial Grunts: The American Military on the Ground Details

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From Reader Review Imperial Grunts: The American Military on the Ground for online ebook

Glenn Hyman says

There is much to like about this book, and some things that irritate. The chief point that America is an empire is well taken, even though I don't think there are many serious people that dispute it. My favorite reference in the book is to the notion among the military about how amateurs discuss strategy, while the real professionals discuss logistics. This applies to business, politics and really any leadership endeavor. Developing the strategy is easy compared to the tough work of implementation. Kaplan wears the military's and his own moral superiority a bit too much on his sleeve. For example, after days of reporting on the battle of Fallujah, he left the besieged city "just as the cease-fire was announced and more journalists began to arrive." You see, just like the Army recruiting ads say, Kaplan does more before 9 AM than most people do all day. This attitude is probably fairly common among the military, and you see it with adventurers like serious kayakers and mountain climbers. Many always come close to death, at least in their telling. Which makes you wonder how much they really value the sheer adventure versus their own pride and narcissism? Fortunately, this attitude is only among a small number of our troops, most of whom show real courage by putting their lives on the line. Political and ideological arguments are often prominent in the book, as opposed to just telling the story. All that said, it was a pretty good read.

David P says

Robert Kaplan is a writer in the mold of young Winston Churchill, marching towards the sound of the guns and reporting from where the action is. His "Imperial Grunts" follows the wide-ranging activities of US elite troops--the "special forces," the "green berets" and in the last part, the Marine Corps in Iraq. If the US has taken on the role of a global police force--the way the British Empire once tried to do--here are the cops on the beat.

In addition to Iraq, he visits Yemen, Colombia, the Phillipines, Afghanistan, Somalia and Mongolia, as well as home bases in the USA. A common theme underlying all of Kaplan's book is his deep admiration for those "imperial grunts" and for the ones who lead them. American soldiers around the globe should appreciate what he has written, because it pays tribute to their determination, resourcefulness and courage, a tribute rarely heard for the simple reason that few members of the regular press go to where Kaplan has gone. These soldiers' job is dangerous, conditions are rough, pay is skimpy--and at the same time, the camaraderie is genuine, personal responsibilities are often enormous and the demands one one's "people-skills" can be staggering. This is most evident where American soldiers operate in small teams, training and inspiring local counterparts to give stability a chance, in societies on the edge of chaos.

Take the rain forests of Colombia, where rival militias subsist off the drug trade, while bullying and exploiting locals, often with help from across an unfriendly border. Colombian soldiers are brave and tough, and the fact that many US soldiers speak their language is a great asset--but Colombia's politicians and the majority of the population, comfortable in the highlands, do no sense the same urgency, so that the situation smolders on.

Yemen is a volatile tribal society, a medley of clans armed to the teeth, often supplementing their income from illegal levies at roadblocks. Whatever hold the central government has is maintained largely by judicious bribes and by playing clan leaders against each other. Later Kaplan discovers that much of Iraq is just as fragmented, and that Saddam's rule was maintained by similar means; the situation there has got

worse since his visit. The clans, the weapons, the religious extremism--also, an expanding population subsisting on limited means--all these are enough to make the reader pause and wonder: are these the places for promoting democracy?

Indeed, I fear that with all the valor of US troops, chaos will ultimately prevail in most places he describes--followed by oppression, the only realistic alternative to chaos. The fighting men are first rate, dedicated and patriotic, but their orders often come from the rear echelon "REMFs," a different breed. Kaplan's book ends with a gripping first-hand account of the battle of Fallujah, in which the Marines prevailed, only to be ordered back at the moment of victory. Being disciplined, they pull out.

Maybe on the long run all that makes little difference. As one reads Kaplan's reports, one is struck by a feeling of futility--valor and resourcefulness are great assets, but in the face of world-wide disorder, of corruption, poverty, exploding populations and religious zealots, any hope for order may be doomed. Those societies were never stable to begin with, and now their edges are unraveling. Tomorrow the stakes will be higher, life more precarious and any hope for exporting our prosperous orderly democracy even more remote.

For the time, however, a few brave young men stand as a thin barrier between our world and the chaotic one. They do their utmost to give those embattled societies a chance, to maybe--just possibly--find a way to a better, more orderly life. More power to them, and great credit to Kaplan for trying to show the view from their side.

Cupcake says

Here's a book that both de-mystifies and confirms the nagging suspicion (and often denial) some of us have about our country's imperialistic tendencies. The book is fascinating on many levels. It is a confirmation of those imperialistic leanings, suggested by Kaplan's constant comparisons to British Imperialism and to various foreign policy objectives put forth by suits in DC. But Kaplan's expose of the real-world mechanics of our foreign policy is where the book gets really interesting. Kaplan spent time 'embedded' with various military units throughout the world and his reporting on the manner in which our foreign policy objectives are being met is quite eye-opening. (I learned that the Green Berets are often employed in tasks suited for the peace corps, for instance.)

Not everyone will agree that we ought to be pursuing these objectives in the first place, but this book gave me a sympathy for these 'grunts' that was often otherwise in short supply. It is interesting to read about the way these soldiers adapt the political demands of imperialism within radically different cultures, particularly when the suits in DC have very little understanding of the situation on the ground. The means of adaptation are the meat of Kaplan's book and make it a worthwhile read.

Gerry says

Welcome to ambiguous warfare – a nuts and bolt of “why” during the age of conflict and asymmetrical warfare. This is something not balanced with the current Obama Administration.

This book was my “go to” for nearly two years; one in which I would pick up and read parallel to other military history books that I normally study and enjoy. Battles past and reviewed, written, and discussed by many get a shot in the arm as to the evolution of how it all works in modern day time frame. More appropriately we see the evolution more as a “transformation” though some old world tactics will always apply to the ground forces. Technology may enhance and change the battlefield; however, on the ground matters will always be fluid and will shift considerably. Shifting requires a flexibility of adopting to the situation – U.S. Army Special Forces and U.S. Navy Seals provided excellent examples of this in Afghanistan when Pentagon types were initially shocked to see these men riding horses (with wooden saddles) that were trained to run toward machine-gun fire, and they used Pack-Mules to haul all sorts of high-tech devices and global positioning devices used to assist precision-guided bombs from the air. But this book isn’t just about Afghanistan and Iraq it is a book about all of the Commands globally from USNORTHCOM, USSOUTHCOM, USEUCOM, USCENTCOM, and USPACOM; locations of managing headquarters are in different areas – the Special Forces types assigned to different areas do quite interesting and unknown “things”; most of these soldiers hail from the Evangelical South and do an admirable job. All in the ability so that the U.S. could have advanced information should the need arise during crisis – PACOM and Mongolia 2003 provided the best example in my opinion of the methodology employed during the time frame. The Afghanistan and Iraq chapters provided insight overlooked in media outlets on reporting requirements. Pentagon rules made the wars in Afghanistan more difficult – one thing is for certain; within this book time and again we see a strong “middle ranks” structure in the U.S. Military. Enlisted ranks of E-4 to E-8 and Officer Ranks of O-3, O-4, and O-5 by far are the difference between success and failure where the proverbial rubber meets the road between policy and action. This one fact alone is the main reason in my opinion why the West will always clamor for more involvement of Arab Allies and receive nothing but lip service. President Obama’s “65 Nation Coalition” is nothing but the same sort of lip service – this Administration has provided more lip over the last 7 years than they have anything. Amazing how this President could be so far off the mark; we now have three former Secretaries of Defense who have nothing good to speak about within their responsible former positions of how their recommendations went to deaf ears and who were paralleled by a National Security team that oft times creates a buffer between reality and what is “wanted to be heard”. Rome is burning – and Nero plays the fiddle – Hollywood is more important to this administration than the cold realities of where everyone else lives and works.

This book is an eye opener for even the most trained policy advisers. Challenges that have remained have gone unresolved in the past 7 years – Generals answering questions in front of Congressional Committees are equally tied from answering in complete truth and usually have their tails wagging in between their legs. We need more McArthur’s and Patton’s in the upper ranks – the time for decisiveness is now. Four stars for the book.

Fred says

Easily one of the best books of it's type that I've read in years. If you're a senior NCO or an officer who is planning NCOPD or OPD and want to include a book in there I think you'll find the one you're looking for right here. Kaplan traveled with Army Special Forces in the Philippines, Yemen, and South America, with an Army Foreign Area Officer in Mongolia, and with the US Marines in Iraq during OIF I/II during the Battle of Fallujah.

His incites are keen and the depth and breadth of this work is truly amazing. I recommend this book to everyone I know in the military. This is the type of work that Soldiers and Marines like to see after they travel with embedded journalists. This is a journalist who really got it and took the time to understand the things that he saw and the people that he was with everywhere that he went.

In the epilogue, Kaplan says that this is the first book in a planned series of them and I haven't found the others yet or even looked them up although I can guarantee that I will. If you happen to live near a military installation I think you can find this wherever they sell books on post, I know it's in the clothing and sales on JBLM.

Tony says

Kaplan's book offers an interesting perspective on American foreign policy and the manner it's carried out. He does this with a series of vignettes that create a feeling of what life and is like on the ground at the various locations he explores - Yemen, Columbia, The Philippines, Iraq, Afghanistan, Mongolia, etc.

His goal was to provide a balanced and realistic depiction of how the U.S. carries out it's imperial goals. To demonstrate how the lower and middle managers (the mid-level military and civilian personnel in charge of implementing foreign policy) run the Empire, so to speak.

His account is respectful and from his point of view. Throughout the stories and locales he's embedded with these units. He speaks their language, he lives with them and he encounters danger with them. But as an outsider he notices things that perhaps the military leaders he interviews and observes don't. Kaplan brings a point of view that only a third party could, a third party that doesn't want to push an agenda, but to see the truth.

Overall, its a fantastic book. As a military officer I found Kaplan's perspective fresh and insightful. I learned several lessons from this. Mainly, that in the technological advanced and media run world of the 21st century the "behind-the-scenes empire of personal relationships is all that is possible anymore". This statement suggests that military units need to embed themselves and form relationships with the people and cultures of the nations that offer strategic gains to the US. The soldier of the future will have to be a blend of scholar, diplomat and warrior. More so than they are now. The other big lesson was that the conflicts of the future will necessarily have to be small affairs, where small unit tactics dominate and those actions which create multiplier effects are most valuable. Running an empire is serious work, and Kaplan provides a fascinating look at its inner workings.

James says

A great survey of a lot of what our armed forces are like and what they're doing around the world today. The American system is an empire in all but name, and this book recognizes that reality and shows how that empire is being maintained and extended by many means.

A fascinating look into what's going on in many regions where our government has decided it has a stake in events and into the personalities and lives of some of our people in uniform. This is the first book of an intended series reporting on different dimensions of our military activities around the world. As a retired Marine, I found this fascinating and am looking forward to reading the rest of the books Kaplan writes in this series.

For anyone interested in geopolitics and/or the military, this is a must-read.

Cook Memorial Public Library says

Recommended by Rob. Check our catalog: <https://encore.cooklib.org/iii/encore...>

Mike says

5 Stars! I hated this book...at first. Why? I bought it in 2007. Kaplan's main thesis is that we are an American Empire, in the vein of Roman, Venetian and British empires. At first I thought, oh shit, Kaplan has gone Code Pink on me. I just retired from the military and he is calling me an imperialist. Not exactly what I wanted to hear. I put the book away until now. But this is a fantastic story that demanded to be read. Kaplan's main theme:

"Imperialism is but a form of isolationism, in which the demand for absolute, undefiled security at home leads one to conquer the world, and in the process to become subject to all the world's anxieties. That is why empires arise at the fringes of consciousness, half in denial...Rome never thought it was building an empire until it already had one, and had already reached the limits of its expansion...Empires are works in progress, with necessity rather than glory the instigator of each outward push... America's imperium was without colonies, suited to a jet-and-information age in which mass movements of people and capital diluted the meaning of sovereignty."

Kaplan places the beginning of the American Empire from just after the Revolutionary War, with the efforts to move the large, threatening powers of England, France and Spain from our rear. We just kept pushing outward until we reached the Pacific. WWII and the subsequent Cold War were the big modern era reasons to continue empire building bringing us to where we are today. The proof of our empire is the opposition to it, according to Kaplan.

Okay, that is the big theme but he spends the rest of the book visiting various theaters of low and high intensity conflict. And he introduces us to an amazing group of "grunts" out in the field. He begins in Yemen in 2002 and finishes in Fallujah, Iraq in 2004. In between he visits the drug war in Colombia, the steppes of Mongolia, The Philippine Islands, Afghanistan, and the Horn of Africa. Along the way he goes off on tangents to Sub-Saharan Africa, Bosnia, Cambodia, etc. Kaplan is unmatched as a travel writer and he has some big cojones as you follow him into some really hairy places. But he just dips in and out, while the "imperial grunts" remain and carry on with their various missions. The sheer variety of places and missions assigned to the military is truly astounding, even to someone like me who knows the way around. I found myself wanting back in and immensely proud of these young soldiers, marines, sailors and airmen.

The book moves along briskly, never boring or preachy and never spending too much time in any one place. Yemen and Colombia do not appear fun places to go but I really want to go back to the Philippines based on his description. Mongolia sounds intriguing, along with Eritrea and Djibouti. Afghanistan and Iraq, not so much. Ever been to Lamu? You will want to. What you will also want to do is spend some time with the young NCOs and junior officers out maintaining the "empire". If your opinion of the army grunt is along the lines of a Stephen King, i.e., only the dumb ones join, you will be pleasantly surprised. The book is not dated at all, and it is interesting to compare what is happening now in Yemen, Afghanistan and other locales to what Kaplan describes in 2002-2004. Try it, you'll like it.

Shawn says

Robert Kaplan rightly acknowledges the United States' ongoing implicit imperial role in the world, and using that perspective, he does an outstanding job explaining how the U.S. maintains that role in the post 9-11 era. "Imperial Grunts" attempts to take a broad, holistic look at how the U.S. has fought the Global War on Terrorism, not just in Iraq and Afghanistan, but in the many other places where the U.S. military has, and in some cases is still operating today. I especially appreciated the background information Kaplan provides for each of the countries he writes about, to include how geography, culture, and historical events eventually brought about U.S. military intervention in each country, and how those same factors work to influence operations and mission accomplishment in those countries. Although I do not agree with Mr. Kaplan's assessment of a continued heavy evangelical Christian influence on the average service member, he does a very good job portraying the essence of the U.S. military of today. The book is very Army Special Forces and Marine Corps centric. That is not a bad thing, but it left me hoping for a sequel that also covers the Navy and Air Force and their contributions to the Global War on Terrorism and the maintenance of modern national interests and global leadership. (Audiobook read)

Jim Salisbury says

A tough read, at least compared to the other Kaplan book I read, *To the Ends of the Earth*, but a comprehensive look at the American military on the ground. I found myself with very mixed feelings regarding our covert operations throughout the world many of which seem to have backfired. As a fan of openness and honesty the lying and treachery of political intrigue are pretty distasteful stuff. Liberty and Freedom as buzzwords playing second fiddle to political necessity defined by those with money and therefore power is not a concept I'm very comfortable with. The refreshing and entertaining part for me was the view of the warriors on the ground, the worker bees whose loyalty and dedication is unquestioned and carries on a tradition seemingly as old as civilization itself.

Andrew says

I've read some less than favorable reviews of this book, mostly by those types who find the idea of American imperialism an unsavory concept. But the fact of the matter is the American empire is a reality and has been going strong for half a century. Rather than waste time equivocating over what does or does not equate to imperialism, Kaplan dives right in visiting forward operating bases (FOBs) where Army Special Forces, FAOs, and Marines are projecting American soft power. Instead of occupying large bases around the world, the military's more forward-thinking strategists are favoring a small footprint strategy. There are now units in places like Columbia, the Philippines, Mongolia and Djibouti training local soldiers, leaving a favorable impression through efficient humanitarian projects, and collecting favors that can be called upon in the future should America need them. All of this was an aspect of American foreign policy that I was completely ignorant of and Kaplan deserves a lot of credit for bringing it to light and doing the footwork to really tell the stories of these impressive soldiers. He also spends the requisite time in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the problems he witnesses there are precisely because these new strategies aren't being applied on the military's two most important fronts. But most of all, Kaplan highlights just how brave and professional these imperial soldiers are and it gave me a new found respect for our country's military.

Andrew says

This is the kind of book I usually read in a sitting. And, I have been following Kaplan's pieces in the Atlantic (some of which make up this book) with great enthusiasm for several years. But, golly, I'm on page 72 and I just can't be fucked. It's boring, and I hate to say it, sloppy. Gonna give it a go just to learn about what the A teams did on Sept 12, but my initial impression is that this is jingoistic second-rate John McPhee.

I made it through the Colombia section then left this book behind. What can I say? I'm disappointed, and even more so, I'm surprised that I'm disappointed.

Maybe I'll pick it up farther down the road and finish it up, but for now, it's going on the new "didn't finish" shelf with a provisional 2 star rating.

Jeff says

Short version - If you want to understand what the US military was doing after Sept 11. Start with this. Even if you serve this is still very insightful. Often individual missions can leave us buried in the weeds. Kaplan takes the individual stories around the world and paints a vivid picture of American power.

S. says

I [am] a citizen of the United States and a believer in the essential goodness of American nationalism, a nationalism without which the security armature for any emerging global system simply could not have existed. I did not doubt that at some point, perhaps as soon as a few decades, American patriotism itself might begin to become obsolete. I also had no doubt that we were not there yet. I had served in the military: in the Israeli rather than the American. In Israel in the 1970s, finding life exclusively among Jews in a small country claustrophobic, I discovered my Americanness anew.... My goal as a writer was simple and clear. I wanted to take a snapshot for posterity of what it was like for middle-level commissioned and noncommissioned American officers stationed at remote locations overseas at the beginning of the twenty-first century...

-Chapter 6, Imperial Grunts, Robert D. Kaplan

With much of the writing about Afghanistan and US military forces abroad coming from very young sources (even Sebastian Junger is a mere 46 as he dispatches to Vanity Fair; Bellavia is 24 when he first gets deployed; Internet journalist Kevin Sites is 39 as he enters Iraq; Luttrell, Wright, Swofford, Kyle, Parnell all in their twenties or early thirties as combat or embedded combat journalism is a work of young men), to large degree we receive the perspective of twenty-four year olds: certain, dedicated, black-and-white, aggressive, absolutist, and keen. To that degree, it's useful and beyond useful to have Robert Kaplan, *currently sixty-one years old* on the ground in Djibouti and Afghanistan to provide a father and babyboomer's perspective, a professor and a long-time Atlantic's journalist's understanding.

Kaplan is right-of-centre. He is a Zionist. He tells us with his rheumatic eyes that 'whorehouses across Asia

use a fishbowl presentation.' He has children. These may be unusual perspectives for the 2013 reader, brought up on Zinn and Nader, who is used to left-of-centre critique and who drinks 'riptide rush' gatorade flavor, remembers 'gnarly' and 'rad' as elementary school slang, likes x-treme sports. But if Internet research reveals that Kaplan is a Stratfor analyst and a former Naval Academy professor, at the same time divergence of perspective is important to the broadly ranging reader. And Kaplan is a skilled writer, an organizer of information. A known minority of b-list non-fiction books start strong and then slowly slowly decline as the writer realizes there is only a limited amount of material he or she understands and can write about. Kaplan's book peaks in the middle, with the battlefield of Afghanistan providing a severe backdrop to what is otherwise peaceful deployments. Like Kevin Sites, he does the global thing, covering the entire world of deployment, but unlike Sites, he has a wealth of connections and personal experience to draw upon, and the story goes deeper and sees deeper.

I can't say that I would be voting any time soon for Kaplan to high electoral office, and I don't know whether being designated a senior advisor by SecDef Robert Gates is an honor or merely a sign of establishmentarianism, but I am eager to read the rest of Kaplan's works, and perhaps his wikipedia page is actually sort of enticing for future theory and practice. 4/5 solid.

JoséMaría BlancoWhite says

Hectic read, absorbing, masterfully told. This is one writer I am going to follow from now on. Whatever you think of his style, you are not going to go bored reading his stories. I was happily surprised to notice his lack of arrogance -as one would expect to find from a reporter among this class of American heroes. The stars are the real soldiers, the military. Kaplan is there alright, but in the background.

I loved the chapters on Colombia and the Philippines. But everything was very vivid and exciting. You get to have a global sightseeing tour of American forces over the planet. You feel the humidity, you see the landscapes they see, taste the same food and live the same experiences, battlefield included.

The last chapter on Iraq, Fallujah specifically was the best ending possible for this book. One can't help to identify oneself with the writer when, after the battle was ceasefire by political decision...

"in Dubai. In the lobby, on the way to my room, I noticed a newstand. The front pages were all about Fallujah. I felt like a person at the center of a scandal that everybody was reading about, in which even the most accurate, balanced accounts were unconnected to what I had actually experienced and the marines I had experienced it all with. I felt deeply alienated. After I ate and showered and scrubbed my backpack, I didn't want to talk to anyone. All I wanted to do was write."

The author has a clear idea -and so depicts it- of American society:

"The soldiers and marines I encountered during months of travel with the military -whose parents and grandparents had fought in Vietnam- thought of that war as every bit as sanctified as the nation's others. As for those who saw Vietnam differently, they were generally from the more prosperous classes of American society, classes which even back then were in the process of forging a global, cosmopolitan elite."

Want to know what the real world out there is like? Read this.

Scott Pierce says

Kaplan has a realistic view of the world, and is able to get access to the U.S. military, so always a good read to find out what is really going in the world.

"Small light and lethal units of soldiers and marines, skilled in guerrilla warfare and attuned to the local environment in the way of the nineteenth-century Apaches, could accomplish more than dinosauric, industrial age infantry divisions."

"In Col. Caldwell's Small Wars, published in 1896, there is an emphasis on the decentralization of command, the need for mobility, and the need to stay outside the base perimeters and among the local population as much as possible. The CJTF-180 at Bagram was violating all of these principles."

Eduardo Sturla says

Another great read from a great war reporter.

Kaplan again delivers an excellent look at the life of those serving in the wars of the 21st century. An indispensable look into the actual travails and efforts of the US military on the war on terror. Will surprise those that thought that US theatre of operations were only limited to Iraq and Afghanistan. Highly recommended.

Steve Grant says

The vast net of US military commitments around the globe is largely invisible to the American taxpaying public - and Imperial Grunts does a good job of taking the reader on a tour of this world

I found myself reassured by what I read here - the military on display here is smart, quiet, adaptable, and effective. This is the way a global war against non-state actors needs to be fought.

But I found my enjoyment of this new world, and all its very important foreign policy implications, clouded by Kaplan's starry-eyed cryptofascist worship of military force as an instrument of foreign policy. Maybe I'm still irritated by his fanboy writeup of the B-2 in this month's Atlantic, but there are times when Kaplan gushes over military globalization the way Friedman gushes over economic globalization - which is to say breathlessly, unabashedly pro-globo... with the downside always conveniently omitted.

Donald says

Author writes about US involvement in many countries Some of which I didn't know of But Its typical pro US
