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China Goes to Sea: Maritime Transformation in Comparative Historical Perspective

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BOOK REVIEWS

THE PURSUIT OF MARITIME TRANSFORMATION

Erickson, Andrew S., Lyle J. Goldstein, and Carnes Lord, eds. *China Goes to Sea: Maritime Transformation in Comparative Historical Perspective*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2009. 544pp. \$49.95

The third book in the Naval Institute Press's Studies in Chinese Maritime Development series is a collection of essays and case studies that is important not only for those working in naval studies and for sinologists, but also for scholars concerned with the idea of strategic culture and its application.

Following an introduction by Erickson and Goldstein, the book is organized into four parts: the premodern era (Persia, Sparta, Rome, and the Ottoman Empire); the modern era (France, Russia, imperial Germany, and Soviet Russia); Chinese maritime transformations (Ming and Qing dynasties, the Cold War); and China in comparative perspective, with essays on contemporary Chinese shipbuilding prowess, China's navy today as it looks toward blue water, and the Chinese study of the rise of great powers.

The contributors are such renowned scholars as Barry Strauss, Arthur Eckstein, James Pritchard, Holger Herwig, and Bruce Elleman. As stated in the book's introduction, a close reading of the case studies reveals distinct differences between China and other

powers that have pursued maritime transformation. Erickson and Goldstein note that Beijing has an impressive commercial maritime dynamism and is uncovering a robust historical maritime tradition. China understands that stable relationships with its continental neighbors are a prerequisite for the growth of maritime power. The issue of Taiwan and the strategic significance of China's maritime trade routes mean there is no real comparison with the Kremlin's pursuit of naval power.

The concluding chapter, by Carnes Lord on China and maritime transformation, is a key element in this meta-narrative of naval history—an approach that is valuable as a complement to the customary focus on the leading naval power but not as a substitute for it. Lord depicts a genuine maritime transformation, and the case studies provide a valuable historical perspective, although the chapter's connection to part 4 is limited.

The most useful chapters are those on China, because they contribute to the historical memory of Chinese policy makers. Elleman notes the extent to

which defeat helped lead China to modernize its navy; defeat in both opium wars forced China to bring new ideas to the forefront. Bernard Cole's assessment of the Cold War reveals a Chinese naval service viewed by its military and civilian masters as an organization whose primary mission was to support army forces. Defensive concerns gained priority, and a new engagement with naval power had to await the end of the Cold War.

Current Chinese developments underline the folly of the Western military posture, with its planning largely focused on Afghanistan and Iran. There is a serious risk that crucial long-term capability will be sacrificed to the exigencies of campaigning in Afghanistan. While the development of Chinese capability has led to responses by such regional powers as Japan, Taiwan, Australia, Malaysia, Singapore, and South Korea, there has not been a sufficient move from awareness to action on the part of other powers. The Chinese naval challenge is apparent as an aspect of an increasingly far-flung Chinese defense system that has serious implications for Western interests in the Middle East and South Asia—implications that are not addressed by counter-insurgency capability.

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Hasik, James. *Arms and Innovation: Entrepreneurship and Alliances in the Twenty-First-Century Defense Industry*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2008. 224pp. \$35

For decades, analysts have understood the nonmarket conditions of defense development and procurement. First, government-as-buyer and ultimate legal authority are atypical market constraints and, second, military weapons systems often have no commercial equivalents and may also have several unique component or material requirements—for example a one-off electronic component architecture.

The recent trend of fewer systems required, or at least procured, in the roughly synchronous post-Cold War and precision-munitions eras has more often than not exaggerated the already anomalous defense-systems market. The Department of Defense (DoD) generally buys or intends to buy smaller numbers of more capable and complicated ships, manned aircraft, tanks, munitions, etc., than it has in the past. Advancing technological sophistication and relatively smaller unit buys, in turn, pressure defense-systems suppliers' business models, alliances and acquisitions, systems integration competencies, and subassembly, component, and material supply chains.

James Hasik is a defense industry analyst and former naval officer with degrees in history, physics, and business. His first book (coauthored with Michael Rip in 2002) was a well received, comprehensive examination of GPS and its implications in modern warfare. With this book, Hasik continues his insightful analysis of the DoD toolbox via a set of six case studies covering disparate defense-system development projects woven into a succinct but overarching analysis of the current international arms industry. The cases examined are air, land, sea, and space