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Yankees in the Land of the Gods

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resupplying German naval units only clandestinely while denying Hitler access through Spain to Gibraltar. Winston Churchill later acknowledged that Spain "held the key to all British enterprises in the Mediterranean, and never in the darkest hours did she turn the lock against us." Antonio de Oliveira Salazar, whom Packard greatly admires as "a man who lived solely for his country," held Germany at bay by lobbying Franco against letting Hitler use Iberian territory and by counting on Spain's centuries-old alliances with England for protection.

Packard notes that Eire was the only country among the five that was seriously threatened by invasion from both the Allies and the Axis. Ironically, the issue that kept Eire from participating with the other Commonwealth countries on the side of England—the continued inclusion of the island's six northeastern counties in the United Kingdom—gave London the capacity to surveil and protect sea lanes into the Atlantic without inserting troops into Eire. The effort was aided further by the cooperation of Eamon de Valera's government, which, without revealing its hand to the violently anti-British Irish Republican Army, helped London keep track of German ships in the waters off Ireland by the simple expedient of radioing reports of sightings in the clear, where by prearrangement British monitors could pick them up.

Striving throughout his comprehensive review to explain how the

five countries escaped involvement in the war, Packard recognized that "of the score of the continent's neutrals at war's outbreak, only this handful successfully maintained their outsider status." He paraphrases a Swedish historian that "there were more Norways—and Hollands and Hungarys and Greecees—than there were Swedens." Packard's writing is interesting and relevant but flawed by an uneven style that ranges from elegant analysis to colloquial slang. He never tires of reminding his readers which side in the war embodied evil, and his editor let stand a few annoyingly redundant passages.

Nonetheless, the book provides a useful reminder of the proposition that not to become involved militarily is sometimes a strategic option that serves a nation's interests.

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Wiley, Peter Booth with Korogi Ichiro. *Yankees in the Land of the Gods*. New York: Penguin, 1991. 577pp. \$14.95

This book tells the story of a fascinating episode in American history, when Japan was opened to the West in the mid-nineteenth century by Commodore Matthew C. Perry. This was the beginning of a collision course that would lead almost inexorably to the attack on Pearl Harbor ninety-one years later.

In developing his thesis that Perry's achievement was much more than an isolated incident, Wiley gives a great deal of the setting necessary to understand this remarkable event, starting long before the event and continuing after it. Seven chapters precede the account of Perry's first visit. They describe the situation in both the United States and Japan at the time of the American visit and lay out the logic of both the American move and the Japanese reaction to it. This was a period not only of great expansion by the United States but of important developments in Japan that led up to the overthrow of the repressive Tokugawa regime. These developments enabled the Japanese to respond positively to the American challenge.

The whole long and involved—and happily very readable—account sheds valuable light not only on questions of military affairs and national security but also on foreign policy objectives and strategy. The account goes a long way toward answering a question that has probably puzzled many: Why were we so hell-bent to stir up what turned out to be a hornets' nest? As we know, the Japan that was awakened was in a comparatively feudal state, and, as we found out, after the opening it would be led by an ultra-militaristic clique bent on world conquest.

What about the Americans, who were building up their empire at the same time? Commodore Perry's action was part of the general expansion of American interests westward to the

Pacific and then further throughout that ocean and into Asia itself. The recently completed war with Mexico, in which we simply took from that country the vast lands that we wanted, was a part of that empire-building movement. Thus, the opening up of Japan was not an act of benevolence on our part, far from it. Commodore Perry, not the most nationalistic of Americans of that period, stated, "I shall in no way allow of any infringement upon our national rights [in the Bonin Islands]; on the contrary, I believe that this is the moment to assume a position in the east which will make the power and influence of the United States felt in such a way as to give greater importance to those rights which, among eastern nations, are generally estimated by the extent of military force exhibited. . . . It is self-evident that the course of coming events will ere long make it necessary for the United States to extend its territorial jurisdiction beyond the limits of the western continent, and I assume the responsibility of urging the expediency of establishing a foothold in this quarter of the globe, as a measure of positive necessity to the sustainment of our maritime rights in the east." Some Americans in fact set no limitation to what was meant by "manifest destiny."

On the other hand, as the author makes abundantly clear, starting with the very title he chose for his book, the Japanese were not weak either in the matter of national pride and national self-esteem. Indeed, the

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Japanese have a strong claim to the championship in this field, making the serene confidence of the Chinese, to whom all outsiders were barbarians, or the Nazis, with their claims of the Germans as a superior race, seem modest in comparison. Hirata Atsutane put it this way: "Ours is a splendid and blessed country, the Land of the Gods beyond doubt, and we down to the most humble man and woman are the descendants of the gods. . . . Japanese differ completely from and are superior to the peoples of China, India, Russia, Holland, Siam, Cambodia, and all other countries in the world, and for us to have called our country the Land of the Gods was not mere vain-glory." Let's concede the point, since it's hard to top it. Gods are indeed superior to mere mortal men, to all men of all other nations.

Perry's efforts extended over a period of time and included a second visit. In the same period, the British, the French, and other Western nations were also attempting, in their own ways and for their own purposes, to "open" Japan. So were the Russians. The Japanese reaction to these moves was mixed, since the Japanese were at a crucial turning point in their history. Many wanted to continue the Tokugawa regime's policy of complete isolation, which required the murder both of foreign sailors who happened to be shipwrecked on the Japanese coast and of any Japanese who had been abroad and were thus infected with dangerous thoughts.

Those Japanese with a greater knowledge of the external world realized that their island empire would simply not be allowed to continue in the old way much longer, for Westerners were carving up Africa and Asia into colonies and Japan seemed to be next. All were alarmed by Perry's black ships, an image that remains vivid among Japanese to this day.

Those Japanese who were better acquainted with the world ultimately prevailed, perhaps just in the nick of time. Their reaction was far from surrender. In 1857 Hatta Masayoshi saw it in this way: "I am therefore convinced that our policy should be to stake everything on the present opportunity, to conclude friendly alliances, to send ships to foreign countries everywhere and conduct trade, to copy foreigners where they are best and so repair our own shortcomings, to foster our national strength and complete our armaments, and so gradually subject foreigners to our influence until in the end all the countries of the world know the blessings of perfect tranquility and our hegemony is acknowledged throughout the globe."

As the reader will find out in a concluding chapter, there are signs that Japan, following its economic triumphs over the U.S. and others, may be now ready to abandon its current low-profile posture. Theodore H. White is quoted as saying, "Perhaps we did not win the war, perhaps the Japanese, unknown even to themselves, were the winners." And a

former Japanese cabinet minister, Ishihara Shintaro, is reported to have said in 1989, "The American nuclear umbrella is just an illusion as far as the Japanese people are concerned. . . . The time has come to tell the United States that we do not need American protection. Japan will protect itself with its own power and wisdom."

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Shapley, Deborah. *Promise and Power: The Life and Times of Robert McNamara*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1993. 734pp. \$29.95

As Secretary of Defense, Robert Strange McNamara was one of the most controversial public figures of the 1960s, in particular in his role as Vietnam decision-maker. Deborah Shapley's long book on the controversial McNamara covers the entire life of the man, from his early years through the post-Defense years, most notably as president of the World Bank. Given the interests of readers of this review, as well as space limitations, my commentary will focus on his period in the Pentagon.

The author, a Washington journalist and investigative reporter, is well qualified for the task she has assumed. Her research is impressive, and the many interviews she had with McNamara are somewhat of a first. The book itself is in fact the first complete account of the subject's life, though there have been a couple of

other efforts, both more focused and less critical in tone.

McNamara was born in San Francisco in 1916 and graduated from the University of California at Berkeley in 1937. He received a master of business administration degree at Harvard in 1939 and the following year joined the faculty there, specializing in the application of statistical analysis to management problems. During World War II he served as a commissioned officer in the Army Air Corps, working as a staff officer in statistical control. After the war he and nine other statistical control experts hired themselves out to the Ford Motor Company. He rose rapidly in the firm, and when he was elected its president in 1960, he was the first to hold that office who was not a member of the Ford family.

In that year there was also elected a new president of the United States, and he, as had been evident throughout his campaign, had a keen interest in foreign and defense policy. Like all presidents, John F. Kennedy had his own views on how these interrelated policies should be managed and the kind of persons he wanted for his chief advisers. Kennedy had offered Robert Lovett the post of either secretary of state or of defense, but he declined them both. Lovett, however, subsequently recommended Robert McNamara for Defense.

When McNamara became Secretary of Defense in January 1961, the department was more than thirteen years old and had had seven secretaries. From a loose federal arrangement in the beginning, the secretary's