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Counterpoint to Trafalgar: The Anglo-Russian Invasion of Naples, 1805-1806

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Gulf.) The commanders must survey everything the foe may do, not just his probable course, and list alternative actions to parry them. Finally, the wise leader tallies up the “costs and consequences” of success or failure, weighs them against those of other courses, and revises as needed. Along the way, Kalbfus instructs on minutiae of comparative tablets and the grammar of orders.

The book has many flaws. Kalbfus demands plans for every contingency combination yet gives no clue as to how many iterations are manageable, even by mental prodigies. (The brain, it is said, can evaluate seven ideas at one time.) This work’s worst drawback is verbosity. No disciple of the admiral would dare issue a crisp directive like Grant’s “Wherever Lee goes, there you will go also,” or Nelson’s “No captain can do very wrong if he places his ship alongside that of an enemy.”

Is the Green Hornet a classic for all times, as some say of the work of Clausewitz or Mahan or Sun Tzu? Kalbfus was pontificating during the heyday of War Plan Orange. By the 1930s the grand strategy of this scheme to defeat Japan by economic ruination had long been fixed, and American planners had turned to specific campaigns. Kalbfus was addressing future designs of naval campaigns to seize an island, raid a base, engage a fleet, or interrupt trade. He lauds the “initiative” (read offensive) as the American way of war, a hallmark of the Orange Plan that was actually employed to win in the Pacific.

The Green Hornet was not the law of Moses but an artifact of its moment in history. As Admiral Spruance’s chief of staff remarked, everything in it is correct, “but to get what you want out of it is extremely difficult.” America’s current guideline for military decision is five paragraphs long.

EDWARD S. MILLER

author, *War Plan Orange: The U.S. Strategy to Defeat Japan, 1897–1945*.

Flyhart, William Henry. *Counterpoint to Trafalgar: The Anglo-Russian Invasion of Naples, 1805–1806*. Columbia: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 1992. 198pp. (No price given) When Admiral Villeneuve sailed reluctantly from Cadiz in October 1805, he knew that his relief was posting from Paris and that Nelson was waiting for him over the horizon. The two admirals had been within a hundred miles of one another during the West Indian chase, which had spoiled Napoleon’s plan to invade England. Bonaparte turned his Grand Army eastward and on the eve of Trafalgar would defeat the Austrians at Ulm almost as decisively as Nelson was to beat the combined fleets of France and Spain within the week. Meanwhile, Napoleon suspected that the destination of the considerable Anglo-Russian expeditionary force in the Mediterranean could only be either Naples or Sicily, and he appreciated that its destruction could only facilitate his new deployment on land. This was to be Villeneuve’s task.

That mission is not generally perceived to have been the immediate cause of Trafalgar, and to that extent the

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somewhat exaggerated title of this book is justified. An account of this early Anglo-Russian cooperation is welcome, and its subtitle defends its author from any suggestion that it might have been better had he extended his study to include Anglo-Russian cooperation to include the efforts of Admiral Seniavin and Sir John Duckworth in 1807. The whole work is richly annotated with references, some of which might have been condensed, if not taken for granted.

However, the maps are not very clear and are of little help, and the contemporary illustrations, though charming, contribute little to the understanding of so scholarly a text. This work devotes all its eight chapters to an episode which, though interesting in itself, has nevertheless been dealt with, elegantly and more economically, by Piers Mackesy in chapters two and three of *The War in the Mediterranean 1803-1810* (1957). Flayhart devotes his first three chapters to the outbreak of the War of the Third Coalition, to the war itself, and then to the formation of the coalition, in that order. This takes almost one-third of his text and as many pages as Mackesy needed to deal with the entire affair.

One wonders whether the book suffers from a desire to associate the Mediterranean fleet with the Mediterranean expedition to an unrealistic extent: "It is unlikely that Pitt in his wildest imagination ever expected that the most important outcome of sending a British expedition to the Mediterranean in

1805 would be the annihilation of the French fleet." Quite so.

The nub of the thesis is neatly put in two sentences on page 120: "The Battle of Trafalgar cost the British fleet its admiral and the French admiral his fleet," and "The Anglo-Russian invasion of the Two Sicilies commenced, approximately three weeks after the French troops left the country." It is the treatment of the relationship between these two propositions that is perplexing as regards the relevance of the book. It is interesting to read the book, and it does reflect creditably on the industry and interests of its author. But he perhaps makes too much of the connection implied in his title, while his text is rather slender as a study of Anglo-Russian cooperation. It is nevertheless a very useful essay on an all-too-neglected episode in the long fight against France, which until this century was known as the Great War.

A second edition should remove inconsistencies about the dates of Ulm and of Trafalgar, and delete the given name of Admiral Collingwood, which he ceased to sign on his elevation to the peerage.

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Hattendorf, John B. et al., eds. *British Naval Documents 1204-1960*. Brookfield, Vt.: Scolar Press, 1993. 1,196pp. \$109.95

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