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Norway 1940

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management, but there is another side to the story, to be found in the specialist literature. It is especially surprising and regrettable that Dr. Andrew Gordon's recent work on British naval procurement in the interwar period does not appear in the bibliography. Barnett's first two chapters on interwar policy, and all subsequent sections where technology is discussed, must be treated with considerable care and reserve and should not be regarded as the last word on the subject.

This said, *Engage the Enemy More Closely* is the most significant study of the British war at sea from 1939-45 to appear since Roskill's standard accounts. It is indeed a direct descendant of Roskill's works, since the great man's archive at Churchill College is kept by none other than Correlli Barnett. He has fully exploited the opportunities of his professional situation to add to his predecessor's work and has given the national security community a stimulating and timely reassertion of the fundamental importance of maritime power to a nation's overall war-making capacity. Admiral of the Fleet Lord Lewin's quote on the dust-jacket says that Barnett's "analysis clearly shows how vital it was for the war at sea to be won before land and air campaigns could bring final victory." That a military historian not regarded as a special friend of the Royal Navy has made this point so clearly is of special significance in today's debates over

national strategy on both sides of the Atlantic.

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Kersaudy, Francois. *Norway 1940*.
New York: St. Martin's, 1991.
272pp. \$19.95

Kersaudy has produced a work that reads fast and is full of lessons, but his interpretations should not always be trusted. For example, he refers to Winston Churchill as physically massive, when in fact Churchill was a diminutive person, and he assails Neville Chamberlain as militarily incompetent and lacking backbone. Yet the former Chancellor of the Exchequer knew more than most government members of Britain's defence establishment and its needs. Moreover, Chamberlain's act of appeasement at Munich in 1938 was absolutely necessary given the totally impotent state of the British air defences at that time. In addition, there is a curious misidentification of "the cruiser *Warspite*" (she was a battleship) beneath a photo of an H-class destroyer in Narvik fjord.

The Norwegian campaign of 1940 was a classic case of British intellectual arrogance—it wanted to run before it could crawl. The British started to organize an expeditionary force, ostensibly to aid the Finns against the Soviets. That concept, however, got muddled with closing the German access to Swedish iron ore, which was shipped during the winter from the

northern Norwegian port of Narvik. The logic of that idea was that Sweden could be persuaded to close its mines to the Germans; to assist them a couple of battalions were to be sent across Norway into Sweden. Naturally, the Scandinavians were not enthusiastic. None of these plans took into account the pacifist nature of the Norwegian government, or, more importantly, the likelihood of a stiff German reaction. So hypnotized were the British by their own planning that they failed to heed the warning signals from Europe regarding German intentions against Norway.

The muddle in London was compounded by the lack of a central direction of the war. Although a Military Coordination Committee was established, chaired by the prime minister, the leadership was usually delegated to Winston Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty. Moreover, London had little knowledge of the army's lack of strength, or the distances over which the navy and the air force would have to operate, or any appreciation of the necessities for a winter campaign in Norway. In addition, the British forces were not yet well acquainted with the Luftwaffe and the consequent need for both large numbers of anti-aircraft guns and to disperse ships and stores in restricted anchorages.

In addition to all this, the story involved not merely Britain but also Norway and France. The Norwegians faced the immediate need to mobilize their forces under German invasion. But the language used by the general staff was not the language heard by the government. To the Norwegian

army, partial mobilization meant sending notices by mail for assembly within two days; the government understood it to mean that only those troops in the south would be called to the colors. The pacifist government did not have available the necessary stores of munitions and other supplies for the troops that did assemble. As if that was not enough, the Germans seized some of their ports with "Trojan horses," while others were destroyed by bombs. Since no one spoke the same language, communication was replaced by rampant suspicion, to such an extent British and the French were attacking when in fact they were evacuating.

Politically, the French government badly needed a victory. It sent Chasseurs Alpins to obtain one, and lectured the British government about how to run a war only weeks before France fell ignominiously.

Kersaudy tells his story with great insight, and discusses what was happening in Berlin as well. He tells a tale whose lessons should not be lost. Anything that can go wrong, will, if no one has planned ahead, no one knows the political and physical situation, and direction is from afar.

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D'Este, Carlo. *Fatal Decision: Anzio and the Battle for Rome*. New York: Harper Collins, 1991. 566pp. \$35
Carlo d'Este has made, with *Fatal Decision*, another significant contribution to our understanding of the war