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Arms Control at Sea

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ational and tactical points of view. The author recounts the invaluable role these boats played in the 1973 Yom Kippur War. Although the ground and air battles have been well publicized, very little was reported on the naval engagements. This book accomplishes that task.

The Israelis were able to score unparalleled victories against both the Egyptians and Syrians with the boats of Cherbourg, armed with Gabriel missiles, 76-mm guns and electronic umbrella chaff systems. The EW system on board the boats performed perfectly against fifty-four Soviet missile challenges.

Making the best of the most important principle of warfare, surprise, the Israelis were able to forestall any challenge to their maritime well-being.

Rabinovich also offers an interesting discussion of the U.S. Sixth Fleet and Sovmedron roles during the 1973 war.

I highly recommend *The Boats of Cherbourg*. International mystery and invaluable examples of creative strategies and tactics combine to make this book well worth the investment in time.

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Hill, J. R., Rear Admiral, Royal Navy. *Arms Control at Sea*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1989. 229pp. $27.95

Until recently, little had been written on the naval aspects of arms control. Now the subject seems to be all the rage. A growing collection of material gives testimony to the amount of attention being paid to a wide range of proposals to reduce the inventories, operations and weaponry of naval forces.

The Soviet Union, especially under Gorbachev, has dedicated a large public relations offensive to the goal of cutting naval arms. In over 20 major public policy addresses in the past two years alone, Soviet leaders have made specific proposals to cut naval forces. Their list is all-encompassing, aimed at specific limits, such as the number of ships in the Mediterranean, ceilings on ship construction and establishing "zones of peace" which would prohibit the presence of warships.

In *Arms Control at Sea*, Rear Admiral J. R. Hill (Royal Navy, retired) has produced a complete review of this important and timely topic. He presents not only a framework to understand the modalities of naval arms control, but a critical assessment of what may be at stake. Admiral Hill is now editor of *The Naval Review*, and recently wrote another Naval Institute book, *Maritime Strategy for Medium Powers*. *Arms Control at Sea* deserves serious consideration, not just because of the author's naval credentials, but because it is the first volume dedicated to this subject.

Admiral Hill emphasizes the influence of international law. Multilateral agreements (such as the

1968 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, and the 1985 Treaty of Rarotonga that established a South Pacific nuclear-free zone) can constrain the movement or construction of warships. Bilateral accords (such as the Agreement on the Prevention of Incidents at Sea—commonly called INCSEA—between the United States and the U.S.S.R.) can result in establishing boundaries to avoid misunderstandings between vessels exercising their rights on the high seas. Admiral Hill's full coverage of related international accords is informative for those who desire a brief summary of key international treaties and their relation to naval matters.

The author's explanation of the types of limits gets to the crux of the issue. He presents basically three broad categories: structural limits (on construction of ships, aircraft, and weapon systems); operational limits (on how or where ships may sail); and confidence-building measures. Structural limits could take such forms as specifying the number of hulls to achieve the desired symmetrical or asymmetrical force levels, capping strategic nuclear weapons or the platforms that carry them (e.g., START), removing tactical nuclear weapons from ships, restricting the unrefueled radius of operations of ships to keep them within homewaters, and eliminating bases in foreign lands.

Operational limits could include agreements to establish sanctuaries for SSBN's, the establishment of nuclear weapon-free zones or "zones of peace" restricting the presence in specified places of ships and aircraft, or cutting back the development of ASW techonology.

The third category, confidence-building measures, includes steps to reduce the outbreak of violence due to misunderstandings between opponents. An example of such a measure is the 1963 Hot Line agreement.

This groundwork is useful, but the main question needing an answer is: Will limiting naval arms contribute to security? Admiral Hill's answer is an elegant yet resounding "no." "Some of my more disarming colleagues," he says, "will no doubt say that this book ought to be called *No Arms Control at Sea.*"

But, he says, submarines are the most destabilizing of naval systems and should be prime candidates for confidence building. They are "weapons of stealth" that "pose a hidden or a half-hidden threat of escalation . . . to attack without warning or pity," and all parties might consider restraining their use in time of crisis.

Among structural limits, he offers tactical nuclear weapons at sea as prime candidates. In his judgment, their deterrent purpose and use in the U.S. and Soviet navies are ill-defined, and there is over-provision on both sides by "any reasonable standard." Clearly controversial, his thoughts on tactical nuclear weapons make a valuable contribution to policy discussions over the verification and limitation of sea-launched cruise missiles.

As specific confidence-building measures that may actually help reduce tension and suspicion, Admiral Hill offers advance notification of naval exercises, the delineation of exercise areas, and the presence of observers. He feels that an atmosphere of confidence would be helped by a more "measured" explanation of the U.S. Navy's 1986 Maritime Strategy and less emphasis on its "gung-ho" offensive nature.

Admiral Hill concludes, however, that the control or limitation of naval armaments is not the main issue, but really a diversion. First of all, the arbitrary removal or limitation on numbers of naval forces would be highly difficult to put into effect. Secondly, and most importantly, such limits would not contribute to security. If naval forces did not exist, Hill states, "some other means would have to be found to settle disputes." In fact, history suggests that the presence of maritime forces has actually contributed to the containable and nonescalatory resolution of crises.

Some criticisms are in order. This book is not very readable. The indirect style makes it difficult to grasp the message the first time around.

Secondly, an American audience will not find in Hill's analysis the most important current issue, namely, the impact and meaning of Gorbachev's "smile diplomacy" and the superpower debate over naval forces in arms negotiations.

Thirdly, while the book's consideration of all naval powers, especially France and Britain, provides a broad perspective, it makes Hill's text sound a little like *Arms Control for Medium Powers*. The focus of attention in arms control must always be on the biggest guys on the block and what their decisions imply for the global military balance.

Nonetheless, *Arms Control at Sea* provides an excellent gauge with which to measure the progress of this debate. As Gorbachev pursues his agenda and offers more and more tempting proposals—and as START and other arms negotiations gain momentum—an understanding of the pros and cons of naval arms limitations will be of increasing importance to all of us.

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Joseph D. Douglass, Jr. *Why the Soviets Violate Arms Control Treaties*. Washington, D.C.: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1988. 203pp. $32

Van Cleave, William R. and Cohen, S.T. *Nuclear Weapons, Policies and the Test Ban Issue*. New York: Praeger, 1987. 104pp. $35

It is often recalled that the celebration of apparent triumph should be tempered with caution. In the triumphs of the ancient Roman conquerors, a dwarf was specifically assigned to ride beside the great hero, whispering of his mortality. In this way, the exultant leader would not be swept by the euphoria of the