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The ABM Treaty and Western Security

Sam J. Tangredi

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Present issues have recent antecedents. The military reader would be well advised to stock his library with some historical material so as to obtain perspective without having to relive past experience. *Washington Goes to War* could certainly be a valuable addition to this library.

AL BOTTOMS
The George Washington University

Hynes, Samuel. *Flights of Passage*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1988. 270pp. \$16.95

"Every generation is a secret society. The secret that my generation—the one that came of age during the Second World War—shared was simply the war itself. We grew up on active duty."

Samuel Hynes was eighteen when he became a naval aviation cadet in 1943; by the time he was twenty-one, he had flown a hundred combat missions as a Marine TBM pilot. Now a professor of literature at Princeton University, he has given us a remarkably engaging memoir of his secret society.

His is the classic story of a young man's passage from the gentle world of the upper Midwest in the 1930's through the masculine bonding of flight training and life in a training squadron and then to the grinding reality of air combat. Hynes grew up in a comfortable and secure world where teenage boys hung around the local airport absorbing the romance of aviation. Joining the Marines, he

joyfully discovered and reveled in the pleasures of flying, drinking and chasing girls. With the boundless energy of a young pilot, he pursued all three without favor or discrimination. Squadron life in California was a long fraternity party, with flying as an added benefit.

The war in the Pacific was another matter: enormously boring and dangerous. Hynes quickly became a careful and cagey pilot, a survivor who grew up fast. He had a typical war, earning a couple of medals, losing some friends, having some close scrapes and discovering that war is not all that it is advertised to be. There was neither glory nor bonhomie in the war.

Hynes' descriptions of flying capture that special sense of oneness that can exist between a pilot and his aircraft. After all, a high performance aircraft is the best toy that can be given to a young man of spirit. Read his account of being aloft with a buddy in a pair of F6F's on a glorious Pacific day with nothing to do but play at inverted formation flying.

Hynes tells his story with the immediacy and perspective of a young man sharing a grand adventure while growing up. He seems to have been a genuine Willie Keith.

FRANK C. MAHNCKE
Naval Surface Warfare Center

Durch, William J. *The ABM Treaty and Western Security*. Cambridge,

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Mass.: Ballinger Publishing Co., 1988. 161pp. \$19.95

Considering the emotionalism engendered by the public and scholarly debates on the possible effects of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) on strategic arms control, it is refreshing to find a pro-arms control text that attempts to outline the issue through the use of cool logic. William Durch does exactly that in *The ABM Treaty and Western Security*. The result is a very persuasive argument for preserving the Antiballistic Missile Treaty in the face of technical advances in strategic defense capabilities.

This is not to say that Durch's argument is flawless, or that the book is a balanced study that arrives at its conclusions only after the most rigorous application of unbiased logic. While the author appears to be impartial in the initial explanatory chapters, the perceptive reader can detect shadings of preconceived support for the status quo. For example, the arguments for the "broad interpretation" of the treaty (i.e., permitting SDI development) are said to have resulted from an assessment by a "former CIA lawyer"—implying a somewhat murky, clandestine and reactionary origin. In contrast, the arguments for interpreting the treaty as "narrow" or "restrictive" are portrayed as generated by public-spirited former negotiators and arms control officials intent on presenting an accurate public record. Never mentioned is the fact that many of these former

officials may have a personal interest in seeing their handiwork preserved.

A point that Durch misses—and one that thoroughly confuses anyone attempting to interpret the Treaty's actual negotiation record via unclassified public documents—is that in 1972 the meaning of the terms "broad" and "narrow" were the reverse of their current usage. "Broad" then meant "broadly restrictive," that is, incorporating a ban on all ABM future development. "Narrowly restrictive" then implied that the Soviets—with an eye to future development—were willing only to agree to a ban on the here-and-now.

Since none of this confusion can be resolved until the actual negotiation record is declassified, Durch's interpretation of what was really meant during treaty negotiations is probably as reliable as any other. He simply assumes that the treaty means what its proponents say it does and that the Reagan administration's interpretation was a major revolution in thought. From this assumption the preservation argument gains considerable force: Why destroy an honorable agreement that has served American interests for the last eighteen years?

Durch's study is concerned with SDI's effects on the ABM Treaty; it is not a study of the feasibility of SDI. It is therefore easy for him to portray the treaty as a solid bulwark preventing a strategic defense arms race and not as an impediment to increased Western security. The author adopts the self-serving logic

that SDI can never be 100 percent effective in defending cities and would therefore be ineffective, whereas the ABM Treaty does not need to be 100 percent effective in preventing violations in order to be effective. Nowhere does he address the issue of strategic deception, or the possibility that national technical means are insufficient to police the treaty.

The author's argument for maintaining the "narrow interpretation" of the treaty cites five explicit "costs" associated with the "broad interpretation": the increased cost of procuring strategic defenses; the possibility of a "renewed arms race"; the possibility of Soviet preemption; a possible increase in "strategic uncertainty"; and a possible breakdown in Nato's cohesion if a "fortress America"

were to be developed. All of these are considerations that must be addressed prior to the decision to deploy strategic defenses. While Durch's conclusions rely on a very particular set of assumptions, his conceptual organization is a useful point of departure for additional research into these issues.

For the reader interested in analyzing the ABM Treaty vs. SDI debate, *The ABM Treaty and Western Security* is indeed an excellent introduction. William Durch should be applauded for his logical approach and his effort to keep the debate a discourse and not a shouting match. It is not, however, the final word.

SAM J. TANGREDI
Lieutenant Commander, U.S. Navy
Coronado, California

Editor's Note

The Autumn 1989 issue of this journal carried a review of *Soviet Naval Theory and Policy: Gorshkov's Inheritance*, by Robert Waring Herrick, which was published in limited quantity by the Naval War College Press in 1988. The book is now available in hardback from the Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, Maryland, at a price of \$23.95.