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Gold Braid and Foreign Relations: Diplomatic Activities of U.S. Naval Officers, 1798-1883

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people to talk to;" and "The question does arise how China specialists could have misread the political situation so miserably. In analyzing the Chinese political scene, must we always depend on hindsight to make sense of Chinese politics? If this were the case, then the profession of China studies has not made much progress since the 1950s. . . ."

In light of recent events in China, these are interesting comments for a group of China analysts to make; and their candor makes this book especially valuable to those who want to understand the variables in the current Chinese "equation," as the communist government of that state once again demonstrates the fragility of political reform in a totalitarian dictatorship.

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Long, David F., *Gold Braid and Foreign Relations: Diplomatic Activities of U.S. Naval Officers, 1798-1883*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1988. 448pp. \$32.95

For over 70 years the main source for the diplomatic role of our naval officers in the 18th and 19th centuries has been Charles O. Paullin's *Diplomatic Negotiations of American Naval Officers, 1778-1883*. Now, Professor David F. Long of the University of New Hampshire has produced this reference book that both succeeds and expands the Paullin book, although Long has chosen to have his work start 20 years

after the beginning of Paullin's on the grounds that 1798 is the beginning of an independent Navy Department. Long accepts Paullin's terminal date because it marks a dividing line between the "old" navy and the "new" navy and because Commodore Shufeldt's successful overseeing of the Korean-U.S. treaty in 1883 was "the last time that a U.S. naval officer on active duty was given such a responsible diplomatic assignment." This was also about the time that the transoceanic cable line came into being: ambassadors, proconsuls and military officers everywhere were thus put on a short leash to the home office.

The book also expands Paullin's "negotiations" to "activities," thereby encompassing other categories, some of which seem to fit the modern definition of naval presence and one which would seem to stand better by itself: "they [naval officers] acted as warriors during their nation's declared hostilities."

While Long intends this as a reference work, his introductory chapter does provide an analytical framework, particularly in his use of Secretary of State William Seward's judicious defusing in 1869 of a State/ Navy dispute over a South American war. Seward refused to declare either the minister or the admiral subordinate, saying that the government benefitted from having two points of view and that while the minister's "proceedings are approved, those of Admiral Gordon are not disapproved." Neither diplomats nor sailors would be completely happy

with this evenhanded approach, especially in China during the age of extra-territoriality.

A good reference book has three audiences: the scholar who requires accurate and authoritative information, the general reader who needs clarification and the random reader who is curious. All three groups are well-served by this book. The third group can have real fun, for instance, reading of "Mad Jack" Percival, commanding Old Ironsides, who took hostages in Annam in 1845 to force the Annamese court to release a French bishop who seems to have made a career of being arrested. Percival tried to take on the whole kingdom with only one 18th century frigate, only to find that the bishop had been released to a French man-of-war. Some of the 19th century contretemps of naval officers in Nicaragua also make lively, if cautionary reading.

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Heinrichs, Waldo. *Threshold of War: Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Entry into World War II*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988. 279pp. \$19.95

Although Professor Heinrichs cannot fully describe Roosevelt's intentions in the crisis year of 1941—Roosevelt's love of dissembling made it impossible to know then, or now, whether he had some hidden plan to take the country to war—Heinrichs does the next best thing. He cites the

president's decisions in their context using what anthropologists call "thick description," in this case a month-by-month analysis of what information the administration had, how they considered it, and what they decided between the passage of Lend Lease in March to Pearl Harbor in December. This is a comprehensive history that sheds new light on American foreign policy.

Heinrichs concludes that Roosevelt was determined to protect the country's interests on their own terms, that he supported but did not defer to an allied cause, and that he understood that the primary threat came from across the Atlantic. Heinrichs' main point is that the president and the administration made foreign policy according to a systematic evaluation of the global implications of events and to the country's military capability. Roosevelt, like Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt, knew the value and the limits of force.

Heinrichs' vertical chronology makes it easy to follow the complex of influences behind every major decision. He shows that policy was based increasingly on what armed force was available and anticipated, and that technology and operational doctrine played a large part. In fact, the focus of the book turns out to be not Roosevelt after all. Rather it is the mass of considerations interconnected by the process of American policy evaluation, the threads of which, admittedly, only Roosevelt held in their entirety.