Naval War College Review

Volume 42
Number 3 *Summer*

Article 13

1989

The Postwar Naval Revolution

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Recommended Citation

Palmer, Michael A. (1989) "The Postwar Naval Revolution," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 42 : No. 3 , Article 13.
Available at: https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol42/iss3/13

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trying to make this great nation function.

Were all that not bad enough, Mr. Smith has managed to pack into nearly 800 pages at least 300 pages worth of material. Example after example is repeated. Add to that such literary gratuities as multiple use of the verb "to limn," stir in immense irritation to the reader caused by footnotes arranged chapter by chapter in the rear of a book in which chapter headings appear only once, and one has a classic case of poor editing and publishing.

Smith's last chapter is called "What Is To Be Done?" How about a second edition of *The Power Game*, shorter by half, using all of the current material and adding some solid recognition for a few more of those "inside the Beltway" struggling on our behalf?

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Friedman, Norman. *The Postwar Naval Revolution*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1986, 240pp. $21.95

Friedman's study is an examination of "the revolution in naval affairs" that occurred during the "decade following World War II." He focuses on the navies which "defined" that revolution, those of Great Britain and the United States. These two nations confronted the global challenge posed by the Soviet Union, the breakup of the old European-dominated colonial order (what we now call the Third World), the advent of new technology, financial constraints, and rivalry among the services. Having previously written at length on the U.S. Navy, Friedman here concentrates on the Royal Navy, although the Americans are not ignored. And he addresses the progress of other European navies, the French and Dutch, for example, in chapters that cover politics and strategy, the shape of the fleets, new technology, and the various classes of ships, including those used for mine and inshore warfare.

The postwar dilemmas of British naval leaders were always drawn more clearly, if less dramatically, than those facing their American cousins. For Britain, World War II was a Pyrrhic victory. The nation was bankrupt and its empire was slipping away. The cost of maintaining a land force on the Continent could only come at the expense of the Royal Navy. And for several years after the war, British leaders faced the prospect of having to confront the Soviets in Europe and the Middle East without any guarantee of American assistance.

Moreover, the forces that Britain and the United States needed to police an increasingly unstable world differed from those required to fight a major conflict with the Soviets. Because the British judged such a "hot" war unlikely before 1957, they cancelled many of the projects begun during the war, allowed their existing forces to run down, and

concentrated on research and development of new technology.

In the interim, Britain, armed with obsolescent equipment, faced new challenges from advanced submarines, jet aircraft, and missiles developed by the Germans and assumed to be in Russian hands. The inability to counter such weapons at the target led to the development of an early postwar naval strategy in both Britain and the United States that focused on "attack at source." For example, the ineffectiveness of convoy escorts in the face of the German Type XXI submarine technology fostered a strategy that called for Anglo-American carrier battle groups to attack Soviet submarine bases.

The promises of the postwar naval revolution were initially left unfulfilled. Before the technological problems could be worked out on either side of the Atlantic, atomic weaponry came to dominate strategy, and deterrence became the means of avoiding the massive expenditures needed to build up a credible conventional force. By the mid-1950s, concepts such as Massive Retaliation and the New Look made the prospect of conventional war between the superpowers seem remote.

Most of the technological breakthroughs of the immediate postwar period, Friedman writes, are just now being fully exploited. Only in the 1980s, with the prospect of global conventional conflict once again considered a possibility, have the British and United States navies begun to realize the technological promises of the 1940s. And it should come as no surprise that the underlying strategy that shapes today's navies is once again "attack at source." As Friedman writes: "Their roots [current strategic and tactical ideas] go all the way back to the immediate postwar period." Indeed, the outlines of American postwar naval strategy, as well as early Nato strategy, foreshadow the Maritime Strategy of the 1980s. In Friedman's view, the U.S. Navy's Maritime Strategy is a logical response to the challenges of the postwar period, a philosophy to guide a navy capable of making full use of electronic technology in a flexible force capable of meeting challenges in the Third World, in the Cold War, or in a hot conflict, be it conventional or atomic.

Friedman ends his work on a positive note, suggesting that the postwar naval revolution that has finally borne fruit is likely to continue to do so given current technological trends. He concludes: "These considerations suggest that increased levels of ocean surveillance will tend to change the shape of navies (mainly in the directions of stealth, cover, and deception) but not to abolish them. World trade must still move over the surface of the sea, because the laws of nature which make that movement efficient are unlikely to be repealed. Navies will move with it, to protect it in peace and in (probably non-nuclear) war."

The author's discussion of the turmoil of the late 1940s and 1950s

within the naval communities in Britain and the United States over roles and missions for the respective services, as well as for individual weapons systems, is well done. As usual, Friedman's research is first-rate, although this book, like his others, lacks citations. And some readers may find the detailed discussions of ship designs within the various chapters more a useful reference than a good read.

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Grove, Eric J. *Vanguard to Trident: British Naval Policy since World War Two.* Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1987. 399pp. $34.95

This is not, as its title implies, a history of British warship construction. Rather, it is a tale of the protracted bureaucratic war waged by the Royal Navy's leadership since the 1940s to preserve a balanced blue-water surface fleet. It is a tale that will fascinate force planners on both sides of the Atlantic.

Against the constant background of a vulnerable economy that has never quite succeeded in providing a stable framework for long-range planning, Eric Grove shows us the effect of both liberal-leftist administrations distrustful of all things military and governments of the right with eccentric and equally damaging views on the usefulness of sea power in the nuclear age. He reveals the machinations of interservice rivalry at their worst and he shows how, repeatedly, the shortage of manpower has arisen to dampen incipient delusions of naval grandeur. He makes clear how real combat (Korea, Suez, the Falklands) has obtruded to confound the plans and predictions of politicians and naval officers alike.

The development of naval policy during this period of radical change, as Britain painfully adjusted herself to a post-Imperial role, makes an epic tale, and Eric Grove tells it well. He begins in the immediate postwar era with a Board of Admiralty striving to protect its wartime investment against the forces of economic instability and shifting strategic consensus. He describes how Mountbatten (First Sea Lord 1955-59 and Chief of Defense Staff 1959-65) began to set the navy on a new course, emphasizing quality rather than quantity, and basing his case for a balanced fleet on an East of Suez intervention role. He shows how a Labour administration, a prey to economic and ideological forces it could not control, exploited both service disunity and inadequacies within the naval staff to demolish the central pillar of the Mountbatten navy (the fixed-wing carrier program) and, ultimately, to settle for a defense role in Europe and the Eastern Atlantic.

The author also examines the political, diplomatic, and economic pressures which continue to drive Britain toward a continental strategy. This, he implies, is the next intellectual challenge for those who