

1987

Soviet Armed Forces Review Annual

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for revolutionary seizure of power and for establishing political control has had a number of takers. Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Yemen (and Nicaragua if its leaders have their way) are among those who have been influenced by the Soviet experience in exercising effective political control of their people and are presently exploiting these Leninist techniques.

The initial chapters of this book sketch out the essentials of the exercise of power among nations and the workings of the international system. The importance of the sense of perception as opposed to the reality of power is stressed. In addition, the significance of geography, history, and ideology in shaping Soviet perceptions is argued. This early section serves to explain how the Soviet Union approaches international affairs, deals with other states, and tries to see "what the world looks like from Moscow."

Dibb argues there are severe constraints on Moscow's foreign activities. Certain "internal problems" should tend to hold back the U.S.S.R.: nationality issues, the security of Siberia, and relations with eastern Europe. In a later chapter Dibb examines the Soviet economy, especially as it affects military power. He rejects the contention of some Western scholars that the economy is in a state of crisis, but recognizes there are serious economic difficulties and that some Moscow leaders admit there are such problems. In the recently held 27th Congress of the CPSU, Gorbachev was frank in his comments on the severity of economic difficulties. There are also chapters on

constraints that the international environment imposes on Soviet activities and a useful discussion is provided on the Soviet "strategic environment."

The Soviet Union: The Incomplete Superpower attempts "to give an overview of the likely nature of Soviet power through the mid-1990s . . . the picture is mixed." Dibb concludes that the "long-term Western strategy should . . . concentrate on exploiting the superior economic size and performance of the industrialised democracies, recognising that the struggle with the Soviet Union is at heart political *and* economic, not military." At the same time "prudence calls for a Western response that maintains a military balance sufficient to deter the Soviet Union from the use of military force." It is clear that Dibb offers no new formula for understanding and dealing with Moscow, but it remains important to reiterate hard learned lessons and this is a service he has performed.

HENRY M. SCHREIBER
Naval War College

Jones, David R., ed. *Soviet Armed Forces Review Annual*. Gulf Breeze, Fla.: Academic International Press, 1986. v. 9. 314pp. \$69.50

Since 1977, *Soviet Armed Forces Review Annual* (SAFRA) has published annually, in one comprehensive volume, a statistical overview and analysis of indicators of Soviet military power and a set of accompanying essays dealing with Soviet military affairs. A major theme developed in the ninth

volume of *SAFRA* is that "Russian planners seem increasingly persuaded that a future war will be fought by sophisticated conventional weapons on a high-tech, electronic battlefield."

In an excellent introductory survey of "The Soviet Military Year in Review, 1984-1985," Mr. Jones—the director of Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada—argues that, as the Soviet Union enters the late 1980s with a new political leadership and a revamped military command, from Moscow's point of view, "the international situation is hardly reassuring." The Reagan administration's insistence on continuing with the development of SDI, postponement of U.S.-U.S.S.R. naval talks on incidents at sea, the Afghan involvement and many other problems will limit severely the extent to which Secretary Gorbachev can restrain future Soviet military investment.

Subsequent essays by a diversified group of authors discuss Soviet strategic rocket, ground and air defense; air and navy forces; as well as the Soviet economy and space program.

SAFRA provides detailed insights into Soviet military capabilities, and thus is a valuable contribution to Western studies on Soviet military affairs. Assorted tables, maps, and figures are interspersed throughout the book. Chapter endnotes and a sixteen-page bibliography of articles and books on Soviet military and strategic issues, 1984-1985, serve as invaluable reference aids.

This book is highly recommended for the specialist and professional military. It will prove to be an asset

to the serious student's collection of books on the Soviet Union.

JAMES B. MOTLEY
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Silverstone, Paul H. *Directory of the World's Capital Ships*. New York: Hippocrene Books, 1984. 496pp. \$70

Jordan, John. *An Illustrated Guide to Battleships and Battlecruisers*. New York: ARCO Publishing, Inc., 1984. 151pp. \$9.95

Everyone is publishing something on capital ships these days and these two books, *Capital Ships and Battleships and Battlecruisers*, represent two very different approaches—one scholarly, the other popular. The former is written by Paul Silverstone, a name well known to anyone who follows naval affairs. Mr. Silverstone deliberately takes a very broad definition of "capital ship," one which includes not only battleships and battle cruisers but armored cruisers and aircraft carriers. Such is for all the navies of the world since the introduction of steel ships around the middle of the nineteenth century. His information and photographs include many from foreign sources.

As a thorough reference book, *Capital Ships* first presents class details by country in rough chronological order. This section contains the specific physical characteristics of each class with limited notes dealing with the designer and the characteristics of the design. Each ship within each