

1981

Makers of Naval Policy 1798-1947

John B. Hattendorf

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

Recommended Citation

Hattendorf, John B. (1981) "Makers of Naval Policy 1798-1947," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 34 : No. 1 , Article 11.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol34/iss1/11>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu.

ceremony, and shipboard life that demonstrates how very Western in form the Japanese Navy was. Yet he also uses Yamamoto's personal correspondence and vignettes about operations planning and command relationships that reveal how that navy differed from its non-Japanese counterparts. Agawa argues that frequent contact with the world outside Japan made Yamamoto and other senior officers strong opponents of more nationalistic, army-backed policies that risked and ultimately provoked war with the United States. Yet the careful reader will find in these pages data that support the opposite interpretation developed by Stephen Pelz in *Race to Pearl Harbor*. Nowhere else in a Western language, however, can one find more information on the organizational behavior of the Imperial Japanese Navy.

On a third level this book can be read as a case study in civil-military relations. From 1939 onward, Yamamoto confronted the military professional's classic dilemma: what to do when one's government follows "wrong" policies? Although the admiral toyed with the idea of resignation, he never resigned. He warned his prime minister against the dangers of war with the United States at the same time as he pushed plans for what became the Pearl Harbor attack. By late 1941 he was determined to "pursue unswervingly a course that is precisely opposite to my personal views." How could he do so? Agawa hints that the admiral may have fallen into the "effectiveness trap," believing that quick victories might somehow educate the Japanese Government to the need to negotiate an end to what should have been seen as a limited war against the United States. He also hints that the Emperor-centered value system of officers of Yamamoto's generation may have precluded effective opposition to war. His most valuable contribution, however, is detail that

suggests that Yamamoto slipped into what psychologists call "cognitive dissonance." The admiral coped with his failure to influence national policy and his awareness of the probable end results of war with the United States by concentrating narrowly on plans for Pearl Harbor. Successful battle against those within the navy who questioned both the strategic soundness and technical feasibility of a strike there compensated for losses elsewhere. This kind of psychological displacement enabled Yamamoto to do what in retrospect seems unthinkable: launch a war that he was certain could not be won.

Two flaws lessen the value of this excellent translation for the non-Japanese reader. It lacks maps, leaving the reader puzzled about the location of places in Japan and in the South Pacific described so minutely by the author. Secondly, someone omitted source notes from this English text. Their absence renders the book less valuable to those who would want to compare this Japanese-based account of war and diplomacy with others written from American and British sources. Nonetheless, *Reluctant Admiral* commands the attention of anyone interested in the naval profession, the Imperial Japanese Navy, or the Pacific aspects of World War II.

ROGER DINGMAN
University of Southern California

Albion, Robert Greenhalgh. *Makers of Naval Policy 1798-1947*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1980. 737pp.

Professor Albion's study of policymaking in the U.S. Navy was begun in 1948 and completed in 1950. The rough manuscript of this study, deposited in the Harvard College Library, in microfilm at the Naval War College and elsewhere, has been known to serious scholars for many years, but it is now published for the first time. The manuscript has had enormous

difficulties in reaching print. It was the first volume in a projected four-volume study to analyze critically the Navy's entire administrative experience. That project was cancelled in 1950. The tale of these misadventures need not be told here; they make a sad and unfortunate story for any piece of serious scholarship. Rowena Reed's edition of this study, culled from the remaining drafts, reconstructed chapters and author's notes shows the editor's great effort and devotion. The Naval Institute has done a great service in publishing this volume. Even 30 years after it was written, Albion's study represents the best general analysis of the policymaking mechanism as it relates to the history of the U.S. Navy between 1798 and 1947.

Unlike the earlier administrative histories of the U.S. Navy by Oscar Paulin and the Sprouts, Professor Albion's work is not a chronological narrative, but a topical analysis of the subject. The first chapter gives a bird's eye view of the chronology and sets the stage for the following chapters. Chapters 2-8 deal with a variety of subjects ranging from the selection of Secretaries of the Navy, the methods by which serving officers gave their professional advice to civilian leaders, the role of Congress and the various processes by which it affected the Navy. Among the topics dealt with under the subject of congressional affairs are the influence of congressional committees, the personalities of their chairmen as well as the tactics used by naval leaders on "the Hill." This section, in particular, is supported by seven valuable appendixes listing important naval legislation, a comparison between the annual expenditures of the Navy, the Army and the Royal Navy, the changes in appropriation procedures before and after 1922 and analyses of the membership of the naval committees in Congress.

Chapters 9-12 deal with the interplay

of all the various factors and the sources of initiative in terms of internal policy for the Navy. Albion clearly shows that when a proposal is initiated, it is altered and formed in the process by which other policymakers react to the idea. The fate of any proposal is bound up in this process and the strength or persistence of the proposal's sponsor. Here we see the interplay among the offices of the President, the Secretary of the Navy and the Navy's senior officers. Beyond these factors Albion also considers the important influence of other departments, such as War, State and the Treasury, in the formulation of policy.

Two additional chapters deal with the Navy's role in the formulation of external policy. Before 1898, the Navy was too small to have much effect in this area, but thereafter it became a major policy instrument in the formulation of broad aspects of national policy toward the outside world.

The final 11 chapters of the book (Chapters 17-27) deal with the period after 1939 and the massive changes in American policymaking that occurred during and after World War II. The material in this section is very useful and provides much illuminating insight. Professor Albion had access to much classified material as well as personal contact with many of the important individuals in this period. Much of this information was used in Albion's work, *Forrestal and the Navy* (1962). More than the earlier portions of the study, however, this section must be modified by the new judgments and additional details that have come to light in recent research. Nevertheless, the overview of World War II naval policymaking is a useful one that makes direct connections with the historical experience of the Navy. For that reason, it remains a useful and important study of the basic outline of events.

In discussing the various factors involved in bureaucratic decisionmak-

ing, Professor Albion's work presages some of the influential studies done in the 1960s and 1970s. Unlike these works, however, he does not deal in "models" and does not describe abstract forces. Albion's analysis portrays many of the ideas involved in bureaucratic policymaking by using anecdotes that emphasize men at work within the office buildings of the U.S. Navy. Albion's great narrative ability and his incisive understanding of naval affairs combine here in an extremely important study for the history of the U.S. Navy. There is no doubt that it is the work of a master craftsman.

Albion's manuscript has benefited from Rowena Reed's addition of an annotated bibliography that summarizes the main work that has been done in this field in the years since 1950. She has done much excellent work in paring the manuscript and bringing the rough drafts into publishable form. One regrets, however, that such a distinguished work must be published in a form that looks like typed pages rather than a printed book. Moreover, there are some occasional editorial oversights. There are a few unimportant matters of wording that mar the text. More seriously, however, the table that summarizes the results of congressional debates on battleships between 1886 and 1916 was "not available for publication" (p. 211). The editor should have either provided a table or altered the wording of the text so that the absence of the table was not such an obvious omission. Additionally, the editor would have been well advised to make clear the natural division of the text into two parts: 1789-1939 and 1939-1947. As it stands, only a careful reader of the volume readily perceives the division.

Despite some unimportant editorial flaws, Professor Albion's work stands, as it has for 30 years, as the year unsurpassed general analysis of the changing process by which American

leaders determined what the U.S. Navy would be and what it would do.

JOHN B. HATTENDORF
Naval War College

Child, John. *Unequal Alliance: The Inter-American Military System, 1938-1978*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1980. 253pp.

John Child's book is a careful and painstaking study of the inter-American military system over a 40-year period. The author traces it from its origins and growth in World War II, its stagnation in the 1945-61 period, its resurgence in the 1960s to counter Cuban-sponsored insurgencies, and finally its decline and fragmentation since the late 1960s.

Particularly valuable in this study is the author's discussion of current Latin American politicomilitary theories and concepts. The author finds that most military rulers (even those that Americans consider to be conservative) adhere to a doctrine of national security and development. This doctrine has its roots in the Kennedy administration counterinsurgency and civic action program, Marxism, and dependency theory. This doctrine calls for the rapid economic and social development of Latin American nations along with increased ability to oppose militarily both internal and external threats under the leadership of military rule. Latin American military regimes, then, view themselves not as a conservative force, but as a progressive and sometimes even radical one. Further, military regimes envision themselves as being the sole force able to implement such a program as civilian democracies are both weak internally and too susceptible to external influence (including that of the United States).

The author also describes how there have been several consequences of the Latin American perception that the military power of the United States is on the decline. First, and most obvious, has been a greater tendency for Latin