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U.S. Policy and Low-Intensity Conflict: Potentials for Military Struggles in the 1980s

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bringing into full light some of the more deplorable practices in the Royal Navy. Sensitivities having eased with him, Roskill has secured access to the private papers of the Beattys, of Beatty's lover and her husband, and of the royal family at Windsor so that he can now provide a full portrait of the whole man.

None can dispute Roskill's assertion that the handsome and brave Beatty possessed "a very high degree of charisma" that won for him devotion in the Royal Navy from the lower decks up. His cap at jaunty angle, his especially cut jacket, his rich and beautiful American wife, and his spectacular rise to become the youngest British admiral since Nelson all attest to the panache that adorned the public image of David Beatty. Behind the panache, however, Roskill has found the terrible trials that Beatty suffered from his unbalanced wife, his affair with a woman who both loved him and sought to help him with his wife, his antisemitism, his disastrous approval of the recommendation by the Smuts Committee in 1917 that Britain establish a separate air arm, and much more.

Predictably, Roskill's biography of Beatty also includes numerous comments on Professor Marder's treatment of the Royal Navy in *From Dreadnought to Scapa Flow*, especially Marder's assessments of the British at the battle of Jutland. Neither Roskill nor Marder have been drawn into the partisan debate over the conduct of Admirals Jellicoe and Beatty at Jutland. What Marder saw as caution in Jellicoe, however, is timidity to Roskill, and Roskill finds Beatty a good deal more decisive and flexible than did Marder. Whereas Marder attributed heavy losses of the British at Jutland to careless handling of cordite, Roskill would still stress the weakness of British armor. Roskill blames poor British shooting on the Admiralty's adoption of the Dreyer fire control system, rather than the superior system developed by Arthur

Hungerford Pollen. Although Roskill claims that Beatty sought to reverse the overcentralization that stifled initiative in the Royal Navy, he also conceded that there was too much wrong with Beatty's staff work for later generations to conclude that the admiral should be counted among the great handlers of fleets. American historians familiar with the debates between line and staff officers in the U.S. Navy should note Roskill's conclusion that excessive domination by line officers over specialists and scientists may have cost the Royal Navy technological leadership over the German Navy.

While Roskill does not sit as judge over the Jutland controversy, he deplors as extremely unwise Beatty's underhanded efforts to tamper with history. Why Beatty was so anxious to cover up the circular movement of his flagship at Jutland remains one of the fascinating mysteries of battle history.

As in his earlier work, Roskill has written of Beatty and the Royal Navy from the point of view of an insider who can draw from his own rich personal experience and background to find meaning in his materials. It is one of the tragedies of American naval history that no American naval officer shall ever write on the U.S. Navy during the early 20th century as has Captain Roskill on the Royal Navy.

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Sarkesian, Sam C. and Scully, William L., eds. *U.S. Policy and Low-Intensity Conflict: Potentials for Military Struggles in the 1980s*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1981. 221pp.

The essays in this book represent a serious discussion of how the United States can protect its foreign policy interests in the many localized conflicts that are likely to occur in the Third World. The authors recognize that there

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are many different types of conflict in the Third World and that these conflicts cannot all be classified under one heading. They acknowledge that the phrase "low-intensity conflict" is an inappropriate one, since many Third World conflicts are actually highly intense, though fought in a limited geographical area.

The authors see two main obstacles to successful U.S. involvement in Third World conflicts: 1) lack of military forces dedicated to and trained for Third World contingencies, and 2) lack of public support in the wake of Vietnam for further U.S. military involvement in such conflicts. Their recommendation for a solution to the first problem is, sensibly enough, the earmarking of specific forces for Third World conflicts and training them to fight in the types of war that occur there. Concerning the second problem, the authors are less able to provide a solution. They feel that the United States should only become involved in conflicts that American public opinion would support. To this end, the United States should ensure that any conflict is not a protracted one and that it does not receive adverse coverage in the American media. How these two conditions can be met, however, is uncertain since both depend on the opponent rapidly being defeated and the media cooperating with government policy. As neither of these conditions can be guaranteed, the problem of public support does not appear to be one that can be resolved easily.

The main problem with the essays in this book is that the authors look at Third World conflicts only in terms of how the United States can protect its interests in them. For the United States this means preventing the U.S.S.R. from gaining influence, whereas for the local participants in such conflicts American and Soviet interests may be less important than their own interests. For example, a military dictatorship supported by the United States may be

less interested in halting Soviet influence than in maintaining itself in power, no matter how unpopular the dictatorship is internally. If U.S. support to an unpopular government leads the populace to favor Soviet-backed forces coming to power, then U.S. support to such a government would be counter-productive in halting the spread of Soviet influence.

More generally, the nature and the goals of the contending parties in a Third World conflict will affect how successful the United States will be in achieving its own goals through supporting one side or another. Supporting an unpopular dictatorship can severely hinder the achievement of U.S. goals no matter how large a military effort the United States makes, but even low-level American aid to popular groups (such as the Afghan rebels) could prove highly effective.

The nature and the interests of local participants are an important factor in determining how successful U.S. interests in Third World conflicts can be achieved. This factor deserved more attention in a discussion of U.S. policy toward such conflicts than it received in this book.

MARK N. KATZ

Ulam, Adam B. *Russia's Failed Revolutions: From the Decembrists to the Dissidents*. New York: Basic Books, 1981. 453pp.

To the student of Russian history, Adam B. Ulam requires no introduction. During his career as Professor of History and Political Science at Harvard University, Professor Ulam has written numerous studies that have established his reputation for serious scholarship. The very title of his latest work should arouse the curiosity of specialist and layman alike.

In *Russia's Failed Revolutions*, Professor Ulam addresses the following question: "What was it that at decisive