

1980

## Tars, Turks, and Tankers: The Role of the United States Navy in the Middle East, 1800-1979

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Questions of substance are also troubling. The research that forms the foundation of much of this critique is seriously outdated. Although published in 1979, no research prior to 1975 is cited. For example, in the authors' section on war gaming at the Naval War College, the Warfare Analysis and Research System, already outdated and scheduled for replacement in 1981, is described as not yet being operational. If research lags so badly for as major a gaming activity as the War College, the validity of the rest of the work must be questioned.

It is remarkable that a book critiquing the military problem-solving system does not mention any of the gurus of system analysis, like Alain K. Enthoven, E.S. Quade or Wayne Boucher. The professional standards Brewer and Shubik call for look like the standards Quade has advanced for systems analysis. A discussion of the relationship of systems analysis and war gaming would have been useful and valuable.

This book raises important questions: how much should the military and civilian community spend on games, simulations, and models? How do we know a model is a good surrogate for the original? What is the theoretical and intellectual foundation for gaming? These questions and more are the kinds of issues that need to be addressed. The authors have posed the questions, but *The War Game* does not give the answers.

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Bryson, Thomas A. *Tars, Turks, and Tankers: The Role of the United States Navy in the Middle East, 1800-1979*. Metuchen, N.J. and London: Scarecrow Press, 1980. 269pp.

Not long before the election in 1904, President Roosevelt was faced with the following predicament. In Tangier an American citizen named Perdicaris had

been kidnapped for ransom by a Moroccan bandit named Rasuli. T.R.'s reaction to the situation precisely depicts the famous "big stick" in foreign policy. He dispatched the fleet at top speed for the Mediterranean Sea and sent the following ultimatum to the Sultan, "this government wants Perdicaris alive or Rasuli dead." Naturally, by the time the fleet arrived Mr. Perdicaris was free.

This story, related with obvious relish, is just one of Professor Bryson's anecdotes in *Tars, Turks, and Tankers*. The book is satisfying and useful on at least three levels. It is first of all an outline of America's historical and diplomatic involvement in the Middle East. It is also the story of some of our most fascinating historical characters, from the exploits of young Lieutenant Decatur in 1804, to the gallantry of the crew of the U.S.S. *Liberty* in 1967. Finally, it is an attempt to persuade us, via its retelling of our historical presence, of our national interests and therefore our naval commitment in that part of the world.

On the first level, the historical, it is tempting to characterize the book as superficial as it attempts to sum up, in 200 pages, about 200 years of naval and diplomatic history. However, given the breadth and depth of the historical panorama of his undertaking, it is better instead to keep in mind the definition given in the preface: the book is intended "to provide a survey of the use of American naval power in the Middle East as an adjunct of American diplomacy." Accordingly the book may be best described as a primer, or outline of our historical involvement.

As a collection of fascinating anecdotes and episodes, the book is most successful inasmuch as no retelling of these stories can fail to entertain the reader. The United States, no less than the British, has had her historical adventurers and characters in the Middle East; less famous, perhaps, than

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Lawrence of Arabia but no less daring, resourceful or romantic. Bryson delights in the exploits of Decatur against the Barbary Pirates, particularly the torching of *Philadelphia* when that ship was captured and lay at anchor in the harbor at Tripoli. In another exploit, reminiscent of Lawrence himself, he tells of William Eaton, formerly a Captain in the U.S. Army, sometime consul to Tunis, Naval Agent (perhaps agent provocateur) to the Barbary States, and a man with a definite vision, who, in 1804, gathered a motley crew of 400 sailors, marines, a few Arabs and Greeks, and marched 600 miles across the North African desert in attempt to restore pasha Hamet Karamanli to the Tripolitan throne. Undaunted by shortages of food, water and by mutiny, not to mention travel by foot and camel, Eaton's force attacked the fortress at Derne by land while Navy ships *Hornet* and *Nautilus* bombarded from the harbor. The result was victory and peace in America's little known but first declared war.

With respect to the final level of this book, wherein Professor Bryson attempts to convince us that we ought not only to remain in the Mediterranean, but that we should also establish a 5th Fleet in the Indian Ocean, he is perhaps guilty of preaching to the choir. Not many would argue with his contention that our national interests dictate a continuing need for a strong naval commitment in that part of the world. Whether as part of the defense of the southern flank of NATO, or as part of a continuing commitment to Israel, or, not the least, as part of our growing interests in the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean, the U.S. Navy's tasks will obviously continue. Even a thumbnail sketch of just some of the crises in that part of the world in the 1970s alone will convince a skeptic of the need for a strong Navy presence there.

Professor Bryson's review of our

historical naval commitment is both timely and germane.

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Buell, Thomas B. *Master of Seapower: A Biography of Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1980. 609pp.

If any single theme characterized the career of Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King, it was his deep-seated and openly expressed ambition to reach the pinnacle of his profession, Chief of Naval Operations. When in 1939 the position fell vacant—quite possibly for the last time during King's active duty—the appointment as Chief of Naval Operations went not to King but to Adm. Harold Stark. King was named instead to the General Board, often the last duty for officers nearing retirement.

Had King's career ended with his service on the General Board, it would still have been an exemplary one, but hardly one that would have attracted a skilled biographer like Thomas B. Buell, author of *The Quiet Warrior: A Biography of Admiral Raymond A. Spruance* (1974). Born in Lorain, Ohio, in 1878, King graduated from Annapolis as a passed midshipman with the class of 1901 and for almost four decades saw unusually varied and interesting service. Choosing carefully the officers under whom he would serve—and many asked for the able King—he saw staff duty with some of the most influential officers of the early 1900s: Hugo Osterhaus, William Sims, and Henry Mayo.

Until the 1920s King's sea duty was entirely in surface ships, but thereafter he became involved with submarines as a division commander and then as commander of the submarine base at New London, Connecticut, from 1923 to 1926. Nearing the close of his tour at New London, he enhanced his already high reputation through his supervision