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U-Boats Offshore

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iniquities of Tsarism, the atrocities of anti-Semitism and the ignorance and drunkenness" of Russian peasants. Of equal interest are the twists and turns of the last days of the Tsar, captured with precision and clarity and revealing that even a man of absolute power must yield if he does not hold the confidence of his government.

This wartime look behind the scenes at the workaday world of diplomats confirms that they perform necessary and difficult tasks that have not been outdated by technological advances in communication nor the realpolitik rhetoric of the nuclear age. Grayson concludes that U.S.-Russian relations never got further than "cool correctness" and that the nations were separated by a "wall of mistrust and ignorance." In my view, that 1914 wall remains largely intact today.

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Hoyt, Edwin P. *U-Boats Offshore*. New York: Stein and Day, 1978. 278pp.

More than a third of a century after the end of World War II, a spate of books about various aspects of that war is appearing on the market: books such as Ronald Lewin's *Ultra Goes to War*, Joseph E. Persico's *Piercing the Reich*, and Edwin P. Hoyt's *U-Boats Offshore*.

The author of this book provides a fascinating account of the activities—and successes—of German submarines off the eastern coast of North America in the early part of the war. According to Hoyt, the American Military Establishment was neither trained nor equipped for antisubmarine warfare in the months following Pearl Harbor, and nearly lost the war for the Allies in the early months of 1942: in the first 6 months after American entry into the war, German U-boats sank nearly 600 ships, most of them in American waters defended by U.S. Forces, while losing

only 6 submarines in the western Atlantic.

These data are consistent with Hoyt's thesis of American "unpreparedness and incompetence in dealing with U-boats." It is, however, only fair to ask whether Great Britain fared any better in the eastern part of the Atlantic. If the Germans threw the bulk of their submarines at the U.S. east coast rather than deploying it elsewhere, it is not surprising that they met with substantial success. Since all of western Europe, including Great Britain, had been losing to Germany during the same period, one could equally well argue that America's European Allies were equally unprepared and incompetent.

The book is a dramatic, suspenseful, action-packed account of war in the Atlantic as it involved the United States. Hoyt's portrayals of sinkings and his lifeboat and raft stories are both poignant and shocking. There are heroes on both sides, with few villains. Even the Germans are pictured as brave men doing their duty: if some German captains abused the laws of war, they were not alone, as in the case of their U-85, the crew of which presumably was massacred by an American destroyer.

Hoyt ends on a note of triumph: the weight of Allied skill and of American industrial power turned the tide of battle, changing the entire course of World War II.

A great deal of research went into *U-Boats Offshore*, but the resulting text is literary entertainment, not a book valuable to military strategists or tacticians.

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Irani, Robert G., *American Diplomacy: An Analysis of the Azerbaijan Crisis, 1945-1946*. Hyattsville, Md: Institute of Middle Eastern and North American Affairs, 1978. 94pp.

The "Azerbaijan Crisis," as it is known in the West, is one of those