

1979

Soviet Air Power in Transition

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Recommended Citation

Katz, Mark N. (1979) "Soviet Air Power in Transition," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 32 : No. 1 , Article 14.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol32/iss1/14>

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BOOK REVIEWS

Bailey, Thomas A. *The Marshall Plan Summer*. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1977. 246pp.

This book represents a distinct departure from Thomas Bailey's other works. The author begins his Foreword with the statement that "This book is not a scholarly monograph on the Marshall Plan. It is primarily a journal that describes in intimate detail conditions in the sick countries of Europe at the time the Marshall Plan was struggling to be born. The emphasis is on the patients, not the doctor." The dean of American history never cloaks his position and his 1941 observations are simple and straightforward with no implied symbolisms.

Traveling under the auspices of the National War College from June through August 1947, Bailey presents a very personal, rare historic Baedeker of the year that spawned the Economic Recovery Act for Western Europe, gave birth to the postwar containment policy, and formally announced the beginnings of the cold war. The fast moving text is punctuated with cartoons and pictures that accurately captured the temper of the time, and Bailey's recorded observations are well mixed with hundreds of personal interviews and official documents that have only been recently released.

Because of the unique "journal" style of the book, Bailey is able to give the reader an insight into the broad issues of general continental concern: food, education, government, economics and displaced persons in addition to lesser issues that illuminate the social conditions at the time: prostitution, architecture, standards of living, the media, American ethnocentrism, discrimination and political disposition of the intelligentsia. *The Marshall Plan Summer* is not a chronological forced march through facts and does not rely on the traditional means of compartmenting

information. Rather, it is a whistle stop tour in which the traveler shares his 30-year old observations frankly and honestly and puts them into a casual country by country historical perspective. This is thorough history of the postwar climate in Europe without the mechanical facts that often make reading histories in general such a chore.

In his final chapter, Bailey suggests that the cold war was the inevitable product of clashing ideologies and misunderstood intentions, beginning with the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 and the articulation of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine of world domination. The Epilogue puts the Marshall Plan into present day context and briefly discusses its place in history. That it gave the recipients the means to shorten the postwar trauma is without question. That it forestalled the westward movement of communism is probable. Thomas Bailey has added an important book to his works, one that will allow meticulous students to fill the voids that are created by the obligation many historians feel to keep history in the third person, avoiding all the unique, colorful, and descriptive sensory information they might receive firsthand. As a layman often disappointed with the cold, articulate, and erudite histories on which we are forced to subsist, I found *The Marshall Plan Summer* to be a pleasant change. Even erudite historians can get something out of it.

JOHN MORSE
Lieutenant, U.S. Navy

Berman, Robert P. *Soviet Air Power in Transition*. Washington: Brookings Institution, 1978. 82pp.

With the widespread attention devoted to the Soviet buildup of nuclear weapons and increasing involvement in the Third World, relatively little public discussion has focused on the more

96 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

traditional instruments of force employed by the Soviets. In this Brookings study, Robert P. Berman examines the tremendous growth of Soviet airpower and the threat that this poses for the United States, especially in Europe. Fundamental to Berman's thesis is the idea that the Soviets would be inclined more to use conventional forces than nuclear ones in a European war (at least initially), and so the need to pay close attention to Soviet air capability is urgent.

Until the mid-1960s, the primary mission of Soviet air forces was to provide defense against NATO airpower. The air defense mission, though, has been increasingly transferred to Soviet ground forces with the development of large numbers of highly accurate surface-to-air missiles. Berman believes that Soviet air forces are not now targeted against their NATO equivalent but against Allied ground forces. Instead of trying to gain air supremacy over the West, the role of Soviet airpower is to prevent an effective ground defense by NATO against a Soviet attack.

One shortcoming of the book is that while the author mentions briefly that he feels the *Backfire* bomber is primarily a threat to Western Europe and not at all to the United States, he does not discuss this controversial point in depth. To be more convincing, he should have discussed why he feels *Backfire* is not a threat to the United States and also should have stated what particular defensive measures are needed to counter this new bomber in Europe.

The author also examines the growing potential wartime uses and the rising actual "political" peacetime uses of Soviet airpower. While he outlines what the United States and NATO must do to counter the former, nothing is said about how to deal with the latter. Particularly disturbing are Soviet overflights of our allies' airspace to deliver weapons to Soviet clients in the Horn of Africa and elsewhere. This reviewer

believes that the United States must act firmly to persuade our friends to halt such overflights by forcing Soviet airplanes down if necessary. This can hardly be considered an extreme measure; it is exactly what the Soviets themselves do when Korean airliners accidentally wander over Soviet territory.

All in all, *Soviet Air Power in Transition* is a valuable work that escapes certain needless constraints in thinking that have been all too common. Instead of seeing future conflict in Europe as a series of compartmentalized battles of armies fighting armies alone while, separately, air forces are fighting air forces alone, Berman stresses the threat that Soviet air forces pose to NATO ground forces as well as to Allied sea and airpower. The book thus merits reading by all those concerned with the defense of Europe on land, sea, and air.

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Betts, Richard K. *Soldiers, Statesmen, and Cold War Crises*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1977. 292pp.

Most military officers will find this an interesting book, despite its probable origins as a doctoral dissertation. Mr. Betts has taken the period since World War Two to study the effect of advice offered by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the President in times of crisis. What makes his effort different is his use of sources. In addition to the usual published accounts and memoirs, he has employed interviews of the principal participants and their subordinates, mostly from the military side of the Potomoc. Actually, there is not much choice in this as the records of the proceedings at issue remain highly classified. And because of classification and other sensitivities, the interviews themselves are not always attributed directly either, but credit an anonymous "Military Interview" in the notes. So, this is