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Royal United Services Institute and Brassey's Defence Yearbook 1978-79

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In separate chapters, Novik assesses Soviet involvement in the currently volatile PDRY-YAR and Somali-Ethiopian relationships. His treatment of recent trends and events on both sides of Bab al-Mandab are an especially valuable feature. On the two Yemens, his analysis serves as helpful background for assessing the February-March 1979 border clash between the pro-Soviet PDRY and the Western/Saudi-backed YAR. Likewise, Novik's coverage of the Somali-Ethiopian conflict in the Ogaden includes solid analysis of both internal and external factors that led to the sudden Soviet turnabout in its superpower patron role. If somewhat critical in his judgments regarding Western inaction in the face of these Soviet initiatives, Novik concludes that it is essential for the United States to reexamine its regional interests before developing a clear-cut responsive policy.

This analysis should prove useful in interpreting recent events along the Strait and also the current nature of Soviet involvement. Its skillful integration of Soviet and Arab source materials are particularly helpful in gaining sophisticated comprehension of the area's complex internal, regional and superpower politics.

These features especially recommend the work as one from which specialist and general reader alike may reach informed opinions.

JOSEPH E. THACH, JR.
Office of the Assistant
Secretary of Defense
for Public Affairs

The Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies, ed. *Royal United Services Institute and Brassey's Defence Yearbook 1978/1979*. London: Brassey's, 1978. 365pp.

At its price of \$49.50 when procured through Crane, Russak, its U.S. distributor, this book would be the last on my list for addition to a personal library. It does not fulfill its stated purpose. It is

dated where it claims to be current, hence not authoritative. Data readily available in 1978 were not included. It is also contemporary where it might be timeless. It is poorly composed and edited. It is general where it should be specific and detailed in offering simplistic trivia. It reflects an "England first" viewpoint, perhaps understandable, but that becomes distracting to an objective reader. Its jacket price of £15, compared to its cost in \$U.S., reflects more strength to the pound than one would find elsewhere.

Brassey's is divided into three parts. Part I "Strategic Review" is the best—a series of 12 articles on the United Kingdom, U.N. and NATO military matters suitable to a quality British periodical, but they are not matched by the remainder of the book.

Part II is entitled either "Weapons Systems" or "Weapons Technology," depending where in the text one chooses to seek its title. It is inconsistent in quality with internal disagreements among paragraphs and between text and tables. It is obvious that this part, especially the section on naval weapons, has not been updated for several years. Available data in the tables is missing; that provided is sometimes incorrect. The writing style is less able than that of Part I.

Part III is an Anglophile's view of important "Defence Literature of the Year" and a "Chronology of Events June 1977-May 1978." Neither seems complete nor are the criteria for inclusion apparent.

There are many credible reference works on defense matters available on both sides of the Atlantic. There are also acknowledged forums that publish contemporary essays quarterly or monthly. This contribution of Brassey's seems to enter both arenas tentatively and sorely unarmed in light of the competition—89 years of experience notwithstanding.

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