Sea Power and Its Meaning

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This book appears to be intended for the same audience as that to which the standard "Sea Power" briefing is given—the relatively uninformed and, perhaps, uncritical. That reader who is either of the foregoing will find the volume an easy-to-read overview of sea power; one which provides palatable answers to the problems raised by Communist aggression, the population explosion, and the possible exhaustion of natural resources. The book follows a logical progression of topics: Mackinder's concepts of geopolitics, Mahan's theories of the effect of sea power upon history, the deterrent effect of United States and Allied naval forces, the cold and limited war utilization of naval power, the historical evolution of United States naval forces, and lastly, the science of oceanography. Some readers may find reason to question the objectivity of some of the historical "facts" included, particularly those occurring during our expansionist era from 1890 to 1920. When dealing with the naval contribution to victory in World War II, some statistics and relative figures seem to be viewed through a rather salt-rimed porthole—and from some distance off the beach. Editing by those with more experience in specialized fields (one notes no such acknowledgments) would have avoided the errors in ship identifications and evolutions so obvious in the photographic portion as well as in the nondoctrinal treatment of amphibious operations and construction battalions. The above comments should not be construed to derogate the value of this book as background reading for non-naval officers anticipating duty with the Navy, or its value as a source for a sea power address. Caution, however, is advised in extracting facts more definitive than the 75/25 water/land ratio.

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