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Soviet Naval Strategy: Fifty Years of Theory and Practice

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with the broader plan of social reform will have a better chance of success; just a means to perpetuate a military regime won't stem the tide of insurgency. The dilemma of attaining political stability amidst rapid demographic, social, economic, and ideological changes continues to be the problem of the elements attempting to promote security and reform. This book is very readable and is recommended as a reference source for those desiring a better understanding of the concepts and programs of military civic action in Latin America.

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Herrick, Robert W. *Soviet Naval Strategy: Fifty Years of Theory and Practice*. Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute, 1968. 197p.

Among all the authors of what looks like the beginnings of an avalanche of new studies (books, articles, theses, dissertations, et cetera) on Soviet naval developments, Commander Herrick is probably the best qualified. He is competent in the Russian language, he was a Soviet naval analyst for ONI, he served two years in the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, he has completed most of the work for a doctoral degree from Columbia University's highly respected Russian Institute, and he has even gone to sea in Soviet warships. The book that he has written is in all likelihood the most carefully researched and the most readable survey of the history of Soviet naval developments in this century that is currently available in the English language. It should be on the "must" reading list for all American military and naval officers and for all American civilian officials with any degree of responsibility for formulating U.S. defense and foreign policies. These readers, however, would be well advised to approach the book with a willingness to make their own judgments.

Herrick's diligent research has produced an impressive array of factual

findings some of which may be news even to generally knowledgeable people, for example, his revelations concerning Soviet interests in building aircraft carrier forces during two periods in the relatively recent past. His evidence also challenges such widespread beliefs as the notion that the Russians have a strong traditional impulse to acquire warm-water ports. But where Herrick is open to question is not so much on his facts but rather on the interpretative conclusions that he places on these facts.

Herrick's central argument is that, unless and until the Soviets build large modern carrier strike forces (and he rejects any speculation that such forces may be in the works), Soviet naval forces do not and cannot present any meaningful threat to NATO or to U.S. sea supremacy. Indeed, even if the Soviets should build a large modern surface fleet including attack carriers, Herrick cites geography and other factors to conclude "that the odds against eventual [Soviet] success would be very heavy." He concedes that Soviet sub forces could be a harassing nuisance, but the whole thrust of his conclusions is that there really is no Soviet naval "threat" facing the United States and NATO. To the extent that some people think there is such a threat, Herrick attributes this to Soviet propaganda and to the willingness of U.S. naval officers to cite Soviet claims in an effort to get more political support for a larger U.S. Navy. This will therefore be a controversial book--indeed, the "Publisher's Preface" reveals that there was a dispute within the U.S. Naval Institute as to whether to publish the book. This reviewer thinks the Institute made the right decision, but he also thinks that any reader who disagrees with Herrick should thus accept the challenge to base his rebuttal on research and reasoning that is as careful and thorough as Herrick has presented.

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