

1967

Book Review

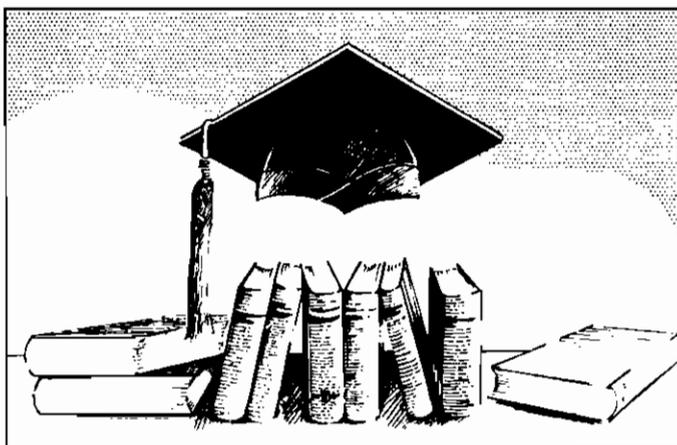
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BOOKS

Bailey, Thomas A. *Presidential Greatness*. New York: Appleton-Century, 1966. 368p. (E 176.1 .B17)

There have been many efforts made throughout the history of this country to measure the greatness or effectiveness of our Presidents. The author of *Presidential Greatness* has made another such effort. He has attacked the problem with a slightly new technique and has developed a very readable, interesting, and human view of the Presidents of these United States. Mr. Bailey has used a basis for his discourse two surveys of presidential greatness conducted in 1948 and again in 1962 by Professor Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr., of Harvard University. The pollsters were professional historians, political scientists, historians, journalists, and others from various walks of life. Mr. Bailey has then gone into the attributes of greatness; surveyed the Presidents, using these criteria; and then compared his ranking of greatness with the ratings expressed in Professor Schlesinger's polls. The criteria used, among others, were physical stature, intellect, character, personality, temperament, and ability as a politician, administrator, and leader. The book is laced with entertaining, little-known incidents, and human and humorous anecdotes on all of the Presidents that personify them as men rather than casting them as impersonal, statuesque figures. Throughout the book there is a definite tongue-in-cheek shading which is refreshing. In his summary reassessment of the Presidents, Mr. Bailey has used 43 yardsticks to measure greatness, commencing with achievement. What was the President's record of achievement at home and abroad, both long-range and short-range? He also applies the gauge of the veto. How skillful was the President in controlling Congress or shaping legislation by the veto or threat of veto? Employing the measurements gathered from his scale, the author has then reassessed the Presidents and placed them in his own priority of greatness. In so doing, he does not agree with Professor Schlesinger in many instances, and his rationale for the variance

is most interesting. This is not a good research book, but it is pleasurable, interesting reading for anyone, without regard to political party affiliation.

J.R.M. FISHER

Commander, U.S. Navy

Brynes, Asher. *We Give to Conquer*. New York: Norton, 1966. 219p. (HC 60 .B87)

On 10 January 1967, *The New York Times* printed the text of President Johnson's special message to Congress on aid to foreign lands. The \$6.2 billion that he requested for the next two fiscal years is the smallest since the program started 20 years ago. In his message, President Johnson stated in part, "The threat to our security posed by internal subversion and insurgency cannot be countered by withdrawal, isolation or indifference."

According to Mr. Asher Brynes' thesis, as expounded in *We Give to Conquer*, the United States foreign aid program is a threat to world peace. He maintains that all unilateral foreign aid to poorer nations is essentially imperialistic. It seeks to create, maintain, and defend spheres of influence and thus, under the guise of philanthropy, it carries on the old statecraft in a new way. Mr. Brynes says that American foreign aid programs are designed to promote within the assisted countries the emergence of middle-class populations; therefore, it is from the Communist point of view as subversive as their own tactics which encourage the creation of new proletariats. He argues that since the American foreign aid program is much larger than the Communist effort (about 30 to 1), it tends to exert a controlling pressure in areas where the Soviet Union has an equal interest. This contest for uncommitted nations, the author holds, can have the same consequence as the diplomatic rivalry that preceded the great wars of this century. The position taken in this book is not antiforeign aid. As a matter of fact, the author offers a proposal which would greatly expand the

United States' contribution to developing nations. He proposes that the United States take one-fifth of the current defense budget, add it to the foreign aid budget, and offer it on a pro rata basis to the underdeveloped nations. The underdeveloped countries would have to agree to act in concert against any international aggression among themselves. This U.S. offer would be made under an all-or-nothing rule: should the peace be broken by any of the developing nations, all aid would be withheld until the aggression stopped. Mr. Brynes goes farther in that he would have this financial aid distributed through organizations of the United Nations.

The views and proposals expressed in *We Give to Conquer* are decidedly those of a liberal. Whether one subscribes to the author's position or not, his arguments and discussion of the U.S. foreign aid program are most interesting. Mr. Brynes has treated a controversial subject in a most controversial manner.

O.W. HAMILTON, JR.
Commander, U.S. Navy

Macintyre, Donald. *The Battle for the Pacific*. New York: Norton, 1966. 240p. (D 767 .M2 1966b)

The Battle for the Pacific contains a history of the air and sea battles during World War II, beginning with a brief look at the prewar situation and the attack on Pearl Harbor. The author has written about the engagements in the Java Sea; Coral Sea; Guadalcanal, under which he groups the battles of Savo Island, the Eastern Solomons--Cape Esperance, the Santa Cruz Islands, Guadalcanal, and Tassafaronga; Kula Gulf--Empress Augusta Bay; Philippine Sea; and Leyte, comprising the fighting in the Sibuyan Sea, Surigao Strait, Samar, and Cape Engano. He has omitted all but a brief summary of the Battle of Midway, stating that it has previously been well covered and is fully understood. However, the same could be said for almost all the actions covered in the book--at least for naval readers. The author reemphasizes the primary role of the carrier in the Pacific and

points out that when the first team of Japanese carrier pilots was depleted there was no pipeline of trained replacements. This factor insured defeat of the Japanese Navy and eventual American triumph in the Pacific. He also heavily stresses the poor capability of the U.S. Navy for night surface engagements despite the great advantage conferred by surface search radars. He generalizes that this was due to hastily trained, inexperienced crews of ships, which were assigned to task groups on short notice and had little opportunity to learn to work together. The superior performance of Japanese torpedoes was also a contributing factor. In summary, the book is easily read, entertaining, and of value to those not familiar with the air-sea battles in the Pacific. However, there is nothing new or different in the author's analyses of these battles. It is regretted that he did not include the Battle of Midway in order to present a more complete picture of the Pacific actions.

B.V. AJEMIAN
Captain, U.S. Navy

Meskill, Johanna M. *The Hollow Alliance*. New York: Atherton, 1966. 245p. (DD 120 .J3M4)

"Alliances between sovereign states are surely among the least stable of political associations." Thus begins this almost incredible history of the relations between the two most powerful signers of the Tripartite Pact. The incredible part was the near-total absence of combined planning between Germany and Japan during the operation of the pact. The deficiency in coordination is known through postwar records and interviews that reveal the fact that Allied planners credited more combined capability to the Axis partners at every turn of the war than the partnership warranted. In light of today's knowledge, there is difficulty in finding any aspect of the partnership that produced truly coordinated action. On the political plane, Germany and Japan had divergent objectives with respect to the Soviet Union. Economically, Germany needed the raw materials of

Asia, and Japan needed the arms and technical assistance of Germany, but the difficulties of effecting this exchange could not be worked out even in the best days of the alliance. On the military plane, the planning of grand military strategy was hindered by different governmental structures, and contrary to the Anglo-American accommodation under similar circumstances, here no new machinery was devised to overcome the difficulty.

The Tripartite Pact, at the time of signing, was generally accorded to be a diplomatic victory for Germany. Secret addenda to the pact, however, completely changed the Japanese treaty obligation from that indicated in the published version. The interpretation of the secret addenda contributes very heavily to the significance of this book. Other significance lies in the reminder that alliances thrive only in mutual understanding. Mrs. Meskill has provided an extensively documented and interesting tale which can be read as an example of the failure of an alliance. Why did the alliance fail? "The German-Japanese failure resulted, to a large extent, from the discordance of their political goals and of the means necessary to attain them."

K.H. LYONS

Captain, U.S. Navy

Pickerell, James H. *Vietnam in the Mud*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966. 129p.
(DS 557 .A6P53)

It seems a shame that a man with the obvious talent that Mr. Pickerell possesses has to resort to axe-grinding in an effort to prove his point. In *Vietnam in the Mud*, he uses the basic tactics of the United States military in Vietnam as his blade, while the reader is forced (if he cares to finish this tirade) to play his stone. The reviewer is convinced that this book was written in the foxholes of Vietnam with all the bad taste of hate, blood, and death fresh in the author's mouth. It is aimed at the un-discerning dissidents who will accept anything so

long as it supports their position. The loopholes in his logic are glaring and numerous. This "man in the mud" or "foot-soldier's" approach to the present Southeast Asian conflict lacks depth and any understanding of the political, diplomatic, or strategic implications of the decisions that have to be made. It is truly unfortunate that the story of U.S. mistakes in Vietnam (and there is no denying that there have been many) could not have been told more perceptively with less vehemence and without the blinding sparks of a grinding stone. As John Barkham said in the *Saturday Review* concerning this book, "Neither dove nor hawk will derive comfort from this frontline report of the Vietnam war . . ." And it should also be added, ". . . nor will they gain any value from this book."

C.O. WAKEMAN

Commander, U.S. Navy

Trager, Frank N. *Why Viet Nam?* New York: Praeger, 1966. 238p. (DS 557 .A6T63)

To the serious planner or policymaker, this book probably would be somewhat elementary. However, it is considered ideal for the individual who simply wants to become more conversant on the subject of Vietnam or who desires a broader historical base upon which to evaluate America's current policy in relation to Southeast Asia. This policy, according to the author, is clear and is based on a determination to contain further Communist advances in that area, while assisting the independent states to retain their freedom and to build up or to rebuild their economies. As for Vietnam, the United States is there by treaty and agreement and by invitation. She should legally, morally, and in every other sense do what is required to stop the invasion and help the Vietnamese stamp out the insurrection. Those who would advocate the Geneva Agreements as a basis for peace negotiations should be reminded that neither the United States nor the Republic of Vietnam was signatory to these Agreements. Settling nothing,

they simply made it possible for the Communists to continue to apply their revolutionary line, the promotion of "wars of national liberation," in mainland Southeast Asia. The American commitment to the Republic of Vietnam, in the several stages of its development under Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson, as endorsed by the United States Congress, stands. It is conceivable that at some future date such obligations may be withdrawn or changed. But for the present, and until they are repudiated, they cannot be denied. It is to the honor of the United States that she has fulfilled a solemnly undertaken obligation. The critical analysis of French colonialist policies, as contained in this book, will undoubtedly stimulate the reader to a keener awareness of conditions and policies in other areas of the world which could, potentially, serve as the "cement of the negative" to unite the Communists with others in a common cause.

B.M. TRUITT
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