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The Chinese Invasion Threat: Taiwan's Defense and American Strategy in Asia

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College in 1897 and heard Theodore Roosevelt speak as Assistant Secretary of the Navy; but for the future admiral, the Naval War College became a much more important aspect of his career.

In the early part of his career, William Jr. served under William S. Sims in the destroyer flotilla, along with Dudley Knox and others. Knox may have been the key to the younger Halsey's assignment to the Office of Naval Intelligence in 1920 and six months later as naval attaché in Berlin, where he reported extensively on German naval developments in the early years of the Weimar Republic. In 1932–33, Captain Halsey Jr. followed his father's earlier example by attending the Naval War College. One of his classmates was another future five-star admiral, Captain Ernest J. King. Halsey and his wife lived in Jamestown and commuted daily across the bay to the College. Although no star student at the Naval War College, he was initially considered as a choice for the faculty. After some false starts with other orders, Halsey eventually went on in the next year to the Army War College, then located in Washington, DC, where his classmates included Jonathan Wainwright and a future Army five-star general, Omar Bradley. Again he did not distinguish himself academically, but his time there gave him unusual perspective as one of the very few to graduate from both the Army and Naval War Colleges.

However, that may well have been Washington's way of putting him in a holding pattern preparatory to going on to the aviation positions that Admirals Leahy and King had been recommending for him. In 1934, Halsey went to Pensacola for training as a flight observer, but soon bent the rules of the system to earn his pilot's wings as the oldest newly qualified naval aviator,

at the age of fifty-two. Thus, Halsey cleared the way for a series of aircraft carrier commands that eventually led to his wartime career in the Pacific.

Hughes has researched Halsey's wartime career carefully and writes judiciously and with great authority using his extensive new research. Among many interesting points, Hughes finds an explanation for the mysterious skin ailment that forced Halsey out of commanding the *Enterprise* Task Force just before the battle of Midway in 1942. While a fungal infection probably caused dermatitis, it likely was related to a bacterial infection in five of his teeth, all of which Dr. Warren Vaughan, a noted dermatologist from Richmond, Virginia, brought under control in early 1943 so that Halsey could return to command in the Pacific theater.

Controversies about Halsey as a combat commander undoubtedly will continue, and Hughes's excellent book will not be the last word on the subject, but there is no doubt that it should be the first book on the subject that one should consult.

JOHN B. HATTENDORF



The Chinese Invasion Threat: Taiwan's Defense and American Strategy in Asia, by Ian Easton. Arlington, VA: Project 2049 Institute, 2017. 406 pages. \$20.

Ian Easton examines and discusses in fair detail the difficulties that the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) would face during an invasion of Taiwan. He provides overall orders of battle for both Taiwan and China; explains which beaches on Taiwan are, or are not, suitable for invasion; provides monthly historical estimates of the

weather with which an invasion likely would have to contend; and describes the defenses and policies Taiwan has created to deter, or defeat, such an invasion. Easton also describes, albeit to a lesser degree, some of the aspects of the Chinese bombardment and blockade campaigns that likely would precede or accompany an invasion of Taiwan.

The author builds a case that China's military is well aware of the many problems and issues that would have to be overcome if the PLA were to invade Taiwan successfully, and that Taiwan is well positioned, trained, and equipped to repel such an effort. He concludes that "Taiwan has little to fear of invasion for right now" (p. 272).

A strength of the book is that the author uses current and authoritative, or at least well-situated, Chinese and Taiwan sources in making his estimates. Consequently, the bibliography is a valuable resource for anyone devoted to studying the military balance across the Taiwan Strait. Also noteworthy is the fact that the author of this volume works at the 2049 Institute. Furthermore, he acknowledges Mark Stokes as a long-term mentor and thanks Randal Shriver, until recently the 2049 Institute's director, for his leadership and support. Stokes, of course, is as knowledgeable about many aspects of the PLA as any Westerner, and Shriver currently serves as Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asian and Pacific Security Affairs. Readers therefore can assume that the book offers insights into some of the current administration's potential inclinations regarding defense support to Taiwan. In those important ways, the book is impressively informed and worth reading.

Despite those strengths, the author's sincere sympathy for Taiwan leads to a tendency to overreach, which sometimes

results in unsubstantiated assumptions. For example, while demonstrating that Taiwan will have ample strategic warning of a Chinese invasion, he asserts that in the immediate run-up to an invasion "farm animals, especially pigs, would be gathered in huge herds to feed the troops" (p. 76). One wonders why the invading forces would require substantially more fresh pork than they consumed beforehand. On the next page he writes, "Shipyards would probably be operating at breakneck speeds for at least three months prior to the invasion, working on 24 hour shifts and brightly lit up at night. Light and noise travel great distances over water, making them easy to pickup with submarines and surveillance ships." That any such increases in noise and light could correlate definitively to landing ship construction, from miles offshore, and through a periscope, is at best doubtful. This tendency toward inconsistent logic is repeated on page 97, where he asserts, "China cannot effectively blockade Taiwan without bombarding it and Taiwan cannot be bombed until it has been blockaded." Another example occurs on page 259, when in a discussion of the perils of mirror imaging he states, "It is too easy to forget that reality and facts are things that are arbitrary and subjective." Better editing would have helped this volume.

More significantly, the author's bias for Taiwan sometimes leads to dubious conclusions. An example occurs when the author states that "Taiwan's spy-catchers have discovered and arrested traitors soon after China has recruited them, ensuring that security breaches were short lived" and that "experts point out that Taiwan has done an extraordinary job in recruiting well-placed agents in China who can provide early warning information to the Presidential Office (and the White House)" (p. 70). One

hopes that Taiwan's counterintelligence efforts are indeed that good, but readers probably recall that the John Walker spy ring operated for over fifteen years in the United States during the Cold War, causing enormous harm. Doubtless, Taiwan works hard to catch spies—as did the Federal Bureau of Investigation during the Cold War—but it just does not seem credible that Taiwan is immune to effective Chinese espionage efforts. Readers also might be forgiven for doubting the author's claim of Chinese counterintelligence ineptitude if recent reports in the press describing Beijing's destruction of Central Intelligence Agency networks in China are accurate. The perils inherent in the book's analytical tilt in favor of Taiwan extend to other areas, perhaps most critically to the author's assessment (which relies on some of his previous, similar work) that the threat that China's conventional missile force and counterair systems pose to Taiwan's air force and navy is manageable. This is important because if this conclusion is wrong Taiwan's exposure to Chinese bombardment and blockade, and even invasion, is far higher than the author asserts. This vulnerability—which depends on whether Chinese long-range precision strikes can be effective against Taiwan's defenses—will remain a critical factor in Taiwan's ability to deter or withstand Chinese uses of force. The implications of this competition extend far beyond Taiwan. This work would be better if it had addressed this issue more thoroughly. Another subject that falls in this category of insufficient treatment is China's ability to use its maritime militia during an invasion of Taiwan. Nonetheless, there is value in this book. Its sources, and the author's background and experiences, provide a

basis for optimism regarding Taiwan's ability to resist an invasion, which the author relates enthusiastically.

WILLIAM S. MURRAY



Congress Buys a Navy: Politics, Economics, and the Rise of American Naval Power, 1881–1921, by Paul E. Pedisich. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2016. 304 pages. \$39.95.

The subject of Paul E. Pedisich's newest work, *Congress Buys a Navy: Politics, Economics, and the Rise of American Naval Power, 1881–1921*, is apparent from its title. Pedisich proposes that it was Congress—rather than the executive branch—that was most directly responsible for funding and building the U.S. Navy during this pivotal period. This well-researched work considers four decades of presidential actions, congressional legislation, and USN policy and their role in the buildup of U.S. naval power and capabilities.

These four decades (1881–1921) are in many ways the most important in U.S. naval history and development, spanning the aftermath of the Civil War through the end of the First World War. At the beginning of this period, Pedisich demonstrates the relative feebleness of the U.S. Navy in comparison with European naval powers, most notably Great Britain. However, this study demonstrates how the efforts of nine presidents and their cabinets, sixteen Secretaries of the Navy, and innumerable members of Congress were able to transform the U.S. Navy from a neglected, presteel, and defensively focused organization into—in the aftermath of World War I—the world's premier naval power.

Pedisich's study is notable for its focus on the legislative branch's central place