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Everything under the Heavens: How the Past Helps Shape China's Push for Global Power

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in developing the nation's maritime power and naval war-fighting capabilities. Consequently, it should be noted that this work is not a study of naval warfare, tactics, or strategy. Rather, Pedisich's extensive research of the congressional sources explores the personal and political negotiations and decisions, and the attendant legislation and congressional appropriations, that in essence "built" this new Navy over the course of four decades.

Perhaps this book's greatest strength is as a catalog of the wealth of primary-source material from which Pedisich drew: personal and private correspondence, political speeches, and military and congressional records. The book is also rich in a level of detail that constitutes a microhistory of the period's naval and congressional politics. One thing readers will not be lacking after reading this book is information.

Yet *Congress Buys a Navy* has numerous weaknesses. Perhaps the most obvious is a lack of clear purpose. While this work extensively chronicles naval politics in Washington—including congressional appropriations, arguments, voting records, and political maneuvers—as well as decisions from the various Navy Secretaries and the rest of the executive branch, it falls short in providing the larger historical contextualization for making sense of this plethora of specific information. Furthermore, Pedisich does not explain the meaning of this massive data dump in any conclusive manner. Most significantly, Pedisich's overall assessment of this period is uncertain: Did the Navy (and the United States) need more funding? Less? The reader is left uncertain. Despite Pedisich's richness of detail, his assessment of the specific processes that transformed the Navy from

a weak, presteel force into a premier fighting force remains ambiguous.

Despite Pedisich's attention to consecutive legislatures, congressional appropriations, funding, and various Secretaries of the Navy and politicians, he does not give the reader regular, intermediate updates regarding the exact strength and capability of the Navy for this period. Occasionally, Pedisich does draw attention to numerical values of naval forces, but when he does he offers little in the way of explanation of the lethality and functionality of the Navy. As a result, the reader may be disappointed at the lack of details on the status of naval forces, such as ships in use and those under construction.

Absent a consistent and overarching metanarrative, the book ultimately reads more as a collection of case studies on congressional processes and as an encyclopedic compilation of attendant economic and political facts and statistics—all perhaps of lesser interest to armchair naval historians. However, *Congress Buys a Navy* is a thoroughly researched work that warrants accolades for highlighting the key role that Congress played in creating a modern U.S. Navy.

BLAKE I. CAMPBELL



Everything under the Heavens: How the Past Helps Shape China's Push for Global Power, by Howard W. French. New York: Knopf, 2017. 352 pages. \$27.95.

As a journalist who has done his historical research, Howard W. French has produced a highly readable book that probes the Chinese concept of *tian xia*, roughly meaning China's "natural dominion over everything under

heaven” (pp. 3–4), and particularly on its impact on the People’s Republic of China (PRC) as it drives toward regional and international dominance. His focus on the cultural and racial nature of the traditional Chinese view of the world evolved from a different direction from that of other scholars and analysts. It comes from his years reporting from Africa for the *Washington Post*, service that produced a book on Africa’s development as “China’s second continent.” Subsequent assignments with the *New York Times* brought him to Japan and China and a familiarity with the written Japanese and Chinese languages.

Unlike other journalists, who create books primarily out of interviews and opinions, French uses interviews sparingly, instead relying on the writings of noted scholars and experts to contextualize current issues. In addition to numerous mainland Chinese and other Asian scholars, French also quotes Andrew Erickson, a noted China scholar on the faculty of the Naval War College. Professor Erickson points out that, concerning the strategic military competition among China and its neighbors and the United States, as “the PLA [People’s Liberation Army] approaches leading edge capabilities, the more expensive and difficult it will be to advance further . . . [since] China’s cost advantages decrease as military equipment becomes less labor-intensive and more technology- and materials-intensive. The more sophisticated . . . the less relative benefit China can derive from acquiring and indigenizing foreign technologies, and less cost advantage it will have in producing and maintaining them” (p. 271).

Such assurance may be cold comfort to those technology companies whose intellectual capital may have been

pilfered via Chinese industrial espionage. However, French also uncovers a critical trend concerning this long-term competition: because of the one-child (primarily boys) policy and other factors, China’s population will peak in 2025; because of immigration, America’s population is forecast to continue to increase. At the existing rate, the four-to-one population ratio in China’s favor will shrink to two-to-one, with an aged Chinese population and decreasing productivity as the country’s manufacturing advantage declines. French quotes Chinese demographer Yi Fuxian: “People say we [China] can be two to three times the size of America’s economy. . . . I say it is totally impossible. It will never overtake America’s because of the decrease in the labor force and the aging of the population” (p. 281).

In assessing China’s historical relationship with the world, French recounts a continuing Chinese effort to achieve *tian xia* through intimidation or force, not through attraction or mutually balanced economic relationships. Instead of being enamored of the PRC’s myth of the peaceful precedent of the eunuch Zheng He’s trading voyages of the fifteenth century throughout the Indo-Pacific (one of the reasons Beijing claims to own the South China Sea), French chooses well and relies on the late Edward L. Dreyer, one of the most thorough historians of Chinese wars. Dreyer maintained that the modern idea of Zheng He as explorer, trader, and nonimperialist was “a creation of Western scholarship. Zheng He’s fleet was actually an armada, in the sense that it carried a powerful Army that could be disembarked, and its purpose was to awe the rulers of Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean into sending tribute to China” (p. 104). Taking twenty thousand Ming dynasty troops to explore and

negotiate trade agreements is a little like using the Third Fleet to achieve adjustments to NAFTA. Frankly, that is exactly what French sees as the future role of the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), once the PLAN's growing size helps to reduce U.S. influence in China's sphere.

French's most significant observation—unique among similar books—is that the American-centric nature of most assessments of the PRC's rise blinds us to the fact that most Chinese do not regard the United States as its primary, long-term enemy. Rather, Japan is perceived as the once-and-future foe that deserves the most retribution for China's "century of humiliation." French illustrates the popularity of this mainland view by examining the composition of the PRC's entertainment media. "[T]o turn on the television in China is to be inundated with war themed movies, which overwhelmingly focus on Japanese villainy. More than two hundred anti-Japanese films were produced in 2012 alone, with one scholar estimating that 70 percent of Chinese TV dramas involve Japan-related war plots" (p. 21). Thus, in French's estimate, it would not be tension over islands (some of them false) in the South China Sea that would result in inadvertent war, but rather an escalating dispute over the Senkakus.

French has done an excellent job of identifying the ties between dynastic China's open *tian xia* policies and PRC president Xi Jinping's aspirations for the future. French points out the ironic similarities between Xi's rhetoric and that of the Chinese communists' greatest enemy, Chiang Kai-shek, over the rightful dominance of China in Asia. Their desired rules for international politics resemble those represented in Thucydides's Melian Dialogue. French recounts that when a Singaporean deputy expressed

support for a maritime code of conduct at a recent multilateral conference, Chinese foreign minister Yang Jiechi responded, "China is a big country and other countries are small countries . . . and that's just a fact" (p. 126).

Everything under the Heavens is both an informative book and an enjoyable read. One hopes it will make the overly optimistic think a little bit harder about future relations between China and the rest of the world. However, in the end, French—whether by personal nature or intellectual predilection—feels compelled to offer only optimistic recommendations. "A China that is treated as an equal with much to contribute to human betterment," he writes, "but met with understated but resolute firmness when need be, is a China that will mellow as it advances in the decades ahead, and then most likely plateau" (p. 284). Of course, how to be both understated and resolute in an increasingly shrill world is the unanswered dilemma. The problem with hugging (or scolding) the panda is that it bites.

SAM J. TANGREDI



Anatomy of a Campaign: The British Fiasco in Norway, 1940, by John Kiszely. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2017. 390 pages. \$44.99.

Anatomy of a Campaign by John Kiszely provides an excellent historical review of the military campaigns in Norway in 1940. In his book, Kiszely takes the reader on an exciting journey following the British expeditionary military campaign in Norway. He asks for and investigates the reason behind the failure. Was it poor military performance, lack of intelligence, or just poor strategy and decision-making?