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Incidents at Sea: American Confrontation and Cooperation with Russia and China, 1945–2016

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coverage to China and India; Latin America and Africa also get attention. However, the theme of these sections seems to be impact rather than influence, and while that focus makes sense for the argument he wants to make, it does seem to divert attention away from more-significant developments.

The individuals most responsible for moving the Cold War away from dangerous confrontation were Richard M. Nixon and Leonid I. Brezhnev. Both wanted détente, but for different reasons. Westad argues that this period was basically a truce. In many ways, détente turned out to be much better for the United States. The competition did not go away, but it turned to soft power, in which global trends ended up favoring capitalism and the United States. Nixon also managed to turn China into an ally during this period. Westad argues that this development occurred more because of the incompetence of Mao Zedong as a statesman than Nixon's skills as a strategist. Mao had weakened China, and his policies often brought about situations that were exactly the opposite of what he wanted. Rejecting the argument of most historians, Westad argues that the Americans rather than the Soviets killed détente, mostly because of American domestic politics. These arguments are well sustained, and although many might have trouble accepting these contentions, they are basically correct. Why did the Cold War end with a U.S. victory? "Like its enemy, the United States had its portion of Cold War successes and failures. It is just that the balance sheet came out differently, and better, than that of the other side" (p. 620). The assets that worked to the advantage of the United States included long-term alliances, economic growth and transformations, technological change, and diplomatic skill.

This book is hardly the last word on the Cold War; given its significance, the period will be studied for decades to come. But Westad has given his readers an important, thought-provoking account, and that is no small thing.

NICHOLAS EVAN SARANTAKES



Incidents at Sea: American Confrontation and Cooperation with Russia and China, 1945–2016, by David F. Winkler. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2017. 336 pages. \$31.95.

In the summer of 1988, I stepped aboard USS *Yorktown* (CG 48) as a young midshipman during my orientation cruise and noticed a ship silhouette painted on the bridge wing. When members of my class inquired about its meaning, the crew regaled us with the story of the shouldering incident with the Russian frigate *Bezzaventnyy* just a few months earlier in the Black Sea—the incident pictured on the cover of David F. Winkler's recently updated *Incidents at Sea: American Confrontation and Cooperation with Russia and China, 1945–2016*. Winkler began studying the 1972 Agreement on the Prevention of Incidents on and over the High Seas (also known as the Incidents at Sea Agreement, or INCSEA) after experiencing such events firsthand as a junior officer in the Sea of Japan in the mid-1980s. Since then, he has established himself as an authority on the subject at the Naval Historical Foundation. With a foreword by the chief U.S. negotiator of INCSEA, former Secretary of the Navy John W. Warner, this edition of Winkler's book builds on the original (published in 2000) by addressing the expanding influence of China and the resurgence of Russia as global competitors in the maritime domain.

Incidents at Sea takes a chronological approach to the intricate relationship between the American and Russian navies beginning at the end of World War II, through the growth of the Soviet navy, into the post-Cold War tensions with Russia, to the emergence of China as a global maritime force. Drawing from oral histories and extensive personal interviews, Winkler puts a human face on these interactions by relating the experiences of junior officers aboard USN ships, senior naval leaders, and senior government officials. He also provides intimate details about the interactions of the members of the American delegation with their Soviet counterparts during the initial INCSEA negotiation and subsequent annual reviews.

No single event precipitated this unprecedented agreement; instead a series of dangerous, and sometimes deadly, interactions between the two nations' navies and air forces reached a tipping point in 1971, resulting in a Soviet call for action. American naval leaders had sought such an agreement in the decade prior, but senior State Department officials were wary that these discussions might derail ongoing American efforts regarding territorial sea claims. Given assurances from the Russians that this would be a navy-only discussion, the State Department acquiesced, and then—Under Secretary of the Navy Warner headed the U.S. negotiating team for initial talks. After months of preparation, the American delegation went to Moscow in October 1971, and the resulting agreement included all the points it desired. A follow-on meeting in Washington, DC, in March 1972 ironed out remaining details, and Secretary Warner signed the INCSEA agreement with the Soviet navy's commander in chief, Fleet Admiral Sergey Gorshkov,

on May 25, 1972, at President Richard M. Nixon and Soviet leader Leonid I. Brezhnev's Moscow summit.

INCSEA marked the first formal interaction between the two superpowers. Discussions involved more than just negotiating sessions; they also included a social agenda, with each side showcasing the strengths of its culture and economy. Winkler presents the social agenda as a key element in the breakdown of barriers between the two ideologically different sets of participants. Another key to INCSEA's success was its bilateral and navy-to-navy nature. Limiting the scope of the agreement created more common ground for the two parties. Winkler notes something I also have observed in bilateral navy staff talks: naval officers have a common shared experience of operating at sea that cuts across the politics of nations.

Since the signing of the historic agreement, U.S.-Russian relations have ebbed and flowed, but INCSEA remains a stalwart of international agreement and cooperation. Winkler illustrates how—despite other sources of tension between the two countries—both sides have maintained civility during the annual INCSEA reviews. He also describes several tense international situations during which following INCSEA protocols kept a cold war from turning hot. Yet despite its success, INCSEA has not prevented all unsafe interactions at sea—witness the *Bezzaventnyy-Yorktown* incident in February 1988. More recently, since the Russian resurgence under President Vladimir Putin, the number of incidents between the two nations has increased, especially as American warships and aircraft reassert the right to navigate freely in the Black and Baltic Seas.

The growth of the Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy in the 1990s

brought increased interaction with American warships, naval auxiliaries, and military aircraft, reminiscent of the Cold War. The United States and China signed the Military Maritime Consultative Agreement (MMCA) in 1998, modeled after INCSEA. Winkler notes, however, that the MMCA lacks the level of trust established between the Soviet and American navies, and therefore has been less effective.

The high seas and contested littorals were the front line of U.S.-Soviet interaction during the Cold War. Winkler's book provides an intimate look at the development and execution of a landmark agreement between adversaries that provided a key mechanism for ensuring that their interaction at sea remained professional and kept the Cold War from becoming hot.

JAMES P. MCGRATH III



The British Carrier Strike Fleet after 1945, by David Hobbs. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2015. 480 pages. \$59.95.

This work is the latest in a series of books from this author about Royal Navy aircraft carriers, and British carrier aviation in particular. It takes the story forward from where his last work on the British Pacific Fleet left us—in the misty waters of Tokyo Bay in September 1945. Hobbs shows how the ethos of naval strike warfare that had been developed and honed in the rigors of World War II survived the many and varied challenges that the postwar era threw at it. Most obviously, perhaps, it is a study of naval retrenchment under that most demanding of scenarios: demobilization after a world war coupled with a broader and ongoing

retreat from global preeminence. It is no surprise, then, that budgetary issues take center stage, but Hobbs manages to make his account much more than a mere litany of what might have been. He charts moments of gritty determination and ingenuity mixed with some unforgivable and almost criminal areas of waste and abuse—features that are certainly familiar to anyone involved in military planning. Above all, though, an unswerving belief from within the service about the value of its aviation has allowed the capability to be resurrected almost from the dead in recent years, in the form of two large carriers with real strike capability. This fact alone makes this book a compelling read.

It is difficult to imagine a more qualified individual than Hobbs to guide us through this story. After a thirty-year naval career as an aviator that spanned the last years of the “big deck” carriers, the “through-deck” cruiser era, and right up to the “renaissance” after the Falklands War, Hobbs capped this off with a period working in naval records and as the curator of the Fleet Air Arm Museum. This gave him almost unparalleled access to the necessary archival material, a resource he has used to great effect in this volume. The book is nothing short of exacting in its research.

That said, and although he tries valiantly to hide it, Hobbs clearly has a message he is anxious to communicate. It is, as he freely admits, “in part my own story” (p. vii). His thesis, which he openly reveals in the last few pages, is that Britain would have been better served had it continued to replace its strike carriers from the 1960s onward. While an understandable and legitimate viewpoint, it is just that—a viewpoint—and many will bemoan this lack of objectivity, particularly as the broader constraints