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India and China at Sea: Competition for Naval Dominance in the Indian Ocean

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submarine as the major elements of that nation's independent nuclear deterrent. Although he glosses over it, he was one of the few to make the transition successfully into higher-level nuclear management, which took him right to the pinnacle of his specialization. He therefore can offer his readers an almost unique perspective into the world of nuclear engineering, from the deckplates right through to higher-level policy making. Paradoxically, though, his illustrious career almost was cut off at the knees when his earnest, and in some ways naive, early efforts attracted some unwarranted judgment from colleagues with a less-than-nurturing disposition. How many others of us suffered similar, "there but for the grace of God" moments like these?

Endowed with a wry sense of humor and a literary bent, Thompson paints at times a disquieting picture of the darker, human side of life in submarines. His characters are portrayed vividly, and anyone who has served will recognize their types instantly. Some may take exception with what, at times, seems a lengthy preoccupation with his own youthful insecurities, so the book will not be everyone's cup of tea, focusing as it does on the author's personal experiences and observations as opposed to the larger policy issues of the day. That said, the book does in passing provide some useful insights into the development of the Tigerfish wire-guided torpedo and the administration of nuclear safety directives at the higher command level. There are also memorable, lighter moments, such as the vivid description of "corporate constipation," caused by the failure of the sewage treatment plant, as well as the many mishaps that inevitably befall mariners who essentially

are deprived of their senses with regard to their immediate surroundings.

In sum, this is a book for those interested in knowing what it was like to live in submarines during the Cold War. Those seeking coverage of matters of policy and strategy probably will be better served elsewhere.

ANGUS ROSS



India and China at Sea: Competition for Naval Dominance in the Indian Ocean, ed. David Brewster. New Delhi: Oxford Univ. Press, 2018. 348 pages. \$40.99.

Americans often think of the vast Indian Ocean as the "rear area" of the Pacific Ocean—a featureless expanse notable mainly for the goods, services, and military forces that traverse it. The view from New Delhi and Beijing is profoundly different. Beijing recognizes that the flow of energy, raw materials, and finished goods across the Indian Ocean is essential to China's economic success. Chairman Xi Jinping's One Belt, One Road (OBOR) initiative is, in part, a strategic investment in securing these sea lines of communication. In just over a decade, the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) has gone from being an occasional visitor to the Indian Ocean to a constantly deployed presence, supported by its first formal overseas base, at Djibouti. The Indian Ocean will become, as one Chinese scholar writes, "a normal region for the PLAN's combat reach in the future" (p. 94). India, traditionally the dominant regional power, views these developments with concern, even as it considers its own interests in the traditionally Chinese-dominated areas of the western Pacific.

In response, David Brewster, a specialist in Indo-Pacific maritime security at the Australian National University, has assembled Indian, Australian, Chinese, and American experts to consider the maritime trajectory of the region. Indian scholars make up the majority of the contributors, while the Australian authors offer views influenced by the unique position of their nation: politically close to the United States, economically tied to China, and physically at the crossroads between the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

As the subtitle suggests, competition is an assumed reality throughout the thirteen collected essays. Through the diverse views in this volume, the complexity underlying this competition emerges—and with it a discussion of why both India and China struggle to understand, much less assuage, each other's suspicions. On the Indian side, intellectual understanding of China's genuine interests in the region collides with an "Indian Monroe Doctrine" dating to the administration of Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first prime minister. Unclear and inconsistently articulated, it remains an idea that, if "not actually a policy . . . is at least a preferred objective" of Indian policy makers (p. 20). The Indian view of Chinese maritime activity also is influenced by ongoing conflict with China over land borders and a perception that China has worked to minimize India's rightful role in multiple international organizations.

Meanwhile, contributions from Indian, American, and Australian scholars are particularly harsh in describing China's failure to consider the suspicion and resistance that Chinese maritime expansion has produced. India scholar Pramit Pal Chaudhuri quotes former Indian

national security advisor Shivshankar Menon's characterization of China as an "autistic superpower"—unable, by its very nature, to understand India's concerns (p. 61). American John Garver asserts that a constructed narrative of national exceptionalism and peaceful Ming dynasty voyages of discovery limits China's ability to understand India's apprehensions about China's rise as a naval power. Australian Rory Medcalf describes official and unofficial Chinese explanations of its Indian Ocean presence as being so conspicuously inconsistent with regional perceptions that they themselves contribute to suspicions.

Calling India "oversensitive," Yunnan University economics professor Zhu Li offers a case study in that narrative. Asserting that OBOR is an international, rather than a Chinese-led, initiative, he outlines the essential choice being offered to India—since it cannot stop the OBOR initiative, it should partner with China and claim a slice of the economic benefits. You Ji from the University of Macau, in contrast, offers a blunt vision of the Chinese military role in the Indian Ocean. Noting that the 2015 revision to China's National Defense Strategy calls for "projecting battles far away from China's homeland," the People's Liberation Army (PLA) is working to extend its "war fighting into the global commons" (pp. 91–92). In this context, he asserts that "the PLA's land reclamation in the Spratlys was meant to . . . establish forward deployment en route to the Indian Ocean" (p. 96).

Nonetheless, Darshana Baruah describes India's evolving maritime domain awareness strategy as a response to issues beyond just China. Terrorism and the proliferation of advanced naval capabilities in the region have pushed India

toward new partnerships, especially with Southeast Asia and Japan. While promising, they face the significant challenge of what Baruah diplomatically calls India's "history of working in isolation" (p. 172). If, as one Australian scholar asserts, "the great game in the Indian Ocean is still in its early phases," it will be increasingly important for the United States to understand the Indian Ocean region and its residents (p. 232). Students and specialists will find *India and China at Sea* a succinct and well-crafted overview of the disparate voices influencing maritime competition in this vital ocean region.

DALE C. RIELAGE



To Master the Boundless Sea: The U.S. Navy, the Marine Environment, and the Cartography of Empire, by Jason W. Smith. Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2018. 280 pages. \$35.

Scholars long have understood the power of the map. In *To Master the Boundless Sea* Jason W. Smith explains and explores the power of the nautical chart, masterfully weaving his observations into the history of the U.S. Navy. It is an exceptional work, strong in its scholarship, and boasting a compelling—at times lyrical—narrative.

Smith's book follows a chronological approach, culminating in the years following the Spanish-American War—the presumed height of the American empire; more-modern hydrographic activities are mentioned only in passing. Major themes include the interrelationship between commerce and the Navy, bureaucratic rivalries within the Navy and with other government agencies, the linkages between hydrography and U.S.

imperialism, and the evolution of the nautical chart into a weapon of war.

To some degree, hydrography would seem to be—and is—a natural adjunct to the naval service. No environment is more dangerous to mariners than coastal and shallow waters; accurate charts are a necessity to avoid deadly groundings. Shallow-water craft, whether engaged in smuggling or combat operations, if provided with accurate depth and current information, can bedevil larger foes who lack that local knowledge. A chart—an accurate one—makes this knowledge exportable. However, such knowledge does not come easily; Smith details the painstaking and backbreaking repetitive work, usually conducted by sailors and junior officers, needed to gather these data. This was work for engineers, not poets.

However, as Smith notes, hydrography—as part of the larger science of oceanography—always has involved more than engineering. At least in its early stages, understanding the coastlines of distant shores also involved understanding the nature of the peoples who lived on those shores. This required abilities and skills associated with anthropologists; linguists; and, when these meetings became confrontations, military officers. The dangers of early hydrographic work were considerable, sometimes deadly.

Smith also highlights tensions between naval hydrographers and the wider community of scientists. Naval officers were then and are now essentially pragmatists. They do not lack for curiosity or imagination, but they energize those traits for the attainment of a practical objective, such as a knowledge of safe passages or the best sailing directions. While a generalization, it can be asserted that mariners,