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To Master the Boundless Sea: The U.S. Navy, the Marine Environment, and the Cartography of Empire

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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,

less concerned with knowledge for its own sake—and at times more rough-hewn than their academic counterparts—were not always welcomed by pure academics, and vice versa.

Smith details how a powerful connection between the Navy's ever-increasing knowledge of the maritime environment and seagoing commerce was forged and strengthened from the beginning. Time (and safety) was money to merchant captains and the owners for whom they worked. Matthew Fontaine Maury's wind and current charts cut days or weeks from sailing times, and time saved was money earned. One of the book's illustrations—a whaling chart produced by the Navy and used extensively by the captains of Herman Melville's era—speaks to the cooperation between the commercial and military spheres. And whaling was not the only industry to have such close ties to the Navy; as underwater cables began to knit together continents and colonies, the requirement to map the topography of the deep ocean floor became more significant as the mechanisms to achieve this goal advanced.

As steam supplanted sail and Alfred Thayer Mahan's strategic insights grew to dominate naval thinking, charts became essential enablers of U.S. imperial ambitions. Using the Spanish-American War as a backdrop, Smith demonstrates how charts became tools of conquest. Spanish charts of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines were incomplete, and without accurate hydrographic information American naval commanders' difficulties increased. After victory in the Spanish-American War, accurate charts were vital in selecting the locations of future naval installations and coaling stations. The diligence

of U.S. hydrographers in accurately charting these waters is nowhere more apparent than in a comparison of prewar charts of Guantánamo Bay with those created after the American victory.

To Master the Boundless Sea also acknowledges the Naval War College's role in the development of naval hydrography and the evolution of the nautical chart into not only an aid to war but also a critical component of campaign and battle planning. Of particular note was the work of Captain William McCarty Little in bringing wargaming to Newport. Whereas Mahan articulated a strategic vision, McCarty Little's wargaming charts mapped ways of making that vision a strategic reality.

Smith fills a major niche in understanding the role of nautical charts, the people and organizations that created them, and how they all advanced scientific understanding and a larger American identity. *To Master the Boundless Sea* is a superb work that will reward the interested and discerning reader.

RICHARD J. NORTON



The Final Act: The Helsinki Accords and the Transformation of the Cold War, by Michael Cotey Morgan. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2018. 424 pages. \$35.

One of the bigger questions in history—right up there with why did the Roman Empire fall—is why did the Cold War end. This question becomes even more significant when one remembers that the United States and its allies defeated the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact without a direct, military confrontation. Other long-term strategic confrontations