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Asia Looks Seaward: Power and Maritime Strategy

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area of “no first use”), “the development of conventional missile doctrine is . . . potentially incomplete.”

There is attention to both hardware and software, with particular focus on the human dimension of PLA capabilities. In a persuasive defense of the value of open-source research, Dennis Blasko explains that the ground forces, which still dominate the PLA, are modernizing and undertaking new nontraditional missions, including domestic and international humanitarian operations. While restructuring and modernization are likely to occupy the ground forces for years, Blasko notes that salaries for many PLA personnel doubled in 2006.

A wide range of possibilities is considered. Phillip Saunders and Erik Quam offer several alternative scenarios for PLA Air Force (PLAAF) force structure, and insights into the key factors that shape them. In assessing future PLAAF operational concepts, Kevin Lanzit and Kenneth Allen state that the PLAAF is trying “to become actively involved in managing China’s military space program with an emphasis on the informatization aspects.”

While the authors are careful to offer balanced assessments of capabilities and limitations, it is clear that dramatic new possibilities are emerging for the PLA. In his chapter on command, control, and targeting, Larry Wortzel judges that PLA “informatization” could be remarkably rapid and successful. “PLA officers seem convinced that using ballistic missiles to attack naval battle groups is a viable concept, and they obviously are actively pursuing the capability,” Wortzel asserts, adding that “the PLA will have near real-time regional intelligence collection capability from space in a few short years, if it does not already have it.” On this note, Michael McDevitt estimates that China “currently

has seven satellites in orbit that can contribute to ocean surveillance.” China’s first radar satellite, launched in 2006, “can probably inspect objects as small as twenty meters in length and is thus excellent for identifying ships.” While Chinese nuclear-powered ballistic-missile submarine (SSBN) development faces a high barrier to entry in terms of acoustic signature reduction, McDevitt judges, China’s navy may be preparing “to arm nuclear attack submarines with nuclear-tipped cruise missiles.” Bernard Cole projects that, despite current limitations in naval aviation and training, “the PLAN of 2016–17, at three times its present size, will dominate East Asian navies, with the possible exception of the JMSDF [Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force] . . . and will offer a very serious challenge to the U.S. Navy when it operates in those waters.”

In the final chapter, Ellis Joffe concludes that the need to deter Taiwan from declaring independence has driven much of China’s recent military modernization, and Beijing is growing increasingly confident in this regard. Yet Beijing remains far from reaching its presumed goal of achieving a “paramount position in the East Asian region.” It is hoped that this volume’s contributors will continue to probe the possibility of such a transition occurring—with the understanding that much may remain unclear to Beijing’s leaders themselves.

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Yoshihara, Toshi, and James R. Holmes, eds. *Asia Looks Seaward: Power and Maritime Strategy*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2008. 226pp. \$49.95

As the first decade of the twenty-first century draws to a close, the most

comprehensive changes in global economic activity, the global correlation of military force, and relationships among globally significant political actors are taking place in Asia. The fact that so many Asian nations rely heavily on oceanborne commerce for petroleum is but one reason why the course of these developments must depend on how the parties concerned exercise sea power. Thus, Toshi Yoshihara and James Holmes's volume of essays by leading academics on Asian nations' experiences and practices of maritime strategy is timely. Yoshihara sets a high standard for the other authors in his introduction, where he specifies issues he intends for the work to address, and identifies the key questions hanging over contemporary Asian maritime affairs with unusual clarity of thought and equally exceptional clarity of expression.

Different chapters address Yoshihara's questions from different perspectives. Chapter 2 presents a broad narrative of Chinese maritime activity, while chapters 3 and 4 present detailed historical studies of Anglo-Japanese relations and the U.S. Navy's operations in the Pacific region, respectively. The book then returns to twenty-first-century concerns, with chapters on the People's Republic of China's (PRC) ongoing naval buildup, the PRC's oil tanker fleet, Indian maritime activity, Japanese maritime thought, and China's maritime relations with Southeast Asia.

All these chapters are relevant to Yoshihara's initial questions. The questions, however, raise more issues than any book could possibly address. Readers of Gabriel Collins's study of the PRC's tanker fleet, for instance, are likely to want a comparative analysis of how other Asian countries transport

their oil. Chapters on India, Japan, and Southeast Asia are invaluable, but Russia, the Republic of China, and the Republic of Korea surely deserve attention as well. Numerous authors mention Alfred Thayer Mahan, but none explore the points he raises in *The Problem of Asia and Its Effect upon International Politics* (Little, Brown, 1905). *The Problem of Asia* emphasizes the importance of Africa and the Middle East to what twenty-first-century writers might call Asia's sea lines of communication. A chapter on the PRC's trade and diplomatic activity in those regions could have been revealing, whether or not the author shares Mahan's views. Since this book could never have covered all aspects of Asian maritime strategy completely, Yoshihara might have helped readers understand its particular contribution by including a conclusion summarizing the steps the authors had taken toward that goal. Readers are, however, almost certain to find this book valuable in their own studies of sea power in Asia.

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Oren, Michael B. *Power, Faith, and Fantasy: America in the Middle East, 1776 to the Present*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2007. 800pp. \$17.95

Michael Oren's *Power, Faith, and Fantasy* is an indispensable historical account of America's encounters with the volatile Middle East. A renowned historian, Oren fills a vacuum in the literature, as most of it dates to the post-World War II era.

Oren begins by identifying the central motifs (the "golden threads") of America's involvement in the region since the