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The Genesis of Naval Thinking since the End of the Cold War

Edward A. Smith Jr.

Peter Hore

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BOOK REVIEWS

PARALLEL THINKING

Hore, Peter, ed. *The Genesis of Naval Thinking since the End of the Cold War*. Maritime Strategic Studies Institute Paper 2, March 1999. 109pp.

Over the past decade, the U.S. Navy has undergone a profound shift in its strategy and thinking. This collection of thoughtful essays written by senior Royal Navy officers between 1992 and 1998 makes it clear that soul-searching by naval thinkers has not been confined to the United States. Eric Grove's foreword, tracing the evolution of British naval thought over this period, and Captain Edwin Atkinson's essay, "The Influence of Sea Power upon Peace," demonstrate how closely the thinking, assessments, and recommendations being made in the United Kingdom paralleled those made in the U.S. Navy's ". . . From the Sea" process. It is certainly an interesting commentary on the eternal verities of naval thinking that what Grove calls an "intellectual revolution" occurred without any formal exchange between these two very different groups, each of which was engaged in an "in house" effort. The real value of these essays, however, lies not in the history of post-Cold War naval thought but in what they say about a continuing revolution in naval thinking on both sides of the Atlantic—especially the efforts to stretch declining force levels to deal with extended commitments. A

particularly salient essay in this regard is Vice Admiral Alan West's "1919–1991: The Need for a United Kingdom Grand Strategy." West's forthright analysis of Britain's failed attempt to adapt to a new strategic environment after World War I points to the lack of a coherent national "grand" strategy, to destructive interservice rivalries, and to military planning driven by costs alone. The lack of a grand strategy in particular left Britain unable to make any meaningful trade-off between the limited means accorded the military in the interwar years and the far-reaching commitments that British forces were directed to meet. Compounding the problem was the policy makers' assumption that Britain "will not be engaged in any great war during the next ten years," a fiscally convenient dictum that persisted well into the 1930s despite evidence to the contrary and that ultimately left Britain unprepared for war. All of this should have a familiar ring to today's readers. Indeed, it is the currency of these problems that gives this essay its greatest impact.

Of equal, if different, significance is a series of essays by Brigadier Robert Fry,

Vice Admiral J. J. Blackham, and Admiral Sir Peter Abbott, written between 1995 and 1998. These provide perceptive British insights on the changing maritime dimension of our post–Cold War world and the increased roles for maneuvers and forward presence in shaping a new strategic environment. These are exactly the kinds of issues with which the U.S. armed forces are now struggling.

The essays' chief drawbacks are their brevity and what they do not say. The in-



Berkowitz, Bruce D., and Allan E. Goodman. *Best Truth: Intelligence in the Information Age*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 2000. 203pp. \$22.50

The U.S. intelligence community, as it currently exists, is fundamentally flawed and must be remade. With this opening premise, Bruce Berkowitz, a senior consultant at RAND Corporation, and Allan Goodman, former dean of the Georgetown University School of Foreign

Service, present their blueprint for the future of American intelligence.

According to the authors, a trio of factors threatens to leave the intelligence community ineffective and irrelevant. First, it is no revelation that the end of the Cold War has left the intelligence commu-

nity without a single clear threat as a focus for its analytic efforts. The past emphasis on the Soviet Union offered intelligence analysts historical continuity. Change tended to be evolutionary; for example, one generation of Soviet submarines offered insights into the next. Today, however, nations and nonstate actors have unprecedented access to technology and information and with it a new capability to organize and operate rapidly across borders. These developments create the prospect of an “instantaneous threat” against the United States from entirely unexpected sources.

Second, if Carl von Clausewitz was correct in defining intelligence as “every sort of information about the enemy and his country,” fundamental changes in information management must create fundamental changes in intelligence. Berkowitz and Goodman observe that the intelligence community was created on an

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ADMIRAL H. G. RICKOVER

sights presented are clearly worthwhile and for that very reason deserve expansion. For example, what were the working-level debates that undergirded the flag officers' presentations? The fact that the essays cover the seven-year period up to only three years ago would indicate that the issues raised with regard to the changing role of naval forces in the new century are still as far from being fully resolved in the Royal Navy as they are in the U.S. naval service. This suggests room for both an equivalent American publication and another Maritime Strategic Studies Institute paper, as both navies continue the process of rethinking naval power that collectively began in 1991.

EDWARD A. SMITH, JR.
Captain, U.S. Navy (Ret.)
Washington Studies and Analysis
The Boeing Company
Arlington, Virginia