

## Naval War College Review

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Volume 42  
Number 3 *Summer*

Article 12

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1989

# The Power Game: How Washington Works

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### Recommended Citation

Freney, Michael A. (1989) "The Power Game: How Washington Works," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 42 : No. 3 , Article 12.  
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol42/iss3/12>

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institutions that Mr. Lehman describes as so "Army-oriented" show about the same distribution as one would find elsewhere in informed societies, including the Army.

This book belongs on the navy bookshelf. It has much fuel for discussion and—perish the thought—analysis. Inevitably there will be the temptation to second-guess many of the force level and platform decisions. When that process starts, it is only fair that we take into account the environment and the implicit and explicit assumptions that Mr. Lehman made in his quest to rebuild the navy.

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Smith, Hedrick. *The Power Game: How Washington Works*. New York: Random House, 1987. 793pp. \$24.95

Hedrick Smith is an imaginative and insightful journalist. His earlier volume, *The Russians*, based upon his experience as a *New York Times* Moscow correspondent, is the best of its kind. It manages to capture both the personal and the bureaucratic, the official and the very unofficial facets of life in the Soviet Union.

Mr. Smith's latest book sadly lacks the crispness and freedom from cant which marked his first volume. It is difficult to determine whether Mr. Smith was overcome by his subject or whether his editor and publisher let him down. This reviewer is inclined to choose the latter as more likely.

True enough, *The Power Game* is full of interesting insights on the changing nature of politics "inside the Beltway." There are fascinating quick analyses of the impact of money, television, public opinion polling, incumbency in the House of Representatives and the destruction

of its seniority system, the maladies and false victories within the old Reagan White House, the agonies and exasperations of a cabinet poorly led, and the corrosive impact of right-wing orthodoxy on programs throughout the last two presidential terms. Unfortunately, the heavy emphasis upon bungling, pettiness, and the cult of the Reagan personality compels one to wonder why the United States has not proceeded along the path of the Roman Empire long before now.

Surely the opportunity to observe the process of government "inside the Beltway" and the process of electioneering "outside" does not bring joy and relief to the idealistic observer. Mr. Smith observes that the Founding Fathers built our system to be inefficient, and it is indeed, in many respects, exactly that. Despite occasional bows in the direction of honest men's differences, however, Mr. Smith identifies so few successes in public life as to leave a very bad taste for nearly everything and everyone involved in

trying to make this great nation function.

Were all that not bad enough, Mr. Smith has managed to pack into nearly 800 pages at least 300 pages worth of material. Example after example is repeated. Add to that such literary gratuities as multiple use of the verb "to limn," stir in immense irritation to the reader caused by footnotes arranged chapter by chapter in the rear of a book in which chapter headings appear only once, and one has a classic case of poor editing and publishing.

Smith's last chapter is called "What Is To Be Done?" How about a second edition of *The Power Game*, shorter by half, using all of the current material and adding some solid recognition for a few more of those "inside the Beltway" struggling on our behalf?

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Friedman, Norman. *The Postwar Naval Revolution*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1986, 240pp. \$21.95

Friedman's study is an examination of "the revolution in naval affairs" that occurred during the "decade following World War II." He focuses on the navies which "defined" that revolution, those of Great Britain and the United States. These two nations confronted the global challenge posed by the Soviet Union, the breakup of the old

European-dominated colonial order (what we now call the Third World), the advent of new technology, financial constraints, and rivalry among the services. Having previously written at length on the U.S. Navy, Friedman here concentrates on the Royal Navy, although the Americans are not ignored. And he addresses the progress of other European navies, the French and Dutch, for example, in chapters that cover politics and strategy, the shape of the fleets, new technology, and the various classes of ships, including those used for mine and inshore warfare.

The postwar dilemmas of British naval leaders were always drawn more clearly, if less dramatically, than those facing their American cousins. For Britain, World War II was a Pyrrhic victory. The nation was bankrupt and its empire was slipping away. The cost of maintaining a land force on the Continent could only come at the expense of the Royal Navy. And for several years after the war, British leaders faced the prospect of having to confront the Soviets in Europe and the Middle East without any guarantee of American assistance.

Moreover, the forces that Britain and the United States needed to police an increasingly unstable world differed from those required to fight a major conflict with the Soviets. Because the British judged such a "hot" war unlikely before 1957, they cancelled many of the projects begun during the war, allowed their existing forces to run down, and