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Invasion: From the Armada to Hitler, 1588-1945

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McLynn, Frank. *Invasion: From the Armada to Hitler, 1588-1945*. New York: Methuen, 1987. 224pp. \$39.95

The last successful invasion of Britain took place in 1066. In the time since, although many enemies either singly or in alliance have made elaborate plans for invasion, all such attempts have been turned aside.

In a study of wide-ranging scope, Frank McLynn describes the essential conditions which allowed Britain to repel invasion over the long course of history. The weather, always a key, unpredictable factor, aided the defense of the realm and gave rise to the legend of a "Protestant wind" which seemed to favor only the defenders. An excellent supply of experienced sailors, crafty naval leaders, and apparently unending good luck also assisted immeasurably in the English ability to resist invasion.

The development of the Royal Navy might appear to have been a guarantee against invasion. McLynn, however, points out a little understood consequence of the rise of British sea power. The development of the Royal Navy, together with the birth of modern imperialism, were inducements rather than deterrents to invasion. According to McLynn, since 1066, the imperial, not the continental, factor precipitated most threats of invasion. The political significance of the navy also increased as it became the principal means of defense against enemies intent upon attacking the English heartland to

redress British worldwide naval and imperial hegemony.

McLynn also describes how the eclipse of empire during the twentieth century may have resulted in a loss of motive for invasion. The consequence of this decline, as McLynn suggests, is that because Britain is no longer a first-class imperial power, the reason for any future plan of invasion would seem to lie in Britain's role as "America's aircraft carrier."

As a *tour d'horizon* of invasion schemes over the centuries, McLynn's book provides a useful source of examples for naval historians to examine the ways in which problems have influenced, shaped, and sometimes hindered strategic thinking. The book is also a helpful reminder that, despite over four centuries of invasion attempts, there was nothing unique about any of the problems faced and schemes proposed by would-be invaders from the Armada to "Sea Lion."

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Gailey, Harry A. *Howlin' Mad vs the Army*. Novato, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1986. 278pp. \$17.95

"A grain of sand is not a beach." A trial lawyer frequently pursues this simple truth in defending a client. He painstakingly examines and cross-examines every miniscule act committed and every word uttered as pertains to the critical event that led to the charge against