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The Soviet Union: The Incomplete Superpower

Henry M. Schreiber

Paul Dibb

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questions which could be as relevant today and in the future as they were in 1943.

In a future conflict—if the NATO forces are not to relearn the lessons of two World Wars—we must pay attention to what Martin Middlebrook is telling us. Systems for protecting merchant shipping must be developed. Resources must be provided. Procedures for this protection must be documented, taught, and practiced at sea. Secure communications with properly staffed and equipped command centers must be provided. The tactics, rescue procedures, salvage methods, control and routing of merchant ships must be practiced in peacetime.

There are many lessons for us in *Convoy*. One concerns the CHOP (change in operational control) line encountered by Atlantic convoys as control changed between British and U.S. staffs. In 1943 there was one such change encountered by North Atlantic convoys. This caused considerable problems in control and protection of the convoys as policy and resources varied on each side of the CHOP line. Today, NATO plans provide for five such CHOP lines, with each NATO commander responsible for a segment of the convoys' transits. Having experienced the difficulty created by one such change we now plan on five.

Convoy is an excellent book, a valuable addition to the library of lessons hard learned in that dirty unglamorous part of war which cannot be overlooked again. Written ten years ago about a battle fought 45

years ago, it is more important today than ever.

S.D. LANDERSMAN
Captain, U.S. Navy (Ret.)

Dibb, Paul. *The Soviet Union: The Incomplete Superpower*. Champaign, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1986. 293pp. \$26.95

Paul Dibb—a senior research fellow at the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, The Australian National University at Canberra—has not created an innovative or original interpretation of the Soviet Union, but this is hardly likely given the extensive writings presently being poured out which look at every aspect of this country. However, his book is a sound and balanced examination of the strengths and weaknesses of the Soviet economy, especially as it affects the foreign and military activities of the U.S.S.R.

The Soviet Union is particularly useful as a collation of the judgments of Western observers on the reasons for Soviet exploitation of its power—political, economic and military—within the international system. It is Dibb's conviction that the Soviet Union has failed to attract any countries in the Third World to the Soviet model. Politically and economically the U.S.S.R. has not inspired emulators; only its military strength, aid, and weapons have had impact. However, there is a political influence that I believe Dibb and many other scholars have ignored. The Leninist organizational model

for revolutionary seizure of power and for establishing political control has had a number of takers. Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Yemen (and Nicaragua if its leaders have their way) are among those who have been influenced by the Soviet experience in exercising effective political control of their people and are presently exploiting these Leninist techniques.

The initial chapters of this book sketch out the essentials of the exercise of power among nations and the workings of the international system. The importance of the sense of perception as opposed to the reality of power is stressed. In addition, the significance of geography, history, and ideology in shaping Soviet perceptions is argued. This early section serves to explain how the Soviet Union approaches international affairs, deals with other states, and tries to see "what the world looks like from Moscow."

Dibb argues there are severe constraints on Moscow's foreign activities. Certain "internal problems" should tend to hold back the U.S.S.R.: nationality issues, the security of Siberia, and relations with eastern Europe. In a later chapter Dibb examines the Soviet economy, especially as it affects military power. He rejects the contention of some Western scholars that the economy is in a state of crisis, but recognizes there are serious economic difficulties and that some Moscow leaders admit there are such problems. In the recently held 27th Congress of the CPSU, Gorbachev was frank in his comments on the severity of economic difficulties. There are also chapters on

constraints that the international environment imposes on Soviet activities and a useful discussion is provided on the Soviet "strategic environment."

The Soviet Union: The Incomplete Superpower attempts "to give an overview of the likely nature of Soviet power through the mid-1990s . . . the picture is mixed." Dibb concludes that the "long-term Western strategy should . . . concentrate on exploiting the superior economic size and performance of the industrialised democracies, recognising that the struggle with the Soviet Union is at heart political and economic, not military." At the same time "prudence calls for a Western response that maintains a military balance sufficient to deter the Soviet Union from the use of military force." It is clear that Dibb offers no new formula for understanding and dealing with Moscow, but it remains important to reiterate hard learned lessons and this is a service he has performed.

HENRY M. SCHREIBER
Naval War College

Jones, David R., ed. *Soviet Armed Forces Review Annual*. Gulf Breeze, Fla.: Academic International Press, 1986. v. 9. 314pp. \$69.50

Since 1977, *Soviet Armed Forces Review Annual* (SAFRA) has published annually, in one comprehensive volume, a statistical overview and analysis of indicators of Soviet military power and a set of accompanying essays dealing with Soviet military affairs. A major theme developed in the ninth