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The Gun Merchants: Politics and Policies of the Major Arms Suppliers

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100 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW**BOOK REVIEWS**

Cannizzo, Cindy ed. *The Gun Merchants: Politics and Policies of the Major Arms Suppliers*, New York: Pergamon Press, 1980. 211pp.

The Gun Merchants is a collection of eight essays on the international arms trade. The contributors are political scientists from the academic world. In fact the volume is an outgrowth of a meeting of the Midwestern Political Science Association in 1978. The heart of the book consists of five chapters, each on a major arms exporter: United States, U.S.S.R., Great Britain, West Germany, and France. The editor has contributed an opening background essay and the closing essay on prospects for control of arms transfers. The one other paper included outlines a taxonomy of international arms control proposals. There is a very substantial and useful bibliography at the end of the book as well as lists of references at the end of each of the chapters. The overlap between references and bibliography is limited.

The authors, particularly the editor, have a definite point of view regarding arms transfers—namely, that transfers are a bad thing, and that more control, although difficult to achieve, is a good thing. This is, of course, an outlook which not all observers share. It is because such transfers provide economic and political benefits to both exporters and recipients that they continue to take place. Most people would surely only agree that they would prefer that transfers of arms to their enemies be controlled. However, a reader who does not share the view that international arms control is a good thing can still learn much from the book regarding policy and policy history in the five exporting countries.

The concept behind this collection is very good. There are important differences underlying the policies of major exporters which certainly warrant

separate treatment. To note the most obvious: in France, where more than 40 percent of arms produced are exported, policy is driven by different considerations than it is in the United States.

While I found the idea to be a good one, I was somewhat disappointed with the resulting book with the exception of the first essay. The editor's opening paper is an excellent overview of the topic. In it she briefly surveys the 20th-century history of arms transfers, then deals in some detail with the present period, noting such important developments as the trend toward licensing and coproduction and the expansion in the number of exporters to include Third World suppliers. The specific country chapters diverge greatly in approach. Tracing common threads among them is difficult. As a beginning, it would have been helpful to bring together statistical information for the five countries. The U.S. chapter, which concerns the Carter administration commitment to limitations on transfers, seems very much out of date although the author notes that, "Arms transfers are too popular and useful a policy tool to be abandoned: only a redefinition of the American foreign policy interests they serve would foster fundamental change." (p. 45) In other words, despite the Carter administration rhetoric, perhaps policy was in fact not too different from that of previous administrations, and perhaps it was not very different from Reagan administration policy. The chapter on France, written long prior to the Mitterand government, soon may seem out of date also. This is particularly true in light of the author's point that while economic factors are important, French arms transfer policy above all responds to concerns of general politics. The Soviet chapter has a narrow focus—arms policy toward sub-Saharan Africa. While much of what is said regarding,

for example, factors influencing Soviet behavior, is applicable in a wider context, the purposes of the book would have been better served by an essay on Soviet arms policy in general.

The chapter on Germany is perhaps the most interesting of the country-specific chapters because there is so little literature on German arms transfer policy. The author emphasizes the deliberately low profile of German policy, but concludes that given the emergence of a significant defense industrial base, and NATO emphasis on standardization and interoperability, Germany is increasingly subject to "the same political, economic, technical and security pressures that other Western arms suppliers have had to accommodate in the last fifteen years." (p. 125)

In the final chapter the editor distinguishes among reduction, restraint, and regulation of arms transfers. Reduction, meaning significant reductions in numbers of weapons and/or dollar volume transferred, and restraint, meaning gradual reduction and/or certain qualitative or geographical constraints, are regarded by the author as impossible given the present international context. Regulation, which she defines as administrative control, accepting the status quo and seeking to "regularize, rationalize, and bureaucratize the process multilaterally" is viewed as the least controversial of the three approaches, but its prospects are also seen as dim. Further, "Even if these . . . regulations could be negotiated into a supplier's agreement, the viper's pit at the arms bazaar would not be turned into a nest of garter snakes." (p. 195) In short, the editor views prospects for control pessimistically.

Although somewhat dared, *The Gun Merchants* is a useful contribution to arms transfer literature. It provides some interesting insights into individual country arms transfer policies. Written by, and mostly for, professional political

scientists, it is not recommended for the casual reader but is of most benefit to readers having considerable familiarity with the arms control literature.

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Exum, Wallace Louis. *Battleship: Pearl Harbor, 1941*. Virginia Beach, Va.:

The Donning Company, 1981. 136pp.

Want a firsthand look at the "old" Navy of fancy work, wooden decks, slush funds, foo foo juice, Academy martinets, mail call, bosun pipes, black oil, seabags, pogy bait, shining brass, and 14-inch guns? Then *Battleship* may be the book for you. As an unvarnished view from the deckplates of the routine and tradition of seagoing life, the book is tough to match. First published in 1974, colorful and spare and not too serious, the story portrays no dashing, larger-than-life heroes or leaders of classic dimension, but rather focuses on the quite ordinary bluejackets assigned to the battleship *Nevada*. In this respect, the book is unusual. Most people who have been associated with the Navy past or present will appreciate this somewhat sentimental voyage and will feel some emotional kinship with the story's central, very human characters. Fast-moving and straightforward, *Battleship* could have been written only by someone who was there.

The actual events of 7 December 1941 take only a few pages and are entwined in a very believable fictional framework that begins when Quartermaster Chief Toland reports for duty aboard *Nevada* the month before. With much of the action set in the familiar surroundings of CPO Quarters, the Wheelhouse, and the Charr Room, the story unfolds easily from Toland's steady, experienced, no-nonsense perspective. Within the clipped, entertaining and very realistic dialogue, the author makes two points that are as sobering today as they were 40 years