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Theodore Roosevelt's Naval Diplomacy: The U.S. Navy and the Birth of the American Century

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MacArthur before firing him on 11 April 1951. Could the White House come up with a line to rival the general's riveting message: "There is no substitute for victory"? Perhaps, but it could not deliver one, since its credibility was largely shot by mid-1951, when Truman registered 23 percent public approval, the lowest in the history of the Gallup Poll. In a battle of sound bites, General Omar Bradley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, had to rescue administration policy by testifying that MacArthur's proposal to attack China "was the wrong war, at the wrong place, against the wrong enemy."

One hears that Casey's next book will be about the U.S. Army and correspondents in World Wars I and II. This reader would have preferred that he pushed on into the next war—doing presidents, policy, the media, and public opinion during Vietnam. For those of us particularly interested in those topics, Casey would thus produce a trilogy on wartime policy worthy of the three volumes on military operations produced by Douglas Southall Freeman (*Lee's Lieutenants*, on the U.S. Civil War) and Rick Atkinson (*The Liberation Trilogy* on the U.S. Army in the European theater in World War II). Yes, Steven Casey is that good.

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Hendrix, Henry J. *Theodore Roosevelt's Naval Diplomacy: The U.S. Navy and the Birth of the American Century*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2009. 288pp. \$34.95

Commander Henry J. Hendrix has written a neat monograph based on his

doctoral work. He makes two related arguments: first, that one cannot understand the diplomatic style of President Theodore Roosevelt without first understanding his attitude toward the efficacy and use of naval power; and second, that the existing literature has not adequately integrated naval and military historical methods of analysis with existing diplomatic historical approaches. Consequently, previous interpretations of Roosevelt's foreign policy decisions, as they relate to incidents that involved the use of naval power, are incomplete, precisely because they do not fuse the diplomatic and political with the naval—especially the perspective reflected by the navalist attitudes of Theodore Roosevelt.

As for structure, the book begins with the now-common device of the narrative vignette—in this case the "sailing of the Great White Fleet," as a means of establishing the ambience of the moment of the great president and his great fleet. With the reader now interested in "the rest of the story," Hendrix proceeds in a workmanlike and professional manner, establishing in the first chapter the basis for the beginning of the "beautiful relationship" between TR and the object of his affection and desire, the U.S. Navy. Included here is the story of Roosevelt's famous action as Assistant Secretary of the Navy regarding the deployment of Admiral George Dewey's Far East Squadron to Manila Bay. This episode may be regarded as typical of Roosevelt's activist attitudes and actions regarding the Navy.

The remaining chapters focus topically. The closing chapter on the Great White Fleet is the only one that deals directly with the linkage of the U.S. Navy to an "American Century." The odd man out

is the chapter on technology, although it is a welcome discussion, given both TR's fascination with new technology and the inherently high-tech nature of navies in general. Additionally, this chapter provides ammunition for a much larger argument about modern Americans and their fascination with technology.

However, the bulk of the book deals with the diplomatic-naval arguments mentioned. Hendrix makes an excellent case for his thesis that previous historians have paid too little attention to the intersection of naval and diplomatic trends of analysis. He employs a multidisciplinary approach that examines naval signals, logbooks, war plans, and other archival Department of the Navy records to render less opaque some of TR's diplomatic actions and motivations.

Although this work is not a biography, it adds value to existing ones, especially Edmund Morris's *Theodore Rex*, which focuses exclusively on his presidency. Theodore Roosevelt had many different personae, and it has not escaped historians that he was not only a historian but also a naval historian, par excellence. Neither has it escaped them that, along with A. T. Mahan and Stephen Luce, he is the father of the modern U.S. Navy. However, Hendrix makes a strong argument that TR's naval persona was critical to understanding his use of power, especially in foreign relations.

The book's minor weakness is its narrow, monographic scope. The chapters proceed in a generally chronological manner but maintain no extended narrative thread—the unifier, instead, is the topical theme. Hendrix may have missed an opportunity to make a larger

statement about the relationship of the man to the institution and its importance to the United States under the entire Roosevelt “dynasty.” There is much peripheral evidence here about the institutional and organizational aspects of the Navy that made this reviewer long for more discussion. TR's presidency was a time of profound change in the military establishment of the United States, a period that involved the Root reforms of the Army and the establishment of the General Board of the Navy, as a sort of proto-naval general staff. TR's role in these critical early years of the General Board would have been worth exploring.

These are minor quibbles in an otherwise fine book that adds substantially to the understanding of an important aspect of the rise of the United States to great-power status and influence during Theodore Roosevelt's presidency. I recommend this book for a broad audience, especially those interested in the development and execution of American foreign policy in the early twentieth century.

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Brooks, Max. *World War Z: An Oral History of the Zombie War*. New York: Crown, 2006. 352pp. \$14.95

“A breath of fresh air stormed into the Naval War College over the rotting flesh of the undead,” reads the first book-club selection of the President of the Naval War College. Without vilifying another country or radicalizing any group, *World War Z's* zombie