

BOOK REVIEWS

THE AFFAIRS OF THE AMERICAS

Reid, Michael. *Forgotten Continent: The Battle for Latin America's Soul*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 2007. 384pp. \$30

Anyone taking up duties related to Latin America or otherwise wishing to understand current realities in the region should read Michael Reid's assessment of contemporary Latin America. Editor of the Americas section of *The Economist*, Reid has lived or traveled in Latin America since 1982 and credits his Peruvian wife for important insights in this volume. Writing with the clarity and color of an accomplished journalist, Reid has produced a book that is sophisticated enough to satisfy a specialist on Latin America but accessible and comprehensible to a neophyte in the subject.

The subtitle refers to the tension between populist politicians with statist agendas, like Venezuela's Hugo Chávez, and the liberal democracies that have undertaken market-oriented reforms in the past two decades. Not bound by this dichotomy, Reid engagingly presents the full complexity of Latin America, where politics, economics, ethnicity, and history create a mixture in which simple explanations and facile prescriptions fall short. While not a policy manual per se, the book reinforces the view

of policy makers who favor a multi-disciplinary approach.

Reid notes that "the region has been relatively free of the interstate conflicts that have dogged so many other parts of the world" and suggests that as one reason why "for much of Latin America's history, regional integration was not a priority," unlike Europe during the Cold War. Perceived security threats also help explain U.S. attitudes toward the region. Reid observes that "while in the past they had condemned *Yanqui* interventionism, many Latin American politicians came to lament what they saw as a lack of U.S. engagement with the region"—thus the title *Forgotten Continent*. In fact, U.S. attention to the region usually has peaked when Americans have felt a security threat, whether it was the European involvement that prompted the United States to adopt the Monroe Doctrine or more recent fears of the spread of the Cuban revolution or Sandinista insurgency. The war on drugs has also driven U.S. interest and policy in Latin America, to the annoyance of those who live there. The current paucity of serious state-to-state

military threats does give Latin American countries the advantage of not having to devote hefty resources to external defense, unlike much of the rest of the world.

Why then has Latin America not done better economically? Reid provides good answers. Latin American countries have prospered recently by meeting rapidly rising global demand for foodstuffs and raw materials, and a tenfold increase in the price of petroleum enabled Hugo Chávez to expand his influence abroad and fuel his authoritarian tendencies at home. However, now that contractions in global demand have reduced the price of oil by two-thirds from its high, Chávez may find his wings trimmed.

Whatever the economic future, Latin Americans will continue to debate how best to organize their affairs, and Michael Reid's expert analysis will help outsiders understand the issues.

PAUL TAYLOR
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Percival, Bronson. *The Dragon Looks South: China and Southeast Asia in the New Century*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2007. 200pp. \$31.25

Bronson Percival has written a compelling book that is a must-read for any student or practitioner of national security in Southeast Asia. His work, unlike that of many others on the same subject, strives to understand the China–Southeast Asia relationship from an Asian perspective. As a career diplomat with extensive experience in Southeast Asia, he explains the key nuances that characterize the complex and iterative nature of China's security relationships with its southern

neighbors. Unlike the United States, which considers the ten countries that constitute Southeast Asia as a homogeneous group, China has shown a deeper understanding of the “extremely complex” nature of the region, reflected by its varied approaches to each country in Southeast Asia. As a consequence, China appears to be steadily achieving its security goals, while the United States has been less successful in realizing its own objectives.

Percival approaches his subject starting with a historical overview of Chinese strategic goals in Southeast Asia and the policies they have used to achieve them. He argues convincingly that, in pursuit of its strategic aims, China has demonstrated a better appreciation of those that comprise the maritime countries of Southeast Asia.

In one of the most important chapters of his work, “How to Think about China and Southeast Asia,” the author dispels some of the more disingenuous analytical approaches that have been used to explain the security dynamics in East Asia. Key among them has been the realist perspective founded on power relationships that assumes the countries in Southeast Asia at some future point will need to choose between China and the United States. He argues that this perception is wholly unsuited given the “asymmetry” of power and influence each country brings to the table. In his view, traditional notions about what constitutes power and influence in Southeast Asia are much more nuanced than many U.S. security analysts have appreciated. His comprehensive analyses of “soft power” and its role in Chinese relations with Southeast Asia are especially compelling. Significantly, the author contends that China's power

and influence in Southeast Asia are not predicated upon military or economic prowess but rather on its “restraint in requesting adjustments in Southeast Asian policy,” and its support to existing ruling regimes that often come under intense pressure from the United States. Finally, Percival argues U.S. credibility problems in Southeast Asia arise from American “reluctance” to commit to a set of priorities and an unwillingness to devote the resources needed to achieve America’s strategic goals. As a result, U.S. policy has fallen victim to competing constituencies in the United States, which results in an ad hoc decision-making process that poorly matches means to desired ends.

The Dragon Looks South provides a clear and succinct analysis of complex issues and relationships that exist in a strategically critical region for both China and the United States. As such, it is a must-read for anyone wanting to gain a better appreciation of the issues that confront American security policy in Southeast Asia.

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Flanagan, Stephen J., and James A. Schear, eds. *Strategic Challenges: America’s Global Security Agenda*. Washington, D.C.: National Defense Univ. Press, 2008. 415pp. \$35

From time to time it is extremely useful for senior military and political leaders to take stock of the international landscape, rise above the incessant demands of the day, and think about where the currents of change are bearing their ships of state. This book takes a hard look at seven distinct security

challenges with which U.S. leaders can reasonably be expected to wrestle in the future.

In many ways, *Strategic Challenges* is exactly the sort of solid work that one expects scholars associated with the National Defense University (NDU) and the Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS) to produce. Its genesis was a two-year study of the international environment undertaken by NDU in response to a tasking from the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This is a thoughtful work, well organized, well written, and well supported by cogent analysis. In short, *Strategic Challenges* is a gateway book that both illuminates important security issues and at the same time leaves the reader wanting to explore some of its topics in greater depth.

Strategic Challenges opens with an overview of the emerging global security environment, dedicating subsequent chapters to the issues of dealing with global terrorism, combating the threat of weapons of mass destruction, protecting the American homeland, defusing conflicts in unstable regions, engaging other major powers, and adapting alliances and partnerships. The final two chapters examine how the United States might transform its defense strategy and posture and secure its future. Each chapter makes a worthwhile contribution to the total volume; the chapters on “engaging other major powers” and “transforming defense strategy and posture” are particularly good. Indeed, the latter chapter provides an excellent thumbnail review of the history of transformation in the George W. Bush administration and the evolution of capabilities-based planning.

If there is a drawback to *Strategic Challenges*, it is that for all its high-caliber writing, the challenges it evokes seem oddly comfortable and familiar. This is not to imply they are not valid but rather there is widespread agreement that these are issues that will task future U.S. presidents. It would have been illuminating if the authors had taken a deeper look at more unusual challenges, such as the growth of feral cities, the ability of the international community to respond to pandemics, the security implications of global warming, and the impact of clearly established demographic trends. Some of these issues are mentioned, and others are actually examined to some degree, but a deeper look at each would have been welcome.

Strategic Challenges would seem destined to become required reading for students in the security studies field. It is suited for both the undergraduate and graduate level as well as lay readers looking to gain an overview of security threats in a minimum amount of time.

RICHARD NORTON
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Lieber, Keir. *War and the Engineers: The Primacy of Politics over Technology*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 2008. 226pp. \$21

Keir Lieber, a recent graduate of the Political Science Department at the University of Chicago, is presently an assistant professor and faculty fellow at the University of Notre Dame. This is Lieber's first book.

One of the first books to examine and criticize directly the current political science analysis on "offense-defense theory," this work is an analysis of the

debate as well as a well crafted refutation of the theory as a whole. The title, however, could have been a better fit with the content—this is not a book about war itself, or about engineers.

In the introduction Lieber outlines the foundations of current theory. Offense-defense theory, broadly, states that war and peace are dependent on technology and perceived power. If a country has offensive capabilities, it will attack and expand, overthrowing the status quo. When defense predominates (ideologically, technologically, or otherwise), cooperation and peace are more likely. Lieber questions this theory. To refute it, in later chapters he considers both *military outcomes* and *political outcomes* (italics original) in specific case studies. By analyzing offense-defense theory using its own vocabulary and definitions, he is able to deconstruct it persuasively. Using two case studies on "offensive" mobility (trains in the wars of German unification and tanks in World War I), and two on the evolution of "defensive" firepower (small arms in World War I and the "nuclear revolution"), Lieber turns the theory against itself. He effectively argues that neither offensive nor defensive capabilities pushed or prevented war during the periods in question.

In his conclusion Lieber offers an alternative argument, "technological opportunism," with just enough information to lead readers to look forward to his next project.

Lieber's use of sources, both primary and secondary, is extensive, and his bibliography provides a wealth of information. His book is well written, well argued, and concise. However, it is sure to cause controversy, outlining as it does both the offense-defense theory as

well as Lieber's refutation of it. This work is the latest in the debate within political science circles on the causes of war. I highly recommend this book to historians, political scientists, military officers, and analysts, who should all be familiar with offense-defense theory and objections to it.

S. MIKE PAVELEC
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Scheuer, Michael. *Marching toward Hell: America and Islam after Iraq*. New York: Free Press, 2008. 364pp. \$27

Former CIA analyst Michael Scheuer offers an assessment of the war on terror, providing in varying proportions the history, an estimate of the global situation, recommended tactics, and a polemic against what he believes has both provoked al-Qa'ida and impaired Washington's ability to fight it successfully. Scheuer was chief and then special adviser to the chief of the CIA's Bin Laden unit from 1996 to 2004.

Scheuer's core argument is twofold. First, he argues that al-Qa'ida's attacks America because of U.S. foreign policies in the Islamic world, and not because of any objection to the nature of American society. In Scheuer's estimate, while jihadists do have contempt for American values, it is only Washington's interference in Muslim lands that motivates them to target Americans and their allies. Second, he argues that this misunderstanding has led Washington to underestimate them and thus remain superficial in its responses.

Scheuer is fairly convincing in his first argument, primarily using statements by al-Qa'ida leaders to illustrate how

they focus attention on U.S. policies and how they use sophisticated strategies to attack (or spare from attack) other Western nationals in proportion to their support for those policies.

However, he also shows how ineffective the U.S. response has been toward these attacks, arguing that the central premise of American strategy in the Muslim world is flawed. That is, whether or not America is a prosperous, free, tolerant, and generous country is beside the point; many Muslims may agree and yet still believe that America deserves punishment for its policies. He then delivers stinging critiques of other U.S. policies since 9/11—for example, deploying too few troops to Afghanistan and deposing a natural ally against al-Qa'ida, Saddam Hussein.

Some of his critiques are less convincing than others. It is frustrating that the author does not critically evaluate the veracity of al-Qa'ida's accusations against the United States or logically explain how U.S. policy failures flow directly from its failure to comprehend al-Qa'ida's true motives. The book is also riddled with run-on sentences and strings of four-or-more-words-connected-by-hyphens, which better editing could have reduced.

The value of the book for the national security community is its identification of eight future hot spots in the global war on terrorism. Scheuer identifies one of these regions, the northern Caucasus, as particularly dangerous and well positioned to provide al-Qa'ida with nuclear weapons.

Because the book's virtues, insights, and provocative ideas are mixed with logical gaps and woeful underdevelopment, this reviewer cannot give it his

unqualified endorsement. If you read only one book on the global war on terrorism, do not make it this one. If, however, you read several books on the subject or your job involves long-term planning for the war on terror, this work is certainly worth a look, as it will make you aware of many of the mind sets and biases that shape government rhetoric and conventional commentary on terrorism and national security.

ROBERT HARRIS
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Cull, Nicholas J. *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American Propaganda and Public Diplomacy, 1945–1989*. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2008. 533pp. \$125

Public diplomacy today is a topic of global conversation. Books on the “new public diplomacy” of state and nonstate actors appear with increasing frequency. Memoirs by practitioners and monographs on cultural diplomacy and international broadcasting abound. Until now, however, there has been no in-depth scholarly treatment of the U.S. Information Agency (USIA), the government organization primarily responsible for America’s international information, broadcasting, and educational and cultural exchange activities during the Cold War.

Nicholas Cull, a historian who teaches public diplomacy at the University of Southern California’s Annenberg School for Communication, provides this much-needed scholarship, with a well written account grounded in twelve years of archival research and more than a hundred interviews with practitioners. Beginning with the

development of information and cultural programs during World War II, Cull’s narrative, organized in chapters on presidential administrations and USIA directors, deals principally with the decades between USIA’s creation in 1953 and the end of the Cold War in 1989. He concludes with a brief epilogue on USIA’s final decade, years that saw consolidation of U.S. international broadcasting services under the independent Broadcasting Board of Governors and the transfer of USIA’s information, exchange, and foreign-opinion-research programs to the Department of State in 1999.

Cull assesses with remarkable evenhandedness the priorities, decisions, and organizational struggles of political leaders and USIA’s practitioners. There is no ideological tilt in his examination of sharply contested approaches to winning the Cold War struggle for “hearts and minds.” The book is not a lament for USIA’s demise or a call for its restoration. Cull brings a scholar’s discipline, a wealth of empirical evidence, and arm’s-length perspective to his analysis. Nevertheless, Cull does have strong opinions. He renders critical judgments on USIA’s successes and failures. In so doing, he frequently prefers to show rather than tell.

On foreign-policy issues and USIA’s domestic political context, Cull’s account is strong on the McCarthy era, the Soviet launch of Sputnik, the civil rights movement, and the Vietnam War. He provides insights into USIA’s marginal role as an adviser to the president, State Department, and National Security Council on implications of foreign public opinion in policy formulation and communication. He deals at length with tensions between USIA and

the Voice of America over missions, “firewalls,” journalism norms, and organizational independence.

Yet the book has limitations. He problematically conflates the generic and constituent elements of public diplomacy—listening, advocacy, cultural diplomacy, exchange diplomacy, and international broadcasting—in the book’s framework of underlying themes. He gives (as he recognizes) disproportionate attention to Washington, USIA’s directors, and broadcast media.

The author ends with a brief look at lessons for the future, such as the need to include public diplomacy in foreign-policy planning and for the United States to listen as well as speak. These are valuable insights. But new forces are shaping twenty-first-century diplomacy. Networks challenge hierarchies. Attention—not information—is the scarce resource. Globalism, nonstate actors, a mix of secular and religious “big ideas,” digital technologies, and new media are transforming the old order. Cull is sensitive to these forces and to the ways in which they are changing diplomacy. Perhaps one day he will write another book that completes his history of USIA and explores the evolution of public diplomacy in a world that is vastly different from the Cold War. In the meantime, Cull’s masterful history will be the gold standard in scholarship on USIA.

BRUCE GREGORY
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Macrakis, Kristie. *Seduced by Secrets: Inside the Stasi’s Spy-Tech World*. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2008. 370pp. \$28

Michigan State University professor Kristie Macrakis provides an interesting, if somewhat disjointed, look into one part of the former East German Ministry for State Security, the department commonly known as the “Stasi.” In its time, the Stasi was one of the most effective intelligence and security organizations on the planet. The book under review provides a look into a key aspect of Stasi operations. Its author, Kristie Macrakis, has written several books on modern Germany and conveys a deep understanding of German thought and attitudes, but her lack of knowledge on intelligence matters unfortunately limits her understanding of her chosen topic. However, the professional who is willing to dig past the discrepancies will find value.

The book is divided into two parts, “High-Tech” and “Spy-Tech.” The latter section focuses on “spy technology” and will fascinate the dilettante and inform the professional. It is in this section that Macrakis appears more comfortable and writes with greater confidence and insight. If your favorite James Bond character is Q, you will love this section. Secret writing, spy cameras, and other surveillance gadgets abound.

Unfortunately, the first section is not as well written as the second. It provides valuable information for intelligence and policy professionals, focusing on the Stasi’s quest to steal high-technology information and hardware from the West, primarily West Germany. Macrakis describes economic espionage as a major role for the Stasi’s foreign-intelligence arm, backed by an extensive organization within the ministry and throughout the East German state. However, an inadequate understanding

of intelligence prevents her from presenting real insights, which readers must find for themselves. Still, the depth of the author's research and her superior understanding of the German psyche are definite enablers for an astute reader.

On the basis of extensive archival research as well as interviews with former officers, the author describes how the Stasi succeeded in stealing technical plans, equipment, and software. Attempting to gain an economic edge on the West, East Germans spent thousands of marks to steal millions of marks' worth of technology. Macrakis also describes the ultimate futility of this effort: East Germany could not incorporate the technology faster than the West could innovate and thus lagged farther and farther behind. Stealing technology is relatively simple, but incorporating that technology and making it an effective part of a national economy is not.

Another major challenge for the Stasi was Western technology-control regimes. While imperfect and implemented long after the Stasi had begun its operations, these regimes significantly increased the effort required. Eventually, the cost of stealing and the inability of East Germany to integrate what it took doomed the Stasi's efforts to failure.

Contemporary critics of current technology-control regimes should note that many nations have learned from the Stasi's mistakes and now make the transfer of "know-how" a key element of their technological-industrial-economic espionage programs. Those charged with enforcing technology-transfer laws can also learn lessons from this work.

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Winkler, Jonathan Reed. *Nexus: Strategic Communications and American Security in World War I*. New York: Harvard Univ. Press, 2008. 358pp. \$55

In March 1921, the U.S. subchaser SC-154 fired on a cable ship attempting to land a transoceanic cable near Miami, Florida. The cable to South America would have been operated under foreign control. While the ship was undamaged, the cable never reached land. The lessons of World War I had left the United States willing to use force rather than allow a new foreign-controlled communications link to North America. In his excellent study, Jonathan Winkler recalls these episodes, describing the international and naval communications structures of the era, their influence on the war, and America's recognition of its dependence on foreign communications systems. The Navy, with a cadre of technical experts and the need to command and control a worldwide fleet, played a central role in shaping a U.S. communications policy intended to reduce these vulnerabilities.

The years before World War I represent the start of our networked world.

Trade, overseas news, colonial administration and the coordination of far-flung military forces all became dependent on a web of undersea communications cables, supplemented by a limited number of long-range radio stations. Understanding this dependence, both Great Britain and Germany entered the war with contingency plans to cut enemy

cables at sea. However, British naval superiority ensured that damage from German attacks could be quickly repaired. Despite later German successes in using submarines to attack undersea cables, geography and infrastructure left Great Britain as the hub of the remaining international communications system. While some of this story will be broadly familiar to readers of Barbara Tuchman's classic study *The Zimmerman Telegram*, Winkler moves well beyond Tuchman's work, describing how Britain's information blockade emerged as a coordinated effort that complemented and reinforced its naval and economic blockades of Germany.

Initially, many in the U.S. government and Navy were sympathetic to British efforts. Even while neutral, the U.S. Navy cooperated, by closing German wireless stations in the United States. However, the British stranglehold on German communications had the effect of leaving the United States dependent on British cables to Europe and Latin America. British monitoring of cable traffic, a valuable source of military intelligence, also yielded commercial information that was used to further British trade—often against U.S. commercial interests. Reliable reporting of news from Germany became impossible, leaving the neutral American press dependent on British reporting of the war. The divergence of American and British interests forced the U.S. Navy's realization that control of communications had become an essential part of control of the seas in the modern age.

In response, several U.S. government agencies moved to build an American cable network, but they were hampered by British control of raw materials. Others turned to emerging technology.

Largely through Navy efforts, the United States ended World War I with the largest radio network in the world. However, the lack of a coordinated U.S. strategy and poor interagency coordination ultimately prevented the nation from dominating the international communications system after the war. Winkler asserts that the lessons learned from this failure provided the impetus for American dominance of international communications in years following the Second World War.

This is an excellent book with a compelling story. Winkler deftly handles a complex topic that cuts across issues of naval history, intelligence, economics, and technological change. *Nexus* is well worth the time of any naval officer contemplating the sources of American dependence in a networked age.

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Kershaw, Ian. *Hitler, The Germans, and the Final Solution*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 2008. 394pp. \$35

This insightful collection of essays from the leading scholar of the Third Reich is a must-read for any serious student of the Second World War. Kershaw's mastery of the intricacies of the Nazi regime is second to none, and he approaches the historical controversies surrounding its reign of terror in as calm and deliberate a manner as the topic permits. Kershaw's essays cover a variety of topics, but he frequently returns to the questions surrounding Adolf Hitler's direct involvement in implementing the

“Final Solution” and how a nation so seemingly advanced could have carried out such monstrous crimes. The crux of Kershaw’s argument is that the führer’s “charismatic domination” of the German people through a potent mix of ideological zeal coupled with his great skills in the art of propaganda paved the way for the “Final Solution.”

On 30 January 1939, Hitler delivered a lengthy speech in the Reichstag in which he threatened the “annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe” should the Jews “succeed in plunging the nations once more into a world war.” As Kershaw notes, Hitler and his underlings would repeatedly cite that “prophecy” over the course of the next three years, as planning for the “Final Solution” intensified. (Interestingly, as the war dragged on, the date of the “prophecy” speech was deliberately altered by the regime in its propaganda broadcasts to 1 September 1939, to link it with the onset of the war.) In 1942 alone, Hitler referred to his “prophecy” in four nationally broadcast radio addresses designed to, as Kershaw puts it, “condition the general population against humanitarian sympathy for the Jews” and, most disturbingly, signal to the regime’s insiders Hitler’s “knowledge and approval of the genocide.”

Kershaw believes that one of the major milestones on the road to a “comprehensive solution” of the “Jewish question” was Hitler’s declaration of war against the United States on 11 December 1941. The propaganda minister, Joseph Goebbels, noted in his diary on 13 December that “the Führer is determined to make a clean sweep. . . . The world war is here. The annihilation of the Jews must be the necessary

consequence.” A little over five weeks later, the infamous Wannsee Conference convened to plan, as SS-*Obergruppenführer* Reinhard Heydrich put it, “the coming final solution of the Jewish question.” What had until that point been a localized and somewhat “inefficient” extermination effort was transformed into a Reich-wide, comprehensive genocide. None of this, as Goebbels noted in March 1942, was possible without the führer’s presence as the “unswerving champion and spokesman of a radical solution” to the “Jewish question.”

Kershaw is to be commended for this collection of essays, which, coupled with a reading of his two-volume biography of Hitler, should be required reading for any serious student of Nazi Germany and the Holocaust. We owe a debt to Kershaw for the unpleasant but essential enterprise of helping future generations grapple with one of the most squalid episodes in the history of mankind.

STEPHEN KNOTT
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Blake, John. *Charts of War: The Maps and Charts That Have Informed and Illustrated War at Sea*. London: Conway Maritime, 2006. 160pp. \$50

John Blake’s book is a masterful short course on the maritime history of Western civilization and chart making as it has evolved through time. It traces the history of sea charts from thirteenth-century portolan wind charts to the diagrammatic charts used to describe pivotal phases of the sea operations during the first Gulf war, in 1991. The sea chart was particularly important to

the maritime countries as they emerged into national states. The objective of this book is to study not war but the development of charts and their use in warfare.

The book is written for the general public, not for the specialist. Although laid out in chronological order, it does not provide an index of the charts, which makes it difficult to locate a specific one. The charts are in a large format, and their reproduction is of high quality; however, it is often necessary to resort to a magnifying glass to see details.

Blake has selected a series of original and printed charts seldom seen by the public; they are highly appealing and are considered secondary art in their own right. Blake states that they were chosen to show “how the chart can illustrate, inform and comment on maritime history.” Each has a description that sets it in its historical context, the specific objective for which it was constructed, its originator (when known), and its current location.

There are over 185 charts, maps, and sketches, covering the development of sea charts from the beginning, as well as their design and content, with the overall intent of showing their importance to the planning and execution of sea

battles. Very few sea charts, however, have survived that show the actual planning or progress of a sea battle. Most sea charts of war are illustrations of past events.

The selection came from fifteen major archives in the United Kingdom, Europe, and the United States. Blake’s research was extensive and goes into great detail. The book covers eight specific areas of chart making: ancient world; the Renaissance; the Spanish and Portuguese empires; seventeenth-century European, American, and Asian wars; American independence; the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars; the American Civil War; and modern warfare.

John Blake has written two other excellent books on sea charts. He was an officer in the Royal Navy for seventeen years, with twelve years’ active service. In 1996 he and his wife initiated the licensing of maritime cartography in the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office. He was educated at Brighton and Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth, and is a fellow of the Royal Institute of Navigators.

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