

Ola Tunander: *Cold Water Politics. The Maritime Strategy and Geopolitics of the Northern Front*. London: Sage, 1989, 194 pp.

In this book Ola Tunander, a Swedish research fellow at the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo, sets out to examine the US Maritime Strategy and its impact on Europe's Nordic region, a region comprising Sweden, Finland and Norway, as well as the Kola Peninsula – and lots of surrounding cold water. The title of the book has, however, also been chosen with reference to the chill of naval competition in the surrounding waters.

The perspective of geopolitics from which the author starts his analysis has the advantage of placing the Nordic region in a broader context than the more localized one which has often served as the frame of reference of other Nordic scholars when addressing aspects of the US Maritime Strategy, or naval matters in general relating to the region. The strength of Tunander's book lies in his employment of the broad perspective of global politics, grand strategies and basic changes in weapons technology as a background to his analysis. This approach allows him to provide an important and notable understanding of the increasing strategic interests in the Nordic region throughout the 1980s. He demonstrates how these interests are reflected in the Maritime Strategy, and in Soviet maritime dispositions as well. When he too, especially in the latter part of the book, reverts to a regional, or even sub-regional, frame of reference the analysis becomes more mainstream. Also his conclusions become more open to dispute.

In explaining the Maritime Strategy the author points out how various lines of argument have converged in support of it and how it suits certain American strategic concepts and interests, some of which being new and others having received increased attention over the last couple of decades. He also demonstrates how these concepts and interests carry a particular emphasis on the Nordic region.

All this is explained in an informative and persuasive way in the first part of his book. Additional interests and considerations, for instance relating to American domestic politics and inter-service rivalry, might have been added as possibly contributing with equal strength to the adoption and formulation of the Maritime Strategy. There also remains the question of what the Maritime Strategy really is – or was. Presenting it as the aggregate of all arguments put forward in support of it and all interests possibly served by it could be misleading and incomplete. A particular policy is not always chosen because of all the arguments presented in support of it. Sometimes it is even chosen despite some of the arguments offered in its favour. And then there is the problem of different officials having different interests and considerations in mind when giving it their approval. Accounting for a particular ambiguity in Swedish policy, the author refers to 'contradictory perceptions of different power elites making their own policies' (p. 120). This observation is applicable to American – and Soviet – policy as well. Lastly, there is the further complication that presently – or in the future – a certain policy may be pursued for reasons other than those leading to its adoption in the past. What stands are the capabilities produced by it.

However, these are not comments made in order to detract from the merit of Tunander's inquiry into the background and state of the US Maritime Strategy. To those interested in the subject his book is recommendable reading.

In the latter part of his book, dealing among other things with Soviet strategic interests and military capabilities in the North, Soviet submarine intrusions into Swedish territorial waters and confidence-building at sea, he becomes more speculative. Occasionally, at least, his conclusions and their supporting premises lend

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themselves to questioning. This is partly due to the presentation of his arguments sometimes lacking somewhat in precision and stringency. In his words of acknowledgement at the opening of the book he recalls being reminded to 'write as if writing for a sergeant'. At the end of the book he seems at times to have forgotten that laudable advice. Here he also exhibits a tendency to address and to express an opinion on too many questions at the expense of an easily discernible thread of argument. Even so, quite a few of his observations and conclusions presented in the latter part of his book – though some of them are overtaken by events – could have a stimulating effect on the debate on Nordic security. In the Nordic region parts of the past still remain in this field.

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Johan P. Olsen: *Statsstyre og institusjonsutforming* (with contributions by Morten Egeberg, Per Læg Reid and Harald Sætren). Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1988, 336 pp.

For more than 15 years now Johan P. Olsen, University of Bergen, has been one of the most productive and creative political scientists in Scandinavia. This book contains 14 articles and some of his most important contributions to the understanding of political life in Norway. Except for a short introduction all the articles have previously been published in books or journals from 1972 to 1986.

The book is structured according to the following four headlines:

'Scientific Perspectives'. Here five articles deal with new-institutionalism and some of the 'ever-lasting' problems in political science and organization theory – i.e. the historical constitution and development of political institutions, relations between structure and meaningful actions and possibilities for choice and rationality.

'Processes of Change and Reform': This chapter contains three contributions to the understanding of recent changes in public administration in the Nordic countries. None of the contributions rely on systematic empirical findings, but try to locate topics and describe paths for further research.

'The Institutions of Democracy': In four articles some of the empirical findings from the Norwegian Power Study 1972–82 are used to describe trends in how the government and the public administration in Norway have come to be organized and to function as elements in a system of interest representation and societal coordination.

'Decision processes and the elaboration of meaning': In this chapter two rather different articles are collected. One describes how the Norwegian mass media are organized and function as channels for the formation and articulation of interest. The second describes organizational prerequisites for decision-making and identifies two ideal type models for how decisions are taken within pre-given organizational conditions.

Seen together all the 14 articles bear witness to the wide range of problems dealt with by Olsen and colleagues over the years and to the still current interest in some of the analytical results from The Norwegian Power Study. On the other hand, they also point to some of the problems in Olsen's more recent efforts (together with James G. March) to transcribe these extensive empirical findings and analytical results into a general (although middle-range) theory of institutions and their