Lambert, Andrew. ***No More Napoleons: How Britain Managed Europe from Waterloo to World War One***
Yale University Press, 2025
571 pp., maps, illustrations, appendices, bibliography
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The "long peace" between Waterloo in 1815 and the catastrophe of the Great War in 1914 is in many respects a misnomer. To be sure there was no general great power war such as had been the case between 1793 and 1815 with Revolutionary and Napoleonic France, but the image of a bucolic and peaceable continent is quite incorrect. There were endemic war scares, there were endemic colonial campaigns and episodes that risked general war, there were a number of limited military campaigns involving limited protagonists for limited aims involving two or more great powers, and underlying all were endemic geopolitical rivalries that frequently troubled the chanceries of European, and increasingly those further afield, foreign offices. Yet no conflagration such as characterised by the decades of the French wars disfigured the continent or the globe more widely. Why?

This is the question that Lambert explores in this fascinating and compelling account of Great Britain's management of its foreign affairs throughout the nineteenth century that led to this comparatively peaceable period in contrast to the endemic major wars that disfigured European history from the sixteenth to the early nineteenth centuries. Lambert anchors his analysis on the identification of a number of fundamental interests that animated British foreign and defence policies. He argues that these remained constant throughout the century and were pursued consistently. That said, for the two decades prior to the Great War, Lambert suggests that political and military officials strayed from these principles resulting in a continental commitment and so contributed in a malign way to the disaster of 1914.

The essentials of British policy, in Lambert's telling, involved debt, the Concert of Europe, trade and industry, and the maintenance of naval dominance. As far as the continent was concerned, the chief objective was to restrain France and to prevent any major power seizing the Low Countries of Belgium and the Netherlands. Specifically, should a hostile power secure the Scheldt Estuary and the port of Antwerp, Britain's vulnerability to invasion was sharply increased. Avoiding this risk was central to British policy. In this regard, the decisions prior to 1914 are consistent with this strategy. The role of debt, trade and industry, and naval dominance is finance. Britain ended the French wars with massive debts that were manageable if peace could be

maintained, thereby permitting an orderly reduction in the debt burden on both a relative and absolute basis. Hence the importance of the Concert of Europe in maintaining peace on the Continent and avoiding the risk of a new hegemon arising, specifically France. The dominance of the navy was essential to this model in that trade routes needed protecting to benefit British commerce, and incidentally global commerce, sheltering under the Royal Navy umbrella.

Lambert's argument is persuasive and well analysed in this account. He navigates the complex currents of technology and geopolitical developments throughout the nineteenth century that challenged British officials – military, naval, and civil – as well as the politicians that directed policy. By identifying the underlying themes that buttressed British policy, clarity is provided in comprehending the ebbs and flows of "events" in a very complex era that witnessed so much change in all aspects of life: economic, technological, political evolution, geopolitical ructions (especial the unification of Germany), and domestic priorities. Lambert, in his analysis, adopted the scaffolding of "ordering" and "offshore balancing" from the political science world, to explain Britain's approach to meeting its geopolitical challenges, primarily to check lingering French ambition. Some may find these terms unfamiliar and confusing, but they work here. The "ordering" element was the management of the Concert of Europe to prevent a hegemon arising in the absence of Britain's physical presence on the Continent. This required continuous deft foreign policy over the century. The "offshore balancing" aspect relied on the Royal Navy's dominance and hence the ability to protect itself from invasion and to secure its trade on which its economy entirely relied. In this, students of Lambert's previous writings in *The British Way of War* and *Seapower States* can perceive connecting threads. It is a compelling analysis that has echoes into the present day. These two volumes, combined with this one, make a useful and insightful trilogy that does much to explain both Britain's historical development and national strategies, as well as providing a framework with which to assess today's world and the shifting geopolitical stresses that must be faced.

The book concludes with two very useful appendices. The first, "Lessons of the Long War," sketches out very briefly the key stress points that British politicians, military figures, and naval leadership had to deal with in its ultimately successful campaigns against a hegemonic France from 1793 to 1815. The second, "The Principles of British Strategy," briefly describes twenty essentials that have dominated policy making, not always consistently, and not always well executed, but ever-present. As Lord Palmerston, Britain's Foreign Secretary, observed in 1848: "We have no eternal allies and we have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual." Lambert has

provided the flesh and bones as to how this truism played out over the Long Nineteenth Century.

I strongly recommend this book. Lambert is an engaging writer, and this particular volume provides critical insight into Britain's nineteenth century, its consistent North Star in strategic thought, and much useful analysis on which to ponder today's world.

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Luebke, Peter C. (ed.) ***The U.S. Navy and Innovation: Twentieth Century Case Studies.*** **Contributions to Naval History No. 10**
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158 pp.
ISBN 9781943604906 (e-book) available online free of charge

In 1972 Raye Jean Jordan Montague received the United States Navy's (USN) Meritorious Civilian Service Award, the third-highest award to be conferred on a civilian. The award was in recognition of her work pioneering computer-aided design and manufacturing in the construction of the *Oliver Hazard Perry*-class ship. This award changed Montague's career in obviously positive, but also negative, ways. She received death threats from people claiming she did not deserve the award and the USN had to relocate her office and parking space over safety concerns. Over her 34-year career Montague rose from the lowest to the highest General Schedule grade for civilians in the USN, along the way "setting several pioneering milestones for women and African Americans" (117).

The story of Montague and her contributions to USN innovation and change is one of eight case studies found in this edited volume published by the American Naval History and Heritage Command (NHHC). Overall, this volume is a project by the NHHC to "share stories of naval innovation and the innovators themselves amid the great power struggles of the twentieth century" (5). The case studies range from discussing USN innovations in battleship design before the First World War through to innovative strategic thinking from the USN leadership during the 1980s. Given the massive USN involvement in the Second World War, half of the case studies cover this conflict with three of the four focusing on the Pacific Theater. Those interested in Canadian naval history will be disappointed that there is no discussion of the North Atlantic theater, despite the heavy USN presence during the period. An additional omission is that while the case studies cover surface operations and naval aviation, there is no discussion of the submarine operations or of the