

Kick the Door Down with AirSea Battle...Then What?

Martin N. Murphy

Power projection is a stated aim of our armed forces. It is the distillation of much of what our armed services exist to do. We vaunt our ability to intervene powerfully almost anywhere we choose to and win once we are there. Power on that scale is quintessentially American. Its roots, however, can be found in Antiquity. What, after all, were the Greeks doing at the gates of Troy but projecting power? Yet before the Industrial Revolution power could only be projected on a small scale. Afterwards power projection on a large scale became possible and flowered in response to the demands of Western imperialism. As Aaron Friedberg noted in an earlier book, from a military perspective “the most important product (of the Industrial Revolution) was a marked improvement in the ability of European states to project and maintain military power far from their own frontiers.”¹ The United States is the inheritor of that experience.

AirSea Battle (ASB), now subsumed into the wider Joint Operational Access Concept, is the latest tool for projecting US power. To be accurate, ASB is an “anti-access” concept not necessarily an invasive one. It is designed to take down an enemy’s defense ensuring the access we have enjoyed since 1945 to threaten invasion or destruction of critical infrastructure in pursuit of our national objectives continues. The US Navy proclaims Alfred Thayer Mahan to be its defining strategic thinker. However, in its pursuit of power projection it is acting not as his disciple but as the disciple of his near contemporary, Sir Julian Corbett, the architect of what became known subsequently as the “British Way of War.” Corbett viewed what we would now call access operations as the acme of naval operations; the ability to project power around an opponent’s periphery wounding, confusing and weakening him preparatory to landing the final and mortal blow; which may very well also arrive by sea as America was poised to do against Japan in the summer of 1945. Although Mahan and Corbett agreed broadly on most aspects of naval practice, they differed sharply on the benefit of amphibious operations. Mahan, who had a much more insightful view of the critical economic dimension of maritime power than Corbett, saw what we now call power projection as highly risky and a wasteful distraction from the Navy’s primary purpose of sea command.

Given power projection’s deep roots in history and military thought, most accounts of ASB, when they suggest it is a new response to a new problem are wrong, or at best only right in part. Troy may have failed to keep the Greeks at bay but as Sam J. Tangredi shows, anti-access strategies were practiced as far back as the wars between ancient

Books Reviewed:

Beyond Air-Sea Battle: The Debate over US Military Strategy in Asia.

By Aaron L. Friedberg

Fire on the Water: China, America and the Future of the Pacific

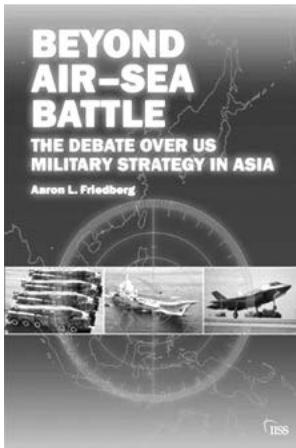
By Robert Haddick

Anti-Access Warfare: Countering A2/AD Strategies

By Sam J. Tangredi.

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¹ Aaron L. Friedberg, *A Contest for Supremacy: China, America, and the Struggle for Mastery in Asia* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 2011): 14.



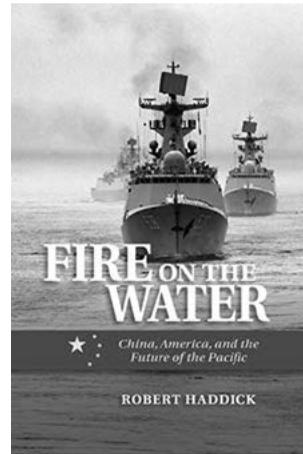
Aaron L. Friedberg, *Beyond Air-Sea Battle: The Debate over US Military Strategy in Asia* (New York & London: Routledge for the International Institute of Strategic Studies, 2014). 155 pages. \$14.99

Greece and Persia. However, in line with its supreme industrial power and expansionist ideology, the most relevant precursors are all American, starting perhaps most obviously with the determination to maintain access to the Pacific in the face of Japan's rise after World War I. That rise led Marine colonel Pete Ellis to undertake his pioneering studies and analyses of island landing grounds and bases in the early 1920s. The second major criticism of ASB—that it includes attacks against the homeland of a nuclear adversary and therefore takes unprecedented escalatory risks—is also misplaced. It is the lineal descendent of Navy thinking going back to Admiral Forrest Sherman's post-World War II naval strategy, a strategic formulation that led to the Maritime Strategy of the 1980s which is still hailed as the most complete statement of offensive military intent ever laid down by this country's navy; one which by threatening the Soviet homeland and its nuclear deterrent anticipated the possibility of a nuclear exchange. Consequently, ASB is only new in the sense it is a new response to an old problem manifested anew as a result of technological change, the peculiarities of East Asian (and to a lesser extent Persian Gulf) geography, and changing legal and social perceptions of the sea.

Forrest Sherman's strategy and operational plan were drawn-up in 1947 in a political-strategic environment already influenced by George Kennan's "Long Telegram" and President Truman's growing realization the Soviet Union was an enemy not a friend. It was based on the belief that any conflict with it would be global and protracted, necessitating forward, offensive conventional operations. Attacks by Soviet submarines lay at the heart of Sherman's concerns and as adequate defensive ASW measures were not available in the short-term, the Navy had no other choice than to look to destroy Soviet bases, airfields, submarine pens, factories and shipyards, launching conventional, and atomic precision strikes from carriers with Air Force support. Although the influence of Sherman's strategy with its emphasis on attack-at-source varied over the intervening quarter-century, it remained an underlying constant in Navy thinking and its reappearance in the Maritime Strategy of the 1980s should have come as no surprise. Even after the collapse of the Soviet empire, its influence and the perceptions that shaped the US Navy during that the Cold War never lost their grip. Presence and influence gained some importance. Les Aspin, when he was Secretary of Defense, institutionalized their value. Nonetheless, the conceptual framework that has governed the US Navy since 1945 has barely been altered.

The Chinese curse which is "to live in interesting times" characterizes the period we are living through now. What makes it extraordinary is we may be living a period of transition between one great power and another; between one global order and another.

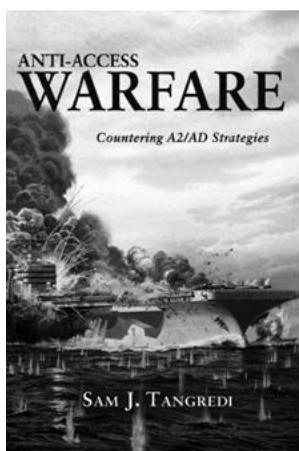
America has assuredly experienced this feeling of existential vertigo before. Time and again its decline has been predicted, more often than not by Americans themselves, and once again the question has arisen as to whether or not we are sufficiently convinced to believe in our exceptionalism or if even saying it makes us cringe with embarrassment. We are imbued with a sense of exceptionalism but little sense of entitlement. Before in our history we confronted defeatism with faith in our physical and intellectual vigour, inventiveness, risk taking, commercial acumen, boundless horizons, technology, immense productivity and, ultimately, ourselves. Is that still true? Or has our self-belief been replaced by a sense that the other guy's point of view is as valid as our own, and that our actions are morally tainted by aspirations of empire? Is our faith in power projection, the capability that underpins our global power, infected by such doubts?



Robert Haddick, *Fire on the Water: China, America and the Future of the Pacific* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2014). 288 pages. \$37.95

These questions are relevant to what the military calls “access” because ever since the United States became the global hegemon in 1944, its strategic position has rested ultimately upon its ability to project power over great transoceanic distances—as Samuel Huntington described it in his seminal 1954 paper—and once the traverse is complete, be able to invade foreign lands and stay there using whatever military force is required, implanting liberty, democracy, and the rule of law. It is this capability which underpins the US alliance system, giving allies and partners the reassurance they need to commit to our cause and us the confidence they share our moral vision. “Should China,” as Aaron Friedberg writes in his book under review here, “someday become a liberal democracy, the US would probably accept it as the preponderant player in East Asia.” Until then it cannot let down its guard because if China “could counter US conventional power projection capabilities and neutralize its extended nuclear deterrent,” it may at some stage be able to force the United States to surrender its preeminent position in East Asia against its will. What he does not go on to say is if this came about China could conceivably, from its vantage point as the East Asian hegemon and the control it would exercise over all maritime movement in the economically most productive region in the world, be able to change the dynamics of the global economic and political system to its advantage. Therefore, whatever the circumstances, the US must retain access to East Asia’s coastal waters; on the other hand, a liberal-democratic China would not prevent that. David Ochmanke, another contributor to the debate about possible US responses, writes the “extent to which the United States and its leading security partners will be able to develop capabilities and concepts adequate to the challenge will be critical factors shaping future dynamics in the international system.”²

² David Ochmanek, “Sustaining US Leadership in the Asia-Pacific Region,” *RAND Perspective* (2015): 1.



Sam J. Tangredi, *Anti-Access Warfare: Countering A2/AD Strategies* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2013). 230 pages. \$49.95

However, it is the economic dimension of China's challenge that makes it so different from the Soviet Union, and which makes facing it down so dissimilar from the largely military power and subversive political influence America faced down during the Cold War. Certainly breaking down the barriers China raises (and others by less significant states such as Russia and Iran) is critical to the survival of the US, not as a great power—which it will almost certainly always be—but a global power leading a democratic and free market-based global system. Nonetheless, it is fair to ask whether or not an operational concept built largely on foundations laid down half a century ago to defeat an autarkic land power are entirely relevant to confronting a growing economic power that seeks not to

destroy the international system but to change it in its favor and to do so ideally without going to war.

Finding the political will and intellectual insights necessary to mount an appropriate strategic response to China's challenge is already shaping up to be an immense undertaking. When asked "why and what for?" the answer that matters is not just one about the US finding the political will to defend its interests, but about finding the national will to continue to advance its values. Only these can justify the investment of intellectual and financial capital—and the potential sacrifices—that will be required in the battles that lie ahead.

None of the three books addresses this concern directly, although the issue of political will arises repeatedly when the discussions turn to resources, the support of allies, or the wisdom of attacking the opponent's homeland. Nor are these books about strategy. They cannot be when America has no settled policy towards China, or Iran for that matter. Russia also appears to leave the US policy community perplexed. This despite the widespread understanding that China presents us with a challenge on a scale we have never confronted before. Its history fascinates us but its economic promise seduces us. We are drawn to the alluring promise of its 1.2 billion consumers like moths to a flame but seem unable, for the most part, to recognize that its government will only allow foreign companies to satisfy its peoples' economic needs provided they offer no affront to the dignity and power of the Chinese Communist Party.

This mixture of awe and self-delusion has undermined our capacity to reach a settled judgement about the mutability of its political system and, consequently, the fungibility of its political intentions. Some commentators ascribe that to deliberate deception on the part of the Chinese; others to the narrative begun when Henry Kissinger and Richard Nixon made common strategic cause with China against the Soviet Union which gulled us into believing China would eventually absorb many of our values; perhaps not everything we stand for but enough to save us from viewing each other with enmity. Whatever the merits of these two

positions, the first which is burdened with the label of “panda slugger” and the second with the equally vacuous “panda hugger,” they are both provisional because the debate within China itself has reached no firm conclusions about what its policy should be towards the United States or about its role in the world order the US largely created, manages, and protects – but from which it has benefited immensely. Where the line lies between indecision and deception remains a matter of speculation on both sides of the Pacific.

It is against this background that the authors make their assessments of America’s military options in East Asia. Aaron Friedberg’s perspective is well-known. The title of his 2011 book, *A Contest for Supremacy*, makes clear his view of what is at stake, while in a recent article he concluded “the era of Chinese assertiveness appears to be entering a new, more complex, and potentially more challenging phase.”³ His aim is to chart the actions of the US and the technological developments which made them possible, leading China to build an anti-access and area denial complex, the reasons why the US responded to this challenge so slowly, and the debate now underway over the possible responses which he divides between two categories – direct and indirect.

Robert Haddick, who served as an officer in the Marine Corps, is now a contractor at US Special Operations Command. He has also contributed regularly to several defense debates. From January 2009 to September 2012 he was Managing Editor of *Small Wars Journal* during which time he also wrote the “This Week at War” column for *Foreign Policy*. Like Friedberg he views an inadequate response by the United States to the rising challenge of China as potentially catastrophic. “The stakes,” he writes, “are immense.” He recognizes the impact of any conflict on the global economy could be crippling, but views the potential damage largely in terms of what it will do to the domestic US economy rather than on America’s international economic and financial leadership. He sees clearly, however, if China succeeds in excluding the US from East Asia, America’s ties to its allies there will be severed – almost certainly calling into question its global worth as a partner – and failure to defend freedom of navigation will contribute to those doubts. Similarly to Friedberg, Haddick views the US as coming late to the problem and slow to appreciate the military potential that China is on track to achieve in the 2020s, two missteps that could open a window of vulnerability for America and its allies in Asia. He suggests that the current US military policy in the region is inadequate to deter Chinese adventurism and needs to be reformed. *Fire on the Water* is his argument for change.

Sam J. Tangredi, a retired Navy Captain and PhD, is already a renowned student of globalization and future warfare. His two studies for National Defense University, *Globalization and Maritime Power* and *All Possible Wars?* are pretty-much essential reading on both topics. It is therefore not a surprise that his book places anti-access warfare in historical context and provides what amounts to an intellectual history of the evolution of more recent anti-access and area denial thinking within the US defense establishment.

3 Aaron Friedberg, “The Sources of Chinese Conduct: Explaining Beijing’s Assertiveness,” *The Washington Quarterly*, 37, no. 4 (2015): 147.

His basic argument is anti-access warfare is not a modern concept; it has been used throughout history. The modern term A2/AD – which was coined in 2003 by the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA), a Washington think tank with close ties to the Office of Net Assessment (ONA) – refers specifically to a strategic approach intended to defend against a superior opponent. The defender fears defeat if the opponent is able to exert its superiority close to the defender’s center of gravity (whatever that may be). Consequently the aim of A2/AD is to prevent an attacker bringing its operationally superior force not just into proximity with the defender’s coast but even into its region. Japan’s war against the US in the Pacific was based on an anti-access strategy designed to defend its territorial acquisitions in Asia. It failed; America’s counter-anti-access strategy prevailed.

Tangredi draws upon a series of case studies of important anti-access campaigns in the past, such as the Spanish Armada (a victory for anti-access forces), the 1982 Falklands War (a defeat for anti-access forces) and the Pacific campaign, to draw lessons for today. These, he argues, can be broken down into five categories: 1) the defender’s perception that the attacking force is superior; 2) the primacy of geography; 3) the predominance of the maritime space; 4) the criticality of information and intelligence; and 5) the determinative impact of events outside the battlespace.

When it comes to geography, Tangredi is not suggesting it throws up insurmountable barriers but terrain does limit the type, direction, and scale of what is possible militarily. That anti-access operations will take place in, on, and over the maritime space is a given and the author expresses concern that the concept of Jointness, which he remarks now carries the connotation all combat domains and all armed services are equal, could mislead leaders and distort programmatic decisions by diminishing the importance of the maritime space and the areas above and below it. The criticality of information and intelligence is also a focus for Friedberg. He points to the work of the then-RAND analyst Mark Stokes who wrote in 1999 that the foundation of China’s emerging anti-access doctrine was information dominance. The PLA recognized it would need to win the reconnaissance battle at the start of hostilities if it was to carry out strikes on US forces while securing its own territory. Finally, Tangredi is right to draw attention to outside events: anti-access warfare is based on the premise of military asymmetry, but asymmetry may well be re-balanced and potentially eliminated by political, diplomatic, legal and propaganda moves, and economic incentives undertaken elsewhere.

Both Tangredi and Friedberg point to the 1992 Gulf War as the starting point for A2/AD strategies. Friedberg argues the First Gulf War confirmed China’s worst fears about the inadequacy of its armed forces compared to its competitors and, above all, the growing gap between the United States and every other country. Most chilling for its leadership was the recognition that much of the PLA’s military equipment was the same as Iraq’s. The war demonstrated the importance of technology but also instilled the recognition it would take years for China to catch up. In the meanwhile it had to counter and off-set US advantages asymmetrically: it had to find ways for the “weak to defeat the strong.” It also castigated Iraq for making no attempt to impede the build-up of

US forces in the region, a failing even DOD noted in its post-operation report.

However, while anti-access may have deep historical roots, it was the peculiarities of the Cold War and the isolated, almost autarkic, economy of the Soviet regime that enabled power projection to gain such a firm hold over naval thinking post-World War II. For much of the first two decades of the Cold War, the US Navy had the world's oceans almost to itself. Soviet submarines were a serious concern but the Navy built a fleet of super-carriers – the Forrestal-class – designed to carry nuclear-enabled bombers capable of destroying Soviet bases around the Soviet homeland. From a peak of perceived superiority the US plunged into the dark years following the Vietnam War during which time the Soviet Navy emerged as a global presence, forcing the US Navy to place more emphasis on sea control and less on power projection.

In the 1980s the Navy recovered its poise and returned to what it has always seen as its core mission: power projection in the manner of its victory in the Pacific War. The Maritime Strategy of 1986 was billed as radical and revolutionary; a new departure made all the more risky because it proposed attacking the Soviet retaliatory force in its coastal bastions. In reality – and as explained already - it was a return largely to the naval strategy of the late 1940s, albeit based on new intelligence which delivered a far clearer understanding of Soviet priorities and planning. It demanded the Navy drive its cruise-missile firing submarine force and carrier battle groups (CBG) deep enough into the marginal seas surrounding the Soviet Union to bring them within range of their targets. To reach its launch positions the fleet would have needed to fight its way through a layered Soviet anti-access defense consisting of submarines and long-range Backfire bombers firing long-range anti-ship cruise missiles with the first engagements possible as far as 2,500 nautical miles for the Soviet coast.

The Maritime Strategy, while it remains the lodestar of naval thinking, was never tested in battle. In a crucial sense this is also true of the Army's equally radical AirLand Battle plan, which while its effectiveness was demonstrated against Iraq, remains untested against a world-class opponent.

Almost before the ink was dry on the Maritime Strategy, the Office of Net Assessment (ONA) led by Andrew Marshall, began to question whether the Navy-Marine Corps team could actually operate effectively against the Soviet periphery. The studies that emerged were skeptical (and, in fact, became known as “anti-Navy”). Because the focus was on the ability of the Soviet Union to negate such operations, it was agreed that “anti-access” was the most suitable term to describe its actions. This, Tangredi suggests, was the first time this description was used. More importantly the naval study coincided with, and was over-shadowed by, ONA's first investigations into what the Russians termed the military-reconnaissance strike (MSR) complex, which has since become known in the US as the revolution in military affairs (RMA). Tangredi's account of how the core ideas of anti-access and the RMA influenced each other as they evolved in papers prepared for ONA, other parts of DOD and CSBA is essential reading.

So, too, is his judgement as to why anti-access—despite the huge and very public effort put into it and the resultant outpouring of positioning and strategy papers—is considered to present such a significant challenge to the existing Joint force that too few substantive changes have been put in place to meet this new challenge effectively. The first and foremost obstacle is what he describes as the “assumption of access” that settled into US military planning post-Cold War; an assumption that generated acquisition programs and Joint structures that could be undermined by anti-access capabilities. Friedberg similarly suggests each armed service had a reason for downplaying the risks in order to preserve its existing role and force structure. He adds, however, the military was not challenged by the nation’s political leadership about this reluctance as there was a general unwillingness across the higher reaches of all administrations to call-out China’s arms build-up. Robert Haddick is equally critical; directing much of his ire at the Air Force and Navy he points out alongside the metasystem the Navy created to support carrier operations has grown up an institutional culture that guards and protects carrier operations even while the favorable conditions that made such operations feasible are deteriorating rapidly.

The risk comes at a time when major weapons systems can take a decade or more to bring into service, meaning any failure to embrace necessary change could leave US forces with little choice but to concede littoral space to the opponent. Tangredi also suggests assumptions about oceanic sanctuary for naval forces and the security of East Asian land and island bases, overlain by the need to reduce costs and squeeze budgets, led the DOD to accept considerable risk in combat programs and operational procedures. Some of the vulnerabilities he identifies concern the viability of high-technology systems and networks, including the dependence of all branches of the US armed forces on satellites for communications and ISR and others about the inadequate range of air and missile systems when compared to the vast space of the Pacific theater. Haddick agrees, providing a detailed analysis many of these vulnerabilities on his way to suggesting alternatives.

The lessons Tangredi draws from his survey of historical examples mirror the conclusions China drew from its own analysis of the anti-access environment as described by Friedberg. For Tangredi, counter-anti-access forces must be tailored to the task, pursue their objective with determination, be willing to commit significant resources, and suffer possibly heavy casualties in what is likely to be an attritional battle; that external factors could be highly influential and disruptive; pre-emption is a common factor—the side that shoots first can gain an unassailable advantage in the *battle* but not necessarily in the war; information, intelligence, deception and camouflage will be critical to both sides but perhaps especially to the counter-anti-access force; technological superiority played less of a role than many assume and this may well be as true today as it was in the past; and the forces which emerged victorious were those able to master cross-domain synergy, which is to say those able to strike the enemy simultaneously from dominant positions in all combat mediums.

Friedberg reports China arrived at a similar list; it assumed it would fight with inferior weapons; and needed to strike the first blow regardless of its assertion it would not fire the first shot; technology was important

but not decisive; it needed to win the reconnaissance battle; and the US might be superior militarily but not politically, diplomatically, geographically and logistically. In particular the vast distances of the Pacific would create supply difficulties and a critical dependency on forward bases that China could exploit. Furthermore many issues which could give rise to conflict, including Taiwan, were less important to the United States than to China, given its currently prevailing worldview, and US determination to win would therefore be correspondingly less.

The point which US anti-access planning has reached and the direction it has taken are largely classified. To the extent to which information about it has entered the public domain, most references are to what Friedberg categorizes as direct approaches. The two with the highest profile are the Joint Operational Access Concept (JOAC) and AirSea Battle (ASB) which nests within it on the chain that leads upwards to the Defense Strategic Guidance. Robert Haddick's recommendations are more broadly-based. He argues JOAC and ASB envision blocking an adversary's area denial capabilities so as to allow US armed forces, constituted and organized in large part as they are now, to maneuver as freely as they did during the Pacific War and in the years since then. JOAC and ASB aim to achieve this by blinding the anti-access power's surveillance capabilities, disrupting its C2 and intercepting its aircraft and missiles before they can prevent the US fleet from achieving a position from where it can launch attacks on the Chinese homeland.

Haddick's approach is broader and less specific. America, he writes, needs to mobilize a comprehensive range of persuasive and dissuasive capabilities covering the spectrum from diplomacy, through economic dislocation, to conventional and unconventional military means strong enough to convince China's leaders that they cannot profit from coercion. The strategy he puts forward is based on persuading and dissuading the country's leadership cadre by denying it a worthwhile first strike option, imposing costs on all forms of coercive behavior, stimulating resistance to Chinese gains and threatening crucial national and Party assets, *not* by rolling back China's anti-access capability. When it comes to striking targets within China, Haddick is understandably cautious about the deep and extensive strikes argued for in CSBA's study of AirSea Battle which is seen by many, rightly or wrongly, as the as the closest publically-available approximation to the DOD's own position. He calls instead for more limited strikes to "suppress China's land-based 'anti-navy' air and missile sources [while] holding at risk other assets and conditions valued by China's leaders." (212) Where he draws the line between the two is unclear as are the assets and conditions which he believes China's leaders may value.

Whatever the advisability of his specific recommendations, Haddick offers pertinent and detailed criticisms about the suitability of current US military equipment and organization for the Pacific anti-access mission. The two most important are the lack of long-range weapons, and dependence on satellites for communications, intelligence, and command. He joins Tangredi and Friedberg in criticizing long-ingrained service cultures and defense acquisition practices that have, in his view, over-emphasized weapons systems that are too short-legged for East Asia and an approach to air warfare by the Navy and the Air Force that depends on high sortie rates which are no longer sustainable. The

assumption all through the Cold War was US forces could mount tactical operations from bases and aircraft carriers located around the Eurasian periphery, and particularly from bases in Europe and Japan located close to the Soviet Union. By remaining faithful to short-range systems the United States has left itself no option but to acquire new bases and sail its fleet into harm's way. The bases will be located on vulnerable Pacific islands—Guam, Tinian and Saipan—none of which are likely to survive under intense and repeated Chinese bombardments using land-based intermediate range and submarine-launched ballistic missiles and air- and submarine-launched cruise missiles. When it comes to attacking naval forces, aircraft carriers and their associated naval surface platforms, China's hugely more successful economy compared to the Soviet Union, coupled to the falling cost of high technology, means it has been able to extend and develop the anti-access tactics the Soviets pioneered forty years ago. Then the Navy was confident it could defeat the Soviet anti-access threat, while ONA was sceptical. The great unanswered question is whether or not the Navy's largely carrier-based anti-air and anti-missile systems have stayed ahead of the anti-access threat or not; the Navy is publically confident that they have while Haddick and other outside observers are not.

When Robert Haddick reviewed Aaron Friedberg's *A Contest for Supremacy* he praised it as like "tossing a dead skunk into a garden party." Each book reviewed here can stand alone but taken together the three can be recommended collectively as the skunk works of the military anti-access debate. They make sense of the concept, they trace its intellectual history, they pinpoint the service interests that have shaped (or misshaped) it, display its inner workings and recommend changes and improvements. Moreover each one recognizes overcoming China's A2/AD challenges will require a mix of direct and indirect approaches and not just direct and indirect military approaches but a wide range of non-military means as Haddick makes clear. All-domain must involve consideration of political and economic domains previously viewed as marginal or even until now largely beyond consideration as venues for conflict. Success, in other words, will arguably demand a willingness to stretch the definition of war and warfare, beyond even the concept of competitive strategies that was articulated by ONA during the Soviet era and which has been resurrected recently. It requires, equally, a clearer appreciation of how concepts of war and warfare are understood and applied by China (and Iran and, based on recent evidence from the conflicts in the Crimea and Ukraine, by Russia). It will also mean, as Sam Tangredi argues, developing the vision and acumen to master cross-domain synergy—the ability to strike the enemy simultaneously from dominant positions in all combat domains, conventional and unconventional. Finally they criticize the failure to locate counter anti-access in an overall strategic context. The Maritime Strategy of the 1980's was framed by the overarching strategy of containment. What policy or strategy guides ASB: we kick the door down...then what?

Two further points: All three writers discuss what Friedberg calls "indirect" anti-access approaches; that is to say approaches that could be taken in the waters surrounding China such as blockade that aims to exploit China's exposure to – and dependence upon – global and regional markets. All three are uncertain of the possible effectiveness of

such an approach. Nonetheless, it demands closer examination as part of a wider economic warfare campaign that seeks to exert pressure beyond the obvious target of China's energy dependency.

The second point is that *none of these books touches on the Army's role in Asia*; in fact there is a scarcity of coherent discussions generally on its potential contribution. This is unfortunate because the Army is clearly determined to carve out a role for itself in East Asia over and above its commitment to South Korea. One concern must be that it will use its leverage in Joint forums to make this happen, something that could interfere with US strategy in what is an overwhelmingly maritime domain (on, under, and over the surface of the sea). Sam Tangredi's concern this "could mislead leaders and distort programmatic decisions" could come to pass. Of course, the Army's command of missile forces make it an essential element in maritime East and Southeast Asia. However, the Army's role in continental Asia—as opposed to maritime Asia—balancing the Navy and Air Force role in the Western Pacific by working with allies and partners in an arc anchored at one end in the heartland and at the other in Vietnam and Thailand, could—in addition to its presence on the Korean Peninsula—complicate Chinese defense and foreign policy calculations on a much greater scale than anything it could achieve supporting a Pacific rim operational concept alone. It seems hard to believe that the US would, for example, consider withdrawing from Afghanistan given its pivotal position between China and Iran as it has from its other outposts in the region. Afghanistan is the cockpit of the Great Game. Every world-historical power from Alexander the Great onwards has had to play it and the United States, if it is to retain its global position, must learn to play it too.

