Book Review: The Anarchic Sea

The Anarchic Sea Maritime Security in the 21st Century
by Dr David Sloggett
Published by C Hurst & Co ISBN978-1-84904-100-3

Dr David Sloggett’s excellent book was published in 2013 and as the title suggests looks ahead to the way in which maritime security is likely to become increasingly important if not the pivot of security in this century. Sloggett starts with a very detailed introduction that provides the context of the book, explores the basis of current assumptions about maritime security, and provides a glimpse into how these conventions may be flawed. As you get into the body of the book he proposes his seven dimensions of maritime security from state on state scenarios through maritime crime and terrorism to disasters and oceanography and uses these themes.

Looking ahead, Sloggett examines ways in which maritime security may be provided in the coming 80 years, concluding that it is an extremely complex and multifaceted subject that ranges from the borderless effects of cyber security, illegal unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and the use of unmanned devices and the adoption of “hybrid naval warfare” by many countries.

In the annexes Sloggett examines 23 different national maritime security case studies in detail, providing an excellent selection of scenarios loosely based on the seven dimensions of maritime security identified in Chapter 1. He then takes this further based on 10 thematic areas from economic migrants, biosecurity, the Mumbai attack, and ballistic missile defence prompting the reader to question how influential these areas of concern will be to different nations. His pages of notes are detailed and extensive, demonstrating the exceptional lengths he went to in research, and the index is excellent.

This book defines a fascinating line for future thinking about the vastness and diversity of maritime security and how it will become progressively more important globally as we move through the 21st century. Whilst we can already see that some of the tactics referred to in the book have been overtaken by events the fundamental principles Sloggett proposes will surely become the reference points as we navigate these challenging waters.

This is an excellent book that provides a detailed historical context and fascinating intellectual thought, offering much food for thought and prompting debate; a “must read” for any serious student of maritime security.

Peter Cook
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