

Furthermore, McDonald and coauthor James R. Hansen include a considerable amount of unnecessary information about the book's subject. The reader doesn't need a chapter devoted to the author and his background or a 28-page bibliographical essay that explores books and conspiracy theories concerning the *Challenger* disaster. Additionally, McDonald and Hansen could have combined several chapters into one or summarized them (e.g., those dealing with the explosion of the Peacekeeper motor, the "Witness" chapter, and the one about his retirement from Thiokol).

Lastly and perhaps most importantly, the author never explains why he waited so long to write the book. The information he presents could have significantly altered the future of the space shuttle program, yet he remained silent for more than 20 years. The reasons for doing so, enumerated in the preface, ring more than a bit hollow.

Although the space shuttle program has now ended, questions about the *Challenger* tragedy linger on. *Truth, Lies, and O-Rings* attempts to explain the how and why but does so long after these revelations might have benefited the program. The book may be of interest to space historians, but its value to military readers remains fairly minimal. I recommend it only to people directly involved in designing, testing, and supervising military flight hardware.

**Mel Staffeld**  
*Council Bluffs, Iowa*

**Allies against the Rising Sun: The United States, the British Nations, and the Defeat of Imperial Japan** by Nicholas Evan Sarantakes. University Press of Kansas (<http://www.kansaspress.ku.edu>), 2502 Westbrooke Circle, Lawrence, Kansas 66045-4444, 2009, 480 pages, \$39.95 (hardcover), ISBN 978-0-7006-1669-5.

The image one generally conjures of World War Two in the Pacific is of US naval aviators flying hundreds of planes from flattops or of US Marines wading ashore on contested tropical beaches. One does not

normally associate the British with the war against Imperial Japan. Yet Nicholas Evan Sarantakes reminds us that America did not stand alone, presenting in *Allies against the Rising Sun* a political history of the cooperation among the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand in the final stages of the struggle against the Japanese Empire. Coalition warfare is a complex undertaking, and Sarantakes examines the challenges faced by the English-speaking nations as they fought together against Japan.

The author asks three important questions concerning British military participation in the Pacific war effort: why did a war-weary United Kingdom want to participate, why did the even more war-weary Commonwealth nations wish to take part, and why did the United States, increasingly able to handle the situation alone, agree to their participation? Sarantakes contends that without the British, Americans would have turned their collective backs on Britain, as they had after the Great War. He argues that “high-placed individuals” in both nations believed that their best interests called for cooperating in the postwar world—an objective that depended upon Great Britain’s “contribut[ion] to the decisive operations in Japan” (p. 8). The author concludes that, ultimately, each nation had its own reasons for agreeing to join the cause against Japan, whether stemming from the United Kingdom’s looking to regain lost colonies, the Commonwealth nations’ seeking a closer relationship with the United States, or American politicians’ needing to explain to their constituents why they would not allow other nations to share in the shedding of blood.

By beginning his book with the events of 1943, Sarantakes does not dwell on the early Axis victories but focuses on the enemies in retreat and on Allied planning for a postwar world. During his research, the author mined archives of the five English-speaking nations involved not only for official government documents but also for diaries and memoirs that would facilitate his re-creation of the atmosphere of the various Allied planning conferences, correspondences, and exchanges as the principals worked out the details of cooperation against Imperial Japan. Sarantakes

attends to both mundane issues, such as dates, numbers of soldiers, and types of ships, and more controversial matters such as Russian participation in the final assault against Japan and use of the atomic bomb.

Not simply political history, *Allies against the Rising Sun* is biographical as well, highlighting not only the decisions made by Allied nations but also the men who made those decisions. Sarantakes introduces the reader to major political and military leaders in each of the English-speaking nations, chronicling both their strengths and shortcomings in short biographical sketches that detail their advancement to the positions they held during the war. By giving these men personalities, the author allows readers to view their decisions and positions on issues with the understanding that they were not supermen but imperfect human beings. The book's epilogue briefly summarizes the postwar careers of 25 of these individuals.

Sarantakes writes in a clear, accessible style, even managing a bit of humor when he tells of a trip Winston Churchill wanted to make to Bermuda to meet with Franklin Roosevelt—a junket that his military chiefs opposed. About the chiefs Sarantakes opines, “Apparently, they had never been to Bermuda” (p. 48). The narrative bogs down a bit into operational history during its coverage of the Okinawa campaign. Granted, the stiff defense of Okinawa surprised the Allies and affected planning for the assault on the Japanese home islands, but the operational detail distracts readers from the politics of alliance. Furthermore, the book ends rather abruptly with the Japanese surrender. After making a case for British participation based on the postwar order, Sarantakes never really talks about how the various participants contributed to that order. That omission, however, does not detract much from a significant study of the complexities of alliances and coalition warfare. Nations rarely go to war without partners, and *Allies against the Rising Sun* is an excellent case study for those who ponder the challenges of coalition warfare in the twenty-first century.

**Lt Col John L. Minney, Alabama Air National Guard**  
*Montgomery, Alabama*