

Book reviews

International Relations theory

Non-western International Relations theory: perspectives on and beyond Asia. Edited by Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan. London and New York: Routledge. 2009. 242pp. Index. Pb.: £22.99. ISBN 978 0 41547 474 0.

Interest in theories of International Relations (IR) from outside the West has been growing of late. This book, which began life as a special issue of the journal *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, speaks directly to that concern. It collects eight essays on past and present international political thought from across Asia, topped and tailed with two reflective pieces by the editors. The contributors take as their cue a revised version of Martin Wight's famous question: why is there no international theory? Why, they ask, does there appear to be no non-western international theory?

What Wight sought, and did not find, was a canon of classic texts of international theory comparable to that belonging to political theory. Instead, he could locate only fragments and snippets of thinking in the marginalia of the diaries and correspondence of politicians, tomes of international law and the work of political theorists. On the whole, the contributors to this book have much more success in their quest. Yaqing Qin provides a detailed analysis not just of the development of Chinese IR theory, of which there is a great deal, but also of foreign influences on its evolution, including the various translations made of American texts. Although there may be no 'hard core' to Chinese theory, he concludes, many potential sources of inspiration, both foreign and domestic, exist for such an enterprise.

Borrowed ideas feature strongly too in Takashi Inoguchi's discussion of Japanese theory, in Chaesung Chun's treatment of Korean work, and in Navita Chadha Behera's 're-imagining' of Indian IR, though in each case what has been borrowed is rather different. In Japan, Inoguchi argues that statist, historicist and occasionally positivist thinking has prevailed, along with a substantial Marxist tradition, demonstrating European rather than American influences. This is partly a matter of historical prejudice and partly one of institutional make-up. Only some 6 per cent of Japanese scholars in the field have American PhDs, Inoguchi finds, compared to some 60 per cent of Koreans. It comes as little surprise therefore that it is not in Japan but in South Korea that, as Chun shows, a tradition of thinking closest to an orthodox American version of IR theory has emerged.

The development of International Relations has taken a much more convoluted trajectory in India. There, as Behera demonstrates, a long and distinguished history of concentrating on area studies, ingrained empiricism and a long neglect of theorizing, as well as the serious institutional problems caused by underfunding in the university sector, have together contributed to a highly fragmented field. On the other hand, rich local philosophical traditions and the openness of Indian scholars to external influences have generated

Book reviews

significant Indian contributions to development theory, post-colonialism, feminism and critical theory despite these various drawbacks.

The sense of complexity in the relations between western and Asian ideas is carried through Alan Chong's chapter on South-East Asia, L. C. Sebastian and I. G. Lanti's contribution on Indonesia, and Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh's study of the Islamic world-view. Chong points especially to South-East Asian engagements with modernization theory and latterly—in studies of international security—with Realist ideas. What Chong calls 'hybrid theorizing' is increasingly prevalent, either in terms of testing western theories with Asian evidence or using Asian ideas to explain what appear to be regional peculiarities. Similar dynamics have long operated in the construction of Islamic worldviews, Tadjbakhsh shows, with western ideas being integrated, co-opted or rejected in a long process of negotiation both within the Islamic world and with the outside world.

In the conclusion, the editors ask whether a 'non-Western IRT[heory] is possible'. Their answer is somewhat pained, reflecting an unspoken desire for an 'authentic' Asian theory and partly voiced belief that western theory is in some way intrinsically imperialistic. Rightly, they criticize those who see hard boundaries between 'West' and 'East', but they do not internalize what they imply. 'Western' theory is largely the product, after all, of western encounters with the 'East' and indeed with the rest of the world. It is not authentically 'western' in the sense of having developed in Europe in the absence of any external influence; rather, it is the product of contacts with other civilizations over many centuries. This history is occluded from the editors because of their reliance on a Gramscian concept of hegemony, with its simplistic sociology of knowledge and account of how knowledge is produced. Hegemonic elites manufacture knowledge and the West constitutes the global elite, so the Gramscian syllogism goes, thus western international theory must be hegemonic and belong only to that elite. The problem is that western theory has never been authentically or exclusively western, and to argue that seems to perpetuate divisions that need not exist.

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Imperialism and global political economy. By Alex Callinicos. Cambridge: Polity. 2009. 288pp. Pb.: £17.99. ISBN 978 0 74564 046 4.

In this new work from the prolific pen of Alex Callinicos (he has since published another book), the renewal of debates around the concept of imperialism is critically reviewed and a distinctive position developed. Callinicos makes a spirited defence of classical Marxist theories of imperialism and their continued relevance in the current era.

Yet this book is no defence of Marxist dogma, and Callinicos recognizes the significant changes that have occurred in the international order since the days of Lenin and Bukharin. He therefore points to US hegemony and the promotion of a liberal international order, cooperation between advanced capitalist states and the internationalization of capital as important features of twenty-first-century international politics. At the same time he suggests that the current order is also characterized by uneven development, a partial redistribution of economic power and continued geopolitical competition. His argument is that contemporary imperialism must be theorized in terms of understanding and analysing the intersection between economic and geopolitical competition.

Much of the book is thought-provoking and highly engaging. Callinicos writes with great clarity, and unlike some recent over-hyped Marxist books on imperialism, he develops his analysis through close attention to empirical detail. He also rightly focuses

on the relationship between theories of imperialism and analyses of the capitalist state, and makes some suggestive arguments concerning the development of state theory. For all these reasons the book is highly recommended, and should be read by anyone looking for a sophisticated Marxist analysis of imperialism.

There are nonetheless areas of contention, ambiguity and, I think, weakness in the work. Callinicos quite rightly focuses on the importance of uneven development in understanding the current imperialist order. However, he does so not only to understand the continued importance of spatial domination and marginalization—what used to crudely be called the North–South divide—but also suggests that the concept is vital for understanding contemporary geopolitical competition between capitalist states. Following on from Lenin, he suggests that cooperation between states is likely to be ultimately trumped by competition between them, and that this reflects the uneven development of the international order. He also implicitly challenges liberal peace theories—and Karl Kautsky's theory of ultra-imperialism—by suggesting that interdependence does not lead to pacific relations between capitalist powers, and indeed may promote conflict. Here Callinicos appears to be taking aim at contemporary Marxists such as Perry Anderson, Leo Panitch and Sam Gindin, who all argue that cooperation between capitalist states has trumped the inter-imperialist rivalries analysed by Lenin and Bukharin. This debate in turn mirrors that between Realists and liberals, the former of whom were somewhat wrong-footed by continued cooperation between capitalist powers at the end of the Cold War. Callinicos's argument rests on two contentions: first that uneven development hinders the prospects for geopolitical cooperation so that ultimately competition between states will win the day; and second, that interdependence between states existed before the First World War (leading Norman Angell to predict that war was impossible), but that this did not stop conflict and indeed war between states. Therefore those like Anderson and Panitch, who point to the internationalization of capital and of states under US hegemony as reasons for highlighting cooperation between states, are replicating Angell's errors.

I think though that these arguments are problematic. First, uneven development takes place within as well as between states, but this in itself does not preclude the possibility of the formation of a state at a national level, and therefore also cooperation between states at an international level. There may sometimes be conflict in both national and international processes, but this will be contingent on a number of factors and the necessity of the primacy of competition cannot be read off from a theory of uneven development. Second, the issue of contingency is important because Kautsky's theory is not the same as liberal peace theory—the latter suggests inevitable peace between liberal countries based on commercial relations, in contrast to Lenin's argument that such relations promoted war. Kautsky forged a position between these two, suggesting neither inevitable peace nor inevitable conflict, but rather the possibility of cooperation between core capitalist powers, even in the context of uneven development and (formal or informal) domination of some territories by others. This seems to me to better characterize the international order since 1945, even if there has at times been some degree of hostility between capitalist powers.

Occasionally, Callinicos comes close to accepting this argument, for instance when he suggests that the crisis of the 1970s led to greater openness due to the benefits that accrued to some capitalist states from participation in 'transnational liberal space' (p. 178). He also casts doubt on the view that China is set on a path of challenging US hegemony and that 'collision between China and the US is inevitable' (p. 220).

But Callinicos also approvingly cites Katherine Barbieri's argument that economic interdependence between states makes them more, rather than less, likely to engage in military

Book reviews

conflict with each other, and argues that conflict is likely to increase in the context of slower growth and a relative redistribution of economic and political power. We thus have recognition of changes in the international order since Lenin and Bukharin alongside assertions that appear to hold on to the centrality of their argument, but which then undermine recognition of a transnational liberal space or of the limits of a Chinese challenge to US hegemony.

In fairness, the issue of the nature of interdependence and cooperation/competition is one that needs to be further developed by both sides of the debate. However, it is clear that the internationalization of productive capital has meant a qualitatively different form of interdependence from that which existed before 1914. Moreover, what is perhaps most interesting and distinctive about US hegemony is the way it has promoted the internationalization of capital, and the ways in which US companies are still at the cutting edge of this process. This is very different from the era of British decline, and is reflected in higher profit rates for US investment overseas than foreign investment into the US—and indeed in the US receiving higher rates of interest from foreign debtors abroad than it pays out on its own debt to foreign creditors. This suggests that we need to think more carefully about both the internationalization of capital and US hegemony, rather than assume that US deficits signal hegemonic decline and the possibility of an intensification of geopolitical competition. The US–China circuit may not be stable, as Callinicos suggests, but this should be seen less as an issue of US hegemony, and more as one of global capitalism as a whole.

These are just some of the areas of debate in Callinicos's stimulating book, which I thoroughly recommend.

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Forbidden fruit: counterfactuals and International Relations. By Richard Ned Lebow. Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press. 2010. 335pp. Index. Pb.: £19.95. ISBN 978 0 69113 290 7.

Through my earlier encounter with some philosophical works on the concept of causation, I was aware that a singular causal statement—'X, in the circumstances that obtained, was part of the cause of Y'—was equivalent to a combination of two kinds of statement, factual and counterfactual: 'X and Y occurred' and 'Y would not have occurred if, in the circumstances, X had not occurred (unless Y was causally overdetermined, such that, even in the absence of X, something else, Z, would in the circumstances have caused Y)'. I had therefore fully accepted the idea that making a causal statement and making a counterfactual statement are *not* different kinds of activity; it cannot be the case—as is often insisted to be so by politicians and historians—that the former is grounded in reality while the latter, by contrast, is mere speculation. Both these activities produce assertions about the real world, more or less persuasive depending on the quality of the reasoning underpinning them. But I had not quite appreciated what could fruitfully be gained by engaging in counterfactual enquiries *as such*—for, it seemed to me, advancing a counterfactual argument and making a causal argument were mirror-image activities; if so, improving the quality of the former would appear to *require*, as well as *lead to*, improving the quality of the latter *at the same time*. So, how precisely counterfactual reasoning could be made good and thereby assist us in our causal understanding of past events had been a puzzle to me. I have therefore learnt much from this book.

I have learnt, *inter alia*, that an event, such as the outbreak of the First World War, commonly assumed to have been causally overdetermined, could (on the basis of evidence used by historians) easily *not* have occurred. I have also grasped the precise sense in which

the assassination of the Archduke and his wife in July 1914, generally considered *not* to be a profound cause, was in fact a decisive cause of the war's outbreak. Well-reasoned counterfactual arguments, incorporating much detailed historical knowledge, I now understand, help us appreciate the extent to which what happened was, or was not, an outcome of a highly likely sequence of events (or, as is commonly but misleadingly expressed, was, or was not, 'inevitable'); they also help us formulate our argument in assessing the importance of a particular causal factor in bringing about the outcome concerned. I have benefited enormously from Ned Lebow's learning, imagination and intellectual effort, and am sure that many readers will feel the same way towards this judicious, yet daring, scholarly contribution to the study of history and international relations.

Lebow also demonstrates, in a chapter co-written with George W. Breslauer, that the Cold War was very unlikely to have ended (about the time it did) if, as could easily have been the case, Gorbachev had not come to power or Reagan had been assassinated. Somewhat unexpectedly, J. David Singer once wrote that all social events may be thought of as the outcome of a concatenation of some deterministic, voluntaristic and stochastic elements. I believe it is definitely more profitable to think of social events in this way and did not therefore require much persuasion to believe that the Cold War could not have ended (about the time it did) by structural deterministic causation alone (or that there was no theoretically grounded way of knowing whether it would have ended 'anyway' in the long run). Still, I am impressed by the painstaking manner in which the chapter demonstrates the vital importance of counterfactual reasoning in enabling us to assess the role of contingency in particular.

There is a tendency among historians and IR scholars, however, to mistrust counterfactual thinking. This may partly relate to a psychological readiness of some scholars to assume that what actually happened was much more likely to have happened than some alternative eventualities. In a chapter co-authored with Philip E. Tetlock and in another, Lebow engages in a pioneering study of this and other tendencies of scholars and offers an innovative psycho(patho)logy of explanation. This is followed by an ingenious chapter on the 'hindsight bias' before the book ends with a chapter dealing with fictional narratives.

But why is it so important to appreciate that some key events in world history might easily not have occurred? For one thing, we would stop believing in overly nomothetic approaches to the study of world politics. Of course, everything that occurred in history and international relations was *caused*, but not everything that happened was very likely to have happened. The world could easily have been a very different place. But since this is the only world we actually have—and one that has shaped us in significant ways—we should engage with it seriously. Lebow's scholarship is an expression of such an attitude.

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Hans J. Morgenthau's theory of International Relations: disenchantment and re-enchantment. By Mihaela Neacsu. Basingstoke: Palgrave. 2010. 199pp. £50.00. ISBN 978 0 23057 607 0.

With *Hans J. Morgenthau's theory of International Relations* Mihaela Neacsu brings forward another rereading of Morgenthau's contribution to the discipline of International Relations (IR), as also recently have Michael Williams, William Scheuerman, Seán Molloy and Vibeke Schou Tjalve. Neacsu questions the standard IR account of Morgenthau as a positivistic proponent of the nation-state and ruthless power politics. The book is already a worthwhile read just because of this, even though its title is slightly misleading inasmuch

Book reviews

as the author does not elaborate on Morgenthau's theory of IR. It is arguable if Morgenthau ever had such a narrow conception of the scope of his work, yet Neacsu plunges into a contextualized elaboration of his core philosophical concepts by allocating them specific places in his construct of ideas.

On the one hand, Neacsu relies on the Cambridge school, particularly on Quentin Skinner, to analyse Morgenthau's intellectual and political thought by putting particular relevance on its context and employed languages, and on the other hand on the German approach of hermeneutics to interpret texts and their meanings by focusing on the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer. This approach, relying on the European roots of Morgenthau's thinking, allows her rather convincingly to identify Friedrich Nietzsche and Max Weber as the main intellectual sources upon which Morgenthau drew to create his own perspective. According to Neacsu, Morgenthau experienced his times as a period where old certainties and beliefs withered away, leaving people in crisis and making them encounter a nihilism so far unknown. The 'death of God' was therefore not only for Nietzsche unavoidable, and Weber's classification of a 'disenchantment of the world', Neacsu is convinced, was taken up by Morgenthau as one of his major concepts. This eventually led to a disenchantment with politics. Neacsu introduces this term in order to explore Morgenthau's discomfort with the implementation of natural sciences' methods into the field of social sciences and humanities. Morgenthau believed that a rationalization of politics blurred, rather than elucidated, its meaning. Politics, always a struggle for power, is unpredictable; mastering it is an art, not a science, as Morgenthau once famously expressed. The final concept Neacsu employs to characterize Morgenthau's perspective is the statesman whom she perceives as the creative force to counter this disenchantment, arguing that Morgenthau considered only the statesman as being able to overcome the dangers caused by nihilism. Finally, the elaboration of Morgenthau's perspective leads Neacsu to the conclusion that Morgenthau's position is between modernity and post-modernity. This is the case since, Neacsu argues, he criticized the pitfalls of a modern understanding of scholarship, exemplified in positivism, and promoted a critical contextualizing approach, yet at the same time he yearned for the re-establishment of universal values which would act as a reference of good conduct.

Neacsu's book is an informative study of Morgenthau's major concepts, which will provide considerable impetus for scholars and students committed to advance in the elaboration of Realism in general and Morgenthau's thought in particular. However, despite relying methodologically on Skinner, who frequently emphasized the importance of languages, and despite clearly pointing out that Morgenthau's intellectual origins lie in interwar Europe, the book does not consult any of Morgenthau's pre-Second World War books, articles and manuscripts in German and French, which are by far the most thought-provoking and important to an understanding of the development of his world-view. Besides, Neacsu solely relies on third scholars to elaborate Morgenthau's European years, but at the same time did not consult standard works by, for instance, Detlev Peukert, Hans-Ulrich Wehler, Peter Gay or Fritz Ringer. Instead, she relies mainly on Christoph Frei's excellent intellectual biography and exclusively focuses on Nietzsche's and Weber's intellectual influence. Although this is undisputable, recent research has proved that one has to locate Morgenthau within the broader context of German humanities during the Weimar Republic, and even the German Empire, in order to grasp the profoundness of his contribution to the discipline of IR. This leaves a deep academic scar on an otherwise elaborate study.

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International law, human rights and ethics

Why not torture terrorists? Moral, practical and legal aspects of the ‘ticking bomb’ justification for torture. By Yuval Ginbar. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2010. 436pp. Pb.: £24.99. ISBN 978 0 19957 123 9.

The ‘ticking bomb’ scenario (TBS) will be familiar to most readers; essentially it asks whether the torture of a terrorist would be justified if it were to be known that this was the only way to prevent an atrocity. In the years since 9/11 a number of lawyers and ethicists have reasoned from the TBS to argue that in such circumstances the absolute prohibition of torture mandated by international law, most obviously in the UN Convention against Torture of 1984, might reasonably be circumvented. Such arguments, which previously might have resonated only in authoritarian, dictatorial regimes, have been proposed by serious writers in the western liberal democracies, and had some influence in at least the first term of the presidency of George W. Bush.

In this comprehensive, exhaustive and, it must be said, at times exhausting book, Yuval Ginbar exposes the TBS to intensely detailed scrutiny and finds it in every respect wanting. He examines the case of private individuals torturing off their own bat, as it were, and of those who act as executors of state policy. He looks at consequentialist arguments and absolutist arguments—and consequentialist absolutist arguments and absolutist consequentialist arguments (it’s a very thorough book)—and explores ‘dirty hands’ and ‘slippery slopes’. He examines justifications in domestic and international law—torture warrants, the defence of necessity (at length) and the non-lawful combatant argument. He examines the legal and practical experience of Israel and the United States, drawing on an activist career in human rights organizations in the former country, and subjects to detailed refutation all attempts to argue that torture (or, for that matter, so-called ‘torture-lite’, or any kind of ill-treatment or ‘coercive interrogation’) could, in any circumstances, be legal. Very movingly, he presents a number of detailed individual case-histories of the tortured. Taking on board all these dimensions of the problem, throughout what is a very substantial book Ginbar at no point wavers from the absolutist position that in all circumstances torture is unconditionally wrong. Even if actually faced with a TBS, while we must ‘do anything humanely possible to save lives at risk’ we must acknowledge that this means ‘doing everything in our power that does not involve losing our own humanity. Which in turn means never to torture or otherwise ill-treat another human being, whatever the circumstances’ (p. 356).

Ginbar presents a very comprehensive and compelling argument; so why am I not entirely convinced? For two reasons, one of substance, the other of process. On substance, it seems to me one can only say ‘Let justice be done though the heavens fall’ if, in one’s heart of hearts, one doesn’t actually believe the heavens *could* fall—as I heard a Christian theologian once put it at a conference on the just war tradition, even if the world were destroyed in a nuclear firestorm, God would protect the innocent and judge the guilty. This is all very well if one accepts the first premise, that there is a loving and judging God—and Ginbar does not base his argument on this premise—but not much comfort if one does not. In other words, for me, in the very last of last resorts, moral arguments are always consequentialist, because what other basis for morality can there be in a godless world? And so I would actually support Michael Walzer’s argument—strenuously rejected by Ginbar—that there are times when, all things considered, it can be right to do something that is morally wrong—with Walzer’s proviso that those who dirty their hands in this way must acknowledge and bear the guilt that attaches to their act.

Dovetailing with this position, on process, it seems to me that while Ginbar rejects the TBS, he is still a little too ready to accept that hypotheticals can sometimes be useful in illuminating problems. For my part, I agree with Kenneth, the naive but good-hearted and always ethical page in the television show *30 Rock*, when he complains that hypothetical situations are 'like lying to your mind'. The basic problems with the TBS hypothetical in all its forms are that it always assumes more knowledge than anyone is actually going to have, and, equally, that the calm of the seminar room can somehow replicate the febrile atmosphere within which decisions of this kind are taken. Torture is indeed always wrong, and torturers must always be held to account, but we will not understand why it is, nevertheless, sometimes resorted to by people who are not monsters or evil-intentioned, unless we take ourselves away from the classroom and the pages of philosophy textbooks and into the world in which there are real consequences attached to whatever decision such people make.

None of this is intended to take away from the great value of this book. Ginbar does a splendid job of revealing the weakness of the arguments he encounters, and, if a little too fond of hypotheticals in general, he still manages very effectively to destroy the TBS. It would be good to think that in response to his scholarship, commentators will cease to employ this particular trope—but that is probably too much to ask for. What one can say, however, is that anyone who employs the TBS in future without starting their analysis from where Ginbar ends will not deserve to be taken seriously.

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International justice in Rwanda and the Balkans: virtual trials and the struggle for state cooperation. By Victor Peskin. New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2008. 272pp. £17.99. ISBN 978 0 52112 912 1.

Victor Peskin approaches his study of the International Criminal Tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and for Rwanda (ICTR) as a political scientist rather than as a lawyer, and as such has produced an invaluable guide to the politics of contemporary international justice. Many books have been written on the use and development of the law within the tribunals, but there has been little work to date on the relationships between tribunals and states. This book fills a significant gap in the literature, and does so by telling a compelling story backed up by information gleaned from eight months of fieldwork and hundreds of interviews. Peskin has put in the graft and it shows: this is a work of narrative detail rather than a sweeping analysis of the tribunals from on high, revealing the controversies, conflict, public shaming and private negotiating that have shaped and constrained the pursuit of international justice through the tribunals. He shows that states have enormous power over tribunals because of their roles in apprehending and transferring suspects, supplying evidence, and approving visas for witnesses to travel to give evidence—power that they (especially the Kagame regime in Rwanda) have learnt to exercise with some skill—but also that the tribunals have developed resources they can use to 'push back' against state coercion.

The book looks at the conditions under which states and state groups cooperate with tribunals—in particular those states in which the atrocities prosecuted by the tribunals took place, but also other key international players with reason to exert political power over the proceedings such as the United States, the United Kingdom, the European Union and NATO. The tribunals were established by the UN Security Council, and as such have the notional power to demand state cooperation and to override state sovereignty, but Peskin shows that the superior legal status of the tribunals matters not at all in their day-to-day effectiveness. The things that matter, he argues, are the ability of the tribunal staff, in

particular chief prosecutors, to use diplomatic skills to coerce or elicit cooperation from recalcitrant states, and the domestic political landscapes within these states.

In examining the role of chief prosecutors (who play the role of diplomat as often as trial lawyer), Peskin demonstrates, *pace* Realist IR theory, that tribunals have independent political power in the international system. This power may be ‘soft’ but it is not insignificant—in particular when exercised by the ICTY. Crucially, tribunals can determine whether or not states win the rhetorical battle for the status of victim, with the political and economic benefits this status now bestows. The story of Croatia’s transition from victim to victimizer and (partially) back again illustrates this point well. Tribunals can also influence peace processes: Peskin tells a fascinating story of the political manoeuvring by Richard Goldstone, first Chief Prosecutor at the ICTY, which succeeded in preventing amnesties being offered at the Dayton peace talks to Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic, two of those most responsible for atrocities during the Bosnian war. Finally, tribunals can influence domestic political prospects: the EU required cooperation with the ICTY from Serbia and Croatia before accession talks would begin.

The most important contribution made by this book is the comparative study of the politics of international justice within states. The great hope of liberal international institutions and NGOs is that the delivery of justice through courts or tribunals will bring peace to war-torn regions. Peskin shows how justice mechanisms can instead bring conflict, describing how the ICTY has threatened domestic stability, causing crises within both Serbia and Croatia as political leaders tried to find ways to balance the demands of the tribunal for cooperation with the demands of many of their citizens to resist. This is a high-stakes game for leaders of new or weak states: Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Zinzić was murdered in large part in protest at his plans to send suspected Serbian war criminals to The Hague for trial.

The architecture of the book—chronological accounts of tribunal–state relations, peppered with intriguing behind-the-scenes stories, and topped and tailed with analytical chapters—is logical; however, the conceptual device of the ‘virtual trial’ or ‘trial of cooperation’ feels artificial and confuses the analysis rather than complementing it. Tribunals cannot put states on trial, virtual or otherwise, and to suggest that they do obscures the power relations and imbalance between these bodies. That said, the book proves beyond reasonable doubt that the ICTY and the ICTR are not above or outside power politics, dispensing impartial justice to victims of atrocity, but political actors who bargain, negotiate and compromise with the states whose cooperation they require. It charts the ebb and flow in the relative power of the tribunals versus affected states since the early 1990s, documents the strategic games they play with each other and sets out the lessons that future international justice institutions should learn from these innovative bodies.

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Mobilizing for human rights: international law in domestic politics. By **Beth A. Simmons**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2009. 468pp. Index. Pb.: £19.99. ISBN 978 0 52171 232 3.

This book marshals theoretical arguments and empirical evidence to show that, under certain conditions, a state’s public law-like commitment in the form of agreeing to an international human rights treaty has a noticeable positive impact on domestic human rights outcomes. These range from religious freedom, to female education, to the treatment of detainees, to the curbing of child labour. Many liberal approaches to the role of

Book reviews

international law in international relations have argued that treaties can change the rational calculus of costs and benefits for states, and that states can be expected to follow treaties because it is in their interests to do so. This book parts ways with that standard liberal position by arguing that through three main *domestic* political mechanisms—first, affecting the national legislative agenda, second, enabling litigation in national courts, third, precipitating public mobilization—rather than through changing the rational calculus of interest- and preference-maximization at the international level, treaties work to improve human rights outcomes.

Overall, the argument is convincing, in part because it does not overreach. Treaty ratification, it turns out, is not a silver bullet that will solve the world's human rights problems; rather, it enables a set of processes that can lead to incremental improvements, in certain places, under certain conditions. Beth Simmons is much more concerned to advance claims about the domestic-political conditions that would need to be in place in order for international-legal commitment to matter than she is to advance an all-encompassing causal claim about the relationship between treaty ratification and human rights protection. In other words, the book's main contribution is its study of the intervening variables.

The book advances the claim that democracy matters. The extent to which a state is 'democratic' (as conceptualized by the Polity IV Project) is one factor that can help to explain and to predict whether a state's international-legal agreement will lead to a change in human rights practices, but not exactly in the way that one might think. The reader is told that democracies are more likely than other states to commit to human rights treaties in the first place, because the values and preferences expressed in those treaties are already quite similar to the existing values and preferences of those countries. However, 'stable democracies' are also places in which one would *not* expect to see treaty ratification lead to a noticeable improvement in human rights outcomes. One reason offered is that 'citizens in stable democracies are already apprised of their rights and do not need a treaty to shore up these beliefs and values' (p. 152). In fact, one of the book's main findings is that the most fertile ground for treaties to make an impact on human rights outcomes is in countries that are neither 'stable autocracies' nor 'stable democracies', but somewhere in between (pp. 148–54). This reader, for one, would have developed the same expectation about the dampened effect of human rights treaties in stable democracies, but for very different reasons. In the United Kingdom, a stable democracy, public opinion is often highly suspicious about human rights legislation. The pressure that is put on political leaders through the democratic process drives them in some cases away from human rights protection, and towards decisions such as limiting the rights of actual and potential immigrants, or imprisoning terrorist suspects for extended periods without laying formal criminal charges. Democratic values and human rights values are clearly not coextensive. The book does highlight this tension in specific places, for example in the discussion of the elimination of the death penalty, but it would have been highly interesting to see this set of questions, debates and expectations built more systematically into the research.

The book's focus on incremental improvements to human rights outcomes (as the relevant dependent variable), though quite intuitive, is also a question for debate. I suspect that some readers—after learning that the Convention Against Torture (CAT) improves the treatment of detainees to some extent, without actually stopping all torture outright—would, in fact, conclude that the CAT has failed. These readers might think that the purpose of international human rights agreements is not to produce incremental improvements in 'outcomes', but rather, it is to overhaul the identity of states, and their sense of their duties, to the point where torture becomes altogether unthinkable for governmental agents.

International organization and foreign policy

These two points, however, represent substantive questions that are mostly matters for future research and debate. Taken on its own terms—as a reassertion, refinement and thickening of the liberal position on the impact of international human rights law—this book is a significant theoretical and empirical contribution that deserves consideration by scholars, advanced students and human rights practitioners.

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International organization and foreign policy*

How enemies become friends: the sources of stable peace. By Charles A. Kupchan. Princeton, NJ, and Woodstock: Princeton University Press. 2010. 442pp. £20.95. ISBN 978 0 69114 265 4.

Henry Kissinger, in his introduction to *A world restored: Metternich, Castlereagh and the problems of peace* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1957), writes that ‘the attainment of peace is not as easy as the desire for it’. Much of traditional International Relations literature, however, treats peace merely as the absence of war. Charles Kupchan’s new book charts the waxing and waning of peaceful relations between states and other types of polities, surveying the achievement and maintenance of peace on a relative basis, more or less stable according to circumstances and cycles of history.

Kupchan seeks to answer two chief questions, both contained in the title: what are the sources of stable peace—what steps lead to ‘peace breaking out’; and how do enemies become friends—what forms does stable peace take? Kupchan identifies the sources of stable peace as an initial unilateral accommodation (often a concession by a stronger power); reciprocal restraint as the parties interact; societal integration as more actors from both sides develop relationships; and, finally, identity change as previously distinct conceptions of identity overlap and become shared. Enemies become friends by starting with *rapprochement*, moving on to a security community and lastly to the formation of a political union. Following an explication of these theories and acknowledgement of the existing, albeit limited, scholarship on the subject, Kupchan provides a series of case-studies in these three categories. *Rapprochement* is first depicted in a full chapter devoted to Britain and America in the period from 1895 to 1906. Other instances of *rapprochement* include the successful cases of Norway and Sweden (1905–35) and Brazil and Argentina (1979–98), continuing with an analysis of failed *rapprochement* between Britain and Japan (1902–23) and the Soviet Union and China (1949–60). Successes and failures in the form of security communities follow, including the Concert of Europe, the European Community from 1949 to 1963 and ASEAN, with a later stage of the Concert of Europe illustrating a failure, as does the Gulf Cooperation Council after 1981. Some of Kupchan’s most interesting choices for case-studies appear in the section on successful forms of union: the Swiss Confederation, the Iroquois Confederation in northern New York State and the United Arab Emirates—with supporting cases in the form of the United States as well as unified Italy and Germany.

The author challenges the view that domestic democratic institutions constitute a prerequisite to a country’s aptitude for stable international peace. He finds that commonality of cultural values may do more to explain democracies’ unwillingness to make war against each other, while non-democratic states, provided they act with restraint, can be credible partners in stable peace. He also refutes the idea that non-political ties can substitute for political action: business and cultural links follow the outbreak of peace; policy and

* See also Robin Niblett, ed., *America and a changed world: a question of leadership*, pp. 1051–52.

Book reviews

statecraft produce it. Crucially, Kupchan emphasizes that the process can operate in reverse. Stable peace can be lost if the factors that made it possible fray or fail.

The book covers an enormous amount of ground and cites an impressive array of compelling historical examples. One could argue that the case-study on Anglo-American *rapprochement* might have started with the Treaty of Ghent, which ended the War of 1812, especially since many of the open issues that required later negotiation—the Maine border, the Oregon territory, fishing rights—were deliberately postponed at Ghent. That would have created an interesting parallel with the case-study on the Concert of Europe, both beginning immediately after the Napoleonic Wars.

Looking ahead, one is tempted to encourage the author to undertake a sequel to address twenty-first-century concerns. How effective are international institutions in making and keeping peace? A case-study on the League of Nations and United Nations would be fascinating. So, too, would an examination of the role of technology, the media, business, thought leaders and other non-state actors in a globalized world. Does the growing influence of culturally compatible global elites—‘Davos man’—constitute a source of stable peace? And what of the ability of major powers to impose peace on unwilling smaller powers (as in Bosnia), potentially one of the biggest geopolitical challenges of the coming decades?

Overall, Kupchan’s narrative strikes the right balance between enough erudition to satisfy the expert and enough accessibility to appeal to the general reader. *How enemies become friends* thus provides a lucid, stimulating and comprehensive exposition of an under-researched area of diplomatic history and constitutes a perspicuous contribution to the International Relations canon that may justly claim pride of place alongside *A world restored* itself.

Nicholas Dungan

Conflict, security and defence

Walking away from terrorism: accounts of disengagement from radical and extremist movements. By John Horgan. London: Routledge. 2009. 188pp. Pb.: £21.99. ISBN 978 0 41543 944 2.

Despite the explosion of terrorism research in the long shadow of 9/11, we still know far less than we should and could about one of the vital issues involved: how and why and when terrorism stops, at individual and group levels. Serious work on this subject has begun to emerge, however, with Audrey Kurth Cronin’s splendid recent study, *How terrorism ends* (Princeton University Press, 2009), providing a strong example. This new book by John Horgan also focuses very valuably on the issue, his own attention being primarily directed towards what he terms disengagement.

Walking away from terrorism forms part of Paul Wilkinson and David Rapoport’s important Political Violence series for Routledge. It is an intriguing book, containing material of analytical and relatedly of practical high value. It represents ‘an attempt to engage questions about the psychology of terrorist behaviour through scientific reasoning and rigorous scrutiny’ (p. xix), as such developing the arguments embodied in Horgan’s impressive 2005 study, *The psychology of terrorism* (Routledge).

What does this current book do? It presents material from Horgan’s own interviews with people who have been involved in terrorism, topped and tailed by valuable, wider-angled reflections on the subject from the author. The people interviewed for these case-studies were involved, respectively, in Norwegian right-wing extremism; the Ulster Volunteer Force; Al-Qaeda; the Provisional Irish Republican Army; the Ulster Freedom Fighters

Conflict, security and defence

(effectively, the Ulster Defence Association); and—in the case of the final individual—a variety of Islamic organizations.

The book is explicitly exploratory rather than decisive in its judgements. It offers only six case-studies, which could never be more than an initial outline of what such work might eventually involve. These case-studies ('interviews with select members of a disengaged sample' (p. 39)) are reasonably presented by Horgan as 'snapshots at best, glimpses into how individuals have engaged in and experienced a complex process' (p. 15). They are fascinating interviews, and they reflect one of the key strengths of Horgan's approach to the study of terrorism: namely, to pursue face-to-face, first-hand interview research and thereby to unveil 'the terrorists' experiences in their own words' (p. xxiv). How many times at academic conferences on terrorism in recent years has one heard the lament that we lack sufficient data? Well, one remedy for this is for people to do what John Horgan has done here, and to provide new evidence, dug up first-hand.

The book is also useful in a second sense, in focusing attention on the individual. Horgan is right to suggest that explanation at the individual level is in itself insufficient. But individual-level explanation is, surely, necessary and important and this book does justify its author's claim about 'the value of the individual perspective in the study of the terrorist' (p. 139).

Walking away from terrorism is not flawless. There are occasional slips (the Irish National Liberation Army was not, in fact, 'an offshoot of the Provisional IRA' (p. 23) but rather of the Official IRA), and more will need to be done in later stages of this kind of work to interrogate interlocutors' individual recollections against contemporary sources and rival interpretations.

Are there patterns which emerge? Horgan rightly eschews the idea of a single or simple terrorist profile or personality. But some themes of significance do seem to emerge. There is the repeated gap between terrorists' initial, romantic conception of violence and of its efficacy, set against the more futile and bloodstained reality of terrorist action in practice. Again, in these pages we see the comparative limits of ideological commitment and understanding displayed by those interviewed, as well as the repeated attraction, as a motivation for becoming involved in terrorism, of simply hitting back at opponents who have perceptively struck first against one's own community.

Tellingly, there appears here also a distinction made by terrorists between tactical effectiveness and moral legitimacy: they may disengage because of a lack of the former, without conceding an absence of the latter. And, centrally, these terrorists' tales repeatedly emphasize their emotional drive to *do* something about injustice, coupled with an apparent lack of serious grasp on their part of the complexity of the issues involved in the relevant conflicts.

Horgan is right that, at present, 'Disengagement and its related processes represent a serious gap in our knowledge and understanding of the terrorist' (p. 160). His book marks a useful beginning in redressing this gap through impressively rigorous investigation and analysis. It is a very valuable contribution.

Richard English, Queen's University Belfast, UK

How terrorism ends: understanding the decline and demise of terrorist campaigns.

By Audrey Kurth Cronin. Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press. 2009. 311 pp. £20.95. ISBN 978 0 69113 948 7.

While the *causes* of terrorism have long been subject to avid research, Audrey Kurth Cronin's cogent and thoughtful text responds to the curious dearth of works attending to its *ends*.

Book reviews

This is clearly a timely project, coming as policy-makers and academics are increasingly seeking alternative ways to think about and practise counterterrorism. *How terrorism ends* indicts both the concept of the 'long war on terror' and the reductionist models the author perceives to have dominated its pursuit. Cronin calls on us to 'calm our hysteria, and recover our awareness of history' (p. 193) by reminding us that all terrorist groups have an end, and that it is ill-advised to act as if Al-Qaeda is any exception to that rule. Only by engaging in detailed historical analysis of the ways in which terrorist groups have met their ends in the past, she argues, will we identify productive strategies for responding to contemporary terrorist phenomena.

Cronin finds that there are six broad patterns by which terrorist groups meet their end: through decapitation of the leadership; entry into negotiations; successful achievement of goals; utter failure through implosion or marginalization; being crushed by force; or transition into other modes of violence. These certainly overlap in some cases, but, she argues, one pattern generally tends to predominate. Through studying the processes entailed in these six historical patterns, we can identify how Al-Qaeda is most likely to reach its end, and deduce which policies will be best suited to hastening it along.

The six endings are developed through a good selection of mostly post-1968 case-studies from around the globe, in which Cronin spells out the complex dynamics which affect or thwart each pattern. These case-studies are easily the most gripping and readable sections of the text. Cronin never flattens for the sake of parsimonious argumentation, rather allowing the specificity of each case to enlighten us to the continuities and differences at work. As a consequence, they are rich in fascinating detail and her derived conclusions are sophisticated. We must, Cronin argues, negotiate the middle ground between identifying radically 'new rules' governing terrorism today (a concept she seems to have limited time for) and simply collapsing contemporary phenomena into the historical record.

The case-studies are supported with some solid quantitative investigation, which adds weight particularly to her conclusions about the efficacy of negotiating with terrorists. Such methodological pluralism seems characteristic of a work which centrally seeks to avoid reductive disciplinary modes. Accordingly, Cronin's familiarity with developments in counter-insurgency doctrine is clearly in evidence, especially in her emphasis on the narrative politics of mass mobilization, which locates her at the cutting edge of contemporary research.

In general, the book is a clarion call for embracing greater complexity and flexibility in our conceptualizations and language, particularly by its focus on the dynamic interactive effects of what she terms the 'terrorist triad' (p. 7) of group, state, and audience or constituency. This embrace of multidimensionality, which again locates her at the sharp end of terrorism research, is similarly reflected in her contention that constructing firm boundaries between concepts like terrorism, insurgency and warfare causes far more harm than good to our analyses. Such insights should rightly guarantee the text a wide readership.

Cronin's critiques of what she views as outdated models, particularly those rooted in interstate behavioural modelling, are often incisive: for example when she rejects the term 'non-state actor' as 'a negation, not a concept' (p. 145). Similarly, her argument for disaggregating the often assumed monolithic unity of Al-Qaeda is unassailable.

In general, this reviewer finds her considered refusal of the 'false clarity' (p. 147) of counterterrorists' language refreshing, even if it does raise questions about her own project's isolation of a category of 'terrorist groups' and their endings from the evolutionary dynamics of a broader range of political assemblages. Occasionally, the book slips into the obvious, as when Cronin lambastes the 'Pyrrhic' character of victories over terror-

ists achieved solely through the use of brute force, but, inasmuch as she sets out to challenge a supposedly pervasive 'strategic myopia' (p. 197), perhaps her strongest argument is that it is currently the obvious which needs most to be stated.

The timeliness, clarity and simplicity of the project contained in *How terrorism ends* should commend it to readers of all descriptions. Above all, Cronin's sensible and well-argued call for 'smarter' (p. 193) strategies for dealing with terrorism today is one that deserves to be widely heard.

Nicholas Michelsen, King's College London, UK

Dictionary of terrorism. By David Wright-Neville. Cambridge: Polity. 2010. 224pp. £50.00. ISBN 978 0 74564 302 1.

This book really consists of two parts: first, an essay on 'Thinking about terrorism in late modernity', and second, a collection of terms, names, groups and events, organized alphabetically like a dictionary, which relate in some way to terrorism, with associated reference material. The two parts do not really connect, in that each could stand alone, and they will be dealt with separately in this review.

The introductory essay is about the length of a short review paper. It begins by rehearsing issues related to the definitional problems of terrorism, and then gives a short historical context. What then follows can be summarized by one of the subheadings—'Bringing society back in'—essentially reviewing and discussing psychological and social accounts of terrorism. This part explores issues such as marginalization and alienation as causal accounts, and identifies relative deprivation as one of the significant factors in terrorist motivation. The discussion is then drawn together around an account of terrorism as a process; despite not being particularly original, this does serve to bring together diverse material, although there are some omissions. This account suffers from the weakness of all such discussions, in that we do not really have the detailed analysis necessary to describe individual pathways to terrorism, or to adequately account for the psychological processes involved. The author summarizes his own views as 'there is a need to understand terrorism as a complex socially constructed tactic employed by individuals who are motivated by a combination of individual and group psychological processes to act out violently against real or perceived oppressors' (p. xxxi). What then follows is a short account of possible future developments that, consistent with the analysis presented, concludes that terrorism cannot be defeated but can be managed.

A problem with short analyses of this kind is that they cannot develop in detail the conceptual underpinnings and assumptions on which they are based. Take for example the author's use of 'root causes' on a number of occasions in the essay. A more sophisticated analysis of how we might understand the concept of motivation (R. S. Peters, *The concept of motivation*, Humanities Press, 1958, offers one such discussion) might lead to a more nuanced sense of cause, and a recognition that very often we are dealing with what might be termed 'necessary' conditions to account for something, but rarely if ever do we begin to approach 'sufficient' accounts (see Max Taylor, 'Is terrorism a group phenomenon?', *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 15: 2, March 2010, pp. 121–29 for a discussion of this). Nevertheless, the essay is an interesting, if not particularly original, gathering of the various strands that might help understand terrorism, and as such merits attention.

The dictionary element of the book is of course its most substantive part. It lists some 267 terms, organizations and names, providing for each an account of a brief paragraph or two. The range of topics runs from 'Guy Fawkes' to 'Coalition of the willing', from 'The

Book reviews

zealots' to the 'Islamic struggle movement'. The range of material covered is impressive, and the accounts are (to the extent that I can verify) accurate. Each account has one or two suggestions for further reading, and a bibliography is provided.

In the contemporary world, one benchmark for a dictionary of this kind might be taken to be Wikipedia. Although its entries lack the authority that this book can give, 'Wiki' accounts of the topics included in the *Dictionary of terrorism* tend to be longer, more exhaustive and include a wider array of further reference material. Given this, it is not really obvious where the value of this dictionary lies. It certainly is authoritative in that the factual information can be relied on more than that included in an online resource like Wikipedia. However, serious scholars should be able to identify such weaknesses or inaccuracies, and furthermore the topics covered tend to be fairly general in character. Some students may find the book of value, as may the non-specialist (such as a journalist) who needs a general reference tool and do not have web access; it isn't really clear who else would use the book.

In summary, this is a useful and interesting aggregation of introductory accounts and explanatory material relevant to the study of terrorism. The introductory essay reviews a number of interesting areas, and would certainly fit into an undergraduate reading list. The book as a whole is not really pitched at the graduate level, but may find a niche as undergraduate teaching material, and may be of interest to the general reader who needs an overview.

Max Taylor, University of St Andrews, UK

Understanding violent radicalisation. Edited by Magnus Ranstorp. London: Routledge. 2009. 280pp. Pb.: £23.99. ISBN 978 0 41555 630 9.

This book is an important and useful contribution to the burgeoning field of radicalization studies. Of course, prior to 9/11, or even more accurately the 3/11 Madrid train bombings and the 7/7 London bombings, 'radicalization' in relation to terrorist activities was a relatively rarely, if ever, used term. In the wake of these events, and in the face of demands by policy-makers and practitioners for more effective and policy-relevant academic interventions, a new literature has sprung forth which seeks to theorize, empirically observe, predict and suggest ways of countering the engagement of ordinary citizens in terrorist activities. In the context of this development, and in this book, radicalization has been a term largely, almost exclusively, applied to understanding Islamically inspired terrorism, as opposed to understanding how individuals come to participate in other forms of terrorism, be they of ethno-separatist, far right, animal rights or other motivation.

In his introduction, Magnus Ranstorp writes eloquently and with clear focus and intent of the successes and failures in this area of study to date. By identifying how and why this is an issue that requires not only intellectual engagement, but also an eye towards policy relevance, he helps to explain the pressures on the production of knowledge in this field. He hails those studies which succeed through methodological sophistication and empirical research adding something new and substantive to the field, while lamenting those contributions which add little to either the collection of knowledge or a methodological approach. As a survey of this area of study, this book reflects these same problems. Where the chapters make clear empirical contributions, the work shines—and similar stories and patterns of recruitment and participation begin to emerge in chapters by Christina Hellmich, Mark Huband, Lindsay Clutterbuck and Rogelio Alonso. Petter Nesser's chapter on 'Joining jihadi terrorist cells in Europe' is particularly insightful, helping to build up

Conflict, security and defence

categories for participation and then assessing such categories 'on the ground' through a study of the 7/7 bombers.

Other chapters, however, aren't as successful, and at points some aspects of the analysis are beset with conceptual confusion and lack of empirical focus. One of the problems of this area of study is lack of agreement over concepts, and hence, research focus—is radicalization a function of Islam, Islamism, Salafi-jihadism, neo-Salafism or other concepts? For policy-makers, these arguments seem pedantic—a common response is that full engagement with conceptualization is intellectual navel-gazing, while policy-makers are happy to take a 'we know it when we see it' approach to radicalization. The problem for academics is that without a clear, long-term and reflexive engagement with these kinds of concepts, studies will be beset with methodological flaws, with effects ranging from lack of clarity on what is being empirically observed to the danger of tautology by considering Islamically inspired terrorism a function of Islam—a definition of cause that lies in the conceptualization rather than observation.

In this collection, as in the study of radicalization more broadly, when authors attempt to create a meta-theory of radicalization, where the emphasis lies on understanding a community's predilection for or vulnerability to participation in terrorism, rather than exploring the cases themselves, the work seems overly thin, and appears to generalize what Ranstorp so importantly recognizes at the outset as the 'multifaceted combination of push-pull factors involving a combination of socio-psychological factors, political grievance, religious motivation and discourse, identity politics and triggering mechanisms that collectively move individuals towards extremism. A number of different factors that interplay are at the heart of radicalization which is highly individualized' (p. 6).

Ranstorp has managed to create a volume that will appeal to policy-makers as a compendium of current thinking on Islamically inspired violent radicalization, while simultaneously holding up a mirror to those studying radicalization to show what works in this area of study and what doesn't. What Ranstorp astutely points out from the start is the pressure academics and researchers face not only to produce timely and policy-relevant research, but not to lose the adherence to methodological rigour and academic practice, which makes research transcend policy summaries and description to become truly insightful and enlightening.

Jonathan Githens-Mazer, University of Exeter, UK

Complex emergencies. By David J. Keen. Cambridge: Polity. 2008. 296pp. Pb.: £17.99. ISBN 978 0 74564 020 4.

Complex emergencies aims to analyse the various abusive systems of government that have created the world's recent humanitarian disasters—civil wars, ethnic cleansing and genocide—with massive loss of life, the displacement of millions of people and the destruction of whole communities. It is an important and challenging book and, being well edited and thoroughly researched, it achieves its stated aim.

While addressing some common assumptions about the causes of such human suffering, David Keen argues for a better understanding and more fitting descriptions of what occurs. War is not simply a collapse into either anarchy or mindless violence—nor is it solely a contest between two sides. It is a system yielding economic and political benefits, with some parties determined to prolong it. The wielding of power over unarmed civilians is a way to cling to power, to suppress dissent and to derail democracy. The book also includes an extended discussion of the damaging role played by the western powers in

Book reviews

such catastrophe, and of how international financial institutions remain reluctant to rein in profitable commodity flows, even when supporting abusive governments and fuelling war economies. In Cambodia, Burma, Liberia and Sierra Leone violence was fuelled by foreign interests in timber and valuable minerals. Keen believes that when major corporations bribe to win contracts, they bolster corruption and autocratic rule. He describes the 'huge vested interest' in the arms trade that feeds wars around the world. He questions the role of humanitarian aid, which can distract from a failure to act on other fronts—military and diplomatic. Sometimes peace proposals have embedded within them future violence, corruption and exploitation. Keen argues that some elements of justice many need to be set aside if combatants and warlords are to agree to peace at all.

Keen challenges the language that is used to describe human catastrophe and explains how the words 'mindless evil' are inappropriate when describing atrocity. Violence should not be dismissed as completely irrational or incomprehensible. Instead there is a degree of predictability in mass violence which is seen to proliferate in particular environments. Certain kinds of military structures with high levels of institutionalized abuse seem to produce a marked incidence of extreme violence. In labelling such violence as 'evil' we are allowed to escape our own responsibility in the unfolding processes, for the word implies hopelessness and encourages a belief that there are whole areas of the world that are not worth bothering with and that any intervention into such 'chaos' is doomed to failure. Rwanda in 1994 was the classic case. As the genocide of the Tutsi was taking place the loss of life was said to be the result of 'mindless evil' or alternatively 'bloodletting' in a situation of 'anarchy and chaos'. Keen argues how inappropriate it is to dismiss genocide and civil war as a manifestation of 'mindlessness and madness'. No less appropriate is the phrase 'war on terror' and the word 'crusade'; it would seem that the more elusive the threat, the more intense the desire to find an identifiable enemy and perhaps a 'terror mastermind'. In practice, the use of the phrase 'war on terror' has resulted in civilians being caught up in a definition of the enemy.

The priority for Keen is economic and physical security for all citizens, with a most pressing challenge to deny the means to those who try to manipulate for violent ends. He also stresses the importance of registering protest at human rights abuses at the earliest possible moment. In 1993 the systematic massacre of Tutsi by a trained and indoctrinated street militia in Rwanda was not much of an issue as international negotiators proceeded to discuss a peace deal. Nor was the killing of Rwandan civilians a priority for the UN Security Council as its members discussed the creation of a weak and ineffectual peace-keeping mission tasked to monitor the country's transition from dictatorship to democracy. No less important is a need to hold to account the decision-makers—those whose policies have led to massive loss of life. There are those who have failed to promote human rights, and those who in recent years have rendered international law an irrelevance. They must be accountable for their decision-making and yet have never had to answer for it; a system in which five permanent members can veto resolutions in secret sessions of the Security Council held to devise UN policy is hardly transparent or democratic.

Linda Melvern, University of Aberystwyth, UK

Mass atrocity response operations: a military planning handbook. By Sarah Sewall, Dwight Raymond and Sally Chin. Cambridge, MA: Carr Center for Human Rights Policy, Harvard Kennedy School, and the US Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute. 2010. 128pp. Free download available at <http://www.hks.harvard.edu/cchrp/maro>.

What will the United States government do the next time it identifies a case of ongoing genocide? The evidence from Rwanda and Darfur suggests that if it occurs in Africa, the answer is likely to be 'not much'. US policies in Bosnia and Kosovo, however, imply that robust action is more likely if genocide takes place in Europe. Two recent developments might just change this equation by making it harder for subsequent US governments to argue that military intervention was not a viable option to stop genocide. The first is President Obama's decision to establish a new position on the National Security Staff with responsibility for coordinating and supporting the administration's policies on preventing, identifying and responding to mass atrocities and genocide. Following the recommendations set out in Madeleine Albright and William Cohen's Genocide Prevention Task Force, David Pressman is now serving as the National Security Staff's first Director for War Crimes, Atrocities, and Civilian Protection.

The second development is the publication of the Mass Atrocity Response Operations (MARO) military planning handbook, a collaborative effort between the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School and the US Army's Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute. The handbook's central objective is to persuade the US government to enshrine the MARO concept into its military doctrine. A MARO 'describes a contingency operation to halt widespread and systematic use of violence by state or non-state armed groups against non-combatants'; it is distinguished in military terms by its 'primary objective of stopping the killing of civilians' (p. 21). MAROs take place in contexts characterized by multiparty dynamics between victims, perpetrators and bystanders, rather than traditional contexts between enemy and friendly forces; where the intervening force will inevitably be seen as siding with the victims against the perpetrators; and where there is a tendency for the mass killings to escalate rapidly once begun.

After providing a succinct summary of the MARO concept, the handbook does a good job of laying out what the US government would need to do in order to plan, assemble and execute such an operation in a way that conforms to the current doctrinal phasing construct—phases zero to five—used by the US military. The handbook also significantly advances the wider international debate on how to protect civilians through its discussion of seven approaches to direct military intervention: the saturation; 'oil spot'; separation; safe areas; partner enabling; containment; and defeat perpetrators approaches (pp. 63–78). The handbook's authors claim it 'does not advocate for a military intervention or response in a given situation'—instead it seeks only 'to prepare states operationally for that possibility' (p. 11). Strictly speaking, this is correct but it belies the whole purpose of the project, which is precisely to make sure that future responses to genocide do not replicate the past. Then again, the authors' attempt to demur on this issue is understandable, because regardless of their explicit preferences, the very fact of possessing an appropriate toolkit increases the likelihood that decision-makers will use those tools. Whether they do so wisely is another matter.

The handbook ends by emphasizing that the MARO concept 'requires continued ongoing exercising, testing, discussion, and refinement' (p. 91). True, but it also needs to be exported to other governments. Only when an international critical mass develops will the excuses for passivity in the face of genocide really dry up.

Paul D. Williams, The George Washington University, USA

NATO in search of a vision. Edited by Gülnur Aybet and Rebecca R. Moore. Washington DC: Georgetown University Press. 2010. 272pp. Index. Pb.: £20.75. ISBN 978 1 58901 630 9.

The first chapter of this edited volume, 'NATO at sixty—and beyond' by Jamie Shea, is premised on three key assumptions that set the tone for subsequent chapters. First, the wars in Yugoslavia were more important to the evolution and transformation of NATO than either the collapse of the Warsaw Pact or the demise of the Soviet Union. Second, NATO as an organization 'whose forte is to use military power ... needs military challenges' to justify its culture and capabilities (pp. 15–16). Third, the alliance's leaders must 'use it' and not 'hide behind it' (p. 19). What all this entails is that NATO, post-Cold War, could be viewed as a hammer looking for nails in order to justify its existence. That said, Shea's chapter is resolute and suggests an opinion which has been shaped by almost 30 years of employment within the organization that is the subject of this book. The readers, by the end of this chapter, if not the introduction, soon realize that if they are, in Shea's words, believers in Immanuel Kant's perpetual peace, or if they believe that military power is no longer the 'dominant element in crisis management' (p. 16), then this book will be a bitter pill to consume with regard to the general International Relations (IR) views in which it is couched. Shea gives an insightful and honest answer regarding his understanding of where the organization should be going, believing that the time has come to 'put the political before the military' (p. 20).

This chapter starts with three key issues which Shea argues must be dealt with before a credible Strategic Concept (SC) can be properly articulated: first, the article 5 versus the out-of-area dilemma NATO currently faces; second, Afghanistan; and third, Russia. Furthermore, any new SC must go deeper than the list of challenges usually presented in order to prudently scrutinize 'the philosophical and doctrinal issues' that are at the root of the organization's current inability to achieve a vision that is defined by more than just its current missions. Given that the release of this new document is planned for NATO's 2010/2011 summit, this seems ambitious at best.

In the second chapter, Gülnur Aybet takes a closer look at NATO's two other post-Cold War SCs (1991 and 1999) and concludes that they have generally been mission-driven rather than strategic, culminating in a NATO that is 'an Alliance with a plethora of global missions but without a common vision' (p. 36). After this historic look back, she concludes that NATO must write a document that accounts for the post-September 11 world while 'inextricably linking' its military and its political vision (p. 45).

Subsequent chapters attempt to address both the historic and prescriptive characteristics of the main issues confronting the alliance today, issues which NATO member states must inevitably find consensus over before any comprehensive SC can be deemed credible as a strategic document. These are: the role of secretaries general; the comprehensive approach to crisis management; NATO–Russia relations; missile defence; enlargement (both eastward in the face of Russian rigidity and in the western Balkans); and potential demographic effects on the alliance. Of course, this is a rather tall order for such a short volume and any one of these chapters could be a book in its own right.

Some chapters are better than others at demonstrating how the various issues individually tie into the overall vision of how a new SC could provide NATO with a future that is 'anchored in the normative principles' which helped define the alliance during the Cold War. Yet 'Europe, whole, free and at peace' is no longer a sufficient strategic vision for NATO (p. 3). Rebecca Moore's chapter particularly helps to illustrate how NATO has changed from an organization that created partnerships leading to memberships, based on

Conflict, security and defence

liberal democratic values, with the Central and Eastern European countries, to a NATO that has ultimately had to seek both interest-based as well as value-based partnerships with countries from the Mediterranean to Central Asia. How to reconcile these two 'different categories of partners' (p. 238), Moore argues, is vital to NATO's new SC.

Given the fast-changing nature of IR, some of the topical specifics are slightly dated. However, this does not stop the volume from offering both a timely review and counsel on the key issues currently facing the alliance. Whether the reader is actively involved in the shaping of NATO's future or merely interested, this edited volume gives good insight into the history of NATO since the Cold War and adds much to the debate over how the next SC could shape a 'common transatlantic vision' (p. 6).

Simon Smith, Loughborough University, UK

Freedom's battle: the origins of humanitarian intervention. By Gary J. Bass. New York: Vintage Books. 2008. 509pp. Pb.: £11.64. ISBN 978 0 30727 987 3.

After the Cold War humanitarian intervention became one of the primary issues in international politics, catalysing a plethora of academic books and articles seeking to explain its ostensibly sudden emergence. According to the dominant narrative, concern for, and military action on the basis of, intrastate humanitarian crises were a product of the end of the Cold War rivalry and the proliferation of human rights-orientated non-governmental organizations. Gary Bass challenges this account by arguing that concern for the welfare of foreigners is not a uniquely post-Cold War phenomenon. Bass points to a number of cases during the nineteenth century when egregious oppression and violence compelled both individuals and states to advance arguments in favour of what we now call humanitarian intervention. This meticulously researched analysis stands in sharp contrast to the vast majority of literature on humanitarian intervention, and constitutes an important counter-perspective with which all those interested in this issue should engage.

The nineteenth century, as Bass notes, is today synonymous with imperialism and hardly, one would imagine, a particularly rich source of evidence for humanitarian concern. Bass's analysis, however, identifies a tension between the proponents of *realpolitik* and the agitation of what he calls 'the atrocitarians' (p. 6) that has parallels with contemporary debates. The primary focus is on France and particularly Britain where the Liberal party was the dominant constituency within the atrocitarians, who rallied against the excess of the Ottoman, and indeed occasionally the British, Empire in contrast to the more interest-led concerns of Lord Castlereagh and Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli. Bass argues, 'Humanitarian intervention was once a relatively familiar European practice, and was understood as such' (pp. 4–5), driven by the emergence of the free press and the lobbying of groups like the London Greek Committee. Again, the parallels with today's 'CNN effect' and global civil society are clear.

Freedom's battle is divided into three sections: part one examines the history and nature of humanitarian intervention; parts two, three and four constitute in-depth case-studies of the conflicts in Greece, Syria and Bulgaria respectively; while part five builds on the historical data in an attempt to contextualize the current debates and offer tentative prescriptions for the future trajectory of this issue. While the case-study sections are obviously well researched and advance an interesting historical account of humanitarian concern during an era of imperial excess, the more general and polemical preceding and subsequent chapters are not likely to sway sceptics about the nature of statecraft during this era, and more broadly, the role humanitarian concern plays in the formulation of a state's foreign policy.

Book reviews

In chapter two, Bass advances an unconvincing refutation of the Realist argument; while some people may, and even in the nineteenth century did, eloquently espouse cosmopolitan ethics, simply quoting their appeals does not constitute an argument against the core Realist maxim that states act in the national interest. The most one can deduce from Bass's analysis is that there are today, and there were in the past, those, including, occasionally, influential statesmen, who say that states should do something about suffering overseas. Instances of rhetorical concern do not in themselves, however, constitute evidence to support his claim that 'the tradition of humanitarian intervention once ran deep in world politics' (p. 3). In the context of Britain's and France's wilful imperial excesses the periodic expression of humanitarian concern appears manifestly hypocritical. Indeed, Bass notes that many of the proponents of enlightened rhetoric, such as Woodrow Wilson, Theodore Roosevelt, Lloyd George and even William Gladstone, 'held loathsome racial attitudes that played out in the subjugation of countless people' (p. 343). There is also a tendency to exaggerate the prevalence of humanitarian concern, such as Bass's claim, 'People in Britain were shaken to the core by the Bulgarian massacres' (p. 341). Some were surely, but it is difficult not to see this as an unsustainable generalization.

Bass convincingly explodes the twin myths that humanitarian intervention is a uniquely post-Cold War issue and that contemporary human rights activists somehow invented the idea that 'something should be done' to protect suffering innocents abroad. His broader claims regarding the influence of humanitarian concerns on foreign policy during this era do not, however, succeed in altering the dominant impression of the nineteenth century as an era of rampant colonialism and the subjugation of human rights and liberty under the banner of the 'white man's burden' and the *mission civilisatrice*.

Aidan Hehir, University of Westminster, UK

War and peace in transition: changing roles of external actors. Edited by Karin Aggestam and Annika Björkdahl. Lund: Nordic Academic Press. 2009. 208pp. Index. Pb.: £19.95. ISBN 978 9 18550 922 5.

This edited volume discusses a wide range of issues related to third-party intervention in contemporary international conflicts. Specifically, the first two chapters deal with how best to regulate the increasing role of private security companies in conflict zones; chapters three and seven present the significance of European conflict intervention, focusing on the role of the EU in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict and Norway's mediation in Sri Lanka; chapters four and six deal with the changing characteristics and patterns of contemporary third-party interventions; and chapter five looks at the experiences of Alma Johansson, a Swedish missionary of the early twentieth century, drawing lessons from her work with regard to contemporary external mediators.

Kersti Larsdotter demonstrates that new military peace operations are sometimes undertaken without the consent of national warring factions and achieve their goals by using a combination of military power and close interaction with local people. She argues convincingly that conventional theories and research assumptions fail to cope with these new trends. Anna Leander provides the grounding for an in-depth discussion on the international regulation of private security companies by conducting a systematic analysis of the complex characteristics of the security companies' roles and the existing international legal regulations, which do not reflect this complexity. Although some chapters do not discuss new phenomena, they uncover new aspects by employing different perspectives or analytical methods. For instance, Michael Schulz effectively counters the idea that the

Governance, civil society and cultural politics

EU's role in third-party conflict mediation has been insignificant by using a multi-level approach that illuminates state-level diplomatic efforts as well as the engagement of civil society. Birger Heldt writes about the link between the effectiveness of third-party intervention and the sequence of the applied intervening methods. The chapter written by Kristine Höglund and Isak Svensson is also interesting in that they focus on the motivation of external mediation, which has so far attracted little academic attention.

The book might disappoint readers expecting a systematically designed research compilation. Although the editors intend to explore the 'changing roles and practices' of external actors to 'manage conflict dynamics and strengthen peace processes' (p. 170) in contemporary conflicts, the topics and arguments of some chapters do not focus closely on this theme. For instance, although the arguments in each chapter are undeniably interesting, it is questionable whether the story of Alma Johansson and Norway's mediation in Sri Lanka demonstrate external actors' 'changing' or 'new' roles in our era. In addition, although the regulation of private security companies in conflict zones is one of the most pressing issues in the contemporary international security arena, the first two chapters do not present its implications for peace processes. Furthermore, the theoretical overviews in the introduction are not well reflected in the following chapters. In this sense, the book does not appear like an edited compilation of chapters that pursue the same goal, nor does it seem to target a specific reader group; its topics are too specific for it to be used as a student textbook but too broad to appeal to scholars whose research focuses on this area. Yet despite these reservations, the book compiled by Karin Aggestam and Annika Björkdahl is attractive and encourages further discussion.

Sung Yong Lee, University of St Andrews, UK

Governance, civil society and cultural politics

Is democracy exportable? Edited by Zoltan Barany and Robert G. Moser. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2009. 303pp. Pb.: £17.99. ISBN 978 0 52174 832 2.

Many in the West believe that government by democratic principles is universally superior to the alternatives, and on account of this are inclined to attempt to export democracy to the rest of the world. Others, while still affirming democracy's value, argue against this project or attempt to restrain its more zealous proponents. *Is democracy exportable?* aims to contribute to this debate by asking whether democracy is in fact exportable and, if so, whether it is right to attempt to export it. Unfortunately, most of its chapters fail to answer these questions in a compelling fashion and contribute little to the existing debate.

To be sure, the book starts strong. In his introduction, Marc F. Plattner gives a brief overview of the history of democracy promotion and poses important questions to the contributors that follow: what precisely does it mean to 'export democracy', and how does that differ from democracy promotion? He also correctly notes the tension in the idea of democracy promotion—since democracy by definition derives its legitimacy from the people, is it not undemocratic for outside agents to pressure a given nation to democratize?

But few of the subsequent authors take their cues from Plattner. Many of the essays primarily consist of summaries of previous scholarship, and most are unsophisticated in their methods and unsurprising in their results.

For example, Sheri Berman's essay on 'Re-integrating the study of civil society and the state' amounts to a disproof by counterexample of the claim that the existence of a mature 'civil society'—understood as the network of 'all voluntary associations that exist below

Book reviews

the level of the state, but above the family’—always and necessarily promotes democracy. To the contrary, she says, in fascist Italy and Nazi Germany strong civil society promoted autocracy. Fair enough, but why should we have thought that civil society would promote democracy in the first place? Similarly underwhelming are Daniel Chirot’s essay, ‘Does democracy work in deeply divided societies?’, which concludes that ‘[p]remature democracy in divided societies is likely to cause more harm than good’, and Robert G. Moser’s essay, ‘Electoral engineering in new democracies’, whose conclusions, as the author says, do not lend themselves to ‘a coherent set of policy recommendations’.

There are a few strong pieces in this volume. One is John M. Carey’s, titled ‘Does it matter how a constitution is created?’, which analyses a relatively rich dataset to conclude that inclusiveness in constitutional creation processes ‘contributes to higher levels of subsequent democracy, greater constraints on government authority, and constitutional stability’. These findings might not seem particularly surprising, but the detailed empirical support Carey gives them is useful. Another solid contribution is the essay by Mitchell A. Seligson, Steven E. Finkel and Aníbal Pérez-Liñán, which aims to answer the book’s title question directly by quantifying the impact of democracy assistance funding on the level of democracy in recipient countries. The authors employ ‘an approach based on hierarchical linear models using maximum likelihood estimates’ to estimate their dependent variable—the level of democracy—on the basis of five categories of independent variables. One of these categories is the country’s ‘rate of democratization’, derived from the democracy scores published by Freedom House, a non-governmental organization that advocates democracy and human rights and whose annual scores are commonly used in political science research. The authors use the ‘rate of democratization’ variable to distinguish the effects of democracy funding from a country’s independent trend towards or away from democracy. They find that increased funding is associated with increased democracy—in particular, ‘10 million dollars of democracy assistance increases the 13-point Freedom House index by about one-quarter of a point’—and, interestingly, that only funding specifically for democratization and no other sort, for instance for economic growth or public health, has an effect on the level of democracy. Their chapter is definitely the book’s strongest.

A few of the essays in *Is democracy exportable?* are solid pieces of social science, and because the book contains such an extensive literature review it might be useful as a reference for specialists. But most of its essays offer little fresh insight, and general readers should skip it.

Mark Holden, *Council on Foreign Relations, USA*

Political economy, economics and development

Fixing global finance: how to curb financial crises in the 21st century. By Martin Wolf. New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press. 2009. 230pp. Index. £20.00. ISBN 978 0 30014 277 8.

This book promises a great deal. First, its author, Martin Wolf, is one of the best-known financial journalists and has been ranked as one of the world’s on hundred leading public policy intellectuals by *Prospect* and *Foreign Policy*. Second, its title, and its subtitle—*How to curb financial crises in the 21st century*—hint at possible solutions for reassembling the pieces of the financial and banking sectors. Yet, perhaps because expectations are set too high, the book suffers from a number of shortcomings and fails to deliver.

First, the financial and economic crisis is still too close for a deep, dispassionate and balanced analysis of causes and effects. At the time of writing this review, three years after

the first shock in the US subprime mortgage market, we are still experiencing shockwaves that have a displacing impact on the world economy. With the Greek crisis and possibly a eurozone crisis looming in the background, we can only say confidently that the banking crisis has now morphed into a sovereign debt crisis. As I argued in another review for this journal (*The future of the dollar*, edited by Eric Helleiner and Jonathan Kirshner, *International Affairs* 86:1, 2010, p. 275), writing at the time of crisis is a hugely demanding task, as great uncertainty and volatility make any firm assessment difficult and any longer-term view almost impossible. One needs a huge dose of self-confidence to embark on any attempt to either fix global finance or to predict the future of the dollar, as books like Wolf's and Helleiner and Kirshner's seem to imply. Or, perhaps more likely, these books suffer simply from being the outcomes of projects that began in different circumstances and were then turned upside down. Martin Wolf's book began as a series of three lectures he delivered at the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at the Johns Hopkins University in the spring of 2006. These lectures, in their turn, built on another lecture given in Melbourne in November 2005. As a result, *Fixing global finance* is set in the pre-crisis past, when the debate in international economics was centred on the globalization of finance and the currency mismatch between developed countries and emerging markets economies. Because of its pre-crisis genesis, the book makes only cursory references to the economic and financial crisis (and always in its epiphanic moment of August 2007), and hence the working of the financial system is seen within the monetary context, as the crises are considered mainly currency crises affecting developing countries. Even more striking is the way 'informal groups' such as the G20 are rushed through in few lines in one of the last chapters. The 'upgrade' of the G20 from a gathering of finance ministers to a forum of heads of state, and the subsequent debate on the reform of international economic governance that this triggered, is one of the positive spillovers from the crisis. Such a development was clearly impossible to predict in 2006, but by late 2008 some seeds of change were already detectable.

The second shortcoming, somehow related to the previous point, is that the book reads like a collection of facts and analyses from reputable, but second-hand, sources. It lacks strong theoretical foundations and does not fully engage with any of the several experts cited. I therefore tend to disagree with Kenneth Rogoff's back-cover endorsement that 'Wolf rigorously critiques the cutting-edge academic debate with depth'. Also, I am not sure how 'cutting-edge' the said debate appears to be now. And this is exactly the third problem with Wolf's approach. The material he presents is too mainstream, self-selective and self-referential. With the whole economic profession currently in turmoil, a fresher approach—away from the 'usual suspects'—would have been more engaging and intriguing. On reporting facts and stats the sense of *déjà vu*—*déjà passé* is even stronger. None of the charts presents figures beyond 2007 and in some cases we have projections and forecasts for 2006—with the exception of chart 6.1 which, however, is from the IMF World Economic Outlook published in April 2007. Furthermore, for chart 6.9, the author's calculations are based on pre-crisis figures. An effort to reshape the book in 2008 in the light of the crisis and to update and refresh facts and numbers would have been not only welcome, but necessary.

Paola Subacchi, International Economics, Chatham House

The future of money: how to get the most from the global economy. Edited by **Oliver Chittenden**. London: Virgin Books. 2010. 390pp. £12.99. ISBN 978 0 75352 203 5.

Trying to read this book reminded me of the film *Groundhog day*, in which the protagonist is forced to live the same day over and over again until he becomes a fully integrated person. I felt that I was reading the same three-page article over and over again, with similar analysis of the recent economic crisis, but, in contrast to the film, by the end I did not become a better person. This volume must have seemed like a good idea at the time: bring together some famous economists (including Martin Feldstein and Edmund Phelps) and key politicians and economic policy-makers (such as F. W. de Klerk and Mike Moore) of recent times, and let them comment in short essays on the past, present and future of the global economy. The end product is as unintegrated and confused as the protagonist at the beginning of the film. There are no common themes, no connections between sections, and almost none of the essays has anything to do with the book's subtitle. There is a need for a stronger introduction, along with synthesizing essays at the beginning and end of the book, as well as at the start of each section. Perhaps past, present and future could have been broken down into smaller, more digestible subsections. This is a difficult read.

Even so, if one is willing to put in some effort, some of the individual essays yield useful economic nuggets. It is helpful that some of the authors contributed to all three sections, so the reader can at least connect their particular essays. A palpable sense of horror at the recent financial crisis is given particular voice, as authors grope for suitable analogies. Andrew Keen calls it a Kafkaesque parable, and compares it to the stock market collapse of 1873. Todd Buchholz writes that trust in economic institutions has 'died', and likens the financial meltdown to the fall of South Vietnam in 1975. Will Hutton states that the crisis had built up for 30 years, a 'Gordian knot of libertarian free-market fundamentalism, unregulated globalization, the collapse of social and political forces committed to fairness, the explosive impact of financial innovations such as "securitisation" and sheer greed' (p. 33). In line with current conventional wisdom, most contributors feel that too much borrowing by and too little regulation of American financial institutions had a large hand in making the crisis. Stephane Garelli suggests that 'everybody has been a sinner', but that the US 'has been immunised for years from the risks and consequences linked to the accumulation of debt' (pp. 27–28). Wolfgang Franz points out the 'massive maturity transformation by quasi-banks [through] so-called special-purpose vehicles' (p. 24). Jacques Attali blames the entire western economic system, and insists that globalization has been chiefly a mechanism by which 'the depleted West could maintain their growth and plunder the rest of the world' (p. 6). Will Hutton and Fred Hu conclude that the enormity of the 2008 calamity has provided an excellent chance for reform, Hu noting that the 'single most important lesson' is the close relationship 'between macroeconomic imbalances, monetary policy and financial instability' (p. 30).

The 'present' section is more or less a rehash of the 'past'. Contributors continue their search for grand moral lessons to be gained from the crisis. John Bruton suggests the need to control the 'explosion of choice' that has created an extremely wasteful lifestyle in the western world (p. 110). Buchholz counters that the world must avoid the temptation to rein in free-wheeling capitalism too much, as 'it is the excitement of competition—sloppy, risky and tense—that brings us happiness' (p. 112). Phelps tries to mediate by promoting a return to robust growth centred on economic 'dynamism with inclusion' (p. 181). Jeremy Rifkin writes that energy shortages and climate change are actually the most critical puzzles that we must solve.

Energy, resources and environment

The 'future' is probably the most interesting section, with the longest, best developed essays, yet its conclusions are quite conventional. Alexander James begins with a simple list of major global economic 'moves' that will take place over the next generation. Garelli wants effective post-crisis management of debt, taxes and inflation. Hutton seeks to restore trust in and ethics for the financial system. David Blanchflower lays out a policy menu for dealing effectively with unemployment, while Buchholz asks for the system to graduate more engineers: 'we are not suffering from peak oil—we are suffering from peak people' (p. 240). Jagdish Bhagwati, in one of the longest essays, gives, unsurprisingly, an impassioned defence of globalization, and insists that policy choices determine whether globalization and liberalization work. Others look for serious underlying problems. Attali calls attention to the neglected issue of population, whereby mass migration and expansion of the middle class in the developing world will make our cities unliveable. Hu believes that China's rise and the financial surpluses it has generated have become one of the most unmanageable aspects of global finance. De Klerk provides a useful shift in focus from Europe and America to Africa.

In the end, the collection reads a bit like an extended version of *Newsweek*: a long succession of op-ed pieces with little actual news, engaging but lacking the more developed analysis called for by the recent recession. This approach may suit some readers, but others will want to seek out some of the better recent book-length studies of the financial crisis.

Joel Campbell, Kansai Gaidai University, Japan

Energy, resources and environment

Global energy governance: the new rules of the game. Edited by **Andreas Goldthau and Jan Martin Witte.** Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press and Global Public Policy Institute. 2010. 356pp. Index. Pb.: £28.99. ISBN 978 0 81570 343 3.

For far too long, the political economy of international energy relations has been overlooked by scholars and analysts, who have instead privileged issues of energy security and climate change. Much of the existing literature is therefore laden with concepts of resource nationalism, geopolitics and scarcity, problematizing energy as a zero-sum issue. *Global energy governance* signals a welcome break from this trend, clearly articulating a set of energy challenges alongside global, cooperative and governance-oriented responses.

The product of a multi-year research project organized by the Global Public Policy Institute, this volume brings together a group of energy experts who offer original and provocative analysis. From the outset, the editors identify rules and institutions under which oil and gas markets operate as the focus of their study, and seek the reforms needed to update the global energy regime for twenty-first-century realities. The conflagration of three cross-cutting themes—the rise of new consumers, state players in energy markets and emerging climate regimes—has ignited a shift away from two decades of relative status quo in global energy relations. This process has also highlighted the often polarized 'patchwork' of international energy agreements and institutions, a system that relies greatly on self-reporting and self-regulation.

It has been said that the energy sector needs reform of institutions that do not exist. In fact, there are many international groupings that focus on energy, including established clubs such as the International Energy Agency, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, International Energy Forum, UN-Energy, and newcomers such as the Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate and the International Renewable

Book reviews

Energy Agency. However, as identified by numerous contributors, no single agency bridges the many stakeholders (producers, consumers, transit countries, national and private energy companies, civil society) or the various energy sectors (oil, gas, coal, nuclear, alternatives) with the teeth needed to develop international policy and force country or company compliance. Global energy governance, then, can be seen as a delicate interplay of interests, issues and actors moderated not by a core institution but by the constant flux of the market. Through a deep examination of this phenomenon, this book presents an intriguing case of economic activity outpacing institutional capacity, one which all students of international political economy should read intently.

The 16 chapters are presented over four sections, each with a short policy paper as epilogue. This format is well selected, as it is designed to appeal to both academics and practitioners, and links the substantive research with current policy debates. Placing the international energy market and its forces of self-regulation at the centre of their analysis, the volume's contributors raise many important questions on the reshaping of norms and institutions in the global energy sphere: how will the energy system adapt to the rise of new mega-consumers, such as China and India? What options exist for financing the transition to alternative energy sources? How can transparency be encouraged in resource-rich weak states? Does the emergence of sovereign wealth funds signal a new economic powerbase? What claims do transit countries have on the oil in their pipelines or coal in their seaports? Who is responsible for protecting critical infrastructure and securing transit routes? Do national oil companies stifle innovation by not reinvesting revenues into the sector? Can energy conflict between producers and consumers be mitigated by mutual self-interest? And so on.

Andreas Goldthau and Jan Martin Witte have assembled this volume at an interesting moment in time when most observers are consumed with the global economic recovery and the future of the global climate compact. The book highlights the lack of general concern for the global energy system. This view is reinforced by the sparse public reflection on and understanding of the 2008 oil price spike and its reverberating effects on the prices of food and consumer goods as well as on the yo-yo effect on investment in the traditional and alternative energy sectors. The energy sector remains prone to high speculation and risk, and as this book reveals there are not sufficient rules or tools to prevent another spike.

While *Global energy governance* is among a budding crop of new books that examine and detail the myriad global energy challenges, it should by no means be seen as a primer. This is an exceptionally well-researched, well-argued and well-structured volume. It presents complicated problems from the perspectives of various stakeholders (from business to government to state-owned enterprises) and provides wider context to significant global debates. The editors have done a commendable job in marshalling the crosscutting themes across the contributions. While the book does offer interesting ideas for improved producer–consumer relations, the analysis rests heavily on consumer country concerns and norm-setting. The interests of producer countries, as well as those of developing nations, deserve more detailed analysis in future work.

Quite effectively, this book calls for a reconceptualization of energy away from the lens of national security towards that of global governance. This is likely to be a formidable if not uncomfortable shift in thinking. Energy remains the lifeblood of all economic activity. One has to question whether states and corporations will abide by the new rules of the game or retreat back to protectionist tendencies when tested by the next economic shocks or energy crisis.

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War and the health of nations. By Zaryab Iqbal. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. 2010. 189pp. £37.50. ISBN 978 0 80475 881 9.

It seems obvious that armed conflict will contribute to the decline of public health systems and people's life expectancy, yet the precise linkages between war and health have been rarely explored from an International Relations perspective. Zaryab Iqbal's book seeks to fill this gap, utilizing the human security thesis to explore how the conduct of war significantly impacts on the health of those caught within the cross-fire, and why this undermines collective global security.

Iqbal provides an impressive body of quantitative evidence to support her argument(s) that war negatively impacts on the health achievements of states; that conflict diverts essential financial resources away from public health expenditure; and that the least democratic countries are more likely to experience significant health decline during a conflict. Iqbal argues that the standard of healthcare available to individuals during conflict is fundamental to the health of the entire international community. The poor health of individuals is created by weak and malfunctioning healthcare systems, when these systems are unable to effectively diagnose, treat and contain disease—there is evitable spill-over into neighbouring countries—making us all ultimately vulnerable. In sum, the poor health of some should be the concern of all. The selection of human security to explore the impact of war on health was chosen because, Iqbal argues, it is the sole security approach that takes into consideration what makes individuals—rather than states—insecure. In studying the impact of war on health, Iqbal seeks to identify how the actions of states and non-state actors engaged in conflict brings about health insecurity among the civilian population.

The book charts the 'effect of violent conflict on the security of people' (p. 29) across nine chapters. The first and last chapter are the introduction and conclusion. Chapters two and three, consecutively, justify the choice of human security and outline how it will inform the theoretical framework for the remainder of the book. Essentially, Iqbal argues that human security provides the best framework for exploring the health of individuals in the context of war. The security needs of populations are at their highest and most vulnerable during conflict. The health security of individuals is fundamental to obtaining personal freedom—a key outcome sought by proponents of the human security approach. The remainder of the book seeks to provide evidence for this claim: health security is most vulnerable during conflict and is best addressed when the political and economic institutions of the state are moving towards peaceful democracy. Chapter four tests the relationship between conflict and health, using the health-adjusted life-expectancy (HALE) model to test the health of populations in all 192 countries from 1999 to 2002 against the incidence of conflict(s) (using PRIO's dataset on armed conflict), democracy (using the POLITY scale) and economic improvement (Penn World Table, World Bank and UN data). The results are impressive. Iqbal assesses the impact of each independent variable on HALE for each country, then does a temporal assessment, comparing the previous year with the current year to establish the short- to long-term effect of conflict on health. There is a wealth of information in this chapter alone.

Chapter five then uses the disaggregated measures of public health (infant mortality, fertility rates)—information that has existed longer than the ten or so years of HALE measures—to assess the long-term impact of conflict on health. Chapter six explores the significance of the preceding chapters' findings, namely that violent conflict dramatically negates any health infrastructure development within the state. This chapter also explores the high costs of conflict to the health and well-being of individuals. Both of these negative

Book reviews

health impacts directly contribute to the high socio-economic cost of war. Chapter seven explores one of the causes for this high cost—the allocation of public health expenditure to the ‘war economy’ and chapter eight explores the human cost—the mass flight of people across borders during the height of conflict—and the health demands this places on neighbouring countries’ health infrastructure.

Iqbal’s contribution is vital for anyone interested in applying the human security agenda to an empirical study. The findings of this book have direct policy implications for those working in the areas of emergency public health, humanitarian assistance, reconstruction aid and conflict resolution.

Sara E. Davies, Griffith University, Australia

Globesity: a planet out of control?. By Francis Delpuech, Bernard Maire, Emmanuel Monnier and Michelle Holdsworth. London: Earthscan. 2009. 180pp. Index. £17.99. ISBN 978 1 84407 667 3.

Obesity is rapidly becoming one of the key public health challenges of our time. *Globesity* is an excellent eye-opener; written in a very accessible style and including many interesting examples and anecdotes, it provides a useful overview of the obesity crisis, its causes and its repercussions. It is to be hoped that many policy-makers and citizens wake up and start developing anti-obesity policies, as mainstream media and politics still seem to be dominated by a *laissez-faire* attitude.

With a wealth of statistics, the authors show that obesity is by no means a regional affliction—its ravages are felt globally, and strongest in regions that only two generations ago were suffering from general undernourishment, such as the Middle East. No country has managed so far to stabilize, let alone to reduce, the percentage of obese in its population. The most alarming sign is the wave of obesity in children. While the trend is clear, data documentation could still be improved, as is shown by some inconsistencies of data shown in the first chapter. Obesity is likely to generate a host of health problems such as cardiac problems and diabetes.

A main culprit of the obesity crisis is what the authors call ‘productivist agriculture’, i.e. an industrialized production process of food and the fast-food distribution industry related to it. For the authors, it is no surprise that the food industry tries to sell low-quality, cheap but high profit-margin food to consumers, since perishable low-calorie food is costly—and thus fast-food lobbies in the United States and France prevent anti-obesity legislation. The average fat content of British chicken has increased considerably with an increased demand for chicken in the last decades, due to more industrialized chicken-rearing methods.

The second culprit is a lack of physical exercise. Given the urbanization process, the need for physical movement decreases, while car-oriented urban structures raise barriers to walking and cycling. An average city dweller would need at least 90 minutes of walking or half an hour of vigorous exercise per day to ensure a stable weight. Moreover, sedentary leisure activities have increased massively.

On the basis of these trends, the authors see obesity not as an individual’s failure to control his or her appetite, but as a systemic social illness, to which especially the less educated and poorer sections of society fall victim. I tend to disagree with the fatalist tone in this analysis. The share of food in our expenses is the lowest in human history; the overwhelming majority of the population would be able to increase food expenditures to improve the quality and balance of food purchases, while saving on non-essential expenditure like travel.

History

What policy options are on the table? There is no simple quick-fix solution, as miracle diets usually have no lasting effect. Attempts to invent anti-obesity medication have not been successful as problematic side-effects abound. Measures could include the promotion of cycling and walking, a ban on television food ads and food taxation according to fat content (some US states already have a special soft drink tax), as well as food-labelling similar to how energy-efficient appliances are labelled today. Examples of a successful policy are rare to date—a Singaporean school children programme and Finnish nutrition education and food-labelling are the only ones that have been able to slow down the increase of obesity. The right policy mix has apparently not yet been found and applied. The authors see a strong link between policies attacking obesity and those mitigating climate change. Given the strong synergies, policy-makers in both fields should start collaboration sooner rather than later.

Axel Michaelowa, University of Zurich, Switzerland

History

Utopia or Auschwitz: Germany's 1968 generation and the Holocaust. By Hans Kundnani. London: Hurst. 2009. 379pp. Pb.: £16.99. ISBN 978 1 84904 024 2.

Recent years have witnessed a run of new books on the so-called '68ers, much of it inspired by endless fortieth-anniversary retrospectives of the student upheavals around the world in 2008. In its train have come new perspectives that have taken aim at many of the myths and misconceptions surrounding this fabled postwar generation. Where much of the focus was once exclusively devoted to the classic epicentres of revolt, namely Berkeley, Berlin, Paris and Prague, new scholarship has widened this story to include lesser-known student movements elsewhere, such as in Amsterdam, Mexico City and Tokyo. By the same token, there has been a notable effort to revisit some of the more conventional stories through the longer-term legacies of '1968' in international politics.

Hans Kundnani's neatly framed and well-written account of the entrance and exit of West Germany's 1968 generation on the political stage of the *Bundesrepublik* is a good case in point. Kundnani, a seasoned London-based journalist, ably recounts the movement's main causes and characters, chronicling with uncommon even-handedness the political dreams and nightmares animating West German radical leftist politics from the mid-1960s to the Schröder-Fischer 'red-green' coalition of the last decade, with special emphasis on how this generation related its activism to the dark patrimony of Nazism and the Holocaust. In so doing, Kundnani builds on the work of Andrei Markovits, Stefan Aust and others in providing revealing background, colour and trenchant analysis, while at the same time making good use of first-hand material (such as interviews with many of the key players) to situate these events in a wider historical context. He often resorts to the common journalistic penchant of telling history through the prism of select biographies, and in this book he puts this to good effect in tracing the political trajectories of certain high-profile figures—Rudi Dutschke, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Ulrike Meinhof, Andreas Baader, Otto Schily, Joschka Fischer and Gerhard Schröder—to discuss the complexities and contradictions of West German radicalism from the tragic death of student Benno Ohnesorg in 1967 onwards. What is new in this account is the way that the story is taken up through Schröder's SPD administration, highlighting that key dimensions of post-reunification leftist politics (anti-Americanism as well as resistance to military intervention in Iraq) were in large measure constitutive of this 1960s legacy.

Book reviews

Perhaps more controversial is Kundnani's claim that there was a strange undercurrent of nationalism in some of the radical leftist writings during the period, beginning with Dutschke and culminating in Gerhard Schröder's 'German way' anti-Americanism, a policy that brazenly inverted half a century of West German *Westbindung*. Kundnani is also keen to uncover an unsavoury strain of anti-Semitism in some radical leftist writings and actions from the era (well beyond the Entebbe hijacking disaster in 1976) in an effort to show how Nazism and the Holocaust ironically shaped the thoughts and actions of this postwar generation in ways not well understood at the time. In this sense, Kundnani argues that this generation inadvertently remained trapped by the legacy of the Second World War, advancing a politics that was often a 'strange mixture of guilt and moral superiority' (p. 10) born of being the 'children of murderers'. Certainly the radical student claims that the West German state (and by association, Israel) was both stridently fascist and a sorry victim of American imperial power are best understood from this vantage point. Such post-Nazi 'psychodrama' among West German radicals is not so surprising in retrospect, but it does show that their purported internationalism was frequently burdened with a distinctive 'special path' thinking all of its own. These points may have been made by others before, but Kundnani's account persuasively reveals that 'the 1968 generation had a more ambivalent relationship with the Nazi past than was often assumed' (p. xi).

The main problem, though, is that he draws a too easy line from the radicals of 1968 to the terrorism of the 1970s. Surely there were links between the two, but there were many other offshoots of 1968 that go all but unmentioned in this book—such as feminism—which were reformist without being violent or self-destructive. As a result, the heavily mediatized Baader–Meinhof saga is given too much airplay in this account at the expense of other new social movements (gay rights, for example) arising from 1968. The non-Fischerite Green Party is no less significant in this regard, and the book aptly ends with the Greens' sharp rejection of Fischer's leadership and political direction at their 2007 conference in Göttingen, effectively confirming that 1968 cannot be simply reduced to the fantasies and failures of its one-time student leaders. What a post-1968 generation of leftists in Germany will bring remains to be seen, but no doubt it will carry a different political attitude towards the Nazi past than that of its parents.

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Europe

1989: the struggle to create post-Cold War Europe. By **Mary Elise Sarotte**. Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press. 2009. 321pp. £20.95. ISBN 978 0 69114 306 4.

Mitterrand, the end of the Cold War and German unification. By **Frédéric Bozo**. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books. 2009. 417pp. £65.00. ISBN 978 1 84545 427 2.

These two works form very significant additions to the already vast literature on the dramatic transformation that Europe underwent 20 years ago. Both make unprecedented use of official archives and other sources to give meticulously documented accounts of what followed the collapse of the Soviet bloc at the end of the 1980s. Both focus mainly on the central issue of Germany's unification, on the attitudes and policies of all concerned with it, and more broadly on its impact on Europe in general. Finally, both conclude with interesting reflections on how Europe has fared since the Cold War ended, and how the process of its ending might have been better handled.

1014

International Affairs 86: 4, 2010

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Mary Elise Sarotte very effectively combines a detailed historical narrative with a conceptual framework which clarifies the significance of what happened, and of what failed to happen. She portrays Europe in 1989–90 as a building site, in which four rival architectural designs competed for the job of reconstruction, once East Germany's collapse had unleashed the 'struggle' of the book's title, a struggle for the future of Germany and of Europe. Three of these designs were unsuccessful, and turned out to be what the author calls the 'counterfactuals' of the story. They were, firstly, Gorbachev's 'restoration model' of 1989, entailing a simple reimposition on Germany of the four-power control model of 1945; secondly, the 'revivalist model' of a German confederation, embodied in Kohl's ten-point plan of late November 1989 and envisaging 'confederative structures' linking the two German states, each of them retaining its own political and social order; and thirdly Gorbachev's 'heroic model' of early 1990, embedding the two Germanys in a 'common European home' stretching from the Atlantic to the Urals. The book's narrative makes it clear why none of these contrasting models, despite their appeal to some of the protagonists, could survive the pressure of events, and why the winning design was one that differed from all of them. This was the one, defined by her as the West's 'prefab model', in which well-established western structures—the European Community, NATO and the Federal Republic itself—were simply extended to absorb the former East German state.

Sarotte's account of how this 'prefab model' defeated its competitors provides a key not only to the shape of the arduous Two plus Four negotiations of 1990 but also to the reasons for what followed. One of her many interesting themes is the question of how, in February 1990, the US Secretary of State James Baker informally offered Gorbachev an undertaking that even though the unified Germany was to belong to NATO, the alliance's jurisdiction 'would not shift one inch eastward'. However, the haste with which Poland and other ex-Warsaw Pact states were drawn into NATO (a further application of the West's 'prefab model') did much to compromise the chances of incorporating a chastened and susceptible Russia into a genuinely harmonious new world order—one of many telling arguments in Sarotte's lucid and thoughtful book.

The immensely detailed study by the eminent French historian Frédéric Bozo places France's policy in 1989–91 in the context of longstanding French national objectives. François Mitterrand is shown to be the heir to de Gaulle's wish for 'a really European Europe', freed from the perceived domination of the two superpowers and—in a French concept repeated ever since 1945—'exiting from Yalta'. This superbly documented account traces the efforts of French policy to use 1989's transformation of Europe, particularly Eastern Europe, for these ends. Mitterrand went to Kiev to discuss the situation with Gorbachev, and even made a visit to the GDR (he assumed, as did others, that Germany's early unification was unattainable), but he was soon working actively with Kohl to achieve a united Germany. This was closely linked with their joint efforts to strengthen the European Community, which indeed became the European Union at Maastricht at the end of 1991.

For reasons Bozo explains very clearly, Mitterrand's projects ended in disappointment. The EU did indeed develop in the direction of an economic and monetary union, complete with a common currency, but its tentative steps in foreign and security policy took it nowhere near France's aspiration for total autonomy from Washington. Again, Mitterrand's grand design for a European 'confederation', intended to unite Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals (ideally, including Russia but excluding the United States), proved unable to compete, even for East European support, with the 'prefab' models of the EU, the 'Helsinki' Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, or a revived NATO led by a US that refused to fulfil Mitterrand's expectation that it would now disengage

Book reviews

from Europe. Bozo's outstanding study thus sheds powerful light on a national policy that ultimately failed (though not for want of trying), and of which some elements, as he shows, may have a role in the future.

Regrettably, the translation, which in places reads like the work of a non-native user of English, falls far below the standard this book deserves. The reader keeps stumbling over such gallicisms as 'the Soviet Number One' (Gorbachev), 'the Old Continent' (Europe) or 'European deputies' (members of the European Parliament); then the French *pacifisme* and 'pacifism' do not mean the same thing, nor do *effectivement* and 'effectively'; and words like 'recomposition' and 'constitutive assembly' are not standard English. However, this defect does not prevent Bozo's book, like Sarotte's, from making an indispensable contribution to our understanding of this engrossing subject.

Roger Morgan

Contested statehood: Kosovo's struggle for independence. By Marc Weller. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2009. 321pp. Index. £40.00. ISBN 978 0 19956 616 7.

Kosovo: the path to contested statehood in the Balkans. By James Ker-Lindsey. London: I. B. Tauris. 2009. 268pp. Index. £54.50. ISBN 978 1 84885 012 5.

The road to independence for Kosovo: a chronicle of the Ahtisaari Plan. By Henry H. Perritt, Jr. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2010. 317pp. Index. £50.00. ISBN 978 0 52111 624 4.

In 1990, Charles Krauthammer characterized the immediate post-Cold War world as unipolar, coining the phrase 'the unipolar moment' (*Foreign Affairs* 1, 1990–1991, pp. 23–33). In an analogy, one might characterize 17 February 2008, the day when the elected parliament of Kosovo unilaterally declared independence, as 'the secessionist moment'. After years of fruitless efforts to achieve a negotiated solution between Pristina and Belgrade over the status of Kosovo, the parliament's unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) was swiftly followed by the new state's partial international recognition, standing at 66 states today. At the same time, a request from the UN General Assembly is pending before the International Court of Justice on an advisory opinion on whether 'the unilateral declaration of independence by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government of Kosovo [is] in accordance with international law' (www.icj-cij.org/docket/files/141/14797.pdf, accessed 4 May 2010). Serbia remains vehemently opposed to Kosovo's independence and sees itself supported in this position not only by Russia but also by five EU member states (Cyprus, Greece, Romania, Slovakia and Spain) which have so far refused to recognize Kosovo's independence. Non-recognition is one of the few (if not the only) issue on which Georgia and Russia agree, divided as they are, of course, over the status of South Ossetia and Abkhazia whose independence is recognized by Russia. Clearly, then, Kosovo remains a highly controversial, deeply divisive issue in the practice and academic understanding of contemporary international law and International Relations. Hence, it is not surprising that the run-up to and aftermath of Kosovo's UDI has become a matter of intense scholarly analysis. Three contributions to this ongoing debate are the focus of this review.

All three volumes go to great lengths to explain the reasons why Kosovo declared independence and why it has been supported in this by major international actors. Three types of argument are put forward. First, all three volumes are fairly unanimous in their assessment that the Albanian majority in Kosovo had been subject to prolonged violation of their human rights at the hands of Serbs. The level and length of historical detail differs

across the three books: James Ker-Lindsey discusses the historical background of the case in fewer than 20 pages, Henry Perritt devotes two rather short chapters to developments mostly in the 1990s, while Marc Weller offers quite a detailed and focused analysis not just of the human rights violations as such but also of how they were dealt with and how they shaped the evolving western response to the crisis. Second, all three authors agree that the basic problem faced by the international community in Kosovo was the intransigence of both sides in their refusal to discuss anything but their maximum demands; or in other words, to refuse negotiating in a meaningful way. For Albanians in Kosovo, no outcome other than independence was conceivable; for Serbs, anything but independence was possible. Third and closely related, all three books see problems in the international context of the negotiation process, including internal EU divisions, US statements prejudging an independence outcome, and Russia's resistance to accepting a UN Security Council resolution without an agreement from Belgrade. While all three volumes offer rich empirical detail gained from interviews with diplomats involved in the process, the focus of their analysis differs. Weller's volume benefits very much from its author's close and long-term involvement on the Kosovo Albanian side in several sets of negotiations on Kosovo. Ker-Lindsey's analysis is very perceptive when it comes to the way in which the negotiations process was structured and constrained by considerations in Moscow, Washington and Brussels (and EU member states' capitals). Perritt's account gains from good insights into the US position, but suffers somewhat from many lengthy quotes and not always obviously relevant anecdotes. This is not to say that Perritt does not offer a compelling analysis as to why Kosovo achieved its independence, but where his book offers a good and easy read, Ker-Lindsey and Weller offer systematic scholarly analysis.

In their examination of Kosovo, Weller, Ker-Lindsey and Perritt, thus, focus on both the normative and the pragmatic case for independence, even though they come to somewhat different conclusions as to the strength of either. Weller and Perritt make good arguments for the unsustainability of Serbian rule in and over Kosovo, and here Perritt's accounts of encounters with ordinary Kosovars are, at a different level, as effective in substantiating this argument as is Weller's detailed analysis of the humanitarian crisis developing throughout the 1990s. Ker-Lindsey's focus is more on the pragmatic arguments and how the reality of the situation in and around Kosovo, and crucially its international perception, shaped the way in which negotiations were handled. Ker-Lindsey attributes blame in a balanced way—to the 'West', for not pushing earlier and harder for a settlement short of independence and for making it abundantly clear, as the US did on several occasions, that Kosovo's UDI would be recognized, thus removing any incentive for the Kosovars to negotiate about anything but independence, and to Serbia for not following through in greater detail and with more commitment on its own status proposals. Perritt singles Russia out for the lion's share of the blame for holding a position that made compromise impossible. Weller goes a step further in this, pointing out that Russia's threat of a veto in the Security Council was in fact counter-productive. Unable to stop the move to independence, it prevented the legal constraints placed on Kosovo in the exercise of its sovereignty from being more firmly enshrined in international law. While this clearly would not have prevented Kosovo from gaining independence, it would have significantly strengthened the protection of minority communities in Kosovo, especially Serbs; would have prevented even more clearly further international boundary changes in this part of the Balkans; and would have guaranteed Serbian access to sites of cultural and religious importance in international law.

Kosovo embodies a key moment in the international practice of dealing with self-determination conflicts. For the first time, outside the colonial context, an entity's UDI

has been widely, albeit not universally, recognized. In this sense, Kosovo indeed marks a secessionist moment and might well pave the way towards a broader practice of what Weller terms 'remedial right to secession' (p. 275), and what Perritt describes as 'an international legal regime that balances sovereignty against the responsibility to protect' (p. 269). However, the precedent of remedial secession potentially created by Kosovo has so far experienced abuse rather than proper application, not least in Russia's recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in August 2008. Beyond the quite sensible *sui generis* arguments about Kosovo and its potential to set a precedent, reflected in all the three volumes discussed here, it is also telling that apart from the two cases in Georgia no further cases of similarly contested recognition processes have since occurred, and the number of recognitions achieved by Abkhazia and South Ossetia pale in comparison to Kosovo's. Yet perhaps what matters more is perception: almost two-thirds of UN members have so far not recognized Kosovo, and some, like Argentina, India and Indonesia, as well as the previously named five EU member states, have not done so specifically because they fear it would undermine their own position *vis-à-vis* contested territories. In this sense, one consequence of Kosovo's UDI is that it has sharpened the focus and intensified the debate on self-determination conflicts and the issue of how they are managed by the international community.

This is related to the second major consequence of Kosovo's UDI which the three volumes examine: the essential failure of the international community, in the form of the UN, to deal effectively with the Kosovo crisis. While the difficulties of an international management of self-determination conflicts are evident if one looks back over the past 20 years (and arguably even longer), Kosovo marks a new low point—or high point depending on one's perspective. As Ker-Lindsey makes clear, independence for Kosovo was the only likely outcome of a process in which major international players, especially the United States, were not fully committed to finding any solution short of independence. The lack of a united international community impressing on all sides the need to find a solution within existing international boundaries made independence the default 'solution', promising, in the eyes of the 'west', a greater degree of stability than any alternative. On the other hand, the transition into a new legal era in which remedial secession becomes a viable option in the face of opposition from the metropolitan state might make the handling of the Kosovo crisis and its aftermath seem more of a high point. After all, major players in the international community could be argued to have done the morally right thing: valuing the principle of self-determination more highly than that of the territorial integrity of states. Weller and Perritt, in their own distinct ways, put this case forward quite well. Where all three authors agree with each other, Ker-Lindsey and Perritt perhaps most emphatically, is on the failure of the international community to remain united. Most damaging of all to international unity was the EU's ambivalence, or rather its inability, to forge a clear consensus decisively early on. This gave incentives to Russia to obstruct the process of finding a compromise formula for a Security Council resolution, and encouraged Serbia to pay tribute to its own historical myths rather than confronting the reality of Milosevic's legacy of destroying Yugoslavia, of which Kosovo's UDI was hopefully the last chapter.

A third consequence of Kosovo's UDI for the international management of self-determination conflicts is discussed at some length in all three volumes, but systematically analysed only by Weller—the continued relevance of accommodating minority communities qua 'traditional' mechanisms of conflict resolution, such as territorial self-governance, power sharing and minority rights. Ker-Lindsey rightly emphasizes Martti Ahtisaari's focus on decentralization and community rights once the former Finnish President had determined that independence for Kosovo was the only viable outcome, and Perritt spends a consider-

able amount of time on discussing this element of the negotiations in the framework of the Ahtisaari process. Weller goes a step further and demonstrates how the constitution of Kosovo, incorporating the so-called Ahtisaari legislation, is evidence of the continued need to think innovatively about how to deal with self-determination claims with means short of secession. This is an important point. While Weller and Perritt, in different ways, endorse a remedial right to secession, they do so with strong conditions and qualifications attached, making it a remedy of (very) last resort in exceptional circumstances. Ker-Lindsey, on the other hand, is less enthusiastic about such a prospect, but also more realistic in making the point that no matter how often a partition of Kosovo has been publicly rejected, it remains on the cards (and has arguably *de facto* been in operation for some time).

Managing self-determination conflicts will remain a significant challenge for the international community in the years to come. Evidence clearly suggests that territorially concentrated communities in divided societies, such as the Albanians in Kosovo, are more likely to demand self-determination and to be engaged in violent conflict in its pursuit. To deal successfully with the challenges that such self-determination conflicts pose requires leadership, diplomacy and institutional design in equal measure. As the three volumes by Weller, Ker-Lindsey and Perritt highlight, the outcome in the case of Kosovo—the entity's UDI followed by partial international recognition—can be explained with reference to these three dynamics. The failure of local leaders to move away from their maximalist positions, partly encouraged by failures in international leadership by supporters of both sides respectively, made a negotiated settlement of the Kosovo conflict impossible. Once this became apparent, no matter how self-fulfilling a prophecy it might have been, partial recognition, and thus a modicum of stability within and beyond Kosovo, was achieved because of eventually decisive western leadership on the matter. While on the one hand, it can be argued that diplomacy failed in bringing about a negotiated settlement, the diplomatic process was important in the sense that it created the framework for a solution that ensured a continued international presence in Kosovo and thus the ability to make the exercise of sovereignty conditional on adherence to principles and constraints enshrined in the Ahtisaari proposals (especially in relation to community rights and self-governance and future boundary changes). This leads to the question of institutional design—no design could be found to bridge the gap between Kosovo Albanian demands for independence and Serbian insistence on its territorial integrity as a recognized member of the international community. On the other hand, institutional design clearly mattered throughout the status negotiations and the constitution of Kosovo is quite remarkable as an attempt at managing an ethnically divided post-conflict society. It has yet to prove its practical worth, and will only be able to do so if international diplomacy continues and local leaders—in Belgrade, Mitrovica and Pristina alike—live up to their responsibilities. Once they do, Kosovo's UDI may have marked a secessionist moment, but not a descent into an era of renewed violent self-determination conflicts in the Balkans.

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Russia and Eurasia

Dagestan: Russian hegemony and Islamic resistance in the North Caucasus. By **Robert Bruce Ware and Enver Kisriev.** Armonk, NY, and London: M. E. Sharpe. 2010. 251pp. Index. Pb.: £29.50. ISBN 978 0 76562 029 3.

There are few western academics who have consistently focused their research on the North Caucasus, let alone Dagestan, which is one of the most beautiful but also one of the most ethnically and politically complex of the republics of the North Caucasus. Robert Bruce Ware is an exception. His longstanding research partnership with the leading Dagestani sociologist, Enver Kisriev, has provided regular scholarly analyses of the evolving situation in Dagestan in the post-Soviet period. This book represents the culmination of their extensive research and is by far the most detailed and comprehensive work on the social, religious and political developments in modern Dagestan. It stands as a testament to their pioneering research without which there would be a considerable scholarly gap in our knowledge of this small but strategically important republic in the Russian Federation.

The story that they tell is one of an incipient democratic potential in the early 1990s which was then gradually but inexorably extinguished over the next decade. In the chaotic but relatively free period of the 1990s, the authors identify Dagestani society as reconnecting with its traditional social norms and practices, as institutionalized in the so-called 'Djamaat' or local community structure, which they view as having provided historically a source of toleration among different ethnic and kinship groups. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, these 'Djamaat' structures were then incorporated into a newly defined post-Soviet political system, whose basis was the sharing of collective power between elites and ethnic groups. This is suggestive of the 'consociational democracy' model originally established by Arend Lijphart. Ware and Kisriev do not push the analogy, are aware of the limitations and fragility of this political experiment in Dagestan, but nevertheless present the emergent structures as a real exercise in democracy adapted to the type of complex multi-ethnic society which characterizes Dagestan. They also see the confirmation of this stabilizing role of the incipient democracy in that, unlike its neighbour Chechnya, Dagestan remained stable during the 1990s and did not challenge Russian rule.

For Ware and Kisriev, the central purpose of this consociational form of democracy was to avoid the concentration or centralization of power. In three successive referendums, the people of Dagestan opposed the creation of a presidency precisely so as to avoid this outcome. For the authors, the subsequent overturning of the brief democratic flowering in Dagestan was primarily due to the recentralization agenda pursued in the 2000s by President Putin and the imposition from the centre of a 'vertical of power', which includes a significant loss of regional autonomy, an appointed president and the abrogation of much of the complex inter-ethnic elite sharing of power. It is the consequent political disappointment among the Dagestani people, which resulted in a 'turn towards Mecca' (p. 87), the growth of Islamist extremism and the endemic instability and insurgency which have affected Dagestan since the early 2000s.

There are many strengths to this book and much to agree with in the central overarching argument. The authors provide an expert and excellent analysis of the ethnic and clan divisions within Dagestan and the multiple complex ways in which these have been managed over time. There is also a sensitive and nuanced account of the rise of radical Islamism within Dagestan which highlights domestic internal causes, such as the acute frustration of the Caucasian youth with the corruption of the political system; the belligerent intolerance of the Sufi-dominated religious establishment; and the violence and lawlessness of the local

security services. Consequently, the authors rightly place the focus on domestic rather than foreign sources of Islamist extremism, which is in contrast to much of the official Russian and Dagestani rhetoric. And, overall, they argue convincingly that the recentralization of power—the imposition of a ‘one-size-fits-all’ model of hierarchical power flowing from the Kremlin—has harmed the political progress within Dagestan and contributed to the sense of alienation and dissatisfaction within the Republic.

The problem is assessing the weight to be accorded to this factor as against others which might also help to explain the rising violence in Dagestan. A gap in the book is in providing the broader regional and international dimension. There is, for instance, little mention of the stabilization of the situation in Chechnya in the mid-2000s, which led to the diffusion of the insurgency into neighbouring countries, not just Dagestan but also Ingushetia and Kabardino-Balkaria. Little attention is also given to the shift of the Islamist movement in 2007 from one focused primarily on the independence of Chechnya to a pan-Caucasian struggle for the creation of a Caucasian emirate. In general, broader regional and international but also ideological dimensions to the shifts in the Islamist insurgency within the North Caucasus needed to be included.

On the political side, there are also questions about how ‘democratic’ the complex inter-ethnic bargains made in the 1990s in Dagestan actually were, and whether this might be stretching the term, even if used as a form of neo-traditionalist consociational democracy. One could legitimately argue that there might be a greater resonance of the situation in Dagestan with the research done on ‘neo-patrimonialism’ in other complex multi-ethnic and multi-confessional societies in other developing regions, such as Africa and the Middle East, and which could potentially be a more fruitful source of comparison than the rather western-centric literature on consociational democracy.

Overall, though, this does not diminish from an important and analytically acute book, which fills a much needed gap on Dagestan and the North Caucasus, and is of interest not just to specialists of the region but also to those seeking to find durable political solutions to highly complex divided societies.

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Terror in Chechnya: Russia and the tragedy of civilians in war. By Emma Gilligan. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 2010. 288pp. £24.95. ISBN 978 0 69113 079 8.

Terror in Chechnya offers an accessible and wide-ranging overview of human rights abuses during the second Russo-Chechen war. The author, Emma Gilligan, focuses on the period between 1999 and 2005. The book itself is split into two sections, ‘The crimes’ and ‘The response’, and is further subdivided into eight chapters, which deal with the Russian bombing campaign; what are known as federal cleansing or sweep operations; Chechen retaliatory attacks; reactions in civil society; attempts by the international community to tackle the human rights catastrophe; and cases brought before the European Court of Human Rights. At the outset the author notes that the claims made will be general, seeking to ‘give some context to the crimes committed in Chechnya’ (p. 12). In this way, Gilligan notes the limitations of the book, which presents a general outline of an argument, rather than a work which opens up new perspectives or moves beyond received wisdom. In the broadest sense then, the book is a welcome addition to the field of studies on international law and human rights, although if readers have knowledge of the federal operations and the insurgency, and are expecting to learn about the most recent conflict in Chechnya or terrorism in the North Caucasus, they will be disappointed.

Book reviews

Evidently, the author has touched on an important, if largely neglected, conflict. She points the reader in the direction of some interesting issues—particularly when turning to underlying themes including racism, or when she examines the role of civil society (chapter six); the failure of the international community to react to the human rights tragedy (chapter seven); and the attempt to seek justice through the European Court of Human Rights (chapter eight). Herein lies one of the book's strengths, linking discourses about human rights with the relationship between normative concerns and the expediency of harsh military measures. Clearly this helps to locate the analysis in an evolving body of work on crimes against humanity.

Of course, a significant literature already exists on the human rights abuses in Chechnya. Since the beginning of the second conflict, the Russian human rights organization Memorial, as well as the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights and Human Rights Watch, have drawn attention to the scale and impunity surrounding federal counter-insurgency efforts in Chechnya. Similarly, other aid organizations in the North Caucasus, as well as numerous reports by an ever-dwindling cadre of fearless journalists, have shed light not only on the murky practices of the federal forces in Chechnya and Ingushetia. The book makes a modest contribution to this literature, drawing on much of it as secondary-source material.

However, a number of notable problems significantly undermine some aspects of the book. Unfortunately, the lack of historical detail leads to a set of general claims, rather than insightful and incisive or original analysis, especially when examining Chechen retaliatory attacks. Indeed, the work on Chechen attacks is certainly the most descriptive and limited of all of the chapters. Here the author fails to unravel the background milieu or strategic and tactical aspects of operations by the radical wing of the movement, and tentatively intimates that the use of radical tactics (such as the 2002 Nord-Ost siege or suicide attacks) stemmed, at least in part, from the influence of networks such as Al-Qaeda, rather than recognizing that the insurgency linked to indigenous fighters and volunteers such as Ibn Khattab was in competition with Bin Laden's terror network. These problems are compounded further by the decision not to address different aspects of the federal campaign and insurgency, instead focusing on the conflict primarily through the lens of Russian Studies: a common problem that afflicts much of the political analysis of the insurgency and the region. Similarly, while the author draws on some excellent sources (Memorial; works by the likes of John Dunlop), and includes a handful of interviews with luminaries who have been involved in human rights in the region, she fails to distinguish between opportunistic commentaries and detailed academic studies, or to tackle insightful and significant works which have shed light on the complex conflict dynamics. This is not to say that the book is not valuable or that its aims are not venerable; but rather that the overall outcome is a little disappointing. In short, it is a pity that the author does not develop a more reflective and detailed analysis, or offer a more persuasive set of arguments so as to enrich analysis of the tragedy that has befallen Russia and Chechnya; but the book by Gilligan is a starting point nonetheless.

Cerwyn Moore, University of Birmingham, UK

A little war that shook the world: Georgia, Russia, and the future of the West. By **Ronald Asmus.** Basingstoke: Palgrave. 2009. 272pp. £20.00. ISBN 978 0 23061 773 5.

With a dust-cover carrying testimonials from Zbigniew Brzezinski, Madeleine Albright, John McCain, Vaclav Havel and Carl Bildt, it is not difficult to anticipate the villain of the piece in this short study of the five-day 2008 Russia–Georgia war, truly *A little war that shook the world*. Though the differences between Moscow and Tbilisi over the breakaway

IO22

International Affairs 86: 4, 2010

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regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia were real ones, especially after Mikheil Saakashvili's attempt to secure South Ossetia by force in August 2004, relatively little space is devoted to an examination of the tangled history of these separatist enclaves. For Ronald Asmus, the August 2008 Russia–Georgia war was rather the consequence of Russia's geopolitical determination to block Saakashvili's efforts to align Georgia firmly with the West. The five-day conflict was a war over NATO enlargement, in which Georgia was effectively made an example by Moscow 'pour encourager les autres' within Russia's 'regions of privileged interests'.

As Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs in the second term of the Clinton presidency, and subsequently in his capacity as an official in the German Marshall Fund of the United States, Asmus was deeply involved in the design and implementation of NATO's post-Cold War eastward march, including the plan to extend NATO membership to Ukraine and Georgia. In this early study of the war he provides an exceptionally well-informed and very readable blow-by-blow insider account of the key stages of policy-making within the Washington belt-way.

Although the scale of the war was small, the stakes were high. Pavel Felgenhauer, one of Russia's best-informed military analysts, has claimed that Russian war plans envisaged that the conflict with Georgia might escalate to involve a direct confrontation with the US and NATO. Lacking first-hand access to policy-makers in Moscow, Asmus is unable to throw light on the accuracy of such a claim. On the American side he is more forthcoming. Given America's struggle to meet its commitments in Iraq and Afghanistan, it might be assumed that any consideration of a US–Russian military confrontation was off the agenda in Washington. However, Asmus indicates that a number of senior officials in the staffs of National Security Advisor, Stephen Hadley, and, predictably, Vice-President Cheney, did briefly consider a range of limited military options to stem the Russian advance, including the bombing and sealing of the Roki Tunnel and surgical air strikes to slow the Russian advance. Fortunately, all such military responses were rejected.

In the absence of any concerted western action, grand-standing calls for a 'coalition against Russia's aggression' by a procession of western leaders who flew into Tbilisi and Kiev could be safely ignored by Medvedev and Putin. By the end of the war Georgia had lost 20 per cent of its territory and the prospect of NATO membership for Georgia and Ukraine was, for the moment, dead in the water. As one Realist observer quipped, 'indignation is not policy'. Russia's limited, but immensely risky, operation, inflicted an unambiguous humiliation on the outgoing Bush administration which had invested so heavily in the Saakashvili project. A lame-duck President Bush was therefore happy to delegate the negotiation of the ceasefire to Nicolas Sarkozy, then President of the European Council, and a politician with an ego to rival that of Saakashvili. Asmus provides a vivid portrayal of the rivalries and absurdities of Sarkozy's chaotic brokering of the messy ceasefire in Moscow and Tbilisi.

After the weakness and humiliations of the Yeltsin years, Russia's short victorious war demonstrated that within Eurasia it was still a force to be reckoned with. A more ambiguous legacy of the war for Moscow has been the future of the 'independent' protectorates of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, which remain the subject of continuing international talks at Geneva.

Asmus argues that 'the Russo-Georgian war may have been small, but it raised some big questions about the future of European security' (p. 7). In particular, notwithstanding his repeated claims that the West reached out to lock Russia into a partnership, he concedes that 'Moscow was rebelling against a European security architecture that in Western eyes

Book reviews

[was] successful in overcoming the geopolitical division of Europe, but which from the Kremlin's perspective was facilitating a geopolitical shift against it' (p. 218). However, NATO's lukewarm response to Medvedev's European Security Treaty suggests that for some time to come Russia will remain the 'outsider'. The search will therefore continue for the holy grail of a truly cooperative pan-European security system which will embrace Russia. Since the Obama administration shows no sign of abandoning America's propensity to lecture Moscow on the impermissibility of its neo-imperialist claims within its 'regions of privileged interests', differences over the former Soviet lands and counter-accusations by Moscow of 'double-standards' look likely to set severe limits to a reset in US–Russian relations.

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Middle East and North Africa

Israel and Palestine: reappraisals, revisions, refutations. By Avi Shlaim. London and New York: Verso. 2009. 352pp. £16.99. ISBN 978 1 84467 366 7.

At a time when relations between Israelis and Palestinians have reached an all-time low and an end to violent antagonism seems almost unimaginable, Avi Shlaim's latest book provides a welcome sense of balance in understanding this cruel and protracted conflict. It brings together in one volume essays on the Palestinian–Israeli conflict spanning 25 years, with the aim of presenting 'an alternative view ... a more critical way of looking at the past'. Subtitled 'reappraisals, revisions, refutations', the book encourages readers to take a step back, to reassess the steady unfolding of events since 1948, the procession of individuals who shaped Palestinian–Israeli history and the numerous missed opportunities for reaching a just and mutually acceptable settlement.

In origin, as Shlaim observes, the Palestinian–Israeli conflict is 'a clash between two national movements'. However, both Palestinian and Israeli nationalisms have assumed a variety of forms over the years, and Shlaim is particularly effective in his analysis, often brutal, of some of the characters who strutted briefly on the political stage for good or ill. On the Israeli side, a succession of Likud leaders have sought to realize Ze'ev Jabotinsky's 'version of the Zionist dream' of a Jewish state over the whole of Eretz Yisrael, from Menachem Begin, of whom Shlaim remarks 'no other Israeli prime minister before or since has been so divorced from the political realities of his day'; to Yitzhak Shamir, who shared Begin's 'bunker mentality' but, in some ways, was even more intransigent; to Ariel Sharon, the hallmarks of whose career were 'mendacity, the most savage brutality towards Arab civilians, and a persistent preference for force over diplomacy to solve political problems'; and finally to the current incumbent, Binyamin Netanyahu, 'a pragmatic politician in the American mould who was prepared to dilute his party's ideology for the sake of attaining power'. Labour party leaders fare little better: of Golda Meir, Shlaim writes that she 'personified the most paranoid, aggressive and racist attitudes of the Zionist movement when it came to dealing with the Arabs'.

For Palestinians, too, the national narrative has been far from monolithic. In their struggle to 'tell their own story', they have progressed from the largely secular revolutionary movements of the 1960s and 1970s to the recognition of Israel and commitment to a two-state solution in the 1980s and 1990s. In his analysis of the 1991 Madrid peace process, Shlaim comments that Hanan Ashrawi, as Palestinian spokesperson, 'was spectacularly successful in projecting a new image of Palestinian nationalism as a rational and humane

cause'. The high point, in his view, was the speech, written by Ashrawi and delivered by Haidar Abdel-Shafi, which Shlaim describes as 'undoubtedly the most eloquent as well as the most conciliatory and the most convincing'. PLO leader Yasser Arafat, on the other hand, comes across as a vacillating and malleable leader, responsible for transforming the PLO, in Edward Said's words, 'from a national liberation movement into a kind of small-town government'. A relatively recent manifestation of Palestinian nationalism has been the rise of militant Islamic resistance in the shape of Hamas, described by Shlaim as 'a movement that glorifies victimhood and martyrdom'.

Between them, these groups and individuals have failed to deliver peace and this failure can be traced back to the start of the conflict. In a fascinating chapter about the causes of the Palestinian exodus in 1948, Shlaim discusses the 'standard Zionist version' of events. He quotes Israeli historian Benny Morris's argument that 'the Palestinian refugee problem was born by war, not by design'; yet others—for example Nur Masalha and Ilan Pappé—have raised the possibility of deliberate 'transfer' or 'ethnic cleansing'; while Shlaim criticizes Masalha for going 'way beyond what his evidence can sustain', he finds Pappé's conclusion that it was 'Israeli rather than Arab inflexibility which stood in the way of a peaceful settlement' more compelling.

A final complicating element has been the role of outsiders. Shlaim's observations about Israel's 'love affair' with the United States are particularly relevant; as he rightly says, 'the US has been the loser in political and moral terms, as well as financially', and it is certainly the case that blind American support has been another factor in both Israel's propensity to miss opportunities for peace and also in America's growing unpopularity in the Arab and Muslim worlds.

This collection of essays is essential reading for anyone wishing to gain a more nuanced insight into a conflict most often portrayed in terms of all or nothing.

Maria Holt, University of Westminster, UK

Debating Arab authoritarianism: dynamics and durability in nondemocratic regimes. Edited by Oliver Schlumberger. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. 2009. 360pp. Index. Pb.: £20.95. ISBN 978 0 80476 333 2.

Rethinking Arab democratization: elections without democracy. By Larbi Sadiki. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2009. 352pp. £50.00. ISBN 978 0 19956 298 5.

These two books will be of considerable interest to students of the Middle East and comparative politics. In presenting a range of different perspectives and interpretations, they join a now steady trickle of titles offering serious engagement with the related questions of why authoritarianism persists and democratization falters among the states of the Arab Middle East.

Oliver Schlumberger's edited volume *Debating Arab authoritarianism* brings together a diverse group of scholars from the United States, Europe and the Arab world. Rather than trying to explain the 'democracy deficit', the contributors seek to uncover those particular features of authoritarian rule in Arab states which provide plausible explanations for its persistence. In exploring the durability of non-democratic rule—and the possibilities of transformation—a single theoretical schema is avoided. Instead, in the editor's words, the book is organized into a set of thematic clusters: state–society relations, regimes, political economy and the international arena, each offering distinctive contributions.

One common theme which recurs in a number of the early chapters is that of the complex interplay between formal and informal institutions in sustaining authoritarian rule. In his

Book reviews

chapter on 'Social pacts and the persistence of authoritarianism in the Middle East', Steven Heydemann argues that the durable and adaptive nature of the national-populist social pact rests on a mix of 'norms, formal institutions and modes of political informality' (p. 35). If this hybrid model has proved surprisingly stable, he sees the possibility of transformation lying in incremental steps towards broadening participation (though with a high probability of reversals as the Egyptian and other cases have demonstrated); or in the gradual marginalization or shrinking of authoritarianism as a mode of everyday governance.

Another chapter by Ellen Lust-Okar, 'The management of opposition', scrutinizes the roles which different institutions play in regulating participation in authoritarian regimes. Focusing on the 'structures of contestation', she considers the opportunities available to opposition groups to participate in the formal political sphere. Using illustrations from the cases of Egypt, Jordan and Morocco, the chapter demonstrates how authoritarian leaders skillfully employ 'a combination of formal institutions that govern participation and informal mechanisms that manipulate the strength of various opposition groups' to preserve their hold on power (p. 57). On a related theme, but looking specifically at the Moroccan case, the chapter by Eva Wegner tackles the question of Islamist opposition. Under the heading 'Islamist inclusion and regime persistence', she demonstrates how, in the short to medium term, authoritarian resilience has endured within a framework of Islamist participation, but only where the institutional framework and rules were previously settled.

The last section of the book, which considers the international dimensions of Middle Eastern authoritarianism, will be of particular interest to *International Affairs* readers. There are chapters on the G8 and other external (mostly US/EU) efforts aimed at political reform and democracy promotion in which the Iraq question naturally figures. The overall conclusions are disheartening. If anything, as Eberhard Kienle argues, attempts to apply 'standard recipes' for democracy promotion have helped to reconfigure authoritarian rule. This conclusion is echoed in the final chapter by Paul Aarts on the 'House of Saud', a prime example of monarchical resilience, which highlights the crucial role that international alliances have played in regime survival (p. 254). For all the talk of democratization, the United States, he argues, has played a crucial role in regime survival and in improving the region's 'YIPPI' (years in power per incumbent) scores (p. 251).

The vexed issue of democracy promotion provides a useful link between the two books under review. The US-sponsored plan, known as the Greater Middle East Initiative, embodying explicit commitments to 'democracy' and 'freedom' (p. 145), forms the subject of one of the chapters in Larbi Sadiki's thought-provoking and richly researched volume *Rethinking Arab democratization* (this is a recent and welcome addition to the Oxford Studies in Democratization series, whose general editor is Laurence Whitehead). Though overlapping in a number of other ways, Sadiki's wide-ranging book offers a different perspective, anchored within the literature on democratic transition. The book's subtitle *elections without democracy* suggests a focus on the electoral process but it is much more ambitious, deftly mapping out patterns of Arab electoralism in two core periods, 1975–97 and 1998–2008, as well as exploring other potential democratizing influences in the region, whether emanating from above or below. With respect to the latter, two interesting chapters deal with the 'bread riots' of the 1980s and their relationship with the rise of electoralism and political reform; and with the role of the Arab media, in particular the Al-Jazeera satellite television channel, as promoting new 'sites of democratic struggle', for example through the pioneering of online opinion polls (p. 265).

Sadiki's book exposes the 'electoral fetishism' that pervades the modern region for what it is: a façade for continuing authoritarianism. He describes the search for 'third wave'

democracies and democratization in the Arab world as ‘an exercise in futility’ (p. 12). However, he leaves open the possibility that states of the region will imagine and finally implement their own routes to democratization, but this will not be one prescribed and demarcated by the West. On this point the two volumes concur. They also agree that the Arab Middle East is a region experiencing enormous changes: amid the language of stalled transition and stubborn authoritarianism, political transformation is possible, if its path remains uncertain.

Louise Fawcett, *University of Oxford, UK*

What’s really wrong with the Middle East. By Brian Whitaker. London: Saqi Books. 2009. 384pp. Pb.: £10.99. ISBN 978 0 86356 624 0.

Beginning with the didacticism of Arab education systems and working through the paternalism of families, the dogmatism of religion and the authoritarianism and corruption of the state, Brian Whitaker’s *What’s really wrong with the Middle East* lays bare almost every aspect of Arab culture, society and politics.

The conspicuously absent question mark in the title is a fair indication of what to expect. This is not an exploratory work, curiously questioning the nuances and contradictions of a vast and complex region; *What’s really wrong with the Middle East* is principled and direct, not hesitating to criticize the Arab world at large for its failings. Taking the view that ‘governments are products of the societies they govern’, Whitaker’s aim is to shift our perspective beyond ‘tyrannical regimes’ to Arab society as a whole. Arab citizens are ‘people who are not only oppressed and denied rights by their rulers but who also ... are participants in a system of oppression and denial of rights’.

The style of education in Arab countries, Whitaker argues, stifles creative and critical thinking and instils submissiveness, rendering populations unable and unwilling to challenge or even question the status quo. Religion and traditional family structures play a similar role, engendering fatalistic, duty-bound mindsets which lay the groundwork for hierarchies, inequalities and social values that undermine freedoms. A fellow writer, Moroccan Abdellah Taia, describes to Whitaker how these systems create a feeling of detachment or disengagement, a sense that ‘society’ is something abstract. ‘We don’t see that society *is us*, and that we can influence or change it’, explains Taia.

Whitaker structures his narrative around anecdotes and stories like those from Taia, collected during his time in the Middle East, first as an interested traveller and later as a journalist for the *Guardian*. This ensures that the ‘local voice’ is heard, that the litany of ailments described—from poverty, illiteracy and intolerance to injustice and corruption—are those identified by the insiders as much as by the outsider. The text is peppered with the views and concerns of Arab bloggers, activists, writers, academics, doctors, students and women, deliberately avoiding government officials and regime propagandists. Not meant to be representative of Arab opinion as a whole, Whitaker tells us, their criticisms of the orthodox are an indicator of where the Arab debate is heading.

The book gains momentum as it progresses into meatier subjects such as *wasta* (roughly translated as the practice of using your connections to your own personal advantage), political accountability, media censorship and restrictions on freedoms of association. Whitaker argues that *wasta* is an almost inescapable part of everyday life across the Middle East. ‘Everything goes through *wasta*’, agrees an Iraqi blogger, ‘whether you are trying to get a good bed in hospital for your aunt, whether it was me trying to dodge military service, you can make your life much easier ... it’s almost expected’. On the surface, *wasta* seems to solve

Book reviews

many problems, a 'magical lubricant that smooths the way to jobs, promotions, university places and much else besides'. Yet underneath, Whitaker shows how it reflects a failing of the state to provide protections and social mobility. It also distorts the activities and make-up of governments, with senior officials filling new posts with family and friends.

In the chapter 'Urge to control', Arab attitudes to media freedoms and freedom of association get equally scathing treatment, with no country faring well. However, Whitaker notes that the gap between what Arab regimes would like to control and what they can actually control is widening, driven by new technology. Again, the onus is on the people to push through social change when and where possible.

While few people in the West would disagree with Whitaker's central principles—freedom, citizenship and good governance—the confidence with which he presents his arguments risks being condescending and even somewhat Orientalist on occasion. Cleverly, however, *What's really wrong with the Middle East* purposefully avoids offering policy solutions, advocating instead a bottom-up rather than top-down, or externally imposed, change. It is more a call to arms, or perhaps a 'self-help' book for Arab citizens.

Kate Nevens, Middle East and North Africa Programme, Chatham House

Eclipse of the Sunnis: power, exile, and upheaval in the Middle East. By Deborah Amos. New York: PublicAffairs. 2010. 230pp. £15.99. ISBN 978 1 58648 649 5.

Deborah Amos's book is a tale of the fallout from the invasion of Iraq and how it continues to reverberate across the Middle East. Amos, a veteran television news reporter, provides insight into the continued vulnerability of Iraqi refugees. Their story is a post-surge reminder of who is bearing the biggest brunt of the long-term consequences of the invasion. Amos's journalistic account focuses in particular on how large numbers of Sunnis have suffered from the civil conflict that broke out following the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003, and how this has upset the regional balance of power in the Middle East.

The author describes how 'a country that was forced together by the army was now torn apart by the mosques'. The violence that followed forced millions to become displaced inside and outside the country. A study by the UN Refugee Agency has shown that more than 60 per cent of these newly exiled Iraqis experienced symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. From the relative safety of Syria, Jordan and Lebanon, Amos chronicles the trials and tribulations of Sunnis, Christians, actors and artists. Many of them are part of what she describes as 'Iraq's lost generation', who were previously 'cut off from the rest of the world, left out of globalization because of Saddam and a decade of United Nations sanctions'. At the time of the US invasion, nearly half of the Iraqi population was under 21 years old; after a lifetime isolated in their country, whole segments of Iraqi society were to suddenly find that their place in its supposedly democratic new incarnation was under threat.

Many travelled to Syria, currently home to the largest expatriate Iraqi population in the world. The UNHCR estimates that some 747,000 Iraqis are living in Syria, while the Syrian government claims that over a million have fled there. Amos colourfully describes her travels through 'Little Baghdad' in southern Damascus, where 'the names of establishments paid tribute to a life left behind'. Here she finds people not only struggling with the memory of the past but desperately unsure about their futures. Amos is quite scathing about the failure of the allied invaders of Iraq to live up to their responsibilities to the country's refugees. She writes how 'young, talented Iraqis could count on the hypocrisy of an official European refugee policy' while large-scale resettlement was denied.

US acceptance of Iraqi refugees has proved equally lax, despite renewed attempts by the Obama administration to live up to responsibilities. One anecdotal exception to this failure is the heart-warming story of a former US soldier who sponsored his Iraqi translator's application to live in America, eventually buying a house for the two families to share—'we owe them a home, because we took theirs away', he explained.

Amos sheds light on the sectarian mindset of the new Iraqi leadership and its inability to create the conditions for refugees to return. The book tells how in 2007 Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki visited Damascus, his home for more than a decade during Saddam's time. During the visit he was overheard describing the exiles as 'cowards' and demanded that Syria arrest a list of 65 dissident Iraqi artists and writers living in Damascus (President Assad refused). Back in Iraq, Amos describes how Maliki has supported 'an ethno-sectarian quota system known as *muhasasa*, which governed job opportunities in every ministry and dictated the number of seats on provincial government councils'.

Whereas the author succeeds in telling the human stories of the Iraq war's fallout, her political hypothesis is far more ambitious. Its cornerstone is the idea that 'the Arab order, Sunni dominance in the region, was under siege' across the Middle East. Yet Syria itself somehow places this theory in doubt—a secular country with a Shi'i Alawite leadership and a majority Sunni population with ties to both Iran and a host of substate Sunni and Shi'i movements that managed to weather the neo-conservative storm. While Amos makes a stab at deciphering the story of the US–Syrian relationship, this light overview feels like one of the book's many sidetracks away from what initially seems a very coherent message.

Indeed, the Middle East does not fit easily into neat political boxes and the author's experience in Lebanon is a testimony to the importance of a more nuanced understanding of its subtleties. Lebanon offers a multitude of interesting parallels to the 'new' Iraq. Nadim Shehadi of Chatham House recently outlined how 'Iraq is sharing the Lebanese model: power-sharing with a local flavour'.

Yet Amos erroneously links recent events in Lebanon directly to Iraq, describing how 'Iraq rules' were operating in Lebanon. Amos travels to Lebanon to witness the growing trend towards radicalism in the country's Palestinian refugee camps, yet this is a product not only of returning fighters from Iraq, but also of Syria's withdrawal from the country; the moribund state of the larger peace process; and internal factionalism within the ranks of Palestinian refugee politics.

Rather than seeing events in the camps in Lebanon as a direct result of the Iraq war, it would have been far more poignant to use their presence as a reminder as to how refugee problems can echo for generations. This funnelling of a wide range of events across the Middle East to fit an ambitious hypothesis is a slight letdown on what is otherwise a sober reminder of the ongoing legacy of the Iraq war.

James Denselow, King's College London, UK

Dubai: the vulnerability of success. By Christopher M. Davidson. New York: Columbia University Press. 2008. 376pp. Index. £25.00. ISBN 978 1 85065 888 7.

Dubai: gilded cage. By Syed Ali. New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press. 2010. 228pp. Index. Pb.: £14.99. ISBN 978 0 30015 217 3.

Both of these books deal with a subject of special concern to scholars and researchers working on the Arab states of the Gulf: the hidden costs of Dubai's unique political, economic and social model. They share similar concerns with regard to the human dimension of the events taking place in Dubai and more generally in the Gulf, which both authors analyse

Book reviews

in a thorough and well-informed manner. They acknowledge that the emirate has had successful outcomes over almost 40 years, but comment how, when the international financial crisis hit the world in 2008, Dubai felt its effects and its vulnerability was exposed internationally. Thus, they explain how Dubai having been the first Gulf state to have diversified its economy has not reduced its dependency on foreign economies and has created a new dependence on an expatriate workforce.

However, each author emphasizes those aspects they consider more relevant, clearly reflected in the books' titles. *Dubai: the vulnerability of success* identifies the key problems the emirate faces, while *Dubai: gilded cage* focuses on the consequences of the system of temporary visas for foreigners (the *kafala* system) in the lives of the emirate's inhabitants. Both books are very well written and easy to read, but Christopher Davidson adopts an academic style, which Syed Ali, following his editor's directions, has tried to avoid. Thus, Ali's book is more accessible to the general public, while Davidson's is directed towards a more scholarly reader.

Davidson, fellow of the Institute for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at Durham University and author of several works on the United Arab Emirates (UAE), has produced the first academic book specifically on Dubai, which is already becoming essential reading for anyone interested in the history, economy or socio-politics of this emirate. Davidson uses a large number of sources including India Office documents, press articles and information extracted from personal interviews, and refers to all relevant publications on the Gulf, the UAE and Dubai. The first chapters present a historical overview of pre-oil Dubai; tell the story of the establishment of the UAE; and interestingly explore the role played by nationalism and British containment strategies. The book continues to explain regional economic development throughout the twentieth century, stressing how Dubai became such an attractive business environment; how immigration began before oil was discovered; and how the need to diversify emerged. The author then discusses the durability of the authoritarian political system, highlighting the legitimacy provided by the 'ruling bargain' formula, which in Dubai stems not only from the oil rent but also from the diversification of new forms of rentier activity. In one of the most interesting chapters of the book (chapter six), Davidson accounts for the problems emerging from the Dubai model: the diversification pathologies; the expansion of the expatriate population; the identity crisis of the indigenous population; and the restricted development of civil society and the media. Published just before the international financial crisis emerged, Davidson predicted the possible burst of the 'Dubai bubble' (p. 189). Very interestingly too, chapter seven analyses the case of Dubai within the context of the federation of the UAE and, finally, in the last chapter he puts forward the threats this emirate faces regarding external and internal security issues, such as international terrorism or human trafficking. What seems to be missing, however, is a concluding chapter which returns to the proposed hypotheses of the introduction.

Syed Ali, sociologist and assistant lecturer at Long Island University, explains how he was initially supposed to conduct research on the second-generation expatriates and how, after spending some time in Dubai and having been deported after the authorities considered he was going too far in his investigations, he decided to change direction and dedicate his work to the living conditions of the inhabitants of Dubai. The book provides an interesting approach to the emirate's daily life, which is very useful, both for scholars working on the topic and for anyone with an intention to travel to the region. Based on the ethnographic method, the sources used include personal interviews, academic literature, articles from the press and internet blogs. The first chapters explain the factors that account

Sub-Saharan Africa

for the rise of Dubai as a 'global brand'. Ali then discusses how this situation has affected the living and working conditions of expatriates and nationals, and finally demonstrates how they all have ended up living in different kinds of 'gilded cages' (p. 109). The main value of the book lies in the real cases it presents, as they provide an accurate picture of the emirate's society. However, the conclusion that 'the *kafala* system colours everything in Dubai' (p. 189) is to my mind somewhat overstated, since many other factors, as explained by Davidson, have played a fundamental role in the shaping of the emirate.

Overall, what lends these books special interest is that both are brave works that tackle sensitive issues usually avoided in studies of the region and that they provide detailed information on the design of the structure of Dubai society. Thus, they fill a gap in the existing literature on the UAE, which generally does not go into such deep analysis of the problems being faced by this emirate.

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Sub-Saharan Africa

A history of modern Africa: 1800 to the present. By **Richard Reid**. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell. 2009. 386pp. Pb.: £19.99. ISBN 978 1 40513 265 7.

A perennial problem for those interested in Africa is a lack of historical knowledge. The general tendency for observers, commentators, journalists and policy-makers to focus on current events is, in the case of Africa, compounded by the accumulated body of writing on the continent that exhibits immense ignorance of its past. Admittedly, the difficulty is great in that the study of Africa's history in the West is relatively recent and its historiography has largely had to make do without written sources, which habitually form the core of the historian's research. Furthermore, much of the continent's history is to be found in the accounts given by outsiders, ranging from Arab explorers or merchants to colonial administrators, missionaries and anthropologists. In the absence of writing (except in Ethiopia and some Arabic-speaking areas), Africans before the advent of colonial rule were in no position to record their own history. And the long oral history tradition found across the continent offers the type of information that professional historians find difficult to use.

This state of affairs has had several consequences. One is that what is written about Africa is often derived from an extrapolation of the western experience. Therefore, it often lacks plausibility and is not infrequently shallow. Another is that Africa, the continent without its own written history, is seen from the perspective of its encounter with the outside world, of which it has often been the 'victim', rather than from the standpoint of its own internal dynamics. Africa thus becomes enshrined in the 'uniqueness' of its suffering. Yet another is the fact that historians rarely encompass Africa in their comparative work. The history of the continent is seen to have been significantly different from that of the rest of the world, reinforcing thereby the image of Africa as a timeless land that has only been stirred into movement by the outside world. Finally, the present condition of the continent, unremittingly bleak as it is, colours the perception of its history, which is often narrowly devoted to identifying the factors that have made for the current crisis.

In short, then, writing a history of modern Africa is no simple task. And because most students of the continent are area specialists, few venture to present an overall historical panorama of what are now 53 independent countries. But Richard Reid has successfully risen to the challenge in this new history of modern Africa, which includes the northern

Book reviews

African countries but also South Africa, thus providing the reader with a comprehensive essay on the continent's last two centuries. Following a brief but useful introduction outlining the difficulties of writing the history of Africa, the author has organized his material into seven coherent parts. The first three present a fairly comprehensive picture of Africa in the nineteenth century, seen, respectively, from the perspective of its own internal dynamics and from the standpoint of the influence of Islam and Europe. Parts four and five cover the colonial period—from the violence of conquest to the post-Second World War efforts at developing the colonies. These sections pay particular attention to the social and economic effects of the European occupation, but do not neglect to explain how colonialism benefited large numbers of Africans. Part six concentrates on the end of empire and decolonization. It explains how postwar anti-colonial sentiments coalesced into nationalism and how the nationalists struggled to construct a political identity that would bring the inhabitants of arbitrarily defined colonial territories together into a 'nation'. The seventh, and final, section discusses post-colonial Africa, stressing in particular the independent countries' unsafe foundations and the difficulties of managing economies made dependent on the export of primary products.

Although there are several histories of modern Africa available at present, the merit of Reid's book is in the choice of themes and the clarity of exposition. On the first, the author has made good use of the latest research on African history to revise the treatment of the standard themes: slavery; legitimate commerce; nineteenth-century jihads; the *Mfecane* (Zulu military push northwards) in southern Africa; the Scramble for Africa; the role of missionaries; the nature of African 'resistance' to colonial conquest; the 'invention' of ethnicity; the complexities of African 'nationalism'; the place of Africa in the international economy; the conundrum of post-colonial politics; and the ways in which Africa is now 'managing' modernity. On the second, the absence of jargon and the judicious use of examples make for an easy read, which will turn this book into the most useful textbook on African history available to date.

Not surprisingly given how onerous the task of writing 'an' African history is, the book suffers from a number of shortcomings. The first is that it is biased towards the earlier period, with the consequence that the post-colonial period (now already 50 years old) is not covered in sufficient depth—which is regrettable given how much material is available. The second is that it is heavily biased in favour of English-speaking Africa, which is understandable but which reduces the comparative dimension towards which any history of Africa should strive. The third is that it fails sufficiently to show the continuities that are critical to the analysis of the historical development of the continent from the pre- to the post-colonial periods. Admittedly, this is contested territory, and the author does answer many of the key questions, but it has now become clear that making sense of present-day Africa requires an understanding of the historical factors that clearly affect the political, social and economic evolution of the continent in the twenty-first century.

For all these shortcomings, however, this book stands as a remarkable achievement and will be the choice volume on modern African history for some time to come.

Patrick Chabal, King's College London, UK

Magic and warfare: appearance and reality in contemporary African conflict and beyond. By Nathalie Wlodarczyk. New York: Palgrave. 2009. 188pp. £52.00. ISBN 978 0 23062 102 2.

In 1999, the historian Stephen Ellis published a book (*The mask of anarchy: the destruction of Liberia and the religious dimension of an African civil war*, Hurst) on the Liberian civil war, in which he claimed that fighters, including the warlord-turned-President Charles Taylor, had eaten human hearts to acquire extra power. Taylor threatened to sue but was apparently deterred by the fact that he would have to appear in person in London. Much the same has been revealed about the civil conflict in neighbouring Sierra Leone. And it is now generally accepted that such practices (or similar ones) have been, and are, found in many parts of Africa—from Mozambique to Uganda, by way of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Therefore, the question for Africanists is not so much to confirm ‘ritual cannibalism’ but how best to account for it.

Explanations commonly fall into two categories. The first is to view such events as primordial or atavistic African ‘barbarism’, a remnant of earlier uncivilized times. The other is to put it down to drug-induced bouts of ‘irrational’ behaviour, brought about by brain-washing, coercion and lack of discipline. Against these two interpretations, Nathalie Wlodarczyk argues that such events must be understood as rational acts that are linked to the role of ‘magic’ in warfare. Her thesis is twofold. On the one hand, the study of war must rest on an understanding of the role of the belief systems that are relevant to the overall cultural context within which conflicts occur. On the other, an analysis of the nature of warfare needs to take account of the instrumental rationality of apparently irrational acts. Failure to do so, she claims, limits the usefulness of theories of war, which remain wedded to an excessively narrow rational means-ends approach.

Ostensibly about the conflict in Sierra Leone, this book is in fact a challenge to the study of non-conventional war in the contemporary world. Wlodarczyk has built on the by-now considerable body of work on the importance of belief systems in African politics to offer a systematic analysis of the role of ‘magic’ in the Sierra Leone conflict. Making good use of the extensive evidence gathered by the trials on war crimes and her own field research, she provides a detailed account of the origins, organization and behaviour of the Kamajor militias that formed the core of the so-called Civil Defence Forces, which fought the rebel Revolutionary United Front. Originally rooted in local secret society organizations, the Kamajors developed methods of recruitment, initiation, training and fighting that were based on, and made extensive use of, ‘magic’. Although the most notable feature of such ‘magic’ was the belief that fighters were invulnerable to bullets, the book makes clear that the Kamajors’ belief system included other aspects—such as solidarity, discipline, etc.—that are more familiar to students of warfare. The author thus demonstrates that what is at first identified merely as ‘irrational magic’ can in fact be marshalled strategically and tactically for the purpose of fighting a guerrilla war. Indeed, Wlodarczyk shows that the Kamajors, an outfit based on ‘traditional’ beliefs and organization, were more effective than the RUF, which relied primarily on coercion and violence to recruit fighters and wage war.

Based on first-hand evidence, the author concludes that the belief in ‘magic’ was effective, even in terms of rational means-end calculations. She gives evidence that the Kamajors’ initiation endowed the fighters with greater determination, better discipline and higher resilience than other guerrilla groups. Interestingly, she explains that, because the belief in such ‘magic’ was shared by all sides, the Kamajors’ effectiveness derived in part from the conviction by their enemies that they did possess supernatural powers. That very fact often

Book reviews

acted as a powerful additional weapon in their favour. Włodarczyk also shows that in many such conflicts the aim is not so much to win a 'military' victory as to achieve one's goals by preying on the mental and psychological weaknesses of the enemy—weaknesses that are often fed by the display of fearlessness rather than the effectiveness of armed action. So that, for example, an attack that fails to seize a town might still result in the routing of the defending enemy, convinced by the 'spectacle' of the attack that they are bound to lose the next time around. Here, she makes the important point that the meaning of success and failure is largely determined by the belief systems *shared* by the adversaries. This is a feature of foreign-led counterinsurgency that is always lacking, thus reducing its effectiveness in the battle for 'hearts and minds'.

Whether this argument will commend itself to war colleges in the West is an open question, but there is little doubt that this book is a perceptive analysis of the nature of violence in contemporary Africa, which has relevance well beyond the continent. And it reinforces the argument that it is impossible plausibly to interpret political events in settings different from ours without an understanding of the cultural context within which they take place.

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China and Africa: emerging patterns in globalization and development. Edited by Julia C. Strauss and Martha Saavedra. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2009. 249pp. Index. Pb.: £21.99. ISBN 978 0 52112 200 9.

This excellent collection is a special edition of the journal *China Quarterly*. It answers some critical questions preoccupying development agencies, scholars and practitioners: what is China doing in Africa? Is history repeating itself with China in the role of the imperialist power, or is something more complicated taking place, offering African countries expanded possibilities for development in partnership with China? The authors explicitly do not offer a clear answer, focusing instead on understanding what is actually going on rather than relying on reactionary and ahistorical media accounts.

The book begins with Chris Alden and Christopher Hughes's examination of harmony and discord in China's Africa strategy, highlighting the challenges created by a focus on interaction between states. As China's engagement with Africa deepens, the range of implicated actors in China and individual African countries is widening, creating new pressures on bilateral relations that have not been anticipated by the government in Beijing. This points to a central theme running through the volume, namely that of a growing awareness that sustainable engagement and mutually profitable bilateral relations require greater mutual understanding. In the foreign policy context, Alden and Hughes point to the need for greater integration of civil society organizations into bilateral relations, which is presented as something of a new idea for the Chinese state. Wenran Jiang builds on this theme by exploring the extent to which Chinese resource extraction practices in Africa are modelled on recent experiences in China, concluding that China is positioning itself as a global status quo power, which seeks African resources as a response to energy vulnerability, not imperial design. This status quo argument resonates in Daniel Large's analysis of China's role in Sudan, which he presents as one of quietly encouraging a de-escalation of hostilities in the country's civil war, not the intensification often cited in English-language media. Large cites international reputational concerns as being as important to this positive, but unreported, Chinese role as a desire to protect expatriates working in the oilfields.

Sub-Saharan Africa

Discussion of Chinese economic investment in Africa starts with Dan Haglund's chapter on the Zambian copper sector. He argues that the individual corporate governance characteristics of Chinese mining firms are crucial for understanding their approach to African investments, which, as in China, is characterized by a reliance on the state to manage the social and environmental impacts. The importance of corporate culture and a short-term approach to strategic planning driven by the rotational deployment of Chinese management is further addressed in Ching Kwan Lee's comparative account of the casualization of Tanzanian textile workers and Zambian miners, concluding that there is no single, centrally directed Chinese approach to Africa, and that Africans themselves are not powerless in the relationship. Instead, the picture is one of an evolving labour market in which foreign capital and domestic labour are working through mutual cultural misunderstandings to search out workable accommodations.

This more developmentally positive and nuanced narrative stands in sharp contrast to the almost stereotypical situation in Equatorial Guinea, where, as Mario Estaban explains, Beijing might not provide the financial succour of the western oil companies to the Obiang autocracy, but does offer international political support due to the lack of pro-democracy and human rights civil society constituencies in China.

Perceptions and receptions dominate the remaining chapters. Deborah Bräutigam and Tang Xiaoyang explore China's engagement with African agriculture, arguing that while the Chinese government has a self-perception of benevolent contributor to rural development, substantial concerns remain that farms run by Chinese expatriates are displacing African producers in local markets, and that in the future these farms may reorient production for export to China. The proposition that China would be well served by investing more carefully in capacity-building in Africa is echoed in Gregor Dobler's chapter on Chinese shops in Namibia, where Chinese merchants form their own community focused almost entirely on the wholesale distribution of Chinese products to African traders from small towns. A theme of the book unpacked in this chapter is the importance of local knowledge and connections to successful Chinese entrepreneurs, which highlights the agency that African governments and people retain in the bilateral relationship through formal and informal regimes and institutions. Barry Sautman and Yan Hairong's cross-national public opinion survey work builds on this, finding a general sentiment that Africans see China as more benevolent than the West. The final two chapters by Martha Saavedra and Julia Strauss, respectively, suggest that the people and government in China see Africa as a land of mutual opportunity, redemption and solidarity, not simply a site for exploitation and the assuaging of resource and food security concerns.

A striking characteristic of this book is that the reader could substitute Canada, France or Britain for China in each chapter and find little substantive change in the final analysis. This is precisely the point the editors make in the introduction. Western reactions to China's role in Africa are driven more by its comparative 'newness', not by the reality of what is actually taking place on the ground, which is quite similar to the reality of western interactions. In short, this is an enlightening book for anybody grappling with the reality and implications of China's engagement with Africa.

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Africa's new peace and security architecture: promoting norms, institutionalizing solutions. Edited by Ulf Engel and João Gomes Porto. Farnham: Ashgate. 2010. 179pp. Index. Pb.: £25.00. ISBN 978 0 75467 606 5.

The twin test of the effectiveness of the African Union (AU), created in 2000 to supersede the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), is its capacity to foster democratic governance and to assist in conflict resolution. Indeed, although the AU has adopted other aims—for instance, the rule of law or the sanctity of human life—the extent to which these fundamental principles can be upheld ultimately rests on the way power is exercised and peace preserved within and between its member states. Since the OAU had long been criticized for its inability to promote these two objectives, its pan-African successor is being scrutinized for the improvements it may bring in accountability, governance, peace and stability. The AU has been invested with much hope, but the results so far are mixed and some doubt has been expressed as to its ability to transcend the divisions and indecisiveness which had largely crippled its predecessor.

One of the original features of the AU is the new peace and security architecture built into its institutional set-up. Partly as a result of the analysis of the OAU's limitations and partly based on the experience of regional organizations like the Economic Community of West African States, the AU was designed with a view to providing a mechanism for the maintenance of peace and security. That such was taken seriously is evidenced by the fact that the pan-African organization can be mandated by the heads of state to intervene in a country's internal affairs if genocide, war crimes or crimes against humanity take place—this was even amended in 2003 to include 'grave threats to legitimate order'. So potentially the AU could act as a guarantor of peace, human rights and constitutional order on the continent. However, its ability to do so is constrained by the need to operate as directed by the heads of state and by its institutional capacity to enforce such objectives.

Ulf Engel and João Gomes Porto's edited volume is a systematic attempt to provide the background, information and analysis required in order to assess the potential of the AU's peace and security agenda. They write: 'In the very year when the entire gamut of institutions and decision-making procedures of the African Union's Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) are set to be fully operational (i.e., 2010), this volume aims at providing the reader with an overview of this so-called architecture, the status of its implementation, as well as touching upon some of the most pressing challenges of a political, financial and institutional nature' (p. 4). The book has been written very carefully to clear guidelines, thus making for a coherent volume which covers all the relevant aspects of the question. The authors are for the most part specialists in the field of African international relations and/or actual participants in the capacity- and institution-building work behind the setting up of APSA.

The first two chapters frame the rest in that they offer, respectively, a study of the success and failure of regional security *and* a history of the transformation of the OAU into the AU. Both are substantial and provide the information that is required. Four chapters on the genesis and workings of the four pillars of APSA follow—that is, in order: 'the Peace and Security Council of the African Union'; 'the Panel of the Wise'; 'the Continental Early Warning System'; and 'the African Standby Force'. Each is well informed and clearly written. The editors' introduction and conclusion are also models of clarity, pointing out the difficulties encountered on the road to the construction of APSA, highlighting the successes achieved so far, and the difficulties faced by the various arms of the peace and security institutional set-up. In this way the book will serve as a handy reference volume for those interested in the organizational make-up of the AU's peace and security mandate.

Asia and Pacific

However, the volume's documentary strength is also its weakness, for the relentless focus on the organizational aspects of the question comes at the expense of a very necessary account of the political context within which these institutions operate. Indeed, any realistic assessment of the potential usefulness of APSA would need to consider the power configurations both within and between African states, as well as the complex ways in which politics are conducted on the continent. So, for example, nothing in this volume would intimate to the reader that it may well be in the interest of African rulers to use violence because it is 'profitable business' to do so. The book would also need to bring into the picture the cultural framework within which politicians operate. So, for example, the way in which heads of state's decisions are reached may well be driven by considerations of prestige, deference, fear and ostentation that only make sense to those who understand the cultural references they evoke. A realistic appraisal of peace and security in Africa requires more than the study of the AU's mechanisms—even if these may evolve to acquire more bite in the years to come.

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Asia and Pacific

China and India: prospects for peace. By **Jonathan Holslag**. New York: Columbia University Press. 2010. 234pp. Index. £26.00. ISBN 978 0 23115 042 2.

Crouching dragon, hidden tiger: can China and India dominate the West?. By **Prem Shankar Jha**. New York: Soft Skull Press. 2010. 405pp. Pb.: £11.99. ISBN 978 1 59376 248 3.

Among the new genre of books looking at China's foreign relations beyond the East Asian region, reappraisal of the Sino-Indian relationship is proving to be an area of growing popularity. The contributions by Jonathan Holslag and Prem Shankar Jha show what can be done by applying a variety of theoretical perspectives to assess the growing mass of empirical data. Each author asks a different question: Holslag sets out to test the liberal proposition that growing economic ties enhance the prospects for peaceful coexistence and cooperation, while Jha explores whether the rise of the two giants will lead to a transformation of the western-dominated global economic order. Much of what they conclude is mutually supportive, so that reading the two books together provides a broad picture which is both rich in detail and full of important and original insights.

While Holslag's project is mainly aimed at assessing the security dimensions of the relationship, he sets up his enquiry with several chapters that test out whether David Ricardo's expectation of mutual gains through complementarity works in practice. Holslag concludes that some synergies have developed in tandem with the economic reforms that have taken place in both countries, but that this is well short of the kind of interdependence which can alleviate traditional security dilemmas. Moreover, even the limited complementarity that has been encouraged by both sides so far is likely to be short-lived as China and India embark on trade policies that are aimed at competing for the same economic sectors and markets. While the public statements from Beijing and New Delhi thus talk up the mutual benefits of their economic relationship, all the evidence points to an intensification of their old rivalry for regional influence.

The seriousness of this situation is conveyed in a number of chapters looking at the range of bilateral security challenges. Longstanding problems, like the traditional and never-ending dispute over the border and the fate of Tibet, are treated well and brought up to date. While these remain serious obstacles to trust, more interesting is Holslag's exploration

Book reviews

of the growing role of non-traditional security threats. Challenging Barry Buzan's model of the Asian regional security complex, he thus describes the arc of states from Pakistan through the Himalayas to Myanmar as a belt of insecurity, rather than a zone of buffer states that insulates the two giants from each other.

Jha's economic argument does not stray into such security issues because it is devoted to analysing the broader implications of the two countries' economic development for their political stability. Starting with an account of western decline, one of the book's real strengths is its debunking of many of the myths that distort the way in which the economic trajectories of the two countries are viewed. For example, he draws on a wealth of statistics to show that China's current economic problems are not unprecedented under 'reform and opening', since the country suffered a recession in 1997–2002. India, moreover, is not the latecomer to economic liberalization that it is commonly assumed to be, as Indira Gandhi began the retreat from the command economy as early as 1980.

Jha's book is most challenging, though, when he develops a radical critique of the economic reforms, showing how liberalization in both countries has created predatory 'intermediate regimes' under which capital has become concentrated in the hands of special-interest groups at the expense of vulnerable parts of the population, especially peasants. Looking at China, he shows how this has been caused by the relinquishing of control to local authorities in a way that has allowed local cadres and governments to gain access to the funds saved in local banks and grab land without compensation, while resorting to force to quell any dissent. The cause is different in India, where big business interests manipulate a government that has been weakened by coalition politics since the demise of the Congress Party's hold on power and face diminishing resistance due to the decay of communitarian values. So desperate are some minority groups that they have joined the Naxalite resistance which is inspired by Maoist guerrilla war.

The failure to reform politics to cope with the 'destructive creativity' of capitalism is thus generating serious domestic instability in both countries. China has failed to take even the first steps in this respect, while India can at least build on its long tradition of democracy. Neither, however, is likely to remake world order. While Jha and Holslag take different routes, they thus arrive at similarly pessimistic conclusions about the implications of the rise of China and India. Both situate their analyses well in their respective theoretical contexts, provide a good overview of the modern history of the two countries and provide comprehensive bibliographies, with Holslag having the added virtue of drawing widely on Chinese sources.

What is interesting in reading the books together is that each seems to provide elements that are missing in the argument of the other. Jha's focus on the relationship between state and society, for example, is more subtle than Holslag's position that China's reforms led to the cutting of many links between the Communist Party and business, given that local cadres have become more powerful. Yet Holslag does a better job of exploring issues like the role of nationalism to fill the legitimacy gap created by economic reforms, an issue that Jha fails to notice. Such differences in the two texts seem to complement rather than detract from their arguments, resulting in a powerful challenge to anybody who has been blinded by headlines declaring the rise of the BRICs and the shift of power to Asia.

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Transforming faith: the story of Al-Huda and Islamic revivalism among urban Pakistani women. By Sadaf Ahmad. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press. 2009. 227pp. Index. £28.95. ISBN 978 0 81563 209 2.

Amid the clamour over the damage done to women under Islamic laws introduced in the 1980s by Pakistan's most notorious military leader, General Zia ul Haq, a more insidious phenomenon aimed at disciplining Pakistani women into 'pious' Muslim subjects went unnoticed. Today, its chief protagonist—the controversial Pakistani religious scholar, Farhat Hashmi (b. 1952)—who single-handedly spawned an Islamic resurgence among elite Pakistani women, enjoys the status of a minor Islamic celebrity among her supporters. They were once better known as torchbearers of a burgeoning feminist movement, but under her influence have turned to Islam—as mediated and manipulated by Hashmi and her Islamic school for women, Al-Huda, established in the mid-1990s. Yet the reasons for the movement's appeal and that of its founder within the ranks of what is, by all accounts, a most unlikely constituency have been poorly understood.

This ethnographic study by Sadaf Ahmad, a Pakistani cultural anthropologist, represents the first comprehensive attempt to explain the success of Hashmi's movement. In it Ahmad draws on the experiences of a cross-section of middle- and upper-class urban Pakistani women involved with Al-Huda's programme of religious education (*dars*). What emerges is a complex picture that defies any single explanation for Al-Huda's popularity. Determined to keep an open mind, Ahmad treads a fine line between Al-Huda's detractors, who dismiss it as merely a fashionable trend for bored, affluent women, and its supporters, who claim that it reflects a 'natural' desire among Muslim women to learn about Islam. The reality, as Ahmad soon discovers, is a far more intricate web of motives that reveal some fascinating assumptions about Islam's relation to rationality, female agency and the construction of Pakistani identity. All are sustained by elaborate 'pedagogies of persuasion', aided and abetted by Al-Huda's skilful use of modern media technology, which has enabled it to package its particular reading of Salafi-informed Islam as quintessentially 'modern' and 'rational'.

Indeed it is precisely the space given to rationality, Ahmad argues, that sets Al-Huda apart from other religious movements and which accounts for its success among educated Pakistani women—a success unmatched by other movements in Pakistan's hotly contested religious landscape. Therefore, while Al-Huda shares with other religious organizations an emphasis on reinforcing gender roles within a broadly patriarchal system, the manner in which it posits a 'dialectical relationship between faith and rationality' is striking. It is this that lends novelty to Al-Huda, for as Ahmad observes: 'the presence of [faith] was clearly not enough to make women engage with religion in the way they are doing now, but at the same time, many claimed that they would have found it difficult to accept many religious commands if they did not have that faith' (p. 74).

The importance given to rationality also informs Al-Huda's Islamic discourse on veiling, which it has sought to present as an expression of female agency. Although Hashmi's insistence on the veil as an integral part of being Muslim relies heavily on a number of 'cultural logics'—chief of which is the notion of the veil as an instrument to keep chaos (understood primarily as sexual promiscuity) at bay—its promotion in the cultural context of Pakistan, which is host to a multitude of opposing Islamic traditions has inevitably met with resistance. And it is this resistance that has strengthened Hashmi's idea of veiling as an act of 'agency'.

At the same time, Hashmi has also reinforced a particular understanding of Muslim identity which Ahmad suggests is now closely associated with Pakistani identity. It rests on

denying the diversity of local religious practices which informs the identities of millions of Muslims in Pakistan and which is vital to the making of a more inclusive Pakistani culture. But these multiple truths find no place in Al-Huda's universe, where they are judged to be both 'un-Islamic' and undesirable for the construction of a Pakistani identity exclusively defined in terms of 'Islam'.

Hashmi's ideas have echoed powerfully in a state still unsure of its relation to Islam and where successive governments have compensated for their lack of political legitimacy by appealing to what Ahmad describes as 'a hegemonic religio-nationalist discourse'. Forged in a climate of growing religious and political intolerance, it now threatens to engulf Pakistan. But as this valuable study shows, the internalization of this discourse by Pakistan's dominant urban middle classes has not only ensured Al-Huda's remarkable success, it has also facilitated the acceptance of an ideology which, while appearing to guarantee women an active role in transforming society, ensures that they remain its greatest victims.

Farzana Shaikh, Asia Programme, Chatham House

China: the pessoptimist nation. By William A. Callahan. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. 2009. 248pp. £25.00. ISBN 978 0 19954 995 5.

William Callahan attempts to answer three fundamental questions related to a rising China: who is China? How do the Chinese perceive their place in the world? And what determines China's foreign policy?

The world is increasingly concerned with the impact of China's continuous rise on its foreign policy. In the West, 'understanding China' has been greatly influenced by different theoretical perspectives such as Realism, liberalism and constructivism, resulting in different interpretations of China ranging from an extremely optimistic view to an equally pessimistic view. Callahan takes a constructivist approach to re-examining the rationale behind China's foreign policy and creatively employs the term 'pessoptimism'.

While Realist scholars often assume that Chinese foreign policy entails the pursuit of wealth and power on the world stage, Callahan argues that the goal of Chinese foreign policy goes beyond these aims, and that a quest for respect and status has become an additional driving force. He also disagrees with the sanguine view that China's rise is as 'peaceful' as the Chinese government has claimed, or that China has been 'socialized' into the (West-dominated) international community, as some scholars both within and without China have argued. According to Callahan, 'to understand China's dreams, we need to understand its nightmares. Alongside the positive images of China that point to 5,000 years of civilization and 30 years of economic growth, there is a very negative narrative of national humiliation that recalls China's modern history as an experience of suffering at the hands of foreign aggression' (p. 192).

To understand China better, Callahan focuses on identity politics of Chinese nationalism, and explores how these have produced the 'security politics of Chinese foreign policy' (p. 28). He believes that 'the heart of Chinese foreign policy is not a security dilemma, but an identity dilemma: who is China and how does it fit into the world?', and that 'national security is closely linked to nationalistic insecurities' (p. 192).

To support his arguments, Callahan looks into what he calls 'China's national humiliation project', which is part of China's patriotic education programme that began in the early 1990s after the government's crackdown on the pro-democracy movement and the West's imposition of sanctions on China. Callahan conducted extensive research on how issues of identity and security have emerged in various official and unofficial places, including

North America

government documents and school textbooks, newspaper and academic articles, public and private museums, professional, pictorial and popular books, feature films, television programmes and novels, websites, blogs, bulletin boards and online videos. He found that the soft side of China's foreign policy, or China's search for 'international status', is determined less by what Beijing actually does than by mutual perceptions. Foreign policy thus goes beyond interstate diplomatic relations, and China's foreign affairs constitute a sovereignty performance that involves a broad range of its people.

The author correctly points out that the state is not a sole actor in determining China's foreign policy but that 'voices' from different segments of Chinese society also matter during the process of foreign policy formation. While the party-state promotes 'correct theories and unified thinking' to guide the official understanding of the real China, society has been active in interacting with the state. Callahan shows how 'it is impossible to speak about the real China in the singular because new voices are always emerging in unexpected places' (p. 29).

While scholars have debated on how Chinese society can affect the country's foreign policy, Callahan has provided a very unique approach to the issue. One can learn a great deal from his research on how Chinese society has motivated and constrained China's foreign policy in one way or another. However, it is also worth noting that the discourse on nationalism, as reflected in the 'national humiliation project', is only one of the discourses of foreign policy in China today. China is now a pluralistic and even highly divided society. Different interests are inevitably reflected in its foreign policy.

In the concluding chapter, Callahan briefly mentions how Chinese intellectuals have endeavoured to form alternative discourses on foreign policy, which have begun to form part of China's foreign policy-making. Certainly, without paying enough attention to the interaction among different discourses (and thus different interests behind these discourses), it will be difficult to see the complicated nature of China's behaviour on the world stage.

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North America

America and a changed world: a question of leadership. Edited by Robin Niblett. London: Royal Institute of International Affairs/Wiley-Blackwell. 2010. 274pp. Index. Pb.: £19.99. ISBN 978 1 40519 844 8.

Writing on a presidency-in-progress, or capturing a contemporary geopolitical moment in time, is a difficult task. The international environment is by nature fluid, rendering observations made one month obsolete the next. American presidents, like all leaders, have a habit of changing course—or shifting emphasis—depending either on the vagaries of public opinion or on changed military/diplomatic realities. Bill Clinton's humanitarian impulse, so evident in his 1992 campaign speeches, was curtailed by the military debacle in Mogadishu, for example. But while assessments formed on the spot tend to lose explanatory utility in the course of time, it remains vital that scholars and think-tanks persist in this vexing task.

If journalism is the first draft of history, *America and a changed world* represents a considered and illuminating second draft. The scholars gathered together by Robin Niblett all offer perceptive insights from a variety of complementary perspectives. Divided into three sections, the first part of the book examines potential US approaches to seven distinct geopolitical regions: Latin America, the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa, East Asia, South Asia, Central Asia and the South Caucasus. The second, shorter section focuses on America's

Book reviews

bilateral relationships with two Great Powers and one pseudo-superpower: China, Russia and Europe. The final section adopts a thematic approach in examining the way in which four global phenomena—international law and the United Nations, arms control, climate change, and the ‘post-crisis economic order’—all present opportunities and challenges to US foreign policy. This is an ambitious list of essays. Yet this compact book succeeds in packing a great deal of analytical punch.

The quality of argument is maintained to a high standard throughout. Victor Bulmer-Thomas’s thoughtful essay on US policy in the western hemisphere, for example, displays a keen understanding of the forces that have moved Washington from a position of haughty dominance (in the eyes of many Latinos, at least) to one that requires a much more careful and respectful diplomacy. To convince a sceptical Latin America of the sincerity and justness of US intentions, Bulmer-Thomas offers the startling and commendable recommendation that President Obama should unilaterally return Guantánamo Bay to Cuba, tearing up the indefinite lease that the US secured following the Spanish–American War of 1898.

Kerry Brown’s essay on Sino-American relations offers the sobering reminder to US policy-makers that ‘China’s GDP, on a PPP [Purchasing Power Parity] basis, might draw level with that of the United States by as early as 2015—though rather later on a nominal basis’ (p. 155). Much worse than the rapid narrowing of the economic gap in GDP terms, Brown cautions, is the fact that the global financial crisis has ensured that ‘Chinese respect for the American way of doing things has turned into scepticism’ (p. 157). Beijing’s unique way of conducting its economic business has ostensibly been vindicated, which may prove injurious to those within China of a more reformist, transparent bent. While tension in the relationship in the medium and long term is all but inevitable, Brown is nonetheless right to conclude that ‘there will be little change in US–China relations over the next five years in terms of grand strategy’ (p. 159). A remarkable degree of economic interdependence between the two nations will see to that.

While scholars such as Timothy Lynch and Robert Singh have identified lines of continuity between Presidents Bush and Obama, Devika Hovell’s essay on ‘International law and the United Nations’ makes a strong case that Obama is significantly different from his predecessor in the respect he accords multilateral institutions. For Hovell, ‘The election of Barack Obama, a man whose personal and career history reflects a deep appreciation of internationalism, civil liberties and the rule of law, opens the opportunity for the United States to play a central role in the reform of the international legal order that it led in establishing 60 years earlier’ (p. 218). Events may conspire to frustrate these noble intentions, and Hovell may well overstate Obama’s ability to effect change in a nation that historically has rejected notions of an ‘international legal order’. But Obama has rediscovered his vim following the legislative victory that followed the fractious and enervating debate over health care reform. Anything, perhaps, is possible. Irrespective of whether the more optimistic contributions to *America and a changed world* continue to hold true, the Obama administration would do well to cogitate on the nuanced assessments presented in this impressive collection.

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US foreign policy in context: national ideology from the founders to the Bush Doctrine. By Adam Quinn. London and New York: Routledge. 2010. 218pp. Index. £75.00. ISBN 978 0 41554 965 3.

Should the American century be followed by a Chinese one, interest in the ebb and flow of US foreign policy would not diminish soon. ‘America declining’ (a yet unproven proposition) should be a subject as fascinating as ‘America rising’ or ‘America ruling’. *US foreign policy in context* offers an important and lucid assessment of the historical and ideological reasons why the American century played out the way it did—and why America still behaves the way it does and probably will continue to do. The book takes a ‘national ideology’ approach—in which ‘deciding a nation’s foreign policy is not simply the material reality of the international environment, but the intellectual framework with which policy-makers approach that environment’ (p. 23)—to explain the strategic visions of American leaders, their conceptions of the international system and what America’s role in it should be. Adam Quinn makes a strong case for viewing US behaviour through the lens of its national character in foreign policy. This leads him to the conclusion that the enduring American ideological framework has been rejection of balance-of-power thinking, in favour first of regional separatism, and later of liberal universalism. The book also supports the thesis that historically US policy-makers have repeatedly conceived of the national interest in ideational as much as material terms, with major strategic and policy consequences.

Chapters on the Founders, Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Harry Truman and George W. Bush test this thesis. Readers will perhaps be more familiar with the debates on liberal universalism since Wilson, and one of the great benefits of *US foreign policy in context* is the convincing demonstration that this tradition has deep historical roots and predates American dominance of the international system. Quinn maps out a ‘Founders’ Era consensus’ (exemplified by the Monroe Doctrine) in which American strategy sought to use the country’s special circumstances to avoid replicating a European balance of power by building a conceptually separate American system. Showing how this was later extrapolated to the global level when international and American circumstances changed is an important contribution the book makes. In the author’s words, from an early date there had been ‘an established ideological consensus that conceived of the United States not as an interested participant in the global balance-of-power system, but as a morally superior outsider’ (p. 60). Under Theodore Roosevelt, America’s growing international engagement was thus pushed not towards acceptance of balance of power but towards universalism and missionary zeal, maybe even imperialism. Hence, also, the lasting tendency to conflate US interests with those of less advanced states towards which America can act unilaterally and self-interestedly, and still argue that its actions are mutually beneficial. This led to the idea ‘that a free nation was, in a sense, defined as truly free by its choosing to become the right kind of society, and that this meant adopting at least the most basic of the United States’ particular principles and practices’ (p. 77). Roosevelt’s expanded version of the Monroe Doctrine for a western hemisphere under US hegemony would soon provide the intellectual basis for the Wilsonian attempts to reform the global system.

America and the world have been living with the consequences of this ideological evolution that shaped much of the country’s rise. To show what is usually thought of as Wilson’s legacy as of older origin is not to downplay his importance as a crystallizer of American impulses. Quinn explains well how Wilson managed the transition to internationalism by convincing his country that it should not and would not join a flawed system but instead aim for the creation of a new one. Ever since American foreign policy has been deeply

Book reviews

influenced by this ambition to be the world's 'leader and umpire' and seen as benevolent by others as it goes about seeking its own advantages.

By setting the intellectual stage for Wilson's casting of America's mission as the champion of liberal democracy around the globe, *US foreign policy in context* not only gives us a better understanding of that emblematic president but also frees us from understanding his successors through a simplistic Wilsonian reference point alone. To this day, much of American behaviour can be understood in the light of Quinn's observation that Wilsonian internationalism was based on the premise that 'the United States agreed to be globally engaged only on the condition that it could legitimately demand from the world the universal liberal democracy upon which the new global order was to be founded' (p. 113). The lessons to be drawn from this book are equally useful in looking back and forward. What might remain of this Wilsonian bargain if American relative power diminished? Quinn's arguments should lead us to expect that this national ideology will be hard to shake off. More likely there will be attempts to recast it to fit new circumstances. A further thought is that if national ideology explains so much of US behaviour, perhaps we need to get to grips with the national ideology of China at the start of the putative Chinese century.

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American credo: the place of ideas in US politics. By Michael Foley. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2007. 496pp. £67.00. ISBN 978 0 19923 267 3.

While nominally a no-nonsense, hard-headed, hawkish document that outlined US national security objectives for the early stages of the Cold War, the Section IV subtitle of the National Security Council Report 68 (NSC-68) begins: 'The underlying conflict in the realm of ideas and values ...'. Indeed, alongside other elements of the *American credo*—like 'the individual', 'democracy' and 'morality'—'freedom' is continually foregrounded in what was seen as the 'fundamental conflict in the realm of ideas'. While NSC-68 focused on the competition 'between the US purpose and Kremlin designs', Michael Foley's first-rate study examines the 'traditions and usages of American political ideas within the arena of practical politics' (p. 12) more broadly; a practical politics, moreover, that is 'animated by a furious competitive urge to align positions with core principles' (p. 10).

'The United States', Foley notes, 'possesses a little understood ability to engage in deep conflicts over political ideas, while at the same time reducing adversarial positions to legitimate derivatives of American history and development' (p. 12). *American credo* asks how this is possible. After setting up his problematic, in chapters one to nine Foley looks at nine elemental components of the American ideational matrix: 'freedom'; 'the most abiding and durable self-characterization of the United States' (p. 19); 'the individual'; 'wealth'; 'democracy'; 'the rule of law'; 'equality'; 'morality'; 'progress'; and 'order'. Each of these components is subjected to a careful and sophisticated analysis that looks to American history to 'illustrate the social significance, the cultural depth, the political leverage, and the civic legacies that continue to be invested in each idea' (p. 14). After looking at each of these elements in isolation, Foley then turns to six of the most common compounds of these core ideas in chapters ten to fifteen: 'capitalism'; 'pluralism'; 'liberalism'; 'conservatism'; 'populism'; and 'nationalism'. The author stresses the fact that these composites should not be viewed as static 'genetically integrated thoroughbreds'. Rather, they are more akin to 'a set of constantly mutating hybrids' (p. 415).

The analysis is drawn together and extended in the final two chapters. Chapter sixteen provides an overview of the 'ecology of ideas' in American politics. Indeed, 'ecology'

Latin America and Caribbean

captures the sense of organic mutability that Foley emphasizes *vis-à-vis* the ideational compounds. He then critically evaluates the ways in which other scholars have viewed the apparent paradox between a high level of political stability anchored around deeply entrenched first principles on the one hand; and the ongoing and often divisive struggle over just what these principles mean and what the proper relationship between them should be on the other. Chapter seventeen, meanwhile, looks at present and future challenges to the *American credo* from both within and outside the Republic. American political discourse, Foley concludes in contradistinction to much of the academic literature, is 'informed and energized by a dynamic of stable instability based upon the cultural co-existence of ideas that are separate and distinct from one another but which are also collectively integral to American identity' (p. 443).

American credo is a skilfully conceived and executed study that adroitly synthesizes a range of pertinent literatures to address the subtitle of the book, *the place of ideas in US politics*. Given its perspicacious insights, which are based on deep erudition, and the fact that it speaks to a number of contemporary debates, *American credo* deserves a wide readership. It will be of obvious interest to those who study US politics and—given the lack of any neat inside/outside bifurcation—US foreign policy. Furthermore, it will be of consequence to those interested in the role of ideas and identity in International Relations, for example those who work in the wake of the 'constructivist' and 'linguistic' turns. Finally, given the pre-eminent US role in the international system and the habitual mobilization of aspects of the *American credo* by US policy-makers—for example, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom—this book will be relevant to anyone interested in international affairs more broadly. Indeed, whether in a behind-the-scenes, top-secret document or in mainstream political discourse, 'ideas matter a very great deal in American politics' (p. 415). They remain, Foley notes, 'a defining characteristic of a society that remains highly self-conscious over the ethical idiom of its origins and purpose' (p. 416).

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Latin America and Caribbean

The Cuban revolution (1959–2009): relations with Spain, the European Union and the United States. By Joaquín Roy. New York: Palgrave. 2009. 220pp. Index. £60.00. ISBN 978 0 23061 926 5.

English-language monographs on the relationship between Europe and revolutionary Cuba over the last half-century have been rather thin on the ground; a notable contribution was the volume edited by Alistair Hennessy and George Lambie, *The fractured blockade: West European–Cuban relations during the Revolution* (Macmillan, 1993). The author of the volume under review ably chronicled the robust European reaction to the extra-territorial provisions of the 1996 Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act in *Cuba, the US and the Helms–Burton Doctrine: international reactions* (University Press of Florida, 2000). Joaquín Roy in fact has proved himself to be quite a prolific writer on the subject over the last two decades—some 20 per cent of his new book's bibliography consists of his own writings—but most pieces have appeared in Spanish in a diverse and not readily accessible range of publications. His latest work sets out to examine the vicissitudes of the relationship between Cuba and the European Union as an entity since the end of the Cold War as well as the 'special relationship' between Cuba and Spain, the EU country with the greatest interest and stake in the Caribbean island.

Book reviews

Two chapters are dedicated to this intimate post-colonial relationship. The author makes great play with the role of continued Spanish emigration to Cuba after 1898 and with the allure of the cultural doctrine of *Hispanidad*—consciously promoted by Madrid—in accounting for the ongoing link despite Cuba's neo-colonial orientation towards the United States in the six decades prior to the revolution. This largely explains why Franco refused to break relations with Cuba after 1959 despite his regime's close ties to Washington, Castro's apparent soft spot towards 'the old fox', and the warmth of the reception in Havana Castro accorded in 1991 to the right-wing politician—but fellow *gallego*—Manuel Fraga Iribarne. Roy also suggests that, as in the case of Canada, the US quietly welcomed a continued Spanish diplomatic presence on the island as a useful source of intelligence gathering. Since the country's return to democracy in 1976, Cuba has continued to feature prominently in the Spanish imagination to the extent that the media show greater interest in that distant island than in the ructions in neighbouring Algeria. Spain played a premier role in shaping EU policy towards Cuba in the mid-1990s and developments there have become a domestic political issue between the PSOE (Partido Socialista Obrero Español) and the conservative Partido Popular, though the latter's supporters in the business community have been wary of any threat to their extensive investments in Cuba. The relationship is nonetheless characterized at a quotidian level as 'an on-off family quarrel' (p. 4), subject to 'embassy invasion crises, cocktail wars, personal insults, demeaning references to historical dates, violations of diplomatic traditions and mass demonstrations led by high [Cuban] government officials' (pp. 127–8).

In the residual three chapters, Roy provides a lengthy analysis of the European Union's stance towards Cuba. This is embodied in the 1996 Common Position on Cuba—forged in part as a tradeoff with Washington for the suspension of the most objectionable stipulations of the Helms–Burton bill—which laid down a set of conditions for an EU–Cuba cooperation agreement on the same lines as those with other developing countries. He traces the intra-European debate over how the EU should respond to the various political crackdowns in Cuba over the years, in particular the jailing of 75 dissidents in 2003. Although 'at no moment has the general [European] consensus abandoned the standard script of combining communications, persuasion, and pressure towards Cuba' (p. 169), EU member states have continued to pursue their own national policies. This has allowed cynics to assert (in an echo of Lord Acton's quip about the Holy Roman Empire) that the Common Position is 'neither "common" (unified and shared) nor a "position" (in means and ends)' (p. 53). The EU (and Spanish) quest for an ordered political transition to democracy has become ever more chimerical in view of the Cuban authorities' concern with maintaining a 'line of internal discipline' (as the author coyly puts it) and, foremost, in the wake of the formal transfer of power from Fidel to Raúl Castro in 2006–2008. Though an abject failure to date in its principal goal, the EU policy of 'constructive engagement', Roy contends, is still preferable to that of the United States, which 'only benefits the Cuban regime, reinforcing its political excuse for the shortcomings of the system' (p. 150).

While written with considerable gusto and chock-full of insights, this work would have certainly benefited from a firmer editorial hand on the tiller. The text, too often, appears to be a literal translation from Spanish; coupled with a distinctive, if not idiosyncratic, writing style that probably will be somewhat jarring to most Anglophone readers, this makes for rather arduous reading. One particular quirk is the author's penchant for overdramatically describing events as having 'exploded': for example, the Revolution (p. 30); the Bay of Pigs operation (p. 36); the Heriberto Padilla case in 1971 (p. 41); the Helms–Burton 'scandal' (p. 88); and the 'crisis' produced by Castro's illness (p. 151). There are also a number of

factual errors: inter alia, he confuses the Guerra Chiquita of 1879–80 with the Ten Years' War (1868–78) (p. 8); includes the Caribbean in the UN Economic Commission for Latin America in Franco's time (p. 21); refers to the island of Grenada as Granada (p. 38); and gives Jimmy Carter's term of office as 1976–80, rather than 1977–81 (p. 72). Finally, the author's understandable focus on Spanish policy towards Cuba means that we learn from this work almost nothing about the material policies that have been pursued individually by the other EU member states and their impact on the respective bilateral relationships with Washington.

Philip Chrimes

Bolivia's radical tradition: permanent revolution in the Andes. By S. Sándor John. Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona Press. 317pp. Index. \$55.00. ISBN 978 0 81652 764 9.

The election in 2005 (and re-election in 2009) of Evo Morales as president of Bolivia has brought about a flurry of books on the circumstances giving rise to the resurgence of political radicalism in the country. Many, rightly, stress the importance of the radical tradition in Bolivian politics and in particular of the legacy of trade union militancy. S. Sándor John's book shines a light into important aspects of the development of that tradition from the 1930s onwards; as such it provides a useful addition to the literature on labour politics in Bolivia.

This is a book about Trotskyism by an avowed Trotskyite (p. 17), but it is of interest to a wider readership than this might suggest. Bolivia is of particular interest for Trotskyites since it is one of the few countries where Trotskyism has been a potent force in left-wing politics. *Bolivia's radical tradition* is a history of the Partido Obrero Revolucionario (POR), with all its splits and deviations, and its influence on the wider political context in which it operated. Principally due to its influence within the Bolivian miners' federation (FSTMB), established in 1944, and in the Central Obrera Boliviana (COB, the country's chief trade union federation) founded in 1952, the POR had a political weight out of all proportion to its (relatively small) number of militants.

Though the book spans the period between the Chaco War of 1932–35 and the present, it is of more interest with regard to the earlier period; the treatment of politics since the 1971 Popular Assembly is fairly sketchy. Three particularly important questions are dealt with. The first of these is how Trotskyism took root in a country far removed from the main centres of revolutionary thinking and activity in Latin America. Although the Chaco War provided a context in opening the way to new forms of political organization, it was the experience of repeated exile of a small number of Bolivian activists in urban centres like Buenos Aires and Santiago, where Trotskyite cells were active, that set the ball rolling. John maintains that an important condition for the development of Trotskyism in Bolivia was the absence of a rival 'Stalinist' communist party. Although there were pro-Moscow movements before 1952, it was only later on that a communist party as such was established.

The second question is how Trotskyism gained such influence. The answer lies mainly in the relationship between Guillermo Lora, the founder of POR-Masas (called after this faction's newspaper), and Juan Lechín Oquendo, the leader of the FSTMB and subsequently of the COB. From the 1940s onwards, Lora acted as speech writer for Lechín. Though Lechín remained within the 'nationalist' camp of the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario, he was greatly influenced by Lora whose written output was prodigious. The key expression of the Trotskyite viewpoint was the Thesis of Pulacayo, adopted by the FSTMB in late 1946 and an important reference point for labour politics ever since.

Book reviews

The third issue dealt with was the tension within the ranks of the POR between Lora's more pragmatic policies, loosely described as 'entrism', and the more militant policies of other groups, notably the POR-Lucha Obrera (again named after its newspaper) which verged from the 1960s into support for guerrilla operations. John argues that though these differences reflected splits within the Trotskyite movement worldwide, they were also a result of specific local divides.

John brings into play a mass of research into local and international archives, as well as a large number of interviews. Most of his sources are Trotskyite to the exclusion of others. This is a weakness. For most of the book his personal views are only hinted at, though in the concluding chapter he makes his position more explicit. He criticizes Lora and the POR-Masas for flirting with the 'nationalists' and ultimately, he argues, being used by them to maintain their influence over the labour movement. 'The program of Bolivian Trotskyists remained untested because in practice it chained itself to nationalist labour leaders. Revolutionary opportunities presented themselves, not once but repeatedly, yet at each new stage they returned to their old ways of leaning on Lechín and his political heirs' (p. 238). One is left wondering whether without Lechín the party would have enjoyed the influence it undoubtedly did. Although there is little mention here of present-day politics, the book ends with the Trotskyite critique of the 'reformist' Morales government and its willingness to 'conciliate with reaction' while 'clamping down' on the labour movement.

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