

BOOK REVIEWS

Embattled Garrisons: Comparative Base Politics and American Globalism

Kent E. Calder

Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007, 321pp.

ISBN 978-0-691-13463-5 (Paperback), \$24.95

The issue of overseas military presence is of crucial importance for the United States. Yet, despite the fact that American military strategy is heavily dependent on the US global posture, this topic has received rather limited scholarly attention to date. In *Embattled Garrisons*, Kent Calder offers an important first step in analyzing different types of politics that involve host nations and basing nations, countries that deploy forces overseas.

In this book, Calder aims to explore why host nations react differently to the presence of military of other countries. In other words, he tries to explain why some nations provide stable bases to the basing nation while others do not. He also aims to show how best to manage host-nation politics and maintain overseas bases once they have been established by major powers.

After discussing the historical development of overseas bases, Calder lays out five hypotheses explaining the positive and negative factors affecting the prospects for successful base management as involving contact, colonization, occupation, regime shift, and dictatorship. The contact hypothesis states that a contentious base politics pattern is likely

to emerge in densely populated countries or communities where chances of interaction between base inhabitants and the general community are high. The colonization hypothesis posits that the basing nation's history of colonizing the host nation will adversely affect the likelihood of maintaining the bases in that country. The occupation hypothesis asserts that stable base politics is likely when a non-colonial power, as a liberator, displace a totalitarian or illegitimate regime. The regime-shift hypothesis says that the political regime shift of a host nation, especially those that are in the process of democratization, could lead to the withdrawal of foreign forces. Finally, the dictatorship hypothesis suggests that a basing nation will tend to support dictators when its base facilities are considered valuable. Drawing on a variety of historical examples, he maintains that, in general, these hypotheses are strongly supported.

Calder also introduces various paradigms concerning base politics. He starts out by asserting that when dealing with base issues, leaders of a host nation often use a mixture of coercion and material compensation as policy tools. He then shows that four patterns of base politics are possible: (i) compensation politics, (ii) bazaar politics, (iii) fiat politics, and (iv) affective politics. Compensation politics is practiced heavily in Japan, where significant material payments flow from the host nation government to various interests that are adversely affected by the presence of foreign military. Coercion is not involved since mediating institutions such as the Defense Facilities Administration Agency (DFAA or *Boei shisetsu cho*) function to adjust local claims. Bazaar politics also involves compensation but from a basing nation in the form of base-rental payments and military sales. This type of politics is named after traditional commercial negotiations in the Middle East. Because the amount of compensation to be provided is uncertain, bazaar politics leads to extensive bargaining. Negotiations between Turkey and the United States in the question of granting US access to Turkey before the Iraq War of 2003 is a case in point. Fiat politics is the case in which material benefits are not provided and coercion is involved. This is the complete opposite of compensation politics and is often found in host nations ruled by dictators. Land for bases is confiscated with no or little compensation, and those who oppose the foreign military presence are treated harshly. This type of politics provides stable bases. As an example, Calder points to the case of South Korea before democratization in the mid-1980s. Finally, affective politics involves neither material

benefits nor coercion. In this paradigm, ethnic affinity, cultures, and values have more weight as the governing principles of base politics. For example, close ties among some Anglo-Saxon countries have been a positive factor in allowing American forces to stay, while for different cultures, such as those found in the Islamic world, a certain distance may define relations. For instance, American forces in Saudi Arabia are strictly isolated from the citizens and are required to follow local norms in public places.

Although these are ideal types, Calder finds that fiat politics and affective politics have become less widespread, and bazaar politics and compensation politics are becoming more prevalent in recent years. However, compensation politics, the most stable type, is costly to maintain and difficult to imitate. This leaves bazaar politics to be the main base politics paradigm that the United States must deal with in the foreseeable future. Yet, he suggests that a nonfinancial mediating mechanism like the DFAA found in Japan should be considered as an example of best practices and applied to other countries.

One of the characteristics of this book is that Calder emphasizes the importance of sub-national level analysis, particularly the rational decisions made by individuals and various organizations as well as the material incentives of each concerned party. He relies neither on national interest nor norms to analyze base politics as he questions the utility of such variables.

The strength of *Embattled Garrisons* is its approach to studying base politics. Most, if not all, works published earlier focus on detailed historical accounts or the military significance of various bases. On the other hand, Calder tries to seek generalizations and to establish a policy science of base politics (p. 2). This novel approach makes this book an indispensable theoretical study for political scientists interested in the analysis of overseas bases. Moreover, this book makes an interesting comparison with Alexander Cooley's *Base Politics* (2008). Cooley also examines what is referred to here as the regime-shift hypothesis but explores different variables such as contractual credibility of political institutions of host countries.

Embattled Garrisons is also valuable because it introduces various types of base politics encompassing different regions. Furthermore, it uses examples from not only the United States, but also other major powers such as the U.K., the former Soviet Union, and France as basing

nations. This comparative perspective makes this book highly significant as studies to date have tended to focus on the experience of only one country.

Like any other book, however, *Embattled Garrisons* has certain weaknesses. The first concerns the structure of the book. There are many interesting sub-arguments as well as important intervening variables introduced throughout the book. However, these critical points may be more enlightening to the reader if they were introduced at the beginning of the book. Second, although Calder claims that domestic individual actors of the host countries, and not national security strategy of the basing nations, decisively affect the withdrawal of overseas military bases (p. 45), his assertion may be overstated. Will Japan, for example, continue to spend a lot of time and money to support US forces in Japan if its security environment becomes more benign? Without taking into account the fact that Japan is heavily dependent on the United States for its own security, we cannot understand why Japan continues to engage in compensation politics. Calder, of course, does not totally dismiss geopolitical factors (p. 70). However, it is necessary to incorporate variables like international structure or the security environment of the host country further into his arguments and show under what conditions host nations engage in particular types of base politics. Without such an understanding, what he sees as the best practice may not be successfully applied to other host nations as they may be in very different security environments.

In summary, *Embattled Garrison* is an extremely valuable book that provides readers with a variety of angles with which to examine base politics. This is a must-read for scholars interested in interactions between the host nation and the basing nation, as well as policymakers who are keen on sustaining a US presence around the globe in the future.

Takafumi Ohtomo

University of Tsukuba

Tsukuba, Ibaraki, Japan

doi:10.1093/irap/lcn019

Advance Access published on 23 October 2008