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and the conclusion that the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction. He documents how the major response to these failures—the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004—focuses a great deal of attention on organizational issues. The Act sought to encourage more sharing and coordination by creating a new Office of the Director of National Intelligence, to focus more of the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s efforts on counterterrorism, and so on. The creation of the Department of Homeland Security a year earlier also focused heavily on organizational reform by merging a wide range of domestic security agencies into one cabinet-level department.

Betts’s main argument is that such organizational reform can, at best, marginally improve the performance of the intelligence community. The reason is that effective intelligence collection and analysis faces a range of far more challenging “inherent” enemies. It is simply very hard to do intelligence well all or even most of the time. Outside enemies actively seek to conceal their goals and capabilities. Collection efforts provide analysts with information that is ambiguous. Intelligence analysts are subject to psychological biases in information search, retrieval, and analysis. There are trade-offs between sharing intelligence widely and ensuring that secrets are kept secure. These inherent enemies of accurately assessing and predicting the behavior of others are the most important and intractable sources of intelligence failures. The difficulties of inadequate organization, while real, are far less important. This is why the benefits of reorganization are always limited; indeed, too-frequent reorganization itself imposes costs on the intelligence community and can contribute to intelligence failures.

Many who work in the intelligence community, or who have studied its operation, will recognize the insight of these ideas. And Betts does not mean to suggest that the inherent difficulties of intelligence excuse failure or, more to the point, mean that no improvement is possible. Instead, he makes a range of suggestions for improving intelligence that rely less on organizational fixes and more on addressing the inherent enemies he identifies.

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The Politics of Income Inequality in the United States by *Nathan Kelly*.
New York, Cambridge University Press, 2009. 216 pp. \$75.00.

What do we know about inequality in the United States? There is a lot of it, more so than in other advanced countries. Inequality has also increased sharply since the early 1970s, again more so than in most other advanced countries. Underlying this rise in inequality is a host of structural changes, including globalization, immigration, skill-based technological change, and industry shifts.

This assessment is widely accepted by analysts of all persuasions. Call this the first consensus on U.S. inequality, a consensus that one contemplates with considerable gloom and pessimism. If inequality is bad and getting worse due to structural factors like globalization that one can do little about, prospects look dim for mitigating the problem.

But wait. A second consensus may be emerging on U.S. inequality, a consensus that provides some grounds for optimism. This consensus, put in its simplest possible terms, is that politics matters. Politics has a very substantial effect on inequality, reducing it at times, while exacerbating it at others. And since politics, by definition, is more open to change than, say, an economic factor like globalization, this provides some hope that the trend toward rising inequality can be fought and perhaps even reversed.

This school of thought has been developing for some years and is associated most strongly with Larry Bartels and his influential book, *Unequal Democracy*. Nathan Kelly's new book, *The Politics of Income Inequality in the United States*, makes a worthy contribution to this school of thought by providing detailed analysis of the linkages and mechanisms that connect politics to inequality.

Kelly's most important finding is probably the role of "market conditioning" in the politics of inequality. Kelly defines market conditioning as government action that "produces economic outcomes different than those which would be produced by market forces in the absence of government action" (p. 41). Market conditioning encompasses a wide range of government actions, including education and workforce development, regulatory policy, and even social policy (for example, the availability of abortions). These actions affect inequality *prior* to redistributive government programs, conventionally viewed as the way government affects the distribution of economic outcomes. But Kelly finds that the market conditioning effect on inequality is also quite substantial and, in fact, is the chief avenue through which political change affects inequality.

More generally, Kelly clearly documents the connection between macro politics and inequality, finding that left (Democratic) control of government does reduce inequality. He further specifies this connection by finding that a liberal public mood leads to Democratic control of the presidency, which leads to liberal policies, which lead, in turn, to reduced inequality. So he is able to flesh out the macro politics model in a way that corresponds very nicely with theoretical expectations.

In light of the importance of Kelly's analysis, I wish I could report that the book is crisply written and that the pages practically turn themselves. Alas, I cannot. The book is almost unbearably dull to read, fully reflecting its origins as a doctoral dissertation. No opportunity is missed to go over (and over and over) theoretical debates in political science that connect to the author's argument and to weigh down even the most unassuming findings with a full load of political science jargon. That is a pity, because I think Kelly is on to something with his analysis. One hopes that his future efforts, now that he

has successfully escaped from dissertation land, will be a bit more lively and inviting to the reader.

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The Rise and Fall of Communism by Archie Brown. *New York, Ecco, 2009. 736 pp. \$35.99.*

In an ambitious new book, Archie Brown has put forth an expansive and definitive account of the communist experience. Rather than focusing on a specific country, region, or event, Brown takes a broad view of communism as a phenomenon, considering the multiplicity of factors that came together in the development and then demise of communism around the world. Few other books attempt to connect the dots of the communist experience in such a comprehensive way.

While the book provides an overall framework for understanding communism, one of its most valuable contributions is the constant reminder of the diversity and contradictions in the communist experience, namely, the gap between ideas and practice, the diversity within Eastern Europe and between Europe, Asia, and other parts of the world, the challenges to communist governments and their ability to withstand crises, and, of course, the contradiction between the apparent strength of communist systems and their surprisingly rapid fall in most, but not all places. The result is a wonderful mosaic in which distinctive elements—people, ideas, events, and structural conditions—have their place, but in which one can also see clearly the larger picture of the communist experience.

Part 1 of the book outlines the ideas behind communism, beginning with Karl Marx and other communist thinkers, and it also provides an overview of the establishment of the USSR as a communist state. The concluding chapter of part 1 sets out a theoretical framework for defining communism, consisting of six characteristics related to politics, the economy, and ideology. This parsimonious framework guides much of the rest of the book, in that it allows the reader to easily gauge what is meant by the establishment and dismantling of a communist system.

The post-war rise of communism is the subject of part 2, in which the chapters combine discussion of communism as an international movement with the distinctive trajectories in different countries. Part 3 considers the post-Stalin period and the zigzags in the development of communism around the world. These challenges and the ways in which they were handled reveal the complexity of communist systems. Part 4 takes the discussion of pressure on communism further by examining three critical challenges in greater detail, namely, organized dissent in Poland, reform in China under Deng Xiaoping, and the West as a comparison point.

Finally, part 5 takes us through the fall of communism in Eastern Europe and the end of the USSR itself. In this last section, Brown asks and answers all