Book reviews

International Relations theory

Africa and International Relations in the 21st century. Edited by Scarlett Cornelissen, Fantu Cheru and Timothy M. Shaw. Basingstoke: Palgrave. 2012. 272pp. Index. £57.50. ISBN 978 0 23023 528 1.

This edited volume has been published at the end of a year in which African actors have enjoyed almost unprecedented global attention. Protest movements across North Africa, but particularly in Egypt and Tunisia, captured headlines during the Arab Spring, and *Time* magazine named 'The protestor' as their person of the year for 2011. The world's newest state was born in South Sudan in June. The second half of the year was dominated by a violent revolt and civil war in Libya, against the backdrop of massive western intervention. As the year drew to a close, environmental diplomats and activists from across the world convened in Durban in December, as the possibility of a legally binding global successor to the Kyoto Protocol on climate change was hammered out. One might think, therefore, that the continued warnings from Africanists that most analyses of the continent's international politics continue to 'occur largely from a vantage point of detachment, exclusion and aberrance' (p. 2) might start to ring a little hollow.

On the contrary, this volume is an excellent reminder of the many problems and limitations that much International Relations (IR) theory faces when tasked with comprehending and explaining African politics. As such, it is a worthy successor to the influential *Africa's challenge to International Relations theory* (Palgrave, 2001), edited by Kevin Dunn and Timothy Shaw. Ten years on, this volume notes that while many of the same theoretical misconceptions and lacunas remain, new issues and developments in African politics have changed the landscape considerably. The editors observe that major new developments since 2001 include new challenges to African development regarding water and climate politics, the rise of the BRICs and the IBSA grouping (India, Brazil, South Africa), and the 'selective integration of African states into the world economy, leading to greater levels of intra-continental inequality and sharpened polarization' (p. 3). Indeed, Africa was among the fastest-growing regions of the world economically during the 2000s, and foreign interest in African land, minerals, oil and even consumer markets seems to be weathering the international economic crisis.

This volume is at its strongest when it points out the many insights African politics can hold for IR as a whole, such as the fact that 'so many of its cross-border relations are "informal", often illegal, and thus not counted in orthodox IR data' (p. 12). An impressive range of contributors advance these insights in a range of empirical cases and theoretical discussions. On the more empirical side, outstanding chapters include those by Thomas Kwesi Tieku on collectivist traditions within African governance institutions such as the African Union; Louise Wiuff Moe, whose detailed first-hand research on Somalia and

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Somaliland is deployed to critique mainstream discourses of 'state failure'; Alfred Zack-Williams discusses the role of diasporas in contributing to peace and state-building in Sierra Leone; Darshan Vigneswaran and Loren Landau present research findings from both large-n and qualitative data on the 'microlocalities' of South African immigration control; and Rita Abrahamsen reveals how private security provision—ranging from Executive Outcomes-style paramilitary adventures to the day-to-day provision of security in Cape Town city centre—'indicates a reconfiguration of the very categories of the public and the private, the global and the local' (p. 163). More theoretical chapters include Karen Smith's discussion of 'African knowledge' in the context of post-colonial debates about 'mimicry'; Ulf Engel and Gorm Rye Olsen's very persuasive account of the 'emergence of new regimes of territorialisation, including reordered states, complex transnational regimes, subnational entities, new localities and transboundary formations' (p. 51); and Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni's theoretically sophisticated discussion of xenophobia and identity through the work of theorists such as Achille Mbembe and Slavoj Žižek.

A concluding chapter by the editors flags up a range of impending issues and topics, which will continue to require innovative theoretical frameworks and empirical methodologies for their study, including new regionalisms, security reform, BRIC-Africa engagements, the global recession, diasporas and climate change. Yet they remain unconvinced 'whether conventional IR even comes close to understanding the African condition' (p. 208). Perhaps, however, one of the major differences in the discipline between 2001 and 2011 has been the increasing diversification of this 'conventional IR', and its usefulness and homogeneity as a straw-man target are perhaps sometimes overstated. Indeed, contributors to this volume draw extensively on concepts like transboundary formations, hybridity, post-territoriality, global assemblages and gendered insecurity, which can be found increasingly prominently within major IR journals and publishers. Comments along the lines that traditional IR is characterized by 'a deep-seated belief that non-whites have nothing to contribute to the making of world history' (p. 208) may be a little overdrawn, and perhaps do not reflect the diversity of the discipline or the different ways in which central IR concepts, issues and problems have been challenged and reworked from within. That said, this volume is a wonderful restatement of the ways in which African politics—in the words of the Dunn and Shaw title from 2001—continues to challenge IR theory, as well as illuminating a number of directions in which these challenges might take us.

Carl Death, Aberystwyth University, UK

International organization, law and ethics

Promoting democracy abroad: policy and performance. By Peter Burnell. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers. 2011. 396pp. £45.00. ISBN 978 1 41281 842 1.

Conceptual politics of democracy promotion. Edited by Christopher Hobson and Milja Kurki. London: Routledge. 2011. 260pp. Index. £85.00. ISBN 978 0 41559 687 9.

One consequence of the political turbulence in the Middle East and North Africa, ongoing for more than a year now, has been to refuel the academic and policy debate about the potential role of external actors in the democratization of countries. In the last decade, concerns about a global democratic 'recession', the rise of China as a model of authoritarian development and revulsion at US policies during the George W. Bush years led to a certain amount of pessimism and even lassitude about democracy promotion. The Arab Spring may not have overturned this completely, but it has shown the enduring relevance of the topic.

Regardless of the fluctuating engagement in democracy promotion as a policy by different countries, studies on this topic have slowly been gaining in sophistication and variety. Taken together, the two books reviewed here provide a wide and intriguing view of where things stand in democracy promotion, for good and for bad, and where they might be heading.

Promoting democracy abroad brings together articles and research papers by Peter Burnell, a leading scholar on the subject, covering the period from 2004 to 2010, i.e. when the 1990s' optimistic view about democracy promotion was fading and concerns about democracy's global prospects were rising. The founding joint editor of the journal *Democratization*, Burnell has made an invaluable contribution to democracy promotion studies. This collection shows the breadth and depth of his engagement with issues of policy practice and also, crucially, of the nature, challenges and limits of knowledge about the subject itself. The chapters in *Promoting democracy abroad* address in comprehensive, theoretically sophisticated and sometimes provocative ways the fundamental questions about where democracy promotion stands today as a practice and a subject of research. A sampling from their titles serves to summarize the overall story: 'Does international democracy promotion work?'; 'Recalibrating the research agenda'; 'The elusive quest for grand strategies'; 'Promoting democracy backwards?'; and 'Is there a new autocracy promotion?'. This could sum up a vast research agenda for years to come and Burnell sets out useful terms for it.

Crucially, like others, he stresses the point that for about three decades, democracy promotion has tended to follow the progress of democratization around the world, with its impact very much debatable. If the continuation of this progress is less taken for granted today, Burnell asks, 'A key question is how far democracy promotion studies can now lead rather than follow the development of democracy itself' (p. 8). From his different conclusions after years of research into this field, it is clear that this will be quite a challenge.

One of Burnell's conclusions is about the reluctance of what might be called 'mainstream' democracy promotion studies to engage more productively with critical and conceptual approaches. The contributions gathered in *Conceptual politics of democracy promotion*, edited by Christopher Hobson and Milja Kurki, form one attempt to bridge that gap. Hobson and Kurki argue that the problems encountered in democracy promotion, and the backlash against it in some cases, have provoked inadequate response at the theoretical and conceptual levels, in particular when it comes to how different actors understand such a contested concept as 'democracy'. The different contributors to the book take on the challenge of showing how research into democracy promotion is frequently undermined by an uncritical acceptance of key concepts and assumptions.

In principle, a conceptual approach opens up a near limitless scope for enquiries into democracy promotion, as is briefly shown by the varied cases in part two of the volume (country and sector case-studies, Orientalism, international law, history, International Relations). This is welcome, regardless of whether readers agree or disagree with the various arguments put forward.

It is not possible in the space of this review to do justice to the (very) different contributions to *Conceptual politics of democracy promotion*. It will suffice to point out that the conceptual approach can pay substantial dividends in the ongoing debate about the relationship between democracy and liberalism, which is central to much contestation of democracy promotion. The chapters by Beate Jahn and Sheri Berman on the democracy–liberalism nexus show this—Jahn by revisiting the Lockean idea of private property being constitutive of individual liberty and Berman by pointing out the lessons from the post-1945 European social-democratic approach to the relationship between state, market and society.

Hillary Charlesworth's detailed account of the evolution of concern with democracy in international law, meanwhile, shows that it has been based on a range of interpretations of the concept and yet reached a point that still fits quite closely—for some uncomfortably—a standard liberal western understanding. The case-studies by Jonas Wolff on the consequences of extending democratic inclusion to previously marginalized groups in Bolivia, and by Valerie Bunce and Sharon Wolchik on different conceptions of democracy for donors and recipients in the post-Soviet space, show the potential benefits of greater attention to conceptual issues in empirical research.

In his chapter, Richard Youngs strikes a cautionary note, however, warning that while the conceptual debates are worthwhile they are not the foremost problem that needs to be addressed in democracy promotion. He argues that for western democracy promoters the 'most serious pathology is governments' failure to defend core liberal norms in a way that would allow local variations and choices over democratic reform—along with genuine civic empowerment and emancipation—to flourish' (p. 100), and that in fact 'genuine doubt over the most suitable paths forward has reached the point where some actors are reduced to immobilism' (p. 112).

Nonetheless, Hobson and Kurki—backed up by the contributions to their book—make the important point that 'The pluralist ethic that informs a conceptual politics framework has potential to encourage greater consistency between the means and ends of democracy promotion' (p. 222). That may be true and to be hoped for, but democracy promoters continuing mostly to muddle through a thicket of issues is perhaps an equally likely prognosis for the foreseeable future, at least for as long as the question of who is doing the promoting and why remains the determining policy factor.

Nicolas Bouchet, Institute for the Study of the Americas, University of London, UK

All the missing souls: a personal history of the war crimes tribunals. By David Scheffer. Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press. 2012. 533pp. Index. £24.95. ISBN 978 0 69114 015 5. Available as e-book.

This story is one of death and immense pain and sorrow, but also of hope, redemption and justice. It recounts many of humanity's greatest tragedies, addressed—often belatedly—with the establishment of a new body of law. Jurisprudence, extracted from the pages of history and stained with the accusations of victor's justice, now provides redress for recent atrocities and hope for a better tomorrow.

Here we find the history of the birth of international atrocity law, as told by the physician responsible for the delivery. While primary sources of such overarching developments are often hard to come by, and primary sources written by one with an academic inclination an even rarer sort, David Scheffer, the first United States ambassador at large for war crimes, provides just that—the ultimate insider's life work, part autobiography, part documentation, all highly informative and enlightening. Indeed, much of the information contained in this text simply cannot be obtained from any other source. His accounts, based in large part on notes taken as the events unfolded, simply would not exist but for this book.

Scheffer structures his text around an analytical framework focused on redefining the approach to 'atrocity crimes', a term he coined shortly after leaving the US State Department. An atrocity crime must be widespread or systematic or part of a large-scale commission of such crimes, involving a large number of victims. It must be led by the ruling or powerful elite of the society. There is an international tradition or established practice of the various war crimes tribunals for holding individuals liable for such crimes. It is irrelevant

whether the crime occurred during times of war or peace or whether within one nation or across national borders. State action must be predicated on such a determination rather than specific requirements, such as the existence of genocidal intent.

Tethered by this conceptual anchor, Scheffer walks his readers through the formation of the International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda and the Former Yugoslavia, the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, the Special Court for Sierra Leone, and ultimately the International Criminal Court. These discussions address the atrocities precipitating the formation of the various tribunals, often including personal accounts with the highest-level offenders, local government officials, widows, orphans and those intentionally maimed and mutilated. Without focusing on the horrors for emotional effect, Scheffer conveys the overwhelming horrors he confronted, sometimes merely hours after mass murder had occurred, as well as many leaders' general disregard for their citizenry during such assaults.

Scheffer provides insight into the bureaucratic wrestling among the various state agencies, and the intricacies of negotiations with the United Nations, other international organizations such as NATO and the Economic Community of West African States, and the governments of countries whose populations had been victimized. In particular, he explains the tension between various camps, including those striving for legal accountability, those concerned with peace at all costs, and those concerned with military objectives and the protection of troops in the field. Issues often encountered include the provision of intelligence to the courts as well as their financial support.

Throughout the text, Scheffer presents his views of those whom he encountered while in the job—many names are familiar to the most casual of political observers, but often in roles very different from those with which they are usually linked. Many times, he praises their actions, but he does not spare feelings when telling his story. He is, perhaps, most critical of himself, as he shares his most disappointing hours—the lives lost that he might have been able to save had he made a different decision, the disappointment after having been told no longer to pursue his four-year effort to obtain the arrest of a particular war criminal, and the frustration of leaving tasks incomplete.

Scheffer completes his work with two key directives, built on the legacy he created while at the State Department. To those who would commit atrocities: you have no immunity. The war crimes tribunals have undisputedly determined that there is no impunity for perpetrators of atrocity crimes, regardless of head-of-state or diplomatic status. To the rest of the world: do not get caught up trying to define whether genocide has occurred. If atrocity crimes are being committed, then international organizations and governments need to act to prevent further violence rather than debate the precise nature of the acts.

Few truly have the opportunity to effect systematic change, yet that was precisely the role played by the author. Nonetheless, Scheffer's book leaves one with the impression—particularly in light of the challenges set out as he concludes his narrative—that, despite the extraordinary impact of his efforts as war crimes ambassador, his most important contributions are yet to come, as, freed from Washington bureaucracy, he can continue to develop and share his keen insights and unique understanding with the world.

Matthew Kane

Conflict, security and defence*

NATO: the power of partnerships. Edited by Håkan Edström, Janne Haaland Matlary and Magnus Petersson. Basingstoke: Palgrave. 2011. 224pp. Index. £57.50. ISBN 978 0 23027 377 1.

NATO's many different forms of partnership have been a stable diet for 'NATO watchers' since 1990 when the alliance decided to 'stretch out the hand of friendship' to its former adversaries. Since then NATO's partnership programme has developed into a complex network of different forms of relationship and many of those to whom 'the hand of friendship' was originally extended have now become full members of the alliance. Even so, the editors of *NATO: the power of partnerships* are right in pointing out that the organization's partnerships have received relatively little attention in the literature on NATO. The volume is therefore a welcome addition to the ever changing nature of this topic.

A recurrent theme through the volume is the question of utility. What is the utility of partnerships for NATO and what utility do partners derive from their partnership? Perhaps the main contribution of the volume is the clarity with which it is demonstrated that 'the utility *for* NATO and utility *of* NATO' are highly contingent and by no means overlapping, and that for most partners the relationship with NATO is seen as an auxiliary to other relationships—most notably the relationship with the United States (Australia and Argentina) and the relationship with the European Union (Sweden and Finland). Moreover, the volume clearly demonstrates that the value of partnerships for NATO has changed over time from a prominence of political utility to military utility. Indeed, as pointed out in the introductory chapter, a willing and contributing partner can be more valuable for the alliance than a reluctant member.

The chapters in the volume follow a categorization of different partners introduced by the editors, which distinguishes between those who see NATO as a complement to the United States; potential NATO members; and those who see NATO as a complement to the European Union. A fourth category is added (though not listed) called 'potential NATO partners', which includes states labelled as major non-NATO allies (MENA) (Argentina, Pakistan, the Philippines and Thailand). Perhaps the major weakness of the volume is this categorization and the subsequent organization of the book into chapters that first look at the utility *for* NATO in relation to each of the four categories, and then the utility *of* NATO to a sample country within each category. The categorization seems illogical; the addition of the fourth category of potential partners is easily confused with the second category of potential members; and it is hard to see why the relationship with the four MENA countries is prioritized over other emerging relationships such as with China, India and Brazil. This is despite the fact that NATO's Secretary General, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, has stated on several occasions the need for the alliance to develop global 'connectivity' through new relationships. Yet apart from the front cover and a brief note in the chapter by Stephan Frühling and Benjamin Schreer, there is no mention of these plans in the volume, nor is there any reference to the new Strategic Concept or the discussions and seminars about partnerships in the long run-up to the adoption of the 2010 Strategic Concept.

The volume contains a number of excellent chapters, although in terms of utility for the reader, the most useful chapters are probably those dealing with the utility *of* NATO for different partners. However, although useful, the choice of examples seems at times

* See also Anthony King, *The transformation of Europe's armed forces: from the Rhine to Afghanistan*, pp. 424–25; Adekeye Adebajo, *UN peacekeeping in Africa: from the Suez crisis to the Sudan conflicts*, pp. 436–37; and William Reno, *Warfare in independent Africa*, pp. 438–40.

rather odd. For instance, why is Ukraine chosen as an example of the group of 'potential NATO members' when the chapter clearly states that this country has no intention of membership? Moreover, why is Macedonia completely absent from the list of potential members? The volume would have benefited from a broader selection of country-specific chapters instead of the chapters dealing with the utility for NATO *vis-à-vis* the four identified categories. A single comprehensive chapter on the utility of partnerships for NATO with a more thorough description of NATO's partnership policy—rather than simply stating that NATO has no policy on partnership—would have been more useful for the reader. This is particularly so as the 2010 Strategic Concept (the closest NATO comes to a policy document) contains a whole section on partnerships. Even if the volume was already in production by the time of the adoption of the Strategic Concept in November 2010, the analysis and recommendations of the Group of Experts (published in May 2010) on which the 2010 Strategic Concept was based contained no less than eight pages on partnerships. It therefore seems to stretch it a bit to say that NATO has no policy on partnerships, and rather odd not to include a thorough analysis of the internal debate on partnerships in NATO in the time before the adoption of the new Strategic Concept.

Trine Flockhart, Danish Institute for International Studies, Denmark

The shadow world: inside the global arms trade. By Andrew Feinstein. London: Hamish Hamilton. 2011. 672pp. Index. £25.00. ISBN 978 0 24114 441 1. Available as e-book.

Small arms, crime and conflict: global governance and the threat of armed violence. Edited by Owen Greene and Nicholas Marsh. Abingdon: Routledge. 2012. 301pp. Index. Pb.: £80.00. ISBN 978 0 41557 755 7.

With efforts at the United Nations to secure an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) at its final conference in July and the review conference of the UN Programme of Action on Illicit Small Arms, 2012 marks an important moment to reflect on the global arms trade, its impact and prospects for regulation. Andrew Feinstein is a journalist and former African National Congress Member of Parliament in South Africa, who has recently co-founded an anti-corruption non-governmental organization (NGO), Corruption Watch. His interest in the arms trade stems from personal experience when trying to investigate a massive arms deal between South Africa, the United Kingdom, Sweden and Germany, and the central role that BAE played in this. Feinstein's chapter nine is a good summary drawing on evidence gleaned from court documents in South Africa, a leaked report in Germany and evidence from Swedish prosecutors. It is a compelling chapter on how corrosive an effect the international arms trade can have on institutions, including Britain's Serious Fraud Office.

Feinstein is ambitious: he tries to track the global arms industry from the 1920s, illustrating opacity, duplicity, national interest or self-interest and greed as drivers. British and American firms feature significantly in the book, as does the importance of markets like Saudi Arabia for arms sales. A small German company that used Nazi networks after 1945, including Gerhard Mertins, also features. A partnership between Mertins and various others resulted in a formidable arms-dealing force in the 1950s and 1960s, especially in the Middle East and South America; in the 1970s, Mertins was connected to the Iran–Contra affair. Throughout the book, Feinstein is at pains to illustrate double-dealing, deception and lack of loyalty to country or ideology or even close business partners: 'there is nothing innocent about the British Virgin Islands' (p. 85), he reminds us, in regard to their use as an offshore haven to channel arms deals. When supporting the Afghan *mujahedin*, the Central Intelligence Agency ordered guns from Israel, bullets from Egypt and cut-price

AK-47s from China, 'to keep American prints off the operation' (p. 245): a salutary lesson for arms inspectors, or NGO advocates, who might assume that the presence of a weapon or ammunition type automatically indicates direct complicity of the manufacturer.

The trouble with this book is that it is over-ambitious, jumping between examples, attempting to be a historical record, but also providing moral commentary. This makes it at times difficult to read. The author is also selective, focusing particularly on the western arms business and arms brokers and intermediaries. Feinstein conveys a sense of continuity rather than change in this business, yet my own experience has shown how one can divide it into different episodes. Feinstein acknowledges that after 9/11, intergovernmental contracts swung back into favour. The book would also have benefited from counter-balancing chapters on Iran, North Korea, Russia and China.

The book contains errors, for instance on how the US congressional oversight system works; in stating that the Angolans dropped arms dealer Victor Bout in 1998, when in fact he continued double-dipping operations there into the next decade (according to banking records); and in arguing that Charles Taylor's diamond nexus was linked to Al-Qaeda, when Belgium Federal Police and UN investigations showed links to radical Islamist groups in Lebanon such as Amal and Hezbollah—a significant distinction.

The author does acknowledge where there has been progress. In particular since 9/11, the US Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) has been used more proactively against smaller operators. Sting operations by US law enforcement agencies have been used in the cases of Monzer Al-Kassar, Victor Bout and Amir Ardebili, an Iranian arms procurer. In 2009 there were three trails of four individuals in FCPA cases, equalling the number of trails in the preceding seven years. In contrast, BAE received a huge fine in order to escape prosecution for corrupt practices.

Feinstein concludes that while 'the manufacture of weapons and related matériel may contribute to our general security, it always comes with a range of undesirable consequences' (p. 525). He argues for an international arms trade treaty, to include strong, enforceable anti-corruption mechanisms and greater transparency. He warns, correctly, that a weak treaty might be more damaging than no treaty at all. Governments and NGO advocates clearly need to consider this.

Small arms, crime and conflict, in contrast, is an academic book focusing on small arms and light weapons (SALW), edited by Owen Greene from Bradford University and Nicholas Marsh from the Peace Research Institute Oslo. Marsh chaired the European Cooperation in Science and Technology (Cost Action A25) initiative between 2004 and 2008, which brought together the authors of this publication and others (including this reviewer in 2007 and 2008). Although this initiative ended some four years ago, the issues have not changed much regarding SALW, and the chapters in the book examine changing thinking from 2004 to 2010.

The book's strength consists in its sharp focus on SALW and its examination of the linkages between these and violence. It is a useful resource to complement the annual small arms survey reports that many of the authors in this book have also contributed to over the years. The number of researchers on SALW has grown from less than a dozen in the 1990s to over 200 in 2010 and many of the authors in this book are part of this new scholarship. The volume has three main parts, each with an introduction: on large-scale, organized violence; on armed violence and societies; and governance responses to armed violence.

Michael Bourne's chapter three is solid. He argues that illicit movements of weapons are not part of an amorphous global black market but are structured (supporting Feinstein's argument). Chapter five by Joakim Kreutz, Nicholas Marsh and Manuela Torre argues

that regaining control over weapons is a key means by which a government re-establishes authority post-conflict. Indeed, I remember from my own field research in Mozambique almost 20 years ago that residents refused for many years post-conflict to tell the police where weapons caches were hidden as they lacked trust in them. They trusted the faith groups and international mine clearance operations such as the Mines Advisory Group, Halo and Norwegian People's Aid.

Owen Greene and Nicolas Marsh's chapter 14 effectively reviews the range of policy responses and agreements designed to enhance regulation and control of SALW, and concludes that although there has been progress, there needs to be radical rethinking. This book is excellent in reviewing past research into SALW, challenging it, and providing new insights. It does, though, fail to suggest new entry points for policy-makers, other than highlighting areas for continued research. Both books document the complexities and challenges, but fail succinctly to map out bold policy options. Advocacy NGOs are doing this, but I imagine we will need reflective work on lessons from the final ATT conference in July 2012 to be written soon.

Alex Vines, Chatham House, UK

The rise and fall of Al-Qaeda. By Fawaz A. Gerges. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2011. 214pp. Index. £15.99. ISBN 978 0 19979 065 4.

The central theme of Fawaz Gerges's book is that Al-Qaeda is a decapitated beast that the western security establishment continues to keep alive through an exaggerated digest of threat reporting on the group's capability. 'Few in the West—Americans specifically—realize that their fear of terrorism is misplaced' (p. 5). According to Gerges, Al-Qaeda is a spent force that will die if we finally allow it to die.

Naturally, this is a simplified summary of a short book that does an apt job of tracking the rise and fall of Al-Qaeda and the ideology that it expounds. Much of the ground covered has been examined before, but calling upon a long experience as an observer of Arab politics as well as on interviews with individuals drawn to the flame of jihad, Gerges is able to advance his sense of Al-Qaeda in a concise way.

The author's vision of Al-Qaeda and its history is one that broadly accords with the general strain of thinking about the group, but with a few key differences. For example, he claims that Sayyid Qutb, the Egyptian radical thinker whose text *Milestones* (Dar al-Shuruq, 1964) is considered a seminal jihadist text, was never actually as anti-American as he is made out to be, citing as sources individuals who knew the man. He specifies 'Qutb did not advocate an armed confrontation with the United States, even though he lashed out angrily against its crusading spirit' (p. 33). Qutb, he concludes, 'was a theorist of domestic jihadism, not al-Qaeda's transnational jihadism' (p. 34). All of which may be true, but nonetheless, does not deter from the impact that Qutb's writing clearly had on numerous radicals, Al-Qaeda not least.

Gerges also takes a fresh view of the notion that it was the more experienced Ayman al-Zawahiri who pushed Osama bin Laden into the direction of global jihad. Many other texts have been written that suggest that it was the impressionable young Saudi who was drawn in by the Egyptian jihadist—but Gerges turns this on its head by describing how a financially starved Zawahiri was 'forced … to embrace bin Laden's agenda' (p. 58). This view is interesting as it elevates Osama; previous visions have painted him as a naive in the thrall of the experienced Egyptian jihadis (one example of this might be Steve Coll's excellent *The Bin Ladens: an Arabian family in the American century*, Penguin, 2008).

However, while Gerges is on sure footing when discussing internal Al-Qaeda or Arab politics and literature (of which he is clearly a deep scholar), he seems less certain when analysing how this narrative is expressed in the West. It is, for example, very unlikely that the Dr Fadl recantations (a long series of publications by a former senior Egyptian jihadist and close friend of al-Zawahiri's, condemning his former comrade) had any particular resonance among the community of young men that produced the 7 July 2005 bombers, or the network that was disrupted at Christmas 2010 planning a bombing campaign in London, or the many young radicals drawn to fight in Pakistan, Somalia or Yemen. The truth is, and this is a detail that seems too often missed by erudite analysts with deep knowledge of Arabian politics and literature, that many of the young men and women atop security services concerns are actually not that religiously or intellectually engaged with the ideas they are fighting for. Clearly, they have engaged with the ideas at some level and have been persuaded by them, but there are only a few who are as committed to the intellectual exercise that underpins the revolution.

On some battlefields, this issue has resolved itself with the respective regional Al-Qaeda affiliate simply using those foreigners who do show up as cannon fodder—Iraq and Somalia distinguish themselves in this direction. And in others, these foreigners are trained and dispatched back to where they came from with directions to conduct an attack. As Gerges puts it, these people may not be the 'Afghan pioneers' (p. 197) who bravely fought off the Soviet Union with the zeal of Allah burning within them (and a few weapons courtesy of America and Saudi money), but they are nonetheless a threat and one that continues to alarm security services in the West. Gerges is not correct in stating that Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula is the only group attempting to attack the West (p. 128)—the Tehrik e Taliban Pakistan has demonstrated a repeated desire to strike—most recently in New York's Times Square in 2011, but back in 2008 a cell directed by the group attempted a mass casualty attack on Barcelona's underground system. Similarly, Al-Qaeda's core in Waziristan continues to offer training for young men and women who make the journey—that many have been disrupted may be a testament to their idiocy and effective counterterrorism, but it would be incorrect to say that it does not still happen.

The book contains occasional, rather angry swipes at fellow terrorism analysts or academics (Rohan Gunaratna comes under particularly heavy fire). Gerges concludes that the war will go on as long as the United States is 'embroiled in foreign lands' (p. 200). It is undeniable that American involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq is something that has acted as an accelerant to the transnational jihadist trend that had been building prior to 9/11, but it is not equally clear that an abrupt withdrawal from those two countries will suddenly bring things to a close. It is worth remembering that jihadists do not only cite those two battlefields as their *raison d'être*; rather a panoply of locations like Bosnia, Chechnya, Kashmir, Xinjiang and, of course, Palestine light their zealous fires. In their eyes, all of these remain unresolved and were in fact unresolved prior to 9/11 too—suggesting that it is perfectly possible this anger will outlive the American withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Raffaello Pantucci, The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation, UK

The 9/11 wars. By Jason Burke. London: Allen Lane. 2011. 736pp. Index. £30.00. ISBN 978 1 84614 274 1. Available as e-book.

The 'post-9/11 world' is over. Osama bin Laden has been killed, the last US troops have travelled home from Iraq, and from Kabul to Washington to Brussels political and military leaders continue to search for a mutually beneficial strategy for the removal of ISAF combat

troops from Afghanistan. Indeed, even in the acrimonious contest for the Republican candidacy in the United States, foreign policy is widely considered to be a 'non-issue'. As President Obama recently announced from the Pentagon, the United States seeks to command a strong presence in the Pacific century, and in doing so, will focus on economic regeneration at home rather than ambitious nation-building projects abroad. The White House strategy of 'leading from behind' during NATO's operation in Libya is very much in keeping with the 'pivot' towards Asia, and the diversion of resources and attention from Brussels to Beijing is likely to be a sign of things to come.

In such an era, therefore, one wonders whether Jason Burke's latest book on *The 9/11 wars* will swiftly be removed from the shelves of current affairs and relegated to the realm of historical texts. As in previous books on militant Islam, Burke gives a comprehensive account of the rise and fall of Al-Qaeda, and the West's political and military responses to that challenge throughout the decade. Descriptive prose and abundant detail contribute to the substantive length of the work; however, Burke's background as a British journalist based in South Asia means he is able to give an account of the 9/11 wars which is not filtered through the lens of the US interest or policy sphere, thus making it a welcome addition to the existing literature on the wars of national security of the last decade.

So, what are some of the features of the 9/11 wars? Again, building on previous works, Burke neatly describes the defining characteristic of these wars as the blurring of boundaries between local and global, foreign and domestic, inside and outside, the frontline of which, as he posits, 'was poorly defined, invisible and intangible' (p. 299). In describing both the insurgent movements in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the western responses to these movements, Burke writes of the 'violence dealt to civilians by all parties, the brutalization of prisoners, the continuing importance of the image and of spectacular violence broadcast to as large an audience as possible, the critical interplay between the local identities and global narratives and ideologies, and the systematic use of misinformation' (pp. 97–8). Such a complex strategic environment—in which insurgency and counter-insurgency (COIN) became the norm rather than a sideshow—raised significant questions about the ethics of the use of force, and placed significant demand not only on international legal jurists but also on the authors of military doctrine, who made the western response to insurgency mainstream military strategy in the US Army Field Manual 3-24.

Unfortunately, however, the success of 'Petraeus's boys' in applying the COIN strategy of 'Shape, clear, hold, build' in Iraq was not mirrored when it was subsequently applied to western military engagement in Afghanistan (p. 437). Although the Taleban capitalized on successes in the Iraqi insurgency (for example, in adopting the tactic of suicide bombing), the success of this feedback from Iraq was not matched by the application of COIN in Afghanistan. In June 2011, with an election year looming, President Obama decided to reverse the troop surge he had authorized 18 months before, and Washington's 'Af-Pak' strategy changed tack once again, from troop-heavy COIN to drone-based counterterrorism operations. As Burke observes, 'Western nations are democracies and, as most people prefer their wars short and victorious, long-term overseas commitments win few votes' (p. 439).

The thinking behind President Obama's push to exit the 9/11 wars with a lighter footprint is perhaps best reflected in the speech he delivered at Cairo University in June 2009 entitled 'A new beginning', in which he maintained that 'no system of government can or should be imposed by one nation on any other' (cited on p. 405). Eighteen months later, when a self-immolation in Tunisia and the tools of Twitter and Facebook ushered radical change from within throughout the Middle East, it became clear that conflict in the Muslim world was no longer the preserve of the key protagonists of the 9/11 wars—that

is, between global Salafi jihadists and the western value-laden military response to that insurgency—but battles were now waged by those fighting for local translations of democracy and by their incumbent autocratic governments. Notwithstanding that a year on from the initial protests in Egypt, spring may have turned into a long winter, the events of the Arab Spring (which, with the exception of Libya, demonstrates the resolve for change from within, rather than externally imposed from abroad) have in many ways brought an end to the era of the 'post-9/11 world'.

Accordingly, will Burke's text be considered a history, or might it have something to tell us about the current contours of international politics? In the book, the author distils three enduring lessons of the 9/11 wars: 'how one generation can bequeath violence to another, how routes into activism vary and how militancy so often remains very localized indeed' (p. 466). *The 9/11 wars* is therefore a key text in highlighting and explaining the enduring complexities with which the West will be forced to grapple in South Asia. Although ISAF's withdrawal from Afghanistan is imminent, instability, violence and the potential for state failure in Pakistan are unlikely to disappear. The trick is, therefore, for western policy-makers to take Burke's lessons on board, and to actually invert the strategy of the 9/11 wars—that of short bursts of shock-and-awe tactics coupled with attention deficit disorder—towards a more sustainable engagement with Islamabad, based on low-intensity firepower and a continuous attention span. The clear requirement for the United States is therefore to reverse the trends of the last decade and work towards a sustainable relationship with Pakistan, which should be at the forefront of any western participation in the Asian century.

Alexis Crow, International Security Programme, Chatham House

Losing small wars: British military failure in Iraq and Afghanistan. By Frank Ledwidge. London and New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. 2011. 304pp. £22.50. ISBN 978 0 30016 671 2. Available as e-book.

Within the rapidly expanding body of work covering the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, Frank Ledwidge, a former military intelligence officer who served in Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan, has produced a 'must-read' book on the subject. He covers a wide range of topics including strategy, planning, military culture and the operations themselves.

Ledwidge's criticism of the two campaigns rests almost exclusively on the heads of the generals, military planners and the political elite, and not on those ordinary soldiers and junior officers who have been on the front line. Ledwidge clearly respects these folk who have carried out their difficult and dangerous tasks with inadequate equipment and, as he argues, inadequate intellectual support from their higher command and political masters. This is a modern variant of the 'lions led by donkeys' critique that so marks the public understanding of the First World War.

Ledwidge's analysis of the campaigns concludes that the British were without appropriate military doctrine; without an awareness of the operational, or cultural environment they were working in; and moreover, that they had not been given a coherent strategy or adequate equipment to work with. Even worse, the higher command believed dogmatically that the British were superior to the Americans at counterinsurgency because of their history in Northern Ireland and in Malaya. *Losing small wars* outlines, in impressive detail, the important differences between these various campaigns, and also how the Americans came to employ social scientists and anthropologists to understand the concerns of the local populations, and then to devise their own doctrine for a war that was set among the people

and from which very little intelligence was available. It was not that the Americans were doing something un-British; it was, as Ledwidge makes clear, that the British had failed to learn their own lessons.

Ledwidge's scorn for the UK Defence Academy is stark, particularly the Higher Command Staff Course, which he says is extremely problematic. The absence of strategic thought, of an encouragement to think strategically, and of the training to do so are all points well made, and have become part of a sustained critique of the Ministry of Defence and the military by parliamentarians and commentators alike. This professional culture is at direct odds with American military culture, where innovative thinking is actively encouraged and embraced. The author points towards the British military's 'can-do' attitude, and the British public's acquiescence in a narrative of the country punching above its weight as contributory factors in this malaise. The 'can-do' attitude of the highest-ranking officers, even in the face of inadequate budgets, equipping and man numbers merely sets up the military to fail. Indeed, Ledwidge paints a picture of a supine and self-defeating military leadership whose failure to speak truths to the government quickly reduced the campaign in Afghanistan (in particular) from one where the initial objective was the total defeat of insurgent forces to the present one, where it would be a success to have a functioning Afghan government and military able to provide security, legal certainty and economic growth: something which seems highly unlikely to be achieved by 2015.

While this book is mostly excellently written there were some typographical errors (for example on the names of Sir Lawrence Freedman and Andrew Dorman), which would be nice to see ironed out for the paperback version. It is, though, a nicely presented book, and one which should make a strong contribution to a debate in public policy circles about the sorts of campaigns the British military engages in, and how these campaigns are intellectually underpinned. The criticism of the education, training and culture of the British officer class is both damning and worthy of attention by all the relevant stakeholders. But Ledwidge's book is not just a condemnation of the defence community and their political masters, it offers an opportunity. This opportunity is a chance really to resolve the classic 'East of Suez' dilemma (and its modern variant) once and for all. It is well beyond time that Britain had an appropriate strategy and an appropriate understanding that it is an influential, but not hegemonic, middle-sized power. Ledwidge's book is a first-class contribution to this debate.

Robert Dover, Loughborough University, UK

Governance, civil society and cultural politics

Radicalism and political reform in the Islamic and western worlds. By Kai Hafez. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2010. 253pp. Index. Pb.: £18.99. ISBN 978 0 52113 711 9.

Kai Hafez argues that there has been a resurgence of Islamism due to the failure of autocratic Arab and Muslim regimes to fulfil their promises of modernization and modernity. These regimes promised that the adoption of leftist ideologies that cater to Muslim sensibilities would lead to the modernization of society, thus improving the economic and social infrastructure (pp. 24–5; 153–87). The failure to deliver the regimes' promises made the populace resort to an alternative ideology—political Islam—in the hope that it would bring about the desired change coupled with societal improvement. This is achievable because Islam is a religion of a holistic nature, including religious edicts regarding the interaction between

believers and God on the one hand, and among the believers themselves on the other (pp. 23–8; 82–3).

Hafez's book is divided into three main themes: modernity, democracy and political violence. He is careful to make the distinction between modernity and modernization, while most authors use these terms interchangeably. According to Hafez, 'western modernization theory has been concerned with the question of why the West has attained a hegemonic position in politics, economy, and science over the last five hundred years, while other parts of the world have lagged behind' (p. 19). Concerning modernity, he writes, 'In the history of the West, the term "modernity" refers to profound social and political shift' (p. 15).

However, he does mix key concepts and terms such as the 'modernization of modernity', 'reflexive modernity' (p. 15) and 'political modernity' (p. 44) without clearly defining what he means. Concerning cultural modernity, Jürgen Habermas has argued that a secular society 'is not completely without religion, but religion loses its coercive character through the process of secularization' (p. 30). Building on that, the author concludes, 'it is by no means the case that secularism is totally disapproved of in contemporary Islamic societies. There are certainly more "cultural" than strict Muslims in the Islamic world' (p. 219).

Hafez affirms that fundamentalist ideologies in general, and Islamic fundamentalism in particular, 'are modern ideologies in traditional garb' (p. 41). He concludes his dense, polemical first chapter by arguing, 'Calls for a community with shared Islamic values, one that combines old and new, by no means inevitably contradict the Western minimum consensus on political modernity' (p. 44).

While the likes of Peter Sloterdijk reduce political Islam to 'hatred and menace', claiming it is 'fundamentally anti-modern', Hafez's main argument is a rebuttal of such contentions: 'political Islam, in all its forms up to and including fundamentalism, might prepare the ground for the political inclusion of the Islamic world in a largely consensual project of modernity' (p. 218). In other words, Hafez uses the intuitive, self-evident argument that the West had passed through the same cycle and trajectory, or the process of 'internal reform', which the Arab and Muslim world has been undergoing for some time. Thus, before embracing liberal democratic values, 'western political ideologies' roughly passed through the following phases: from totalitarian and authoritarian regimes; to tyrannical regimes and political violence; to anti-Semitism, genocide and apartheid; to all kinds of discrimination and human rights violations; and so on. Likewise, Islamism or 'political Islam' has undergone or is undergoing a similar process (pp. 141–69).

After all, Europe 'broke with dictatorship only a few decades ago' (p. 218), the same Europe that had colonized most Muslim lands, practising its ideological hegemony and imperialism which had crafted the 'artificial' borders among Arab and Muslim countries, creating modern nation-states instead of tribalism and patrimony. Hafez argues that reducing political Islam to political violence and terrorism is counterproductive, since it is just a process of development, and because only a small number of Islamic groups resort to such means. Besides, the literature seems to ignore or sideline non-violent forms of struggle, which are embraced by many Muslims who risk their lives to achieve their objectives. Indeed, Hafez argues that the sizeable majority of Islamic movements have accommodated their protest and militancy from bullets to ballots by contesting elections and participating in the apparatus of the modern state that they were previously fighting (pp. 170–215). Thus, they moved from anathema to integration, embracing the bumpy road to modernity in all its aspects: political, economic and cultural. This insightful analysis seems to anticipate the Arab Spring, with all its ills and victories.

This well-thought, well-written, well-argued book is a welcome addition to the debate on Islam, democracy and modernity. It aims at shattering stereotypes and well-ingrained ideas about the alleged militancy of Islamism or 'political Islam' and its anti-democratic character as well as its opposition to modernity. The remarkable ease and clarity with which Hafez writes render this book a joy to read.

Joseph Alagha, Leiden University, The Netherlands

The leaderless revolution: how ordinary people will take power and change politics in the 21st century. By Carne Ross. London: Simon & Schuster. 2011. 272pp. Index. £16.99. ISBN 978 1 84737 534 6. Available as e-book.

Why it's kicking off everywhere: the new global revolutions. By Paul Mason. London: Verso. 2012. 224pp. Pb.: £12.99. ISBN 978 1 84467 851 8.

Frequently described as a 'high flying former diplomat', Carne Ross resigned from the Foreign Office over the Iraq War. Being so close to mechanisms of power provided him with an understanding that ultimately shook his belief in our national and international systems of government. Indeed, the author admits that he does not come up with his arguments 'by way of academic study, or historical research. I know this because I once did it'. Ross's earlier work, *Independent diplomat* (Hurst, 2007), was an exorcism of his institutional past, while his latest effort is a far more ambitious attempt to outline a better future for global governance.

Ross, now running his own diplomatic consultancy, has transformed himself into a thinking man's neo-anarchist whose book outlines both the failures of representative democracy in the era of globalization and ways in which empowered individuals can succeed in the future. The author's central point revolves around the failure of institutions to meet people's aspirations. Global surveys confirm that while people prefer democracy, as Ross puts it, 'they are less and less happy with the practice of democratic government'. The nation-state represents an archaic and ill-fitting answer to multifaceted non-localized issues, brought on by the pressures of globalization and climate change. From flu epidemics to the spread of rioting, he carefully plots the ways in which our interconnectedness has led to problems that require global cooperation to solve. However, the best efforts at multilateral cooperation have yet to deliver the answers. Ross parallels the enormous rhetoric of the 2005 G8's promise to 'make poverty history' with the reality of its 'utter failure' to do so given a shortfall in pledges of US$20 billion.

The spine of his 'nine point manifesto' is the concept of anarchism. Ross traces its political conception to dispel the images of violent and balaclava-clad anarchists who are responsible for a largely false picture of the true movement. Rather than a chaos-filled power vacuum, he envisages a gradual shift towards self-organized systems, which he argues are best for the twenty-first century. Ross finds that 'if people do not have responsibility', then we should not 'expect them to behave responsibly', while observing the ultimate paradox of well-meaning government that the more it 'seeks to act to tackle particular problems, the less that individuals are likely to feel responsible for them'. The power of human agency is fundamental to his argument: 'do stuff for yourself rather than asking a government or others to do it; address political concerns directly to those in power; use non-violent methods and always act as if the means are the end; and embody the political principles you're trying to promote'. Ross uses the case-study of the Brazilian city of Porto Alegre to highlight his belief that sustained participatory or deliberative democracy shows that 'better outcomes result when citizens are directly involved in decisions over their own lives'. The

author argues that the systems of domestic and international governance will continue to prevail until 'those in whose name they claim to function withdraw their consent'.

The withdrawal of consent from the hegemonic modes of governance would appear to be the ultimate barometer of the success of Ross's *The leaderless revolution*. However, the author fails to explain how a global consciousness going beyond 'what we don't want' to articulate and promote 'what we do—the change we want to see' might actually emerge. Both the Arab Spring and the Occupy movement, defining events of 2011, have demonstrated that, in this case, rejecting authoritarian rule and modern capitalism has not in itself resulted in a fundamentally different global dynamic. Ross is correct that if the elites do not address existing imbalances then the people will act: 'The less people have agency—control—over their own affairs, and the less command they feel over their futures and their circumstances, the more inclined they are to take to the street'. Yet he admits that 'the world is complicated; it requires professionals to sort it out'. Ross makes the excellent point that when Barack Obama promised to 'change politics', galvanizing millions across America, he meant that he as the President, not the masses, would change things: 'government is not about mass collective action, only getting someone elected is'.

Paul Mason's *Why it's kicking off everywhere* is an equally ambitious attempt to provide a journalistic account of the underpinnings behind the revolutions and protest movements of the past few years. The book is an extended edition of a blog post that went viral and Mason is far more positive about the role of technology, what he defines as his 'technological-determinist approach' than Ross is. Indeed, Ross makes the powerful argument that technology can detach people from one another and the more detached they are, 'the more they can cloak themselves in anonymity and be shielded from the consequences of their views, the more violent, hostile and irresponsible they are likely to be'. Mason is far more comfortable with 'social media's power to present unmediated reality'. His main argument is that modern technology has allowed 'networked individuals' to overcome collective institutions which are unfit for purpose, in essence that 'a network can usually defeat a hierarchy'. These networks of organization led to security services in Tunisia and Egypt being bypassed by protesters.

Mason agrees with Ross that 'we are in the middle of a revolution: something wider than a pure political overthrow and narrower than the classic social revolutions of the twentieth century'. He sees the ingredients for this revolution as a combination of the 'radicalized, secular-leaning youth; a repressed workers' movement with considerable social power; uncontrollable social media and the restive urban poor'. Although it is global in nature there are significant variations in its success: in the United Kingdom, for example, there has been a 'crisis' of protesters as 'students got wrapped up in exams; the trade unions began negotiations over pensions; the small group of activists behind UK Uncut went into a defensive huddle; and the anarchists engaged in mutual recrimination'.

However, the book poses more questions than it does answers and can be guilty of trying a bit too hard to be in touch with twenty-first-century living, as in Mason's half-baked attempt to accredit Twitter users and constant reference to iPods and Lady Gaga. Yet beneath this enjoyable journalistic veneer is the critical heart of Mason's argument that while technology has allowed empowered individuals to overthrow authoritarian governments, globalization itself may fail as the economics of the financial crisis of 2008 continues to unravel, something better explained in his earlier book *Meltdown* (Verso, 2009, reviewed in *International Affairs* 85: 5). Both Ross's and Mason's accounts are important contributions to the new age of thinking that is rapidly emerging as a consequence of the crisis of globalized capitalism.

James Denselow, King's College London, UK

Political economy, economics and development

The price of civilization: economics and ethics after the fall. By Jeffrey Sachs. London: The Bodley Head. 2011. 326pp. Index. £20.00. ISBN 978 1 84792 092 8.

Rightly regarded as one of the leading macroeconomists of his generation, Jeffrey Sachs has devoted the bulk of his career to trying to advance practical solutions to the world economy's most pressing challenges, from economic development and environmental sustainability to poverty alleviation, disease control, debt and globalization. He has been an influential adviser to a wide range of governments and has been accorded many awards and honours. So when Sachs turns his attention to the economic problems of his own country, the United States, it is worth paying attention. In *The price of civilization*, he offers his take on what ails America today and what we can do about it.

Eminently readable, the book is divided into two parts. Part one, 'The great crash', offers a multidimensional diagnosis of America's current economic crisis, focusing on the interplay of politics, economics and underlying social values. In part two, 'The path to prosperity', Sachs then offers his prescriptions for restoring US economic health. At the root of America's troubles, he argues, lies a moral crisis—a decline of civic virtue among the country's political and economic elites. Recovery requires a renewed ethos of social responsibility—a 'mindful society' that promotes moderation, compassion and cooperation across class divides. Imperative is a new commitment to the goals of efficiency, fairness and sustainability, which in turn calls for a balanced 'mixed economy approach', combining contributions from both the public and private sectors. And above all, America needs to be more receptive to higher taxes to pay for all the needed investments in education, poverty alleviation, infrastructure and environmental protection. Taxes, declares Sachs, quoting Oliver Wendell Holmes, are the price we pay for civilization.

No one of the moderate left, among whom I count myself, should find much to quarrel with in Sachs's analysis of America's ills. US political economy has indeed tilted very far in favour of a single-minded pursuit of wealth, creating a new Gilded Age of extraordinary income inequality. An excessive faith in free markets discounts the positive role that government can play in promoting long-term prosperity. The 'game' does indeed seem to have become 'rigged' in favour of powerful corporations and their lobbies in Washington—what Sachs calls America's 'corporatocracy'. And globalization has further tipped the balance of power towards corporations and away from workers, reinforcing the role of big money in US politics. Readers on the political right may be tempted to dismiss all this as a hysterical screed against contemporary capitalism. But that would be a shame. In reality, the discussion is moderate in tone and solidly based empirically. Sachs makes a persuasive case.

Nor do I see much to object to in his prescriptions, including his call for higher taxes. Sachs's goal is a 'modern mixed capitalism', reliant on market forces to allocate goods and services but also prepared to equip government with the means to protect the poor, stabilize the macroeconomy, and keep the environment safe. In calling for new civic virtues—a society of compassion, mutual help and collective decision-making—he is clearly on the side of the angels. Who but the most selfish can argue with the idea of a new mindfulness of others, nature and the future? A mindful society, Sachs contends, 'will open the way to a reenergized, virtuous citizenry, one that is ready to rebuild American democracy and put it back in the hands of the people' (p. 183). Here too the case is persuasive.

But there is a problem. How are these worthy goals to be achieved? If there is an Achilles' heel to this otherwise fine book, it is the author's failure to provide us with any sort of

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systematic blueprint to realize his goals. His agenda, to say the least, is ambitious. From the private sector he expects a more considered understanding of our social relationships and responsibilities, involving no fewer than eight dimensions of civic awareness. And from the public sector he demands a commitment to another eight objectives, involving everything from job creation and improved education to debt reduction and a higher level of America's 'happiness and life satisfaction'. Sachs is too familiar with the ways of the world to believe that any of this will come easy. Stiff resistance will have to be overcome. 'We need to break out of the money-politics-media trap', he proclaims (p. 236). But apart from some vague references to 'a new governing majority' and a touching faith in the political inclinations of the so-called millennial generation (Americans between the ages of 18 and 29 in 2010), he fails to tell us how to manage it. Readers are left to figure out on their own how to design a political strategy that will get us from here to there.

Benjamin J. Cohen, University of California at Santa Barbara, USA

Crises and opportunities: the shaping of modern finance. By Youssef Cassis. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2011. 200pp. Index. £25.00. ISBN 978 0 19960 086 1.

The world stands on a financial precipice: a major financial institution is on the verge of failing, rumours of contagion and possible runs buzz, and the government steps in at the very last moment to arrange a bailout or takeover and avert a complete disaster. Sounds familiar? It could as easily describe the Barings disaster of 1890 as the Lehman Brothers collapse of 2008. At the centre of every major financial crisis of the past 120 years has loomed a bank or banks in trouble. How the financial sector and governments dealt with these crises has determined whether these incidents spread through global finance, and whether they morphed into full-blown recessions or depressions. Youssef Cassis attempts to describe and explain the nature of modern bank crises: what creates them, why they happen and how they are resolved. This is a challenging subject for any study, and Cassis effortlessly carries it off.

Cassis presents four crises in both pre-Second World War and postwar eras. The Baring Brothers collapse in 1890 was brought on by over-reliance on Argentine investments, and the Bank of England quickly organized a rescue that prevented a contagion effect. The next event, the American Panic of 1907, involved more banks, but was similarly resolved by a quick rescue, in this case by the super-financier J. P. Morgan. The emergency of August 1914 was brought on by the sudden rush to general war, but resolute government action averted a continent-wide disaster. The banking catastrophe of the early 1930s did not threaten the overall financial system, since it involved mostly smaller banks, but had much greater knock-on effects in the gathering depression. A recovering and then fast-growing global economy was largely free from system-wide financial problems for 40 years, until a series of national bank difficulties in the early 1970s. In each case, an unstable lender teetered and was saved by, respectively, an injection of funds (the United Kingdom), a sell-off (the United States) and a bank closure (West Germany). The Latin American debt problem became a bank calamity in 1982 due to heavy lending to the region, mostly by American banks. When the US Federal Reserve raised interest rates to battle inflation, Latin debtors could no longer service their loans. The danger was defused by renegotiation and rollover of credit, principally for Mexico, Brazil and Argentina. As in 1907, the Japanese banking meltdown of the 1990s primarily affected one country, but its sheer scale made it one of the greatest crises. Japanese authorities were slow to act, but a series of liquidity injections and mega-mergers gradually consolidated the sector. Most recently, the 'financial debacle'

of 2007–2008 was the 'culmination of thirty years of unbridled financial development', combined with economic globalization, financial deregulation, 'market fundamentalism' and a surge of banking innovation (p. 47). Governments' direct action to rescue banks and other financial institutions curbed the crisis by early 2009. Cassis believes that this was, at least in financial terms, the worst of the events presented.

The book examines four factors that shaped the development of these crises: the banks themselves, bank governance, government regulation and international cooperation. Though most failures have been among smaller banks, the 2008 crisis focused on the shuttering of Lehman Brothers, one of the largest investment banks. Consolidation resulting from crises actually has been limited, and major waves of mergers and acquisitions took place as a result of post-crisis lifting of regulations or macroeconomic changes. Banks' performance subsequent to each event was dependent on the overall state of the post-crisis economy. For instance, banks' earnings and growth were not seriously affected by the mid-1970s crisis and recession, but were hit harder by conditions in the 1980s.

Governance concerns begin with the degree of responsibility of the banks. Banks came in for much of the blame for the early 1930s crises, but the Japanese bank collapse led to perhaps the most profound challenge to confidence. Ownership and control of major banks were challenged in each crisis, but even the Great Depression did not fundamentally alter basic ownership. Regulators have tried to balance stabilization-compliance with efficiency and innovation promotion. Most crises have been accompanied with a 'never again' imperative, but only the 1930s events significantly altered the regulatory environment long term. Lack of regulatory changes in some crises, such as the Barings collapse, often has meant that in time deregulation becomes more, rather than less, likely. International cooperation is a final key to successful crisis resolution, and was most lacking in the 1930s case. The creation of international organizations, such as the Bretton Woods institutions and various committees of the 1970s, greatly aids cooperative efforts.

Despite its commendable parsimony, the book is a bit too slender, and might have benefited from a fuller examination of factors that lead to bank crises, most notably the accompanying political and business dynamics. Especially, more is called for on the 2008 crisis, as it is most relevant to our current economic predicament. Some of the crises, such as the Barings event, hardly seem to rank alongside the disasters of 1931 and 2008. The reader also needs much more on how each crisis was resolved; Cassis concludes each case with a kind of *deus ex machina* arranged by governments, larger banks or lenders of last resort. Since resolution is both an economic and a political process, we yearn to understand the politics and behind-the-scenes decision-making that pulled together bailouts, sell-offs or cash injections. A look ahead to possible banking crises of this century would have aided our understanding of where global finance is heading. Finally, the foreword is a bit troubling: why does it read as an extended advertisement for the author's bank? Is that really appropriate for a study of this nature? Even so, the book greatly aids our understanding of financial crises.

Joel Campbell, Troy University, Global Campus, Japan–Korea

World 3.0: global prosperity and how to achieve it. By Pankaj Ghemawat. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press. 2011. 386pp. Index. £21.99. ISBN 978 1 42213 864 9.

Private ratings, public regulations: credit rating agencies and global financial governance. By Andreas Kruck. Basingstoke: Palgrave. 2011. 205pp. Index. £57.50. ISBN 978 0 23028 223 0.

Pankaj Ghemawat's excellent new book begins with an important question: 'Do propositions about the gains from market integration survive the reality of market failure?' (p. ix). Would we, in other words, be better off pulling back rather than pushing forward with global integration? Ghemawat suggests that the debate has collapsed into a binary choice between those who favour more globalization and deregulation, 'world 2.0', and those who prefer the opposite, 'world 1.0'. Looking beyond economics to incorporate lessons from history and philosophy, Ghemawat offers a third way: 'world 3.0'. His argument that regulation and cross-border integration can coexist, and even complement one another, is thoughtful and persuasive.

The book divides into three parts, the first of which explains why world 3.0 is a better basis for the pursuit of prosperity than other world-views. Levels of cross-border integration, Ghemawat explains, do not fit well with either world 1.0 or 2.0. Despite many popular accounts to the contrary, differences between countries still act as major barriers to globalization. Geographic, cultural and administrative distances matter. Borders, for instance, still have a major impact on trade between countries as geographically and culturally close as Canada and the United States. Fascinating examples of 'semi-globalization' abound. Only 3 per cent of people live outside their country of birth, for instance, while less than 20 per cent of all internet traffic was routed across a national border between 2006 and 2008. The potential gains from 'opening up' are therefore much larger than assumed; Ghemawat reckons 'several hundred if not as much as a thousand dollars for everyone on the planet, *every* year' (p. 65). Alongside economic gains, cultural and political rewards are also likely, not least an apparent link between globalization and international political harmony.

The second part of the book addresses market failures and other fears about cross-border integration, covering a wide range of topics with alacrity. Ghemawat recognizes that markets are imperfect, and acknowledges that aggregate assessments are not the only measure of success, but stresses that the most commonly cited reasons to curb cross-border integration are overstated. Claims that globalization always leads to concentration are erroneous; competition is much more likely. Further challenges to globalization based on the environment, systemic risk, cross-border (labour and capital) imbalances, exploitation, oppression and homogenization are equally flawed. In most instances, he reasons, further integration can alleviate the effects of market failures. While other books may examine these issues in more detail, Ghemawat successfully uses these chapters to support and develop his argument for world 3.0.

The book's final part prescribes what countries, businesses and individuals must do if they are to build towards and maximize benefits from world 3.0. Integration across borders may not be perfect but it is the best method with which to achieve growth, and therefore achieve prosperity for rich and poor countries alike. People must hence look for opportunities to increase integration and limit market failures. The book ends by presenting a case for a 'rooted cosmopolitanism', which entails a positive but distance-dependent concern for foreigners. Ghemawat spares only 15 pages for his rethinking of cosmopolitanism, which will likely leave sceptics unconvinced. Nevertheless, his ambition is commendable and

his argument compelling. The potential rewards for conquering irrational fears, whether about other people or globalization itself, are significant.

Throughout the book, Ghemawat rightly notes the continued importance of the state. His confidence in 'government's special function and authority as a rule maker' (p. 212), however, would not be shared by all. Even in a world of semi-globalization, many governments already struggle to oversee huge quantities of highly complex financial activity. As Andreas Kruck details in his intelligent and comprehensive study, governments are, in many key areas, transferring significant regulatory responsibilities to non-state actors. Kruck focuses his attention on the use of credit ratings by national and international regulatory bodies, highlighting the global diffusion of (quasi)-regulatory authority.

In the decades preceding the recent financial crisis, public regulators in developed countries felt increasingly unable to cope with the complexities and uncertainties of financial markets. Public regulators delegated, albeit to varying degrees, governance tasks and regulatory authority to specialized risk-measuring agents. In the second of six well-researched chapters, Kruck provides an informative overview of the growth of the regulatory use of ratings in the United States from 1931 to 2006, before detailing their seemingly irresistible rise in other national systems. Even Germany, which stood alone in choosing not to incorporate credit ratings into national banking regulation, now relies on them, albeit indirectly. In 2006, two new EU directives, standardizing the use of credit ratings in banking regulation, ended Germany's 'exceptional position' (p. 42). Kruck returns to the intriguing theme of German reluctance, contrasting with American enthusiasm, in chapter five when he examines the negotiations concerning Basel II and the contested issue of internal rating procedures. More information about the credit rating agencies' own views regarding their role as regulators would perhaps have been interesting in these chapters, but this is nevertheless a minor point.

Kruck goes on to examine what influences public regulators' dependence on credit rating agencies. In chapters three, four and five, he develops a detailed theoretical model to explain common trends and cross-country differences in the regulatory use of credit ratings. His findings corroborate the book's core hypothesis. The higher the degree of public regulators' dependence on the analytical resources of credit rating agencies, the higher the degree of public regulators' use of credit ratings in regulation. Kruck's argument extends beyond this seemingly straightforward conclusion. Dependence, he explains, is 'contingent on macro-institutional socioeconomic contexts on both global and national/regional levels. In particular … the use of ratings in financial market regulation seems to be systematically higher in the Anglo-Saxon variety of capitalism (liberal market economy) than in the Rhenish variety (coordinated market economy)' (pp. 155–6). It would therefore be a mistake to generalize credit rating agencies' impact on financial governance. Borders, much as Ghemawat suggests, still matter.

Both authors have produced valuable books. Kruck's effort contributes to a better understanding of the changing role of the state and the diffusion of political authority. Those interested in credit rating agencies or regulatory responsibility more broadly will certainly benefit from his research. Ghemawat's effort, bold in its claims and broad in its scope, makes a compelling argument about larger global forces. Intelligent and accessible, his arguments deserve a wide audience. Taken together, these two authors make an important contribution to the study of the global economy.

David James Gill, University of East Anglia, UK

Energy, resources and environment

Food. By Jennifer Clapp. Cambridge: Polity. 2012. 218pp. Pb.: £12.99. ISBN 978 0 74564 936 8.

This is a book about the way the organization of our global food system has evolved over recent decades. Key changes have been the rapid growth of international agricultural trade; the spread of industrial farming methods; the emergence of powerful transnational corporations (TNCs) in agricultural value chains; and the intrusion of speculative financial interests into agricultural commodity and land markets. Jennifer Clapp argues that these changes have brought mixed blessings. On the positive side, most people today have access to an unprecedented range of safe and quality foods at affordable prices. On the downside, industrial farming has brought some serious environmental problems; developing countries have become excessively dependent on food imports from the industrial world; some TNCs have acquired worrying degrees of market control; rural poverty and hunger remain rampant in many developing countries; most consumers have become 'distanced' from any understanding of the way their food is produced; and the recent world food crisis has raised questions about the future reliability of our food supplies.

The book analyses the drivers that have led to the current food situation. These include the agricultural support policies of the industrial countries that, in combination with food aid and unfair trading rules, have undermined farmers in developing countries and unnecessarily increased their countries' dependence on food imports; IMF/World Bank-enforced liberalization programmes that opened up agricultural markets in developing countries to TNCs and foreign direct investment; the promotion by industrial countries, international development agencies and private sector interests of industrial farming methods in developing countries (viz. the green revolution); and the 'financialization' of food and land as part of the explosive growth in global financial markets.

After an introductory chapter, the book is structured around discussion of each of the major drivers of change and its consequences. Apart from a scientifically uninformed treatment of environmental issues and biotechnology, these chapters are generally well researched and written, and there is a serious attempt to look at both sides of the debates. But the wording is often ambiguous, inviting us to assume the worst and suggesting that we may now have reached the point where our global food system is at risk of breaking down. While the book highlights important concerns that need to be addressed, it is less than convincing in demonstrating a sense of impending global catastrophe.

Despite the recent price increases, the real cost of food is still near historic lows for most people; even when world cereal prices peaked in 2008 they were still less than half the prices of the early 1970s when adjusted for inflation. Moreover, apart from two price spikes in the past 40 years, world cereal prices have remained remarkably low and stable. Compared to the prevalence of hunger and famine throughout recorded history, the past few decades have turned out remarkably well for most people.

Globally, cereal production now exceeds 2 billion tonnes per year, compared to less than 1 billion tonnes in 1960, feeding a population of 7 billion rather than 3 billion. While poverty and hunger in the developing world remain at intolerable levels, we should not overlook the enormous progress that has been made in China and other Asian countries, or the fact that most of the hungry now live in lagging regions (see Ejaz Ghani, ed., *The poor half billion in South Asia: what is holding back lagging regions?*, Oxford University Press, 2010), the very areas that have not enjoyed a green revolution and where yields remain too low for farmers to feed themselves. Most small farmers have not been pushed off their land (in fact

there are more small farms today than ever), and in rich countries family farms have grown larger and more mechanized, but still thrive and account for most of the cropped area and agricultural output.

Overlooked in this book are the huge cost savings that have arisen from improved technologies along value chains. Farmers now spend more per hectare on seeds, fertilizer and other modern inputs, but they obtain higher yields and often save on other costs (for instance labour), the net result of which is to lower production costs per unit of good produced. This allows them to sell at reduced prices and still make a profit. Firm concentration along value chains has also facilitated new technologies in storage, transport, processing and marketing, and the exploitation of significant economies of scale and scope. These have also contributed to lowering unit costs. So an important reason why food prices have fallen over the years is that many of these cost savings have been passed on to consumers. In this context, falling prices do not necessarily translate into hardship for farmers and other producers along value chains.

While industrial agriculture has brought environmental challenges, it is not yet in widespread crisis. Land and labour productivity continue to rise in most intensively farmed areas. Agricultural biodiversity has been reduced but not lost (see M. Smale, P. Hazell, T. Hodgkin and C. Fowler, 'Do we have an adequate global strategy for securing the biodiversity of major food crops?', in A. Kontoleon, U. Pascual and M. Smale, eds, *Agrobiodiversity conservation and economic development*, Routledge, 2008); there have been major improvements in methods and chemicals for controlling pests and diseases; low-till farming has eliminated many of the land degradation problems associated with mechanization; and precision farming has greatly reduced the amounts of fertilizer and water needed to achieve high yields. Water use in irrigated agriculture is high because of wasteful water distribution systems and pricing policies rather than high-yield technologies, and there is enormous scope for improvement without having to sacrifice crop yields. Also overlooked in this book is the vast amount of environmental damage that occurs in lagging regions, and which is driven by poverty and population growth rather than industrial farming. Deforestation and land degradation arise when smallholder farmers encroach onto new and often fragile lands, and from the widespread use of low-input farming practices that are no longer able to return sufficient nutrients and organic matter to the soil (see Hazell and Stanley Wood, 'Drivers of change in global agriculture', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B*. 363: 1491, pp. 495–515, 12 February 2008). These problems would be far greater today if our current urban populations had to be fed without the substantial yield increases achieved through industrial farming practices.

The book concludes with a chapter that considers alternative approaches to resolving the problems with our global food system. The dominant vision involves continuing efforts to refine and improve the current global food system, mainly through further market and trade liberalization; additional public and private sector investments in science and technology and supporting infrastructures, including biotechnology; and improving market opportunities for smallholder farmers. Not surprisingly, this agenda is promoted most actively by the G8 and G20 countries, international development agencies, private foundations and TNCs.

But many reject this approach and seek more drastic changes. Supporters of fair trade seek to cut out the middle man in highly integrated value chains, and provide a more transparent link between producers and consumers as regards production methods and prices. Despite rapid growth, fair trade remains a niche market and only works for a limited range of export commodities. Others promote 'food sovereignty', which essentially means going back to

locally sourced foods that are grown on small farms using ecological farming methods. This sounds like a credible approach for some poor rural communities in lagging regions that have limited alternatives, but is hardly a viable prescription for feeding the world's huge urban populations, or raising the living standards of most farmers. Finally, there are strong advocates for greater global food justice, with activities ranging from supporting the legal establishment of new rights for consumers and farmers (for instance the right to food), to campaigning for greater regulation of agricultural trade, financial speculation and TNC activity, to reforming international trade agreements to make them fairer. While these different groups have raised social awareness about some of the problems with our current global food system, the author concludes that on their own they seem unlikely to bring about substantial change. All of this leads to a rather unsatisfactory ending to the book, and one wishes for a clearer vision from the author about what needs to be done.

Peter Hazell, Imperial College London, UK

International history

Spies and commissars: Bolshevik Russia and the West. By Robert Service. London: Macmillan. 2011. 424pp. Index. £25.00. ISBN 978 0 23074 807 1. Available as e-book.

Ambling around Moscow's Lenin Museum in the days after the Soviet collapse, you could not help wondering how the great Russian empire, even after defeat in a horrendous war, could have fallen with so little fuss into the hands of such an unimpressive and mean-spirited bunch of men (no women). They had lived as exiles in Siberia or as poverty-stricken émigrés in the West, interminably splitting ideological hairs while Lenin split the Party into ever smaller factions until he could dominate what little remained. But few had any experience of the real world, although Stalin was at least a competent poet and a skilled bank robber.

At the grand strategic level, the Bolsheviks were naive and misguided. Lenin and Trotsky believed that their narrow-based coup in Russia would be saved by revolution in the West, above all in Germany with its large industrial proletariat: the essential prerequisite, Marx had said, for a soundly based communism. It took Stalin to understand that this would not happen, and that the infant Soviet Union would have to stand on its own feet to survive. Yet at the tactical level, Lenin was a genius. His insights were supported by a ruthless will, which enabled him to exploit every opportunity his enemies gave him.

The success of the Bolsheviks was by no means preordained. They faced a formidable array of foes: White armies adequately led and for the most part better equipped; foreign armies everywhere—in Ukraine, in the Baltics, in the North, in the Far East; risings and mutinies among the peasants and the revolutionary sailors who had at first supported them. Even after the Bolsheviks had won the Civil War, the intrigues against them continued. They were proclaimed outlaws by the international community. Lloyd George broke the ban, to the disgust of Winston Churchill. But the United States refused to recognize them until 1933. And the Germans played with them cynically until Hitler made the colossal error of attacking them in 1941. No wonder they became, and remained, determinedly paranoid.

Robert Service's lively book brings his characteristic blend of erudition and common sense to a retelling of this turbulent story. He concentrates on the Bolsheviks' struggle to establish their new regime in the international arena, and he brings to life the bizarre and colourful characters who populated the period. Many were idealists—dedicated, often courageous, and sometimes outrageously brutal revolutionaries from Germany, America,

Eastern Europe. Many had dubious or confused loyalties—the 'spies' of his title. John Reed, the American journalist, was an enthusiastic fellow traveller: his colourful and starry-eyed account of the Bolshevik seizure of power in Petrograd in 1917 is still very much in print; Arthur Ransome, the journalist and children's writer, married Trotsky's secretary and was regarded as a spy by both sides; Armand Hammer became the favourite capitalist of one Soviet leader after another.

But even Service, who has been deeper into the archives than most, cannot unravel all the tangled threads. The KGB Museum in Moscow contains a large section devoted to the 'ambassador's plot', the claim—and in Russia still the widespread belief—that Bruce Lockhart, a British diplomat, and Sidney Reilly, the 'ace of spies' of the British television serial, conspired to assassinate Lenin and overthrow the new regime in 1918. After 90 years the British still refuse to document their side of the story. They have themselves to blame if Service's final word on the affair is that 'the British Foreign Office and Secret Service Bureau led the way in plotting to prepare a future for Russia free from Bolshevik rule'.

Rodric Braithwaite

Symbols and legitimacy in Soviet politics. By Graeme Gill. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2011. 362pp. Index. £60.00. ISBN 978 1 10700 454 2. Available as e-book.

This book comprises a history of the development of Soviet symbolism and ritual, from the Bolshevik takeover in 1917 to the Soviet regime's collapse in 1991. Graeme Gill provides a systematic and lucid account of the evolution of what he calls the Soviet 'metanarrative' (that is, Soviet ideology in its most compressed and simplified form) and its basic building blocks: an interlinked series of six Soviet myths, and the symbols used to form them. He connects the shifting patterns of this metanarrative to the different modes of legitimation employed by the Soviet regime at various points in time, and argues that while the remarkable elasticity of this metanarrative made it sustainable for over seven decades of dramatic transformations, ultimately the internal inconsistencies and weaknesses in the metanarrative contributed substantially to the regime's demise under Gorbachev. In other words, symbols matter. Demonstrating the crucial link between the viability of the Soviet regime's symbols, and the viability of the regime itself, the author presents a convincing case for viewing cultural and political history as interwoven and mutually constitutive.

The analysis is supported and illustrated by a wealth of examples of the four types of symbols under discussion: language; the visual arts; the physical environment; and ritual. The primary source base is impressive in both its breadth and its depth. It is so comprehensive and detailed, in fact, that the book will serve as a valuable reference for those with an interest in the subject.

This key strength of the book—the encyclopaedic knowledge that it displays—is also linked to its weakness, namely, in my opinion, its tendency to be overly descriptive at times. The impact of the argument is somewhat blunted by the combination of extended paraphrases of party programmes and rather long lists of examples of symbolic features (among others, monuments, factories and street names), which can make certain parts of the book heavy reading.

Many readers will find most useful the concluding chapter, which can be read as a stand-alone essay, and in which the author presents his summary of the overarching trajectory and broad sweep of Soviet cultural and political history. It is here too that we find the real 'meat' of the argument in its most concentrated form, as the author sets out his views on the connections between the decay of the metanarrative (and Gorbachev's failed attempt

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to reinvigorate it by an increased reliance on different modes of legitimation, in particular) and the eventual collapse of the Soviet regime, as well as grappling with the issue of the reception of Soviet discourse. The author does cite here some of the recent works on related issues such as resistance to and internalization of Soviet ideology, but it would be intriguing to hear more about how he would position his own work on these topics within the field of current scholarly debates on Soviet culture and ideology and with respect to the so-called 'Soviet subjectivity' school of historians in particular. Finally, given the book's subject matter, with its frequent references to posters and monuments, illustrations would have helped to add life to the text. But these are minor complaints about an accomplished and fine study showing a masterly grasp of its subject.

Julie Fedor, University of Cambridge, UK

The shock of the global: the 1970s in perspective. Edited by Niall Ferguson, Charles S. Maier, Erez Manela and Daniel J. Sargent. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. 2010. 434pp. £22.95. ISBN 978 0 67404 904 8.

This book, the product of a Harvard conference on 'The global 1970s', seeks to break new ground in interpreting this decade from the perspective of global history. When discussing the 1970s, most authors mean 'the long 1970s', thus aiming to discuss and contextualize a longer period of transformation in twentieth-century history. We therefore get, after the 'long 1950s' and 'long 1960s', another long decade in what Eric Hobsbawm has called the 'short twentieth century'. None of this is particularly novel: there are a number of research projects around the world, most notably in continental Europe, which have put forward similar arguments (although very few, if any, of these arguments have found their way into the chapters in this volume). What distinguishes this book from others already published is that it comes with the right ingredients: it would be hard to find a more distinguished and qualified set of editors and authors to accomplish this truly colossal task. Moreover, the coverage of topics is comprehensive, ranging from more traditional fields of diplomatic history to the rather softer fare of the history of popular music. Not least, the book's slightly psychedelic dust jacket puts readers just in the right mood to rediscover this decade, although those readers with a more sombre disposition might well prefer the navy blue of the actual book.

Niall Ferguson's introduction comes with his trademark mix of extremely thought-provoking, astute observations and highly provocative contrarian thinking. Ferguson proposes to take Prime Minister James Callaghan's quip 'Crisis. What crisis?' seriously. He argues that the contributions to this volume are supposed to take us away from the 1970s as a time of accumulated financial, economic, political and international crises. There was, so Ferguson's argument runs, no real economic and financial crisis; in comparison with other twentieth-century crises, this was a very mild concussion rather than a full-blown knockout. Instead of analysing a crisis, so the argument runs, we should regard the decade as one of a fundamental transformation of the world into a truly global system. Where there had been essentially three worlds before, there was now one world that could appear as global. The 1970s, therefore, constituted a far more hopeful period than it has so far been given credit for. Instead, Ferguson points out, the realization of being exposed to global forces beyond one's control, the resulting 'shock of the global', led to perceptions of crisis. For Ferguson and some of the contributors, the 'long 1970s' constituted the key period during which the foundations for the end of the Cold War international system were laid, and the absence of the Cold War as a central topic from most contributions reflects this.

Unfortunately, the implications of this argument for our understanding of the previous decades are not really fully developed, not in Ferguson's introduction, nor by most of the other authors: arguing that the 1970s constituted far less of a crisis means that what happened in the 1950s and 1960s (the emergence of political, economic and financial stability within the framework of the Cold War) was far more remarkable than historians so far have realized. Charles Maier's magnificent chapter on the 'crisis of capitalism' (which he proposes to analyse as 'malaise') is an exception. It sets a standard so high in terms of analytical rigour and command of the material that virtually no other author is able to reach it. Maier's chapter is—together with Daniel Sargent's on US developments, Arne Westad's (writing concisely on China) and Stephen Kotkin's (writing imaginatively on the history of the Soviet Union)—among the minority of contributions that really engage with the kind of questions that Ferguson develops in his introduction. Glenda Sluga's wide-ranging chapter on the emergence of new actors in international relations provides both an astute analysis and the kind of deeper historical contextualization of key developments that has been missed in many of the other contributions.

Given that this is supposed to be a book on the 'global 1970s', this reviewer also missed a truly worldwide grasp of the diversity of developments and research literatures. In the end, this is primarily a book about how the United States came to see what happened in the 1970s as problematic for its position in the world. The book's chapters offer a diverse history of the shapes, forms and methods of a US sovereignty that imagined itself as the embodiment of a new globality. This is, of course, an important and highly innovative topic—but it is not what it says on the package. So, while this volume contains a lot of excellent material, it could have done with a tighter analytical (and perhaps editorial) focus than the decadological approach that amounts to little more than an academic glass bead game. A more tightly knit framework might have enabled the authors to develop their chapters as a conversation rather than a list of different topics, some of which are more, some less, obvious and relevant.

Holger Nehring, University of Sheffield, UK

Britain's empire: resistance, repression and revolt. By Richard Gott. London: Verso. 2011. 564pp. Index. £25.00. ISBN 978 1 84467 738 2.

Was the British empire a good thing or a bad thing? This seductive question has permeated much popular debate in the United Kingdom in the last few years. Richard Gott sets out to prove conclusively the case for the prosecution. His polemical stance is stated from the outset: 'the rulers of the British Empire will one day be perceived to rank with the dictators of the twentieth century as the authors of crimes against humanity on an infamous scale' (p. 7). The book aims to show how British imperialism was opposed by the colonized almost continuously from first contact, to be met by persistently ruthless British repression. Its scope is ambitious, encompassing the empire in North America, the Caribbean, India, Ireland, Africa, Australia, Afghanistan and elsewhere, from 1755 to 1858. The study's breadth is thus impressive, and the consistent focus upon the colonized laudable.

Gott's pace is brisk, and his ability to select telling stories in support of his argument is notable. At times the pace is too brisk, with one chapter comprising only three pages. In most chapters, understanding the historical context is impossible, because the narrative lingers only briefly on an episode before moving on. The grasp of the historiography is inconsistent. On India, major works by C. A. Bayly and P. J. Marshall are left out, whereas on New Zealand, James Belich's research is drawn upon effectively. Too often the author

relies upon out-dated secondary sources, especially Fortescue's *History of the British Army*, completed in 1930 (Macmillan). The fundamental structural flaw is that *Britain's empire* is a list of bad things done by various agents of the empire. There is no explanation as to why ethnic cleansing, gulags, extermination and other anachronisms were carried out, apart from the underlying belief in the empire's evil essence. Violence is divorced from politics—for both colonizers and colonized alike. Britons kill because they are cruel, natives resist because they have no other choice. Non-violent resistance and political activity are omitted from the equation.

The book seeks to demonstrate how British invaders were resisted from the moment they stepped ashore in the new world, yet the narrative itself skips over the origins of the empire and examines a later stage. Reckless over-generalizations are scattered throughout the text. For example, we learn that the allies of the British were always a 'thin crust', solely motivated by venal material interests. Conversely, most colonized peoples hated the British (pp. 5–6). To call this selective history is an understatement. Of course, some or indeed many may well have harboured animosity. No author could hope to find evidence to support a generalization about millions of people over a hundred-year period. And Gott does not even try. Major trends such as settler migration and the impact of conflict with France are identified. Their causes, nature and implications for the subject at hand are seldom elaborated. Asserting that military power played a central role in colonial control is a welcome remedy to its absence from some cultural histories. But power is much more complicated than brute force alone.

Perhaps there is merit in attempting to counter the imperial triumphalism most influentially embodied in Niall Ferguson's best-selling *Empire* (Penguin, 2002). Gott claims the existing literature is uniformly pro-empire. This is palpable nonsense to anybody with any familiarity with the historiography. A more concise and convincing attack from the left already exists in John Newsinger's *The blood never dried* (Bookmarks, 2000). For serious students of imperialism, these partial histories can offer little more than light entertainment. A superior, scholarly alternative which broadly covers the same time period as Gott's work is C. A. Bayly's *Imperial meridian* (Longman, 1989). Political violence must be assessed contextually in order to comprehend its origins, nature and consequences. On this score, *Britain's empire* is of no help.

Huw Bennett, King's College London, UK

America, Hitler and the UN: how the Allies won World War II and forged a peace. By Dan Plesch. London: I. B. Tauris. 2011. 272pp. Index. £20.00. ISBN 978 1 84885 308 9.

Most people associate the foundation of the United Nations with the period immediately after the end of the Second World War, when there was international soul-searching about how to reconstruct a world shattered by the effects of six years of war, and how to ensure that such conflict never happened again. The UN charter of 1945, finalized in San Francisco, is seen as the major landmark event, marking the formal start of the UN's work. But to historian Dan Plesch, in fact the UN had deeper roots, and was talked about even as early as 1941. His argument goes further. It was, in fact, an integral part of the Allies' thinking about how they were to win the war, and how they would then deal with the challenges of peace thereafter. That gives the organization, despite the many problems it has faced over the last seven decades, even greater legitimacy today.

It was the internationalist thinking of President F. D. Roosevelt (FDR), alongside Winston Churchill, which gave the initial impetus to the UN, as they talked in 1941 of

how to assist the United Kingdom in its struggle against Nazi Germany in a Europe which was then almost wholly militarily dominated by the German armies, before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor pushed the US actively into the war. For Roosevelt, the initial challenge was to clarify to his home constituency the importance of being engaged in the war, even as a non-combatant, despite widespread misgivings in the United States that this was another conflict, remote from the country, which was best to keep out of. The UN rubric at least spelt out some long-term benefits for being involved: the creation of a new, genuinely empowered international organization, which would be able to intervene in conflicts, mediate between nations and start setting out internationally accepted standards of behaviour for nation-states that would cut across the prevailing Westphalian doctrine set in place in Europe from the seventeenth century onwards. The concise Atlantic Charter of 1941 outlined some of these expectations, providing, as Plesch notes, 'a model of both vision and caution' creating 'an agenda that, in twenty-first-century terms, is one of liberal social democracy'. The original name of Associated Powers, for those loosely linked by their opposition to Nazism, was replaced by FDR himself on 28 December 1941, when he thought of the title 'United Nations' and famously (according to his ever-present assistant, Daisy Suckley) went in his wheelchair into Churchill's guest room, and confronted the naked British Prime Minister fresh out of the bathroom with the new term he had just thought up.

The UN gave a pragmatic framework in the early era to a series of changing relationships among different allied nations and their interconnecting obligations as they adapted to war. Plesch maps these out in detail. He shows how the USSR was brought back into this framework; how it made a number of deep concessions, in terms of signing up to what could be seen as capitalist economic notions of modes of behaviour through the Bretton Woods agreement of 1944; and how it even recognized one of the most sacrosanct pillars of FDR's original vision of international justice, that of religious freedom (though for Stalin, all this meant was the freedom to practise communism, which he viewed as a species of religion). The UN was also frequently presented, in the media and the official documents that Plesch used to write this book, as the key term for the Allies in their collective action as the war started to turn in their favour from 1942 onwards. And it was able to accommodate the shift of some Americans from seeing victory in the Far East against Japan as their key priority in 1943 to moving to winning the war in Europe by 1945.

Plesch has separate chapters on the work of organizations under the UN, like the United Nations War Crimes Commission, which undertook detailed investigative work on crimes committed during the war, and was a major contributor to the trials after the war and the legitimacy they had because of its painstaking work, despite this never being fully recognized. He also shows how deep the contribution of the UN Relief and Rehabilitation Administration was from its creation in 1943 in alleviating the vast problems of poverty and lack of food in large parts of Europe, particularly in Eastern Europe, when countries like Poland had simply been decimated.

Plesch's book is most effective when showing the play-off between brute political pragmatism and a more long-term idealism in the articulation of the UN. It was, from the beginning, an ideal, but one shaped by two extraordinary political figures, FDR and Churchill, into something that could answer the very critical political necessities of the times in which they were living—times in which the fundamental values of western culture and civilization were questioned. The most moving aspect of this process was the way in which the UN was able to continue and to grow after the end of the Second World War, after the untimely death of its leading patron, FDR, and despite, as Plesch implies,

the rather more tepid response to the whole project by his successor, President Truman. Plesch also explains very well how some of the key tenets of the UN project, from the very beginning—equality between nations, and the right to self-determination—cut against the imperialist ambitions of old colonizing nations like the United Kingdom and France, and how their ideas of restarting business as usual over their old dominions after the end of the war were undercut by the anti-colonial spirit of the UN ideal. With all its faults, therefore, over 70 years after it was first mentioned, the UN lives on as a major factor in international life; the world, as Plesch makes clear in this well-written and lively study, is a better place for the fact that FDR thought it up, and in the end, in spite of everything, made it happen.

Kerry Brown, Asia Programme, Chatham House

Allende's Chile and the inter-American Cold War. By Tanya Harmer. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press. 2011. 400pp. Index. £38.95. ISBN 978 0 8078 349 5. Available as e-book.

Much of the abundant literature on the tragically foreshortened presidency of Salvador Allende (1970–73) has focused on the US project to undermine and eventually topple his democratically elected, left-wing coalition government. Over the last decade, historians have utilized the raft of official documents released under the Chile Declassification Project both to amplify the findings of the unexpectedly probing US congressional hearings of the mid-1970s and to pinpoint the exact US role in the sanguinary coup of 11 September 1973 and subsequent US efforts to shore up the new hard-line military successor regime. These works have often been palpably charged with a high degree of emotion and the issues at stake have been couched in moral terms.

Tanya Harmer epitomizes a new generation of scholars, who are better able to distance themselves from a period that for earlier writers had a decidedly contemporary resonance. She brings to her work a refreshing new perspective. She makes no attempt to rehash, for instance, the copious evidence of the US attempt to prevent Allende's inauguration in 1970 or its covert support for the internal opposition; she also eschews substantive discussion of Allende's mounting internal problems. Rather, she steps back to examine these years within the broader context of an inter-American Cold War being waged in South America, an area of the world to which the benefits of superpower detente did not extend. Chile, she writes, was 'consumed by the bitter regional—inter-American—manifestation of the global Cold War that abided by its own internal logic, chronology, dimensions, and cast of characters' (p. 258). The Nixon administration's intervention in Chile was not the result of a concern for specific US corporate interests angered at the inadequate amount of compensation being offered for their expropriated holdings, but was the result of a US struggle against forces in Latin America challenging US hegemony, part of a wider bid to refashion North–South relations that was seemingly gaining momentum in the early 1970s. Harmer's argument chimes here with Hal Brands's notion of a revolutionary and counter-revolutionary dynamic at work within the region that was advanced in his recent work, *Latin America's Cold War* (Harvard University Press, 2010, reviewed in *International Affairs* 87: 2).

Harmer underpins her thesis of a distinctive inter-American Cold War with a prodigious amount of research in a wide range of archives. Access to the recently opened Chilean Foreign Ministry archives as well as to the papers of Orlando Letelier, who served as Santiago's ambassador to the United States, have permitted her to present for the first

time the evolution of Chilean foreign policy under Allende. Although she was denied access to Cuban archives for this period, interviews with surviving Cuban officials closely involved in Chile at the time have provided further details on Havana's involvement. The author has also been able to flesh out much more than has hitherto been known about Brazil's counterrevolutionary role in the Southern Cone and its willingness to take the lead against the political left in Uruguay, Bolivia and Chile itself. Harmer has also been able to consult East German and Polish archives to obtain a glimpse of the view from the East; once again, such documents are revealed to be an invaluable source for the new Cold War history.

Equally impressive is Harmer's careful rereading of the official US record, which enables her to tender a far more nuanced analysis of US policy than is found in the extant secondary literature. She demonstrates that US officials were fully alive to the regional, rather than just bilateral, implications of Allende's election; that Nixon was far more engaged in US foreign policy formulation towards Latin America after 1970 than previously thought; that all elements of the foreign policy bureaucracy were in fact united in wanting to see Allende removed from office; that US policy-makers in the early years shrewdly masked their underlying hostile intent from their Chilean counterparts; and that there was a distinct lack of US confidence in the Chilean military's ability in the months preceding the coup to carry it through with the degree of ruthlessness that was deemed necessary. In line with Peter Kornbluh's conclusion in *The Pinochet file* (New Press, 2003), she finds that there is no evidence of direct US involvement in the coup itself; the assertion by Jonathan Haslam in *The Nixon administration and the death of Allende's Chile* (Verso, 2005) that Vernon Walters, then US defence attaché in Paris, was in Santiago on the day of the coup directing operations from a hotel is found to be completely unsubstantiated. Washington's satisfaction with events on the ground, it is maintained, is reflected in its significant but discreet material support after the coup.

An additional strength of the work is a chronological approach that charts the changing perspective of Santiago, Washington, Havana and Brasília as it unfolds; the author avoids the pitfall, common to other works, of interpreting the Allende years in terms of the final outcome. As Harmer shows, this outcome was not at all clear to the players at the time: in his first six months in office, Allende had an opportunity to establish a real basis for his political project much to Washington's alarm, but by 1972 the latter could be confident that the counterrevolutionary tide in the region had turned decisively against Santiago, and the US could thus afford to string along the Chileans in fruitless bilateral negotiations.

This book, in short, is a first-rate work of international history. It is well paced, extremely well written (apart perhaps from an over-fondness for the word 'pivotal', its frequent recurrence tending to devalue its meaning) and commendably measured in its assessments. It helps to reshape our understanding of the import of the Allende years within the context of Latin America's distinctive Cold War experience. Clearly, as the author frankly acknowledges, there is much more that remains to be uncovered about this period, especially about the Cuban and Brazilian dimensions. It is to be hoped that Tanya Harmer will be at the forefront of such an endeavour in the years to come.

Philip Chrimes

International Affairs **88**: 2, 2012

Europe

The transformation of Europe's armed forces: from the Rhine to Afghanistan. By Anthony King. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2011. 326pp. Index. £55.00. ISBN 978 0 52176 094 2. Available as e-book.

There is much to commend in Anthony King's book about the way Europe's armed forces have evolved since the end of the Cold War. Its approach is a welcome change from the superficial analyses of European military establishments that have been all too common. Such analyses have tended to make the same sorts of points: that there is a lack of political will among European states to act together; that they spend too small a proportion of their national wealth upon defence; and that they suffer from a list of weaknesses including insufficient power projection capabilities, a shortage of precision-guided munitions and inadequate intelligence-gathering assets.

In contrast, King's study is much more thorough, detailed and well researched. He looks at how Europe's land forces are being reorganized, and how changes are being implemented at both the operational and the tactical levels. He investigates how armies plan for their various roles, how command arrangements are adapting to new sorts of tasks and how issues of cohesion and coordination impact upon their effectiveness. The author begins by explaining the new demands that are placed on European armies: the 'wars of choice', rather than survival, that require forces to be capable of intervening over long distances. He proceeds to inform the reader about the structures that make this possible, the framework headquarters that command these multinational operations and the operational and tactical adaptations that have flowed from these developments.

The book is written in a clear and accessible style and based on solid research. As part of a funded research project, King has conducted a series of interviews with military officers of varying levels of seniority, from sergeants through to generals and air marshals. He has been particularly successful in securing interviews with senior British commanders in Afghanistan. Some of these interviews are very frank; they provide authority to the analysis and a wealth of insights.

King argues that pressure on defence budgets has driven European countries towards two tiers of forces. The top tier is comprised of elite, rapid-reaction brigades readied for overseas interventionary tasks. These brigades have supplanted divisional-level forces as the centre of gravity of national armies and enjoy the lion's share of resources. They are linked in a transnational military network by officers who have worked together in multinational operations, usually conducted under the aegis of NATO but occasionally under the EU.

This is not to say that there are no weaknesses in the book. One of the most obvious is that its title is misleading: only in part one of the book is the focus upon threats to Europe and the development of content-wide defence capabilities. The rest of the book looks not at European armed forces as a whole, but at the militaries of Britain, France and Germany. In fact, the author's lens in part two of the book rests principally upon Britain, with chapter six devoted exclusively to the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps. France figures significantly in part three, which looks at brigade-level structures, while Germany receives some attention for its different structures compared to Britain and France. The focus upon these three countries is a pity because it detracts from the wider lessons that can be drawn from the book. It is unclear how representative these three leading nations are of broader trends within European defence establishments.

A second weakness is the author's penchant for diversions into sociological analysis that pop up on numerous occasions in the text. Considering that King is a professor of sociology

at the University of Exeter, it is perhaps unsurprising that he litters his text with these asides. But it would have been preferable if he had chosen either to explore these themes systematically or to leave them out altogether. The resulting points sit uncomfortably alongside the core themes of the book.

Nevertheless, this is an excellent book and a valuable contribution to the literature on the post-Cold War adaptation of European armed forces. It should be read by practitioners and higher-level students of strategic studies.

Wyn Rees, University of Nottingham, UK

The coalition and the constitution. By Vernon Bogdanor. Oxford: Hart. 2011. 162pp. Index. £20.00. ISBN 978 1 84946 158 0.

Peace, reform and liberation: a history of liberal politics in Britain 1679–2011. By Robert Ingham and Duncan Brack. London: Biteback. 2011. 400pp. £30.00. ISBN 978 1 84954 043 8.

It might seem strange that entering government in 2010 was something of a momentous achievement for a party that can trace its roots as far back as the era of the Glorious Revolution of 1688. But for so much of recent history the Liberals, today known as the Liberal Democrats, have been viewed as being on the margins of government, subject to regular predictions of their imminent demise. That they have not vanished should remind us of the central place Liberals and their ideas have played and continue to play in the history of Britain, its politics, government and international relations. It is an ambitious project to document this in one book but this is exactly what Robert Ingham and Duncan Brack, leading members of the Liberal Democrat History Group, set out to achieve and to a large extent accomplish.

In 400 pages, divided into eleven chapters, each written by different authors, they map out the part Liberals played in British politics from 1679 onwards, the era of the Glorious Revolution being, for the authors, the period when the first discernible traces of Liberalism as an organized political force can be found. That the chapters are crammed with details is a testament to two authors who have spent many years covering the history of the party. Their analysis is made accessible by regular chronologically located briefings, indented from the rest of the text, providing descriptions of key events and ideas along with biographies of many of the people who have shaped the party's development.

Its detail and breadth also constitute the book's weakness. It is not until page 227 of 385 pages of substantive discussion that we reach 1945. Discussion of the 2010 coalition takes up a mere 13 pages. Of course, reflections on such recent events are always going to be difficult. But I was left wanting a chapter that tied this mammoth history together and drew out the extent to which the party's long history feeds its current thinking. At various stages, I therefore found myself rereading Michael Freeden's introductory chapter, which provides a degree of overview. For a party that prides itself on such a long history of progressive politics and reform, I was left hoping for an evaluation of how radical compared to the past the party of recent decades has been on issues such as constitutional reform.

For an answer to this we can look to Vernon Bogdanor's *The coalition and the constitution*. For Bogdanor, the Liberal Democrats' achievement of entering government might not lead to the radical constitutional reforms that the party believe it is the torchbearer for. His book, published in early 2011, appears at first to provide a critique of the coalition's proposals for reform of the constitution, but more than this it is a neat analysis of how the United Kingdom has experienced an innovation that is neither unique in the democratic

world nor entirely unique in British history: coalition government. Analysing this experience forms the first part of the book, followed by chapters on electoral reform, fixed-term parliaments and a discussion of where British politics is headed. For Bogdanor, changes in voting behaviour mean further hung parliaments remain a distinct possibility, something the constitution is not ready to take and the coalition's proposals will do little to prepare for.

Bogdanor's short and readable critique of proposals such as the alternative vote and fixed-term parliaments is to the high standard one has come to expect from him. Frustratingly, his work and ideas have been used by opponents of any reform whatsoever. Such usage ignores the fact that Bogdanor is far more of a radical on constitutional reform than the coalition. However, such usage in part reflects how the book's calls for more far-reaching changes such as proportional representation tend to be mentioned in passing, mainly through reference to Bogdanor's other works. Nevertheless, his analysis has little time for ideas of the British constitution as arrangements that are stable or desirable. He paints a picture of a system that has long been in flux both constitutionally and politically. In this he draws heavily on history, for which one might benefit from some prior knowledge of the politics of periods such as the interwar years.

Some might ask what the point is in reading a book about reforms that have either sunk or are running into increasing difficulties. Bogdanor's book will of course be of use when historians look back on this period of government, in particular to understand what happened to Liberal Democrat efforts at constitutional reform. Ingham and Brack's book will help them locate such efforts in the longer history of British Liberalism. More than this, both books are valuable in understanding current changes in British politics. Anybody who wants to understand the current government of Great Britain, its agendas in domestic, European and international politics, needs to get their head around how this coalition operates and why it has been such a learning experience for politicians, civil servants, the media and voters. If coalition is to become more common, as both Bogdanor's and Ingham and Brack's books argue is likely to be the case, then the importance of these books becomes even clearer.

Tim L. Oliver, Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, UK

Russia and Eurasia*

Eastern partnership: a new opportunity for the neighbours? Edited By Elena Korosteleva. Abingdon: Routledge. 2012. 188pp. Index. £85.00. ISBN 978 0 41567 607 6.

There's a general consensus among those who study the European Union's eastern neighbourhood that the EU's approach to the region is deficient. Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova, which form the core of this study, represent the new 'Eastern Europe', trapped between the European Union and Russia, which (albeit in different ways) have increasingly represented 'besieged fortresses' contesting the lands in between. In this context, the EU's response has been a classic case of too little too late: its 'conditionality without *finalité*' (p. 101) has promised nothing sufficient to compensate for the losses these states suffer trying to extract themselves from Moscow's grip. As Dov Lynch once noted, while Russia makes them offers they cannot refuse, the EU makes them offers they cannot understand.

It would be encouraging to report that this book rejected the general wisdom, and showed that the Eastern Partnership (EaP, launched in 2009 to replace the widely derided

* See also Robert Service, *Spies and commissars: Bolshevik Russia and the West*, pp. 416–17; and Graeme Gill, *Symbols and legitimacy in Soviet politics*, pp. 417–18.

European Neighbourhood Policy) did offer new opportunities. But its answer is firmly negative. Its main contribution is its extensive use of specially commissioned public opinion data (building on the editor's ESRC-funded project) in each of the three aforementioned countries and Russia, examining popular attitudes to European values, the EU and its neighbourhood policies. These are conducted by local experts. What results is a detailed bottom-up approach which traces the neighbours' changing perceptions both before and after 2009. The title is therefore slightly misleading. On one hand, the country studies only go up to late 2009 or early 2010 and therefore it appears premature to judge the EaP after merely a year. On the other hand, the volume involves longitudinal in-depth approaches, which fully justify the basic contention that there is little new to expect from the EaP.

The editor's opening chapter indicates that the EU's approach remains 'patchy and inconsistent' (p. 16), meaning that elites and publics in the region remain unwilling and unable to commit themselves more fully to EU integration, given their perceptions that the benefits are intangible and that the EU's approach is 'asymmetrical and one-sided'. In the second chapter, Tanya Radchuk explores some general themes, including the insurmountable significance of Russia for the region, and the neighbours' preferences for multi-vector foreign policies. Though ties with the European Union are valued, the region believes that the EU forces them into a one-sided, constrained relationship that has begun to cause a backlash—feelings of inferiority, suspicion, even Euroscepticism are growing, and, while the region's publics have become Europeanized, whether European integration has been otherwise furthered at all is doubtful.

Each of the following case-studies reinforces the view that the EU has missed countless opportunities, although each also blames the national leadership for 'virtual' policy implementation. In Ukraine, as Oleksandr Stegniy shows, this has led to a declining motivation for a European future. In Belarus, as David Rotman and Natalia Veremeeva argue, the manipulative approach of Russia and the EU alike has led to reinforcing the country's isolationist policies (although it is perhaps difficult to agree with the contention that the EU's manipulation is in quite the same league as Russia's). Arguably, Moldova is the EU's biggest failure. This has been the Eastern neighbour most supportive of further integration and most susceptible to outside influence. Yet, as Olga Danii and Mariana Mascauteanu argue, the European Union has offered little that can offset the economic and social tremors caused by edging out of Moscow's orbit.

The following chapter (Sergey Tumanov, Alexander Gasparashvili and Ekaterina Romanova) examines Russian views, which show that the EU/EaP is increasing in importance in Russian discourse, but in a counterproductive way. Russian suspicions that the EU is expanding into its zone of privileged interest increase the country's intention to reassert its interests there.

Thereafter, the volume suffers from a slight loss of focus and coherence. Its contributions were earlier published as a *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* special issue. Yet in the format of a book, the absence of an obvious conclusion becomes more detrimental. The final chapters (Ron Hill's detailed discussion of the historical evolution of the region, and Stephen White's survey of different constructs of the EU 'neighbourhood') are both interesting and insightful, but neither focuses explicitly on the EaP and they could have been better placed at the volume's beginning. Moreover, the 2012 publication date makes the lack of coverage of recent developments (for instance, the impact of the economic crisis; the patchy record of the Alliance for European Integration in Moldova) more telling. Moreover, whereas it is shown that the partnership's faults are evident even to EU officials in the field, we get little direct detail on how policy evolves in Brussels. One

can guess, but a chapter on this could have been beneficial. Overall, though, this is a valuable volume with some fantastic, if not particularly cheering, insight into the pervasive dysfunctionalities of EU policy towards a region that has every right to consider itself European.

Luke March, University of Edinburgh, UK

Vladimir Putin and Russian statecraft. By Allen C. Lynch. Washington DC: Potomac. 2011. 165pp. Index. £19.50. ISBN 978 1 59797 298 7. Available as e-book.

Allen C. Lynch's *Vladimir Putin and Russian statecraft* is a lucid and thorough biography of the Russian leader. It is part of Potomac's 'Shapers of international history' series, whose 'short, evocative and provocative' books (p. xi) are aimed specifically at a non-expert audience. Within this framework, Lynch's work does not uncover much that would come as a surprise to experts in contemporary Russian politics. With a general readership in mind, however, it makes an important contribution and a refreshing change to the often one-sided portrayals of Vladimir Putin in much of the English-language literature on the subject. The publication of the book is particularly timely given the recent announcement of Putin's renewed candidacy for president in March 2012. It is essential reading for anybody interested in a balanced and insightful assessment of Russia's former and likely future president.

Lynch's biography portrays Putin as a complex character whose political beliefs and choices have to be understood as the product of a variety of factors. Significantly, unlike many other portrayals of the Russian politician, his assessment of Putin goes far beyond that of an unreformed KGB man and authoritarian leader. The opening chapter describes Putin's upbringing and early working life, including his post as a KGB officer in East Germany. Subsequently, Lynch demonstrates that the influence of Putin's years in the security services should not be overemphasized. Four substantive chapters describe Putin's formative years as a politician and statesman covering the final decade of the twentieth century. These include his time as an aide to St Petersburg mayor Anatoly Sobchak, and those spent as the holder of various posts in the administration of then President Boris Yeltsin. When Putin moved to the centre of power with his appointment as prime minister in August 1999, he could demonstrate almost a decade of experience as a politician and statesman. The skills and knowledge he gained throughout these years had a profound effect on his subsequent political conduct. The final two chapters evaluate his domestic and foreign policy choices as president and prime minister from 2000 to 2011 against this background.

The central aim of Lynch's biography is to show that Putin's political beliefs and choices are not only the result of his character and KGB background, but have to be understood within the context of the difficult circumstances Russia faced following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the chaos of the Yeltsin years. From this point of view, he argues, the predominantly negative appraisals of Putin's achievements in the West require modification. Putin successfully dealt with many problems that Yeltsin could not solve, such as stabilizing the country's economy, improving living standards, establishing stability in public affairs, and pursuing a pragmatic programme of foreign policy. In many ways, Lynch argues, 'Putin's government, while perhaps not very "good" by Western political standards, is arguably one of the best that Russia ever had' (p. 4). The biography is far from defending Putin's policies wholesale, and serious questions regarding democratic direction under his leadership are raised throughout. However, it shows that the challenge Putin faced in reconciling tensions between the freedoms required for a democratic modern society and the control needed for an authoritative public order was an almost impossible one. Ultimately, Putin resolved these tensions increasingly in favour of the latter with the result of creating a

'Potemkin democracy' incapable of genuine evolution (p. 66). Given the legacy of the Putin years so far, Lynch is pessimistic about the potential for future democratic developments in Russia. Although Putin's renewed candidacy had not been announced at the time of publication of his book, it was clear that the choice of successor was Putin's alone. Russia, Lynch concludes, 'remains a government of men, not of laws' (p. 134).

Bettina Renz, University of Nottingham, UK

Belarus: the last European dictatorship. By Andrew Wilson. New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press. 2011. 304pp. Index. £20.00. ISBN 978 0 30013 435 3.

This is an authoritative account of Belarusian history. Whereas Nicholas Vakar's 1956 volume *Belorussia: the making of a nation* (Harvard University Press) bears an imprint of the author's formative experience in Russia, and Jan Zaprudnik's 1993 book *Belarus at a crossroads of history* (Westview) reeks of idiosyncrasies of the 1944 Belarusian émigrés, Andrew Wilson's is an account by a mainstream, well-meaning, if slightly condescending, westerner who is keen on prodding Belarusians into embracing such western goodies as liberal democracy and market economy.

The book's first part traces the earlier history of Belarus from the ninth century to the end of the Soviet Union (chapters one to six). The central idea is that Belarusian history is a series of false starts in the quest for a clear-cut national identity. The author upholds Valer Bulgakaw's view that the first custodians of the 'Belarusian idea' were the so-called West Russians of the 1860s, who believed that Belarus was a specific but inalienable part of Russia's spiritual universe. However, the first 'proper' Belarusian nationalists, who took the cue from the West Russians, did not come up with a 'strong story' to tell the ordinary people, most of whom either retained local identity or were inspired by Russian or Polish nationalisms. Even as late as the 1920s, there was no unanimity about the country's name. Wilson reaffirms Francine Hirsh's view that Belarus's national identity was eventually 'assembled by bureaucrats' (p. 104), i.e. from above; and he admits that Soviet Belarus was a brainchild of *realpolitik*, that is, it was founded as a buffer state that would enable the Soviet Union to claim territories from Poland.

The central question of the book's second part (chapters seven to 12) is how Belarus got stuck with Lukashenka, who is described as a 'chameleonic president' (p. 134) and a 'total opportunist' (p. 170), whose court ideologues are 'a gruesome bunch of hacks' (p. 203) and whose Institute of Socio-Political Research is 'ominous-sounding' (p. 203)—despite the fact that the polling firm of the Belarusian opposition (the good guys), which Wilson quotes approvingly, bears an almost identical name. Indeed, the signs of an affective disposition that sway Wilson and into which he feeds—i.e. Lukashenka is a notoriously bad guy and has to be condemned wholesale—are plentiful. Wilson does not cut Lukashenka any slack, although he admits the absence of oligarchs in Belarus, the steady economic growth since 1996, the equitable income distribution, and even 'Lukashenka's impressive record in winning foreign support' (p. 253), as well as the fact that the base of support that he won in 1994 has been remarkably solid ever since. Why this is the case remains unclear and so Wilson's response to the aforementioned central question is far from cogent. At fault is the lack of an informed reflection about contemporary Belarusian society, the major omission of Wilson's book. Although he mentions twice that 'Lukashenka didn't come out of nowhere' (pp. 75 and 115), he does not follow the trace. In effect, Lukashenka gets blamed for not accommodating himself to the 'end of history' and for not conforming to a set of values that are presumed to be shared universally when in fact they are not.

There is, it seems, an intimate connection between Wilson's persuasive but not entirely convincing critique of Lukashenka and his all too easy dismissal of Huntington's point about the inherent dangers of western universalism ('boon to half-penny ideologues justifying authoritarian regimes'—p. 171), although he admits that 'authoritarian saviour figures are popular in all three East Slavic states' (p. 257). Likewise, there is a noticeable asymmetry between the designs of the influential others in regard to Belarus: whereas 'Russia wants a more reliable satrap' (p. 259), 'the EU wants Belarus to transform its society' (p. 259).

Wilson does not seem to like Minsk with its 'Brutalist Soviet architecture' (p. 204) and calls the national library the 'new layer of kitsch'. What I find kitschy is the book's subtitle, which seems to sell it below its worth. Further, the book contains several factual mistakes; for example, the legend of a map on page 50 should read 'Uniate' instead of 'Catholic'; Belarus's largess in the area of potash is overstated (p. 125); Mikhail Myasnikovich, the current prime minister, is said to lack academic credentials (p. 165), whereas he defended his doctoral thesis in 1998 in Saint Petersburg; and the account of what Lukashenka said about the prose writer Vasyl Bykaw (p. 202) is inaccurate. The book is full of suggestive tangential remarks. For example, Zianon Pazniak 'would have split the country to a greater extent [had he come to power] than Lukashenka has ever done' (p. 138); and the BNR or the Belarusian People's Republic, the major founding symbol of Belarusian nationalists, whose life span was six months under the German occupation in 1918, 'could not have been so insignificant if the Soviet secret services sought to destroy it in exile' (p. 96).

Wilson's mastery of English idioms is unsurpassed but he overindulges in Gallicisms, his favourite being *amour-propre*. Depicting Grigorii (not Georgii) Yavlinsky as the 'Russian liberal supremo and later conservative bête noire' (p. 169) does not seem to make sense. Strangely enough, the technical writing style of the account of the Belarusian economy in the last chapter is out of step with the rest of the book. Overall, however, Wilson's book is a thorough analysis of historical information, and as such, it is one of the most valuable contributions to Belarusian studies and is guaranteed a long shelf life.

Grigory Ioffe, Radford University, USA

Constructing grievance: ethnic nationalism in Russia's republics. By Elise Giuliano. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. 2011. 256pp. £27.95. ISBN 978 0 80144 745 7.

In an association that is inherently problematic, Russia is now regularly named in conjunction with Brazil, China and India, a constellation of countries that is predicted to experience significant economic expansion over the next 50 years, and an augmented role in international affairs as a consequence. In Russia's case, a strengthened economic foundation has buttressed the Putin presidency as well as the subsequent Putin–Medvedev tandem, and afforded the country a bolder foreign policy projection.

There was a period, however, in the early 1990s when Russia's economy was in free fall, and anxieties persisted that the country could implode and splinter along ethnic lines. James Baker, Secretary of State under President George H. W. Bush, encapsulated these fears when he warned that the Soviet Union risked turning into a 'Yugoslavia with nukes'. Confounding some of the nightmare scenarios posited at the time, Russia thankfully never ventured down this destructive route and avoided an 'ethnofederal implosion'. Although Russia did experience bouts of mass nationalist mobilization across its vast expanse—which includes over 100 ethnic minorities and more than 20 ethnically defined sub-federal territories—the attraction of nationalism was highly uneven. These wide discrepancies of mass nationalist mobilization and regional secessionism provide the starting point for

Elise Giuliano's investigation: why did people respond favourably to nationalist leaders advocating a 'radical transformation of the status quo', and why was the appeal of nationalism so different across the republics?

In examining these questions in her excellent book *Constructing grievance*, Giuliano provides a comparative study of Russia's 16 ethno-federal republics. Drawing on evidence from republics that experienced mass nationalist mobilization as well as those that did not, she argues that the 'power of ethnicity as a basis of political action' is often overstated, pointing out that people with ethnic affiliations do not necessarily 'constitute a group with common interests … prior to a moment of political mobilisation'. Instead, a political process, whereby it is incumbent upon nationalist leaders to define both the ethnic group they aspire to represent and the group grievance that lies beyond that entity's reach, crafts this sense of group identity.

On the basis of a solid foundation of evidence, Giuliano argues that specific economic, political and social conditions are insufficient factors for fostering mass nationalism. As she demonstrates in chapter three—which analyses the labour market position and social mobility of ethnic Russians and titular nationalities across Russia's republics, and compares and contrasts their varied experiences of mass nationalism—there is no direct correlation between social mobility and ethnic group identity. This argument is reinforced by Giuliano's detailed study of Tatarstan, where her extensive field research is evident. Along with the republics of Chechnya, Tuva and, to a lesser extent, Bashkortostan and Yakutia, Tatarstan belongs to the minority of republics that saw significant nationalist mobilization. However, the appeal of nationalism took place in a context where the titular population experienced improved socio-economic conditions and professional mobility, an improvement largely attributed to the central state's policies. What becomes clear though is the crucial importance ascribed to the way 'nationalist entrepreneurs' chose to frame their argument. In Tatarstan for example, nationalist leaders advanced an argument that emphasized ethnic economic inequality. Although this did not necessarily reflect the reality, its coinciding with a period of economic crisis—which the Soviet Union had entered in the 1980s and which continued well into the 1990s—meant that it nevertheless gained traction. While arguments crafted around the idea of ethnic economic inequality led to nationalist success, Giuliano observes that those nationalists who advanced issues of culture and history found their success stunted.

While Giuliano's book is a considerable contribution to scholarship, some weaknesses nevertheless exist. For example, given that mass nationalist mobilization constitutes a form of group activity and, as Giuliano sees it, a political process, greater attention to dimensions other than the rhetoric of nationalist leaders and the underlying socio-economic conditions, like ethnic group identity, would have been useful. While she does write about this issue—pointing out that ethnic groups were reified in Russia during the Soviet period and before—more detail here would have strengthened her case given its crucial importance to nationalist movements. For instance, what role did the level of organizational aptitude play in this regard? With this in mind, her comparison of nationalist mobilization in Russia, China and Iraq in fewer than four pages in the concluding chapter seems out of place, especially given the highly detailed analysis in the rest of the book. Nevertheless, *Constructing grievance* is still an admirable book, and its findings—which are born out of first-rate research—deserve to be widely read.

Johannes Olschner

International Affairs **88**: 2, 2012

Middle East and North Africa

Insecure Gulf: the end of certainty and the transition to the post-oil era. By Kristian Coates Ulrichsen. London: Hurst. 2011. 288pp. Index. Pb.: £25.00. ISBN 978 1 84904 127 0.

The new post-oil Arab Gulf: managing people and wealth. Edited by Nabil A. Sultan, David Weir and Zeinab Karake-Shalhoub. London: Saqi Books. 2011. 250pp. Index. Pb.: £25.00. ISBN 978 0 86356 490 1.

The publishing of books on Gulf security has become a thriving industry. The Gulf appears to be turning into the new centre of the Arab world, replacing the traditional centres of Cairo, Baghdad and Damascus, on the assumption that the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries—Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia—have the kind of permanence that such a centre requires. The two books under review appear to be contributing to this process of trying to recentre the Arab Middle East on the Gulf. These new, flourishing but vulnerable states, established between the 1930s and the 1970s, hold 40 per cent of the world oil reserves that pass through the narrow Strait of Hormuz. They possess an oil revenue surplus that in the light of global economic recession becomes even more important. But does this alone justify the Gulf's claim to be the new centre of the region?

Both books, like other recent works on these oil-rich states, are reluctant to use the historical name 'Persian Gulf'. The use of 'Arab Gulf', as in *The new post-oil Arab Gulf*, is in itself a sign of the insecurity felt by the GCC states *vis-à-vis* Persian historical dominance and recent Iranian attempted hegemony. In *Insecure Gulf*, Kristian Coates Ulrichsen refers to these regional hegemonic ambitions on both sides, the Persian and the Arab, and, for the purpose of neutrality 'in order to avoid local political sensitivities' opts for 'the Gulf' in his book. This 'neutrality' sets the tone for the whole book.

Coates Ulrichsen covers not only the GCC member states, but also Iraq, Iran and Yemen. Although Iran and Iraq are geographically Gulf countries, the GCC was specifically created in 1981 as a defensive shield against the threats of these two states. They remain regional 'ideational and political threats' to the GCC countries. The author's use of Yemen as a 'case-study' is also questionable, as it contradicts a geographical fact. While the term 'Middle East' remains debatable, 'the Gulf' is geographically well defined and cannot include a Red Sea and an Arabian Sea country. Yemen is no model on the edge of 'the Gulf' as it is not a monarchy, and does not share the political systems of the GCC states. It is a republic; it has a different infrastructure, and a different economy. Yemen is not a rentier state with millions of expatriate workers, like the GCC countries. Perhaps Bahrain could offer a better case-study of dwindling oil resources and a religiously divided society, with incompetent rulers failing to address citizens' rights. Certainly, Yemen has an impact on GCC security, as do the surrounding countries like Syria, Iraq, Jordan and Iran.

Although both books address the post-oil challenges to the six oil-rich new states, *Insecure Gulf* is more substantial in its detail and analysis. It is divided into three parts: part one outlines the history of national security structures and future trends; part two addresses the demographic and structural imbalances in Gulf economies, with emphasis on political economy; and part three focuses on Yemen's transition. *Insecure Gulf* offers a clearer account of the dimensions of energy security, i.e. diversification, public policy, access and equity, and social development. *The new post-oil Arab Gulf* recounts the distinctive success story of the GCC countries and their hope to become 'the new economic tigers of the Middle East'. The authors celebrate the building of the foundations of the post-oil era: the successful

GCC sovereign wealth funds and Islamic finance; the knowledge-based economics as future aspirations; the transformation of higher education in the GCC modernity; and the use of smart technology to enhance learning for a post-oil 'Arab Gulf', as well as the fundamental role of women there, albeit in accordance with Islamic traditions.

The perceived aim of Gulf security in both books is the survival of the ruling families, while taking into consideration international, especially western, interests. In both books the idea of this security or transition to a post-oil era is not portrayed through the eyes of the population, but rather through the perception of regime concerns and international interests. Failure to maintain standards of living could disturb the 'good living—no democracy' understanding and pose a threat to the regimes.

Both books were published in 2011. Although Ulrichsen missed the wave of Arab Spring protests and the challenges they pose to the monarchic rule of the GCC, his book offers a good background as it sheds light on the difficulties of moulding security in the Gulf. For example, he points out how 'the peninsula shield' that was dismantled in 2005 symbolically came back in March 2011 to protect Bahrain from the threats of constitutional monarchy. Furthermore, he has included a postscript where he addresses the new external and internal threats, ranging from sectarianism (Sunni–Shi'i) to the risk of marginalizing a huge new generation.

The new post-oil Arab Gulf appears to have been published after the wave of revolutionary change in the Arab world, but the latter is barely recognized as a serious challenge to the status quo of the GCC states. Chapter one has a sentence in its conclusion referring to 'the mass demonstrations that have swept away the Arab world' and could 'increase the dangers of failure of GCC regimes'. The authors continue to praise the outstanding economic status and achievements of these oil-rich countries. The book reads like a good textbook for international bankers and investors in the region, but should be read sceptically by politicians.

In the end, neither book is the definitive work on Gulf security, leaving open the unedifying prospect of yet more emerging from this thriving branch of the publishing industry.

Mai Yamani

Salafism in Yemen: transnationalism and religious identity. By Laurent Bonnefoy. London: Hurst. 2012. 366pp. Pb.: £25.00. ISBN 978 1 84904 131 7.

As the Arab uprisings of 2011 have seen Salafi groups rise to prominence across the region (particularly in Egypt and Tunisia), Salafism—a creed which is centred on the notion of purifying Islam from local particularities and innovations—may increasingly be a topic of interest to students of the contemporary Middle East. *Salafism in Yemen* focuses on the politically quietist 'missionary' Salafism which is pre-eminent in Yemen, and offers an important case-study into the local dynamics of a transnational movement.

Drawing on in-depth reading of source texts and extensive fieldwork, Laurent Bonnefoy sets out to counter the 'narratives of Saudisation'—the relatively widespread view (among Yemenis and others) that the Salafi movement in Yemen is the product of a deliberate policy of proselytization by Saudi Arabia, enabled by Saudi political and economic dominance in the Arabian Peninsula.

A key element of his alternative analysis is the account of the life and ideas of the movement's founder and central figure, Muqbil bin Hadi al-Wadi'i, who died in 2001. Al-Wadi'i came from a Zaydi tribe in northern Yemen, but left for Saudi Arabia in the early 1950s. After working in the kingdom and pursuing religious studies there for many years, al-Wadi'i eventually returned to Yemen in the early 1980s to found his own religious

institute and preach the ideas he shared with leaders of the transnational Salafi movement with whom he had studied in Saudi Arabia.

Al-Wadi'i's ideas, now taught in Salafi institutes and centres across Yemen, are characterized by a trenchant rejection of *hizbiyya*, roughly translated as 'factionalism'. In Muqbilian Salafism, this entails absolute rejection of formal organization in all its varieties, including charitable bodies and political parties, because of its ability to divert allegiance from God and cause *fitna* (strife) in the community. Bonnefoy argues that this is an example of Salafism adapting to the Yemeni context: the focus on *hizbiyya* would not have the same relevance in other locations.

Bonnefoy goes on to describe the Salafi community in the southern Yemeni town of Yafi', using it as an example of the impact of transnational relations in Yemen. The community is—like al-Wadi'i himself—shaped by the ambivalent relationship to Saudi Arabia, with many young men aspiring to find work in the kingdom and return to their home town as successful businessmen, an increasingly unattainable ambition.

Bonnefoy makes a convincing case for seeing Yemeni Salafism as primarily a product of grassroots transnational relationships and migratory patterns, rather than a deliberate policy of proselytization on the part of the Saudi state. His extensive reading of Muqbil al-Wadi'i's books and speeches finds that the Salafi leader was frequently critical of the kingdom and the ruling Al Saud family, while there is scant evidence to support accusations made that the Saudi state bankrolls the movement.

Salafism in Yemen approaches its subject both through the writings of the movement's leaders and through the practice of its followers, offering a sensitive description of the movement's development and its place in Yemeni society. This book can be thoroughly recommended both for those seeking to understand modern Yemen and for those whose interest is in transnational religious movements, and Salafism in particular.

Leonie Northedge, Middle East and North Africa Programme, Chatham House

Sub-Saharan Africa*

Citizen of Zimbabwe: conversations with Morgan Tsvangirai. By Stephen Chan. Harare: Weaver Press. 2010. 116pp. Pb.: £18.95. ISBN 978 1 77922 105 6.

Southern Africa: old treacheries and new deceits. By Stephen Chan. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. 2011. 304pp. Index. £25.00. ISBN 978 0 30015 405 4. Available as e-book.

The relationship between South Africa and Zimbabwe has been long been akin to that between siblings: linked by colonial genealogy, geographic proximity and similar (although far from identical) formative experiences, the history of their fractious relationship has also been indelibly influenced by the interaction of the personalities and political values of their respective leaders. This was as true during the era of apartheid South Africa and Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence experiment, as in the period of post-independence Zimbabwe and black majority rule in South Africa. As these two books by Stephen Chan make clear, external observers need to study with greater care the particular philosophy and outlook of Robert Mugabe and Morgan Tsvangirai, on the one hand, and Nelson Mandela, Thabo Mbeki and Jacob Zuma on the other. These two books combined offer a refreshingly different perspective on the critical dynamic between the two countries'

* See also Scarlett Cornelissen, Fantu Cheru and Timothy M. Shaw, eds, *Africa and International Relations in the 21st century*, pp. 393–94.

leaderships, and do much to dispel the myths that have attached themselves to analysis of the South Africa/Zimbabwe axis, and South Africa's supposed 'failure' to resolve the toxic Zimbabwean problem.

While both books are written in a clear, accessible style, and contain well-informed and provocative political and philosophical themes, of the two, the reprint of Chan's extensive interviews with Morgan Tsvangirai is more interesting and intellectually satisfying. This series of interviews with the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) leader, conducted over several days when Tsvangirai was under immense personal strain from the treason charge, was first published in *samizdat* form in the run-up to the parliamentary elections of 2005. Given that all political parties and groupings in Zimbabwe today expect renewed parliamentary elections in 2012, its reprinting is both timely and appropriate. Chan himself is of course an incomparable observer of the twists and turns of Zimbabwean politics, dating back to his involvement as a youthful Commonwealth election observer in Zimbabwe's first fully multiparty elections in 1980. The patient and gently inquisitorial technique the author used to draw out the MDC leader proves remarkably effective in presenting a much more rounded politician and profound thinker, and reflects well on the maturation of Tsvangirai's keen interest in the qualities and challenges of leadership. True to his educational and trade union roots, Tsvangirai's personal suspicion and dislike of intellectuals comes through strongly, as does the importance of his family in sustaining him through the vicissitudes of Zimbabwean politics since 1999. (The tragedy of Susan Tsvangirai's death in 2009 and its personal and political implications for Tsvangirai echoes through the book when read in 2012.) The reader is left in no doubt of Tsvangirai's remarkable courage and fortitude, but Chan works scrupulously to present a balanced view of his shortcomings: repeated political vacillation; questionable strategic judgement; reliance on a key unelected kitchen cabinet whose own political strategy seems frequently misplaced; and the disastrous split with MDC-M which has compromised a viable political alternative to ZANU-PF.

Much of the material and intellectual themes identified in *Citizen of Zimbabwe* appear again in *Southern Africa: old treacheries and new deceits*. Despite its title, and introductory historical survey of the intersection of Southern African radical black nationalism and its armed struggle against white minority regimes, together with external intervention and logistical support from Cold War allies and foes, the book concentrates primarily on the fraught relationship between Pretoria/Tshwane and Harare. History matters, and in Southern Africa history matters a great deal. Chan provides welcome discussion of Nelson Mandela's approach and legacy, Thabo Mbeki's intellectual grounding and foreign policy strategic vision, contrasting this starkly with the floundering of his successor, Jacob Zuma. There is also considered examination of the internal tensions and power struggles within the liberation-era ANC senior leadership.

Chan is writing again from his deep personal knowledge—and so academic references and documentary sources are limited—and provides a wealth of anecdotes. This makes the book appealing to general and informed observers of Southern Africa, although less satisfying to an academic audience. In the West there has been a popular mystification of why the South African President Thabo Mbeki proved so resistant to international calls for Pretoria to use its considerable regional leverage and political influence to secure the removal of Robert Mugabe after successive rigged and violent presidential and parliamentary election campaigns from 2000. As Chan points out, South Africa's 'quiet diplomacy' to produce a power-sharing agreement and sustainable transfer of political power from ZANU-PF which draws so much of its legitimacy from its standing as a victorious liberation movement has been anything but quiet. The book makes clear that the intellectual

philosopher-king Mbeki had scant respect for Tsvangirai's political and leadership skills, quite apart from the MDC leader's limited intellectual qualities. Therefore, while Mbeki held Mugabe in respect and intellectual regard—the ideological, personal and philosophical outlooks and interaction of the two leaders are particularly well drawn—Mbeki's political standpoint was equally influenced by his lack of respect for Tsvangirai and his team as capable and qualified political replacements. Intellectual outlook, generational respect, personal liking and disdain for the possible replacement are set firmly in context, as is the wider context of Southern African Development Community opinion. As the internationalist Mbeki clearly appreciated, the sad truth is that the resolution of Zimbabwe's protracted crisis lies inside the country itself: Zuma too recognizes this, hence the consistency of the South African President's calls for the warring parties to reach an accommodation of their differences, with South Africa determinedly acting as mediator. Disputed political transitions should be inclusive (see South African policy on the DRC and Libya) and the use of force is firmly out of the question. Chan as analyst and observer does not spare himself, reflecting on the luxury of academic disapproval of policy choices, while recognizing the validity of Lord Carrington's blunt and tough-minded retort on the flaws of the Lancaster House settlement: 'What would you have done?' As Chan reflects, diplomacy is all too often the choice between two evils, rather than the selection of the lesser.

Sue Onslow, London School of Economics and Political Science, UK

UN peacekeeping in Africa: from the Suez crisis to the Sudan conflicts. By Adekeye Adebajo. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner. 2011. 240pp. Index. Pb.: £19.50. ISBN 978 1 58826 782 5.

The African continent has played host to more than half of United Nations peacekeeping operations and the time is ripe for a review of successes, failures and lessons learned. In this book, Adekeye Adebajo reviews 15 UN peacekeeping missions on the continent, and seeks to identify some of the criteria and prerequisites for success. Adebajo, the director of the Centre for Conflict Resolution in Cape Town and veteran of several UN missions on the continent, is well placed to provide just such a review and does so with his usual flair.

While Adebajo's book revolves around five questions, two are centrally important: what accounts for success and failure of peacekeeping missions, and how can a new division of labour between the UN and Africa's regional security organizations improve conflict management? The latter question is essential to the former, for as the book demonstrates amply, the UN is not the only significant player in conflict management and peacekeeping on the continent; one has only to think of the critical roles played by ECOMOG in Liberia and Sierra Leone, or the challenges faced by AMIS in Darfur to recognize that regional organizations on the continent have a critical role to play, but that the roles of the UN and these organizations are often not clearly delineated in advance.

Adebajo defines success as a peacekeeping mission that brings peace and stability to a particular situation by implementing the key tasks of its mandate, such as ceasefire or disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants. He draws out five key lessons regarding success of such operations—many may seem somewhat self-evident but can be overlooked in the authorization of missions which simply generate unrealistic expectations and founder over time. First, support of key UN Security Council members, including willingness to mobilize political and financial support for the mission. Second, the absence of spoilers or the development of an effective strategy to manage spoilers. Third, the support to peacekeeping efforts of powerful regional players or hegemons such as South

Africa and Nigeria politically and where necessary militarily. Fourth, the development of an effective division of labour between the UN and regional bodies, recognizing the primacy of the UN Security Council for international peace and security but also the need for better strategic planning. Finally, he argues for the need for effective UN special representatives and the importance of individual diplomacy.

The book is explicitly historical and comparative, seeking to draw lessons across quite distinct missions in very different contexts. Adebajo makes the case that despite idiosyncrasies of specific cases, important lessons can be drawn out about the roles of national, regional and international actors in contributing to, or undermining, conflict management. The book is something of a *tour de force*, with the ambition and limitations attendant on such endeavours. The volume gives a genuine overview and taste for the range and pitfalls of these operations, although with the inevitable limit to detail that writing a volume covering 15 operations in 240 pages entails. Nonetheless, Adebajo asks important questions that require such a large comparative sweep, and discerns some important lessons. As such, this book will be of interest to scholars and practitioners alike.

Chandra Lekha Sriram, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, UK

Obasanjo, Nigeria and the world. By John Iliffe. Woodbridge: James Currey. 2011. 326pp. Index. £45.00. ISBN 978 1 84701 027 8.

It is often said that Nigerian politics are so complex as to defy understanding. But since it is equally common to label Nigeria one of the most important African countries (mainly because it has the largest population), the inability to explain its politics would be significant. Students of Nigeria are thus left with what appears to be an insurmountable difficulty: how best to make sense of this multifaceted country without falling into the trap of excessive simplification.

Although Nigeria has suffered repeated political convulsions, the country has remained intact. However, it is clear that in spite of its enormous oil reserves, it has failed to develop. This contradiction is often judged to be due to the poor quality of leadership, which has blighted the country's politics. Indeed, it is often claimed that both civilian and military rulers have failed to institutionalize a political system that would ensure political stability and spur sustained development. The oil dividend has largely been dissipated unproductively by the various regimes that have presided over the fate of the country. So the question arises as to whether the transition to electoral democracy can bring about more productive progress.

John Iliffe comes to this question by way of a political biography of, arguably, the most important politician in post-colonial Nigeria. Indeed, Olusegun Obasanjo has been a key political figure since the 1970s and his actions have been significant for the country, both domestically and in the international arena. Military ruler from 1976 to 1979, he returned the country to civilian rule. Having retired from the military, he continued to exercise political influence. He was elected president in 1999. By the time he stepped down in 2007, he could claim to have consolidated electoral democracy in Nigeria. Yet he is a controversial figure and his political foes have been quick to point out that he did not manage to suppress corruption and that he failed to bring about development. Whatever his legacy, there is no gainsaying that he played a critical role in the last three decades. So does Iliffe's biography help to illuminate Nigerian post-colonial politics?

Based on an exhaustive reading of the secondary sources, including the Nigerian press and political memoirs, this study follows a strict chronological order, presenting the material

according to the different phases of Obasanjo's career. This format makes for a clear account of his life and political involvement, but it fails to explain why Nigeria was evolving as it did during the period in question. The focus is entirely on the man, not the country. But it is difficult to understand the man without reference to the country, and readers without prior knowledge of Nigerian history will find it difficult to place Obasanjo within the relevant historical context. Furthermore, the absence of primary sources makes it hard to understand informal politics, which we know to be significant in Nigeria. In other words, the book remains centred on Obasanjo's formal, or official, role—which obviously leaves a gap in the account of Nigeria's political history.

Obasanjo is a prominent African figure for two main reasons. The first is that as military ruler he returned Nigeria to civilian rule, which earned him the admiration of the outside world. His standing was further heightened by his ability, as civilian, to win the presidential elections between 1999 and 2007, and to stand down as per the constitution after two mandates. He is also credited, during and after the Biafra war, with having contributed to safeguarding Nigeria's unity in the face of strong fissiparous currents. The second is that he was heavily involved in the continent's international affairs, having been a key actor in the creation of the African Union. His high international profile raised Nigeria's standing and the country was increasingly seen as the key player in West Africa despite its intractable domestic problems. Furthermore, his undoubted commitment to electoral democracy lent greater legitimacy to the democratic wave that swept over the continent from the 1990s onwards.

Iliffe's account of Obasanjo's life and deeds is probably as good as we can expect to have in present circumstances. Indeed, as an outsider he is able to write more objectively, which makes the book all the more valuable. However, his approach (standard political biography) prevents him from teasing out the more subterranean factors that help explain the evolution of Nigerian post-colonial politics. The reader will undoubtedly learn a great deal about Obasanjo but will likely be left wanting to understand more about Nigerian politics. And because this biography avoids any discussion of the 'informal', we lack an analysis of the concept of power in Nigerian politics—one that would help us understand how it differs from that extant in western polities. So, this impressive volume will be of most value to those who are already familiar with Nigerian politics.

Patrick Chabal, King's College London, UK

Warfare in independent Africa. By William Reno. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2011. 271pp. Index. £55.00. ISBN 978 0 52185 045 2. Available as e-book.

Although there is today a sense of optimism about Africa's future, it cannot be denied that the continent continues to suffer from widespread violence, civil conflict and warfare. This paradox raises important questions about both the nature of politics and the development of civil society in contemporary Africa. Is warfare an inherent aspect of African politics, or is it merely the image we have of a continent that has suffered untold violence since the pre-colonial period? Are we giving such violence too much importance, forgetting that all processes of development in history have been violent and that Africa is in this respect no different from the rest of the world? And in any event, what is the best way of analysing conflict in contemporary Africa?

This volume, which appears in the 'New approaches to African history' series by Cambridge University Press, aims essentially at providing a systematic account of civil conflict in independent Africa. The author's basic thesis is that warfare on the continent is

best understood in terms of the nature of the state that armed insurgents confront. In other words, the type of armed conflict found in Africa is to be explained by the complexion of the state and the behaviour of leading state actors. This approach is original in that most of the attempts to explain violence in Africa have centred either on the causal effects of ethnicity and poverty or on the politicians' greed (both in and out of office). Here, the author argues that the changes in warfare since independence are due to the evolution of the post-colonial state. Thus, the more derelict the state becomes—that is, the more 'informal' it is—the more likely it is that parochial violence will break out. Conflict will be initiated and sustained by the competing political elites, who seek power and profit by means of violence.

The book is divided into chapters that chart the evolution of warfare in terms of the 'enemy' the armed insurgents face. The author discusses in turn what he terms anti-colonial rebels; majority-rule rebels; reform rebels; warlord rebels; and parochial rebels. Although it is not presented as such, it is interesting to note that these various chapters tackle warfare chronologically. The first two groups of rebels engaged in anti-colonial or anti-apartheid violence with a view to replacing the existing state with one that was independent or representative of black African majority in the former Portuguese colonies and the white majority-rule regimes in Zimbabwe and South Africa. Warfare in those instances was used to capture the post-colonial or post-apartheid state. Here, the rebels had a clear political agenda that rested on national unity, the search for national legitimacy, the promise of a better world and recognition by the international community.

Reform rebels emerged in those countries where the post-colonial state was in the hands of politicians who favoured policies dividing people according to ethnic or regional origins and who had failed to achieve economic growth. The hallmark of such rebels, of which Uganda's Museveni is the archetype, was the commitment to 'clean up' the political system, and to set up a new political structure that would enable more active and more equitable developmental policies. In Uganda, Ghana, Ethiopia and Eritrea, these reform rebels took power with a clear sense of the policies they intended to implement throughout the country. They were intent on a wholesale refashioning of the state and drastic policy changes. However, the more common (and more recent) type of violence found in post-colonial Africa is undoubtedly that carried out by warlord and parochial rebels—of which Liberia, Sierra Leone and the Congo (Zaire) offer the clearest examples. Here, the rebels oppose what has become a weak, or failed, state operating on the basis of patronage networks that sustain what is left of the state edifice. Violence is in the hands of militias, gangs and 'armies', which are set up, financed and controlled by formal and informal political actors seeking economic gains and political leverage.

Although this book will serve as a most useful textbook for students, largely because it is clearly written and well informed, it fails to address some important issues, which are relevant to an understanding of violence in Africa. The first concerns the question of chronology. Is the change in warfare that has taken place in Africa an indication that there has been an evolution of politics in the direction of warlord and/or parochial violence—that is, informal politics? And if so, why? The second has to do with the nature of the state. Is it true that such warlord/parochial violence stems from the deliquescence of the post-colonial state over time? And if so, how are we to conceptualize the post-colonial state? Finally, and from a comparative perspective, why is it that violence in Africa has not been productive? If, as is often argued, violence and warfare have historically been the driving forces in the 'modernization' of politics in Europe and Asia, why is this not happening in Africa? In point of fact, the contrary seems to be true insofar as in Africa

violence has become an instrument of business, which both rests upon and weakens the post-colonial state. Violence begets violence but fails to bring about the consolidation of a state that would be able to generate the kind of economic development the continent desperately needs. In other words, what this volume lacks is a sense of the appropriate causalities over time. How, that is, to explain the evolution of the relationship between politics and violence in post-colonial Africa.

Patrick Chabal, King's College London, UK

South Asia

An enemy we created: the myth of the Taliban/Al Qaeda merger in Afghanistan, 1970–2010. By Alex Strick van Linschoten and Felix Kuehn. London: Hurst. 538pp. Index. £30.00. ISBN 978 1 84904 154 6.

Even after Osama bin Laden's death the links between the Taleban and his Al-Qaeda movement remain a hot issue. The Afghan government as well as the Obama administration insist that unless the Taleban break with Al-Qaeda, they will not be accepted as partners in any future political dispensation. Whether they are right to assume a close continuing connection between the two movements is the central question in *An enemy we created*. Although its subtitle supplies the answer, this book is not based on mere assertion. The authors' research and scholarship make a powerful case and their book is likely to become the definitive text on the matter.

Alex Strick van Linschoten and Felix Kuehn have lived for several years in Kandahar, where they interviewed numerous current and former Taleban commanders and officials. Using these and other interviews, they provide a mass of evidence of differences between the Taleban and Al-Qaeda.

Going back even before the jihad against the Soviet invaders in the 1980s, the authors show that the brand of Deobandi teaching received by most students in southern Afghanistan differed from the Muslim Brotherhood philosophy that Arabs were taught (pp. 22ff). This gap widened when Arabs such as Osama bin Laden arrived in Afghanistan in the mid-1980s. The newcomers' ideology was internationalist, while the Afghans were fighting to defend their country. In addition, the Arabs mainly operated in eastern Afghanistan close to Peshawar in Pakistan, where they had their base, while the younger jihadis who later became the Taleban were in the south. In short, the core leaderships of the Taleban and Al-Qaeda have different social, cultural and ideological backgrounds and represent different generations.

So it is not surprising (though rarely understood in the West) that when bin Laden returned to Afghanistan in 1996, long after the Russians had left, but during the civil war which was engulfing the country, it was not the Taleban who invited him. His hosts were the older jihadi leaders against whom the Taleban were fighting. Indeed, the authors conclude that Mullah Mohammed Omar, the Taleban leader, knew nothing of bin Laden in 1996 (p. 138). It was only after the *mujahedin* lost power in Kabul that the Al-Qaeda leader was forced to switch allegiance to the victorious Taleban. He moved to the Taleban stronghold of Kandahar, in part because Omar was advised that the powerful Arab jihadi could be kept under closer control there. The two men met regularly, but the authors argue their relationship remained formal and distant because neither spoke the other's language. The rumour that Omar married bin Laden's daughter has no basis in truth, they say (p. 169).

Bin Laden and Omar were linked by convenience rather than affection. Omar was willing to give bin Laden hospitality as a fellow Muslim, provided he did not use Afghanistan to attack other countries. He also valued his money and support in the continuing effort to defeat the former *mujahedin* warlords who were holding out in the north. On his side, bin Laden needed a safe haven.

After bin Laden broke the rule about attacking other countries with the bombing of US embassies in east Africa in 1998, to which Clinton responded with cruise missile strikes, several senior Taleban spoke out against bin Laden's continued presence. But bin Laden found a clinching counter-argument. At a face-to-face meeting the Arab told Omar, 'Sheikh, if you give in to the pressure of infidel governments, your decision will be against Islam' (p. 163). Omar accepted the point, but requested bin Laden to repay Taleban courtesy by making arrangements to leave Afghanistan within the next 18 months. Yet, paradoxically, relations became closer. The authors claim that US inflexibility and the Taleban's increasing international isolation drove Omar into bin Laden's arms. He started to accept bin Laden's line that Saudi Arabia was betraying the Islamic community, the ummah, by keeping US bases on Saudi soil.

Meanwhile, having won a reprieve for his Afghan sanctuary, bin Laden went on to organize the attacks on New York and Washington, without telling Mullah Omar. Even this did not end relations. On the contrary, after the attacks happened, Omar hardened his determination not to hand bin Laden to the Americans, blithely dismissing warnings that the Bush administration was going to strike Afghanistan more thoroughly than Clinton had done.

Since then, ten years have passed, and the authors argue that Al-Qaeda's agenda and the Taleban's have diverged again. Although Osama's death prompted Taleban statements that he was a martyr who strove to liberate Islamic land from infidels and crusaders, recent Taleban activity shows an unwavering focus on Afghan problems rather than global jihad.

The crucial question in deciding whether negotiations take place between the Taleban and the Americans, the authors argue, is the will of the protagonists to go for peace rather than victory. The Al-Qaeda link to the Taleban is one of many issues, and to the Taleban it is much less pressing than it is for the United States. But how much of a sticking point it becomes will only be clear once talks get under way. The authors believe the Taleban will abandon it if and when Washington makes an irrevocable commitment to withdraw all its troops.

Jonathan Steele

The wars of Afghanistan: Messianic terrorism, tribal conflicts, and the failures of Great Powers. By Peter Tomsen. New York: Public Affairs. 2011. 714pp. Index. £25.00. ISBN 978 1 58648 763 8. Available as e-book.

One of the more persistent narratives about events in Afghanistan after the Soviet troop withdrawal in 1988–9 holds that US disengagement created a political and military vacuum which set the country on a trajectory of civil war, Taleban rule, Al-Qaeda presence and 9/11. As a result, the dominant theme in 2001 was that the international community must never again abandon Afghanistan. More recently, the theme has returned in the form of warnings against a precipitate withdrawal of the US-led coalition forces and a sharp decline in international economic and political support.

The book by Peter Tomsen shows in great detail that parts of this narrative are patently false. The United States remained deeply engaged during a critical three-year period

after the Soviet withdrawal. Washington financed arms supplies to the *mujahedin* through Pakistan, maintained a strong CIA operation that worked with Pakistan's military intelligence (ISI) to support favoured *mujahedin* factions, and appointed a special envoy (with ambassadorial rank) to the Afghan opposition. The objective was to score a decisive victory in the wake of Soviet withdrawal.

Peter Tomsen served as the US special envoy (1989–91). As he describes it in this book, his main efforts were threefold: first, fighting the CIA, which in cooperation with the ISI favoured the more militant *mujahedin* factions; second, cajoling the remaining 'moderate' Afghan factions to agree among themselves in order to deal more effectively with the 'extremists'; and, third, convincing Washington decisively to support 'moderate' Afghans, rein in the CIA, and pressure Islamabad to abandon what Tomsen saw—and still sees—as a powerful Pakistani ambition to spread Islamic extremism in Afghanistan, in the region and indeed globally.

Tomsen had to admit defeat on all counts when in early 1992 his position was abandoned and the *mujahedin* factions seized Kabul. While he was appointed ambassador to Afghanistan, the violent chaos in Kabul that followed prevented him from taking up his position. After a further stint in the State Department, Tomsen was posted as ambassador to Armenia and then retired to Nebraska. Throughout, he continued to fight the same battles as he did while a special envoy to the *mujahedin*. After 9/11, he briefly resumed the role of a roving diplomat (although as a private person). Jetting to Rome for talks with the *mujahedin* leader Abdul Haq and the exiled king, Zahir Shah, and to Dushanbe for meetings with Ahmad Shah Masood, Tomsen tried again to forge a front of 'moderate' Afghan leaders. An American multimillionaire financed part of the project. By this time, of course, the wheels of official diplomacy were turning at great speed at the United Nations and in the main countries concerned, and Tomsen was no more successful than he had been when a special envoy. The deaths of Masood and Haq soon afterwards sealed his venture.

The book is a long (714 pages of text) continuation of Tomsen's struggles as a special envoy to alter what he views as ignorance and drift in US policy towards Afghanistan and Pakistan. Much of the material he draws on has been published elsewhere, however. The story of the ISI's and CIA's support for militant *mujahedin* factions and its 'blow-back' effects are particularly well known and documented. Tomsen's wider claim that the ambitions of Islamist extremists for regional dominance and global influence dominate Pakistan's foreign policy appears as a steady drumbeat throughout the book, but is thinly substantiated and simplistic in the extreme. Nor does Tomsen provide much analysis of the dilemmas in US policy towards Pakistan and the problems of adopting a more confrontational policy. While recognizing that the measures he advocates entail risks—notably cutting aid and placing the country on the US list of states sponsoring terrorism—he concludes that the risks are worth taking to save the United States from 'the scourge of Islamic terrorism' emanating from Pakistan.

In Tomsen's perspective, Afghanistan is clearly more important to the United States than Pakistan, and he writes with much empathy and concern about its sad history. Yet the narrative here lacks analytical depth and consistency. For instance, he warns that the complexity of Afghan politics will defeat efforts by foreigners to promote their clients, but actively promotes his own preferred partners (Afghan 'moderates'); he advocates establishing Afghanistan as a buffer state in the region, but recommends continued NATO presence and US support. In line with this view, he does not explore political solutions to the present conflict through negotiations with the insurgents, although, in a recommendation guaranteed to create 'blow-back', he writes that if talks were to take place, Islam-

abad should be excluded. Knowledgeable readers will here discern a reason why Tomsen's advice, by his own account, rarely resonated in Washington.

Astri Suhrke, The Chr. Michelsen Institute, Norway

In the shadow of shari'ah: Islam, Islamic law and democracy in Pakistan. By Matthew J. Nelson. London: Hurst. 2011. 337pp. £65.00. ISBN 978 1 85065 926 6.

In this important new book on politics and shari'a law in the Pakistani Punjab, Matthew Nelson shows how local social structures and customary practices undermine attempts by the state to implement legislation. The groundwork was laid under the British. The colonial administration was unable to establish individual property rights—in order to consolidate market forces—because of entrenched customary group rights. During the post-colonial period, these same customary practices worked against the full implementation of Pakistan's Islamic laws—particularly those relating to women's inheritance rights.

Several writers have attributed the Pakistani state's inability to establish its writ and the rule of law to the incompatibility between the country's 'tribal' practices and impersonal legal and bureaucratic norms. Nelson broadly follows this line of argument, but his innovation is to explore the wider, paradoxical implications. Pakistan's Islamic laws have in fact *exacerbated* people's tendency to circumvent or break the law. Because these laws are inimical to Punjabi customary practices—such as denying women their share of ancestral landed estates—people increasingly approach politicians in order to get help avoiding their reach. Since politicians do not feel they can engage with or amend 'divine' laws, they serve their constituents by helping them work around the laws. Nelson makes it clear that if Pakistan's Islamic laws regarding inheritance were enforced, they would benefit women. The problem is that, unlike in other parts of the Muslim world, Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) in Pakistan is divorced from local customs and processes of political negotiation, making it an obstacle that is best ignored. Nelson believes that if elected politicians could engage with and debate shari'a law it would help democracy, because they might spend more time doing their job as legislators and less time circumventing or breaking the law.

The broader theoretical question that Nelson's book addresses is whether politicians who break or circumvent the law on behalf of their constituents are in fact making rigid and unresponsive post-colonial state institutions more responsive to people's needs, and therefore more 'democratic', as scholars like Partha Chatterjee have argued. Nelson's argument is that they are not: their principal achievement is to perpetuate the dominance of the landed elites and to deny women their share of ancestral landed estates as stipulated under shari'a.

Unlike more conventional studies of the country, the book does not just focus on formal politics and state structures. Instead it clearly illustrates how the state works on the ground and how its bureaucracy is at the mercy of the logic of local politics. Chapter four, for example, reveals how village land registry officers (*patwaris*), though formally under the deputy commissioner, in practice fiddle the books for influential landowners and members of the political establishment, for their own and their supporters' benefits. *Patwaris* supplement their meagre salaries with bribes and favours in exchange for (among other things) delaying and cancelling transfers of ownership, misrepresenting the value of property held by insolvent owners and failing to enter the names of specific heirs. Moreover, *patwaris* are dependent upon revenue collectors (*lambardars*) for their office, residence and other essential amenities. The latter are often the very same landowners who use this influence, together

with their role as expert witnesses in district and appellate courts, to launch their political careers by helping their constituents avoid the law when resolving land disputes—often helping them to disinherit women.

According to Nelson's research, constituents mainly approach their politicians to get these to use their influence over the local bureaucracy, the courts, the police and informal village councils to help them circumvent shari'a law. Nelson finds that, despite Islamic laws that go against the interests of landowners, there has been an increase in land-related litigation and a decline in the number of judicial enforceable decrees. The reason is that landowners do not use the courts to obtain decrees, but rather to put pressure on opponents by entangling them in endless and expensive court cases and forcing them to reach an agreement out of court.

In the shadow of shari'ah is a landmark study that will interest all serious students of Pakistani politics and of shari'a law. However, because the book is technical and assumes background knowledge of Pakistani politics and society it may intimidate the non-specialist. Nelson makes a nuanced, compelling and important argument about why Pakistani politicians have become law-breakers—instead of law-makers—and how this deprives millions of Pakistani men and women of their rights. This book does not elaborate on solutions, but will greatly help both academics and policy-makers understand and raise questions about some of the obstacles in the way of democracy and political stability in Pakistan.

Nicolas Martin, London School of Economics and Political Science, UK

East Asia and Pacific

Beyond North Korea: future challenges to South Korea's security. Edited by Byung Kwan Kim, Gi-Wook Shin and David Straub. Stanford, CA: The Walter H. Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center. 2011. 281pp. Pb.: £19.99. ISBN 978 1 93136 819 3.

Korea 2010: politics, economy and society. Edited by Rüdiger Frank, James E. Hoare, Patrick Köllner and Susan Pares. Leiden: Brill. 2010. 309pp. £49.00. ISBN 978 9 00418 535 7.

Korea's foreign policy dilemmas: defining state security and the goal of national unification. By Sung-Hack Kang. Folkestone: Global Oriental. 2011. 425pp. £78.00. ISBN 978 1 90687 6 35 7.

The domestic politics and foreign policy of South Korea do not only revolve around the behaviour of its northern neighbour. This might surprise those taking an interest in Korean peninsular affairs only whenever North Korea attracts the attention of the world media, such as with the recent decease of Kim Jong-il and the transition of power to his son, Kim Jong-un. Yet, since the end of the Cold War, and especially during the presidencies of Roh Moo-hyun and Lee Myung-bak, South Korea has evolved in such a way that North Korea is but one of many issues affecting its internal affairs and international relations. The three books under review provide a refreshing, timely and welcome reminder that South Korea can only be understood by moving beyond the prism of a divided nation seeking reunification above all else.

If there is something that unites *Beyond North Korea*, *Korea 2010* and *Korea's foreign policy dilemmas*, it is their excellent examination of the dynamism that characterizes contemporary South Korea. The contributors to *Beyond North Korea* make clear that security challenges such as economic instability, energy dependence, an ageing population and, of course, the behaviour of North Korea, have not elicited a single and unified response from South Korean

policy-makers. Different groups offer a variety of solutions, and the response from Seoul needs to take most of them into account. The contributors to *Korea 2010* also analyse the diverse forces shaping governmental policy on issues such as urban planning, the response to the global financial crisis or so-called 'green growth'. Meanwhile, Sung-Hack Kang makes clear in *Korea's foreign policy dilemmas* that South Korea's foreign policy is influenced by multiple actors seeking different goals, which sometimes can even contradict each other.

The three volumes are also similar insofar as they provide a historically informed assessment of contemporary behaviour and affairs. *Korea's foreign policy dilemmas* does this more clearly, examining the evolution of Korea's foreign policy since the early twentieth century, before the partition of the country. Being a theoretically informed volume, it explains that bandwagoning has dominated (South) Korea's foreign policy preferences for over a hundred years. Most of the contributors to *Beyond North Korea* and *Korea 2010* also reflect on how history partly informs policy choices being made today. However, these two volumes are concerned with contemporary issues, so the exploration of history mainly serves to locate current affairs within long-term trends.

Interestingly, *Korea 2010* and *Korea's foreign policy dilemmas* include chapters comparing and contrasting the behaviour of the two Koreas. Moreover, the former also devotes two chapters to examining domestic developments and the economy of North Korea in 2009 and North Korean migration to China and South Korea. Kang's book has two chapters entirely focused on North Korea. Even though the chapters comparing the two Koreas, as well as those examining North Korea, are interesting by themselves, the major strength of these two publications lies in their analysis of developments in South Korea. Thus these chapters, in these particular books, complement the main theme excellently.

Two of the volumes, *Beyond North Korea* and *Korea's foreign policy dilemmas*, discuss foreign policy matters. The former focuses exclusively on South Korea. It explains very well how Seoul's foreign policy is the result of a confluence between domestic and external forces. For example, Jongseok Lee and Jae Ho Chung, in their respective chapters on the role that the United States and China play in South Korea's foreign policy and vice versa, convincingly explain that Seoul's preferences and choices do influence Beijing's and Washington's. In his book, Kang seems to be a little bit wary of overstating the role that South Korea plays in influencing the policy of these two superpowers. However, he does believe that Seoul has become increasingly assertive and therefore more likely to affect other actors. Thus, the two volumes give credence to the expanding literature on South Korea as a middle power capable of influencing certain issue areas.

Korea 2010 does include chapters on foreign policy matters, but its main focus is on domestic affairs. Here, the reader finds interesting and unusual contributions on economic and societal matters. Arguably, Annette J. Erpenstein's chapter on urban planning and Werner Pascha's chapter on economic policy responses to the global financial crisis are those that will appeal the most to readers. They move beyond the usual characterizations one can find in the domestic or, sometimes, international press. Nonetheless, all the chapters in this volume are commendable for drawing attention to issues that, while important, do not normally merit space in English-speaking volumes on South Korea.

Overall, these three books are recommended reading for anyone wishing to understand contemporary South Korea. Given the ever more prominent role that the country is playing in international affairs, knowledge concerning South Korea's domestic developments and the forces driving its foreign policy decisions are increasingly relevant. Together, these three books provide that knowledge.

Ramon Pacheco Pardo, King's College London, UK

International Affairs **88**: 2, 2012

Southeast Asia and the rise of China: the search for security. By Ian Storey. London and New York: Routledge. 2011. 362pp. Index. £85.00. ISBN 978 0 41532 621 6.

The relationship between the states of South-East Asia and China to the north has undergone myriad changes since the end of the Second World War and again after the fall of the Soviet Union. However, it can be argued, and it is asserted in this book, that the Sino-South-East Asian relationship today is once again in flux. This situation can be directly attributed to growing regional concerns about China's expanding diplomatic, economic and military power, and the question of whether the cordial relations which marked the first two decades following the Cold War are giving way to greater wariness and pragmatism. *Southeast Asia and the rise of China* is a detailed and comprehensive study of Beijing's relations with the South-East Asian region as a whole and with its individual governments. As the first chapters explain, although politics and economics have factored heavily in these relationships in the past decade, the Sino-South-East Asian relationship has been most heavily marked by security issues. By the time of the turn of the century, the book notes, China was differentiating its increasingly difficult relations with North-East Asia, which included the growing strategic headaches of North Korea and Taiwan, with those of South-East Asia, which seemed to be more amenable to Chinese diplomacy and especially improved economic relations at a time when the United States under George W. Bush had significantly disengaged from that part of the world, opening the door to Beijing's *rapprochement* policies. 'In the words of Premier Wen Jiabao, China hoped that Southeast Asian countries would come to regard it as a "friendly elephant"' (p. 65).

As the book explains, even during times of warm diplomatic relations, there were many periods of underlying concern in several South-East Asian capitals about their security *vis-à-vis* China. The first few chapters trace the relationship between Beijing and the entirety of South-East Asia from 1945 to 2010, including the region's frequent role of diplomatic chessboard for China, the United States and the USSR. The description of the relationship after the Cold War is one of China's 'charm offensive' in South-East Asia, as Beijing tried to dispel Cold War-era suspicions that Beijing, like the superpowers, was trying to create an ideological sphere of influence. As the regional history draws closer to the present, the cracks in China's South-East Asian diplomacy are described as becoming more numerous due to a variety of factors, including concerns about China's military and especially naval modernization, the flare-up of the South China Sea/Spratly Islands dispute, an issue which had been a thorn in the side of Sino-South-East Asian relations for decades, and the emergence of Beijing as an economic power which greatly affected the markets of its southern neighbours.

The remainder of the chapters look at Chinese diplomatic relations with individual South-East Asian states, again from the period after the Second World War. These histories are packed with detail and even those familiar with the region will find much interesting information. Especially informative is the chapter on Beijing's close relations with Myanmar (Burma) which may today be undergoing a considerable shift in light of the developing thaw in Yangon's relations with the West and increasing uncertainty about its relations with Beijing. Those interested in the role China has played in Myanmar politics since the two states aligned their policies in the late 1980s will find much useful background material. The chapter on Vietnam is also rich in historical material, tracing Beijing and Hanoi's often prickly relationship and including the current tenuous bilateral ties. 'Vietnam shares a border with Asia's fastest growing economic and political power', it is noted, 'a reality Hanoi cannot escape' (p. 123). Even states which are normally given much less attention in the region, including Brunei, Laos and Timor-Leste, are awarded chapters here.

At the conclusion of this book, there is definitely a sense of 'to be continued' in the study of regional relations in this part of the world.

Marc Lanteigne, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

Worse than a monolith: alliance politics and problems of coercive diplomacy in Asia. By Thomas J. Christensen. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 2011. 318pp. Index. Pb.: £16.95. ISBN 978 0 69114 261 6. Available as e-book.

In facing a coalition of enemy states, which of the following options is preferable for a foreign policy decision-maker: a unified bloc or one riven with division? At face value, most would choose the latter option. Think again, argues Thomas Christensen. In this path-breaking book, Christensen examines the dynamics within, and between, the US- and Soviet-led alliance systems in Asia, focusing primarily on the 1949–69 period. He shows that the fact that the opposing alliance systems were not monolithic systematically increased conflict in ways that would not have occurred if Washington and Moscow had each led a more cohesive bloc.

How might this be? The author identifies and scrutinizes two forms of dynamics that complicate coercive diplomacy between rival alliances. The first is poor coordination. Here, the argument is that particularly during the formative stages of an alliance, disorganization within the ranks seriously interfered with the signalling process associated with coercive diplomacy. While poor coordination is potentially a problem in any alliance, Christensen identifies a second dynamic, which is particular to groupings of states which subscribe to a revisionist ideology. The contention here is that such alliances systematically exacerbate conflict though three pathways. First, there is an asymmetry in the threat perception and preferences among actors in a revisionist alliance. Subordinate alliance members are at once more likely than their adversaries to feel threatened and to initiate conflict, dragging in their senior alliance partner. Second, and relatedly, in the early phase of their existence, revisionist states are intent on proving their internationalist revolutionary credentials, and more willing to use force than non-revolutionary states. Finally, ideological alliances are prone to leadership competition. This increases the alliance's aggressiveness. The cumulative effect of the foregoing is that the disorganized communist bloc in Asia was more threatening than a hierarchically organized alliance, presenting a particularly difficult task for the Americans to contain.

This book contributes to the theoretical literature in two ways. The first concerns its treatment of the relationship between internal alliance dynamics and coercive diplomacy. Christensen's study adds to the literature by focusing on the complexities of inter-alliance deterrence, particularly during periods of change and uncertainty. The second contribution relates to the alliance literature. Here, Christensen argues that lack of cohesion in alliances containing ideologically revisionist states caused increased aggression, presenting enemy states with increased difficulties in deterring threats.

To illustrate his argument, Christensen kicks off the analysis by examining the Korean War and the First Indochina War. He shows how lack of coordination in the respective alliance systems complicated both blocs' efforts at coercive diplomacy. Conversely, from 1953 to 1957, when Beijing and Moscow were closely coordinating policy, it was easier for the United States to implement coercive diplomacy. The exception to this generalization is the Taiwan Strait crisis of 1954–5, which the author examines in chapter four. In a particularly incisive analysis, Christensen examines how the unravelling of the Sino-Soviet alliance significantly complicated American containment policy in the late 1950s to the 1960s.

Worse than a monolith is clear, persuasive and expertly researched. However, it is pertinent to note that while a riven bloc was bad news for the United States in the short to mid-run, it turned out to be rather good news over the long run. This point is fully appreciated by Christensen (p. 208), but merits further elaboration. Over the long run, the breakdown of the Sino-Soviet alliance and subsequent conflict clearly and directly bolstered US interests. First, the Sino-Soviet border war of 1969 created a compelling imperative for China to engage in what was at the time a surprising *rapprochement* with the United States in 1972. The alignment of Chinese and American power against the Soviet Union held until the end of the Cold War. Second, the escalating Sino-Soviet conflict created an imperative for the Chinese to take up the role of regional container of the Soviet Union and the Vietnamese. Besides cushioning the effect of American retrenchment from mainland Asia, this freed up resources for the United States to focus on the larger goal of containing the Soviet Union in other areas. So, over the long run, to continue the metaphor, the internecine nature of the Sino-Soviet confrontation made the communist bloc in Cold War Asia something significantly less than a monolith. Overall, this is an excellent work that sets the standard for how to conduct area studies research with theoretical rigour.

Nicholas Khoo, University of Otago, New Zealand

North America

Liberty's surest guardian: American nation-building from the founders to Obama. By Jeremi Suri. London and New York: Simon & Schuster. 2011. 358pp. Index. $28.00. ISBN 978 1 43911 912 9. Available as e-book.

It is supremely ironic that while nation-building has been one of the most important problems for US foreign policy-makers over the last century, it has received comparatively little attention from historians. Political scientists and political economists have dominated a field to which, one would think, historians would have a lot to contribute. Aside from a mountain of literature on the failed nation-building project in South Vietnam, however, the subject has received scant historical attention. Even more astonishingly, nobody has thought to look at American nation-building efforts synthetically, across centuries of time and literally a world of space.

Nobody, that is, until now. With *Liberty's surest guardian*, Jeremi Suri has written what must be considered the definitive one-volume historical account of Americans' efforts to transform other societies. In between a tightly argued introduction and conclusion, which tie everything together within a set of general observations and conclusions, Suri uses five chapter-length case-studies, disparate in chronology and geography, to examine his topic: Reconstruction in the American South after the Civil War; the colonization of the Philippines; post-Second World War Germany; Vietnam in the 1940s and 1950s; and Afghanistan after 9/11.

Americans sometimes flinch at the thought of reconstructing other nations and societies. In 2000, for example, before her 9/11-induced conversion to the cause, Condoleezza Rice famously derided the Clinton administration's willingness to act as the world's policeman, therapist and social worker. Suri thinks otherwise. To him, nation-building is as unavoidable as it is essential. We live in a world system based on the sovereignty of nation-states, yet we also live in a rapidly globalizing world that makes those very same nation-states increasingly interconnected and interdependent. In such a world, where the United States is the most powerful nation-state, nurturing a stable system is imperative because it will

be the surest route to peace and prosperity. And the best way to nurture it is to help build stable nation-states elsewhere.

Suri's case-studies are fascinating. If his rooting of the American nation-building enterprise in the founding of the United States is original, his discussion of post-Civil War Reconstruction in the nation-building tradition is even more so. Most historians of American foreign relations treat the Civil War era as a purely domestic affair with little consequence for foreign policy, a mistake Suri avoids. Yet if *Liberty's surest guardian* has a shortcoming, it too lies within these case-studies. While Suri is clear-eyed about the limitations of nation-building, he is less clear about the general trajectory of its usefulness in historical terms, at least according to his chosen case-studies. For example, while the American founding in the 1780s and 90s, and German reconstruction after 1945 were obviously successful, Reconstruction and Vietnam were unmitigated disasters, and Afghanistan and Iraq have been almost total failures with little prospect of improvement in the future. As for the 47-year occupation of the Philippines, Suri's conclusion that American rule was a 'frustratingly incomplete' mixed success is accurate in itself (p. 121), but what does that tell us about nation-building writ large? Are the Philippines better off than other Asian states for having lived under American rule? It would seem not. Consider the Filipinos' neighbours, who had strikingly different forms of governance up to 1946: Thailand always remained independent; Taiwan and South Korea were subjected to Japanese imperial rule; Singapore and Malaysia toiled under British control; and Indonesia chafed under the Dutch. All are at least as stable and prosperous as the Philippines—indeed, one could argue that all of them are better off. Others, such as Burma and North Korea, are in far worse shape. What is the point of nation-building, then, if the results are so sparse and disparate? It is no coincidence that Suri's only unqualified nation-building successes are the eighteenth-century United States, when a people built their own nation as they wished, and post-1945 Germany, when reconstruction efforts had a solid economic and political foundation on which to build and local elites were largely left to get on with the task at hand.

But these are points for further discussion rather than problems with the book. As a rough outline of how American policy-makers can properly embark on nation-building, Suri highlights what he calls 'the five Ps': partners, process, problem-solving, purpose and people. Using history by way of example, his aim is to warn policy-makers away from excessively impatient, optimistic and ideological visions of rebuilding foreign nations with completely different social, religious, cultural and economic backgrounds from those of the United States. Throughout, his analysis is judicious, pragmatic and commonsensical. Officials in Washington would do well to heed his advice.

Andrew Preston, University of Cambridge, UK

The decline and fall of the American republic. By Bruce Ackerman. Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press. 2010. 264pp. Index. £19.95. ISBN 978 0 67405 703 6. Available as e-book.

The debate on America's prospective imperial decline—a recurring theme perhaps most famously evoked 25 years ago by Paul Kennedy in his *Rise and fall of the Great Powers* (Random House)—has once again gained new scholarly life, thanks to economic crisis, military misadventures and the looming of new challenger states. This latest book from Bruce Ackerman, a notable constitutional theorist based at Yale is not, however, a contribution to that well-rehearsed 'decline' conversation. Rather, it explores an arguably even older theme in American, and western, political thought: the decline not of the nation's

imperial strength overseas, but of the institutions of the Republic at home, an evil largely compatible, as Ackerman notes, with continued preservation of imperial power abroad. Indeed, those methods and institutions most useful in sustaining the imperial project are often most threatening to liberty domestically. This was certainly a fear that haunted the founding generation of American leaders, many of whom fretted openly and often about the perils of foreign entanglements, standing armies and the spectre of 'caesarism' on the part of some opportunistic politician or general.

Chiding his fellow constitutional scholars at the outset for tending towards 'triumphalist' celebration of the health of the American constitution, Ackerman warns that without sober reflection on the factors presently undermining America's institutional balance, the nation could easily sleepwalk into a crisis that delivers a grievous blow to republican freedoms. Facile veneration of the Founders for having constructed a text perfectly capable of addressing today's needs is misguided, he argues. While the constitution has indeed proved robust, largely thanks to the collective efforts of the polity to adapt its functioning over time to meet new needs, it is currently subject to a combination of mutually reinforcing pressures in the face of which it will require a concerted effort to preserve America's republican virtues.

As Ackerman sees it, the expansion of the powers of the presidency has now moved far beyond even what Arthur Schlesinger warned of when he described the 'imperial presidency'. At the same time, the evolution of the electoral system has increased the likelihood of ideological extremism capturing the presidency, while the pervasiveness of the dark arts of opinion polling and pseudo-scientific political consultancy feed a politics of 'unreason' in the public square. Meanwhile, the inexorable expansion of the Executive apparatus under the president's command, including large and prestigious offices of politicized elite lawyers at the Office of Legal Counsel and the White House, have increased the presidency's capacity to legitimate assertive power grabs at the expense of the other branches of government, including the Supreme Court. Lastly, what Ackerman sees as the steady politicization of the military over recent decades adds a final lethal ingredient to the brew.

These factors have been long in the making, Ackerman concedes, but they have reached critical intensity only since the 1970s or 1980s. Today they combine to place the United States at risk of wide-ranging Executive lawlessness with impunity, fuelled by a tendency towards government through the regular assertion of a state of emergency and literal or metaphorical war. The nation may be only one major crisis—and Ackerman floats a number of hypotheticals ranging from disputed elections to major terrorist attacks—from a full-blown constitutional impasse. While the relative good character of a Gore or an Obama, in conceding a disputed election gracefully or desisting from some excesses of the 'war on terror' respectively, may avert the worst in specific cases, unless the underlying institutional weaknesses permitting such crises to arise are addressed, Ackerman argues, it may be only a matter of time before a true catastrophe occurs.

In constructing his argument, which he does with a methodical clarity that excuses occasional repetition, Ackerman blends constitutional law with political science and history, including shadows of Schlesinger's seminal analysis as well as Samuel Huntington's classic account of civil–military relations. Some of the worst-case scenarios Ackerman paints may to some minds seem to exaggerate the risks of, for example, intervention by the military in the political process, and some of the technical solutions he proposes in the book's final section are ambitious, and may strike some as quixotic. These include a national 'deliberation day' to improve discourse on public issues, vouchers to help citizens fund worthy journalism, a supreme Executive tribunal to constrain the president within constitutional

bounds more firmly than the Supreme Court's reactive judgments can, and a new canon of military ethics to buttress civilian control. But however debatable his solutions, Ackerman does a provocative but often persuasive job of making the case for his fundamental diagnosis of a constitutional order straining in the face of challenges that have only recently reached their current strength. In an era when the Tea Party and Ron Paul have brought questions of the constitutional limits of government back to the political foreground, it is reassuring to be reminded that the strict constructionist right does not have a monopoly on legitimate concern about how to reconcile the demands of twenty-first-century government with the small-'r' republican virtue of constraining Executive power.

Adam Quinn, University of Birmingham, UK

Latin America and Caribbean*

Leftist governments in Latin America: successes and shortcomings. Edited by Kurt Weyland, Raúl L. Madrid and Wendy Hunter. New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2010. 216pp. Index. Pb.: £18.99. ISBN 978 0 52113 033 2.

The resurgence of the Latin American left. Edited by Steven Levitsky and Kenneth M. Roberts. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press. 2011. 480pp. Index. Pb.: £18.00. ISBN 978 1 42140 110 2.

The triumph of politics: the return of the left in Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador. By George Philip and Francisco Panizza. Cambridge and Malden, MA: Polity Press. 2011. 224pp. Index. Pb.: £15.99. ISBN 978 0 74564 749 4.

Right-wing politics in the new Latin America: reaction and revolt. Edited by Francisco Dominguez, Geraldine Lievesley and Steve Ludlam. London: Zed Books. 2011. 270pp. Index. Pb.: £19.99. ISBN 978 1 84813 811 7.

The pronounced shift to the left in much of Latin America over the last decade represents a dramatic change in the political landscape that would have appeared decidedly improbable in the early 1990s, when pundits were proclaiming the left's imminent demise in the wake of the end of the Cold War and the apparent regional ascendancy of neo-liberalism. This political transformation has, unsurprisingly, already received a considerable amount of scholarly attention, though the extant literature has been largely restricted to individual countries and has lacked the benefit of a sufficient amount of historical hindsight. Three of the books under review seek to address the genesis of this phenomenon and to weigh the achievements and failings of the various left-wing governments over time, while the fourth book chronicles how the right has reacted to a changed political environment that has challenged to varying degrees the elite's entrenched socio-economic privileges.

The volumes edited by Kurt Weyland et al. and by Steven Levitsky and Kenneth Roberts bear the closest comparison; indeed, they share a number of contributors, both works having emerged from the same initial conference. There is a broad consensus on the reasons for the appearance of divergent manifestations of the post-neo-liberal Latin American left: namely, their distinct historical experiences and pathways to power, especially the level of institutionalization of the party systems in which they arose, and dissimilar resource constraints. The two works, however, advance substantively different typologies of the left based on policy orientation: one that sees a basic dichotomy between 'moderate' and 'radical'; and

* See also Tanya Harmer, *Allende's Chile and the inter-American Cold War*, pp. 422–23.

the other that argues for a tripartite division between statism (Venezuela), heterodoxy (Argentina, Bolivia and Ecuador) and 'social liberalism' (Brazil, Chile, Uruguay).

Weyland et al. are primarily concerned with policy outputs and outcomes: the extent to which the moderate and 'contestatory' left (as they choose to term it) were able to boost economic growth, increase equity, ensure sustainability, and increase political inclusion without undermining pluralism and liberal safeguards. By these measures, Hugo Chávez's Venezuela (in a stinging but standard indictment by Javier Corrales) and Evo Morales's Bolivia (as well as Rafael Correa's Ecuador and Daniel Ortega's Nicaragua) are deemed to be sorely wanting on all counts, their scant achievements resting on 'quicksand'. By contrast, the policies pursued by the two Concertación governments of Ricardo Lagos and Michelle Bachelet in Chile and the administration of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in Brazil (and that of the Frente Amplio in Uruguay), despite being constrained by globalization and by the perceived need to maintain fiscal equilibrium and to accommodate powerful business groups, have—in their estimation—succeeded in achieving a measure of growth; in narrowing the income gap; and in mollifying the opposition. The authors' attempt to delineate a 'bad' populist and a 'good' social democratic left is, it seems to me, a much too facile dichotomy—one in line with the George W. Bush administration's approach to the region during its time in office. Political perspective, of course, is everything: Jeffery Webber has argued from a Marxist standpoint (in *From rebellion to reform in Bolivia*, Haymarket Books, 2011, reviewed in *International Affairs* [*IA*] 87: 6) that Bolivia's Movimiento al Socialismo is in practice promoting not socialism but 're-constituted neo-liberalism'; and the Bachelet administration has been criticized for having been too concerned with the politics of consensus to the detriment of necessary reforms to enhance equity (*The Bachelet government: conflict and consensus in post-Pinochet Chile*, edited by Silvia Borzutzky and Gregory Weeks, University Press of Florida, 2010, reviewed in *IA* 87: 2). The authors also play down the ferocity of the right-wing response in Venezuela and Bolivia, hardly the reaction of embattled democrats concerned solely about the steady erosion of horizontal accountability.

The hefty Levitsky/Roberts tome is far more balanced and much less judgemental in its approach. There are an equal number of chapters on comparative topics and country case-studies, including an analysis of oft-neglected Uruguay. Case-studies of the presidencies of Peronists Néstor and Cristina Kirchner in Argentina and of Alan García's Aprista administration in Peru, although not 'leftist' in the strict sense, are presented as examples of machine parties that, depending on circumstances, might tilt either to the left or to the right once in power. There is, unfortunately, no attempt to incorporate Nicaragua (2006), Paraguay (2008) and El Salvador (2009) as part of the overall explanation for the resurgence of the left. The individual contributions are of a generally high standard: the case-studies of Brazil and Chile particularly stand out for their ability to convey the varied factors at work behind the long march to the political centre by the Brazilian Workers' Party and the Chilean Socialist Party. The most disappointing chapter proved to be the much anticipated case-study of Uruguay: while strong on the Frente Amplio's achievements when in office, the author in question gives little sense of how this left-wing coalition came to supplant the two traditional parties that had so long dominated Uruguayan politics; moreover, the chapter's awkward English makes for somewhat arduous reading. The Levitsky/Roberts work, nonetheless, will stand as the most comprehensive treatment to date of the re-emergence of the Latin American left, and of the variable performance in office of the 'first generation' of left and centre-left governments.

Ostensibly much narrower in focus, concentrating on the 'twenty-first-century socialist'

governments of Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador, George Philip and Francisco Panizza's highly accessible opus views the rise of Chávez, Morales and Correa through the optic of themes that have a broader relevance to Latin American politics: civil–military relations; the political challenge posed by 'subaltern' groups; the recrudescence of populism; the revival of a plebiscitary form of politics; and the politics of nationalization. They take a far more nuanced approach to the question of plebiscitary democracy than do US political scientists—unaware perhaps that plebiscites are provided for in the Uruguayan constitution—who appear wedded to the notion of representative democracy as the only legitimate game in town: plebiscites have been as much favoured by the right (Pinochet, for example) as by the left in Latin America and, in the form of a recall referendum, was aggressively pursued by the Venezuelan opposition in 2004. Nor does the left, they point out, have a monopoly on seeking to overturn term limits: both Carlos Menem of Argentina and Alvaro Uribe of Colombia seriously considered running for a third term and in Paraguay Fernando Lugo was stymied as much as his Colorado predecessor, Nicanor Duarte, in his attempt to overturn the restriction of a one-term presidential mandate. They conclude that 'one cannot dismiss plebiscites, recall votes and some relaxation of re-election rules as simply undemocratic' (p. 121). Altogether, such broad contextualization is far more revelatory than stark, value-laden comparisons.

There are few works dedicated exclusively to the Latin American right, which largely constitutes an off-stage presence—a 'policy constraint'—in the preceding books. The continued strength of the right is indicated most recently by the 2009 coup in Honduras and the right-wing electoral victories in Panama, Chile and Guatemala. The edited volume by Francisco Dominguez et al. is thus a very welcome addition to the literature. Two introductory chapters examine the importance of the right for the maintenance of US hegemony in Latin America in the face of the 'pink tide' and the means ('soft power') by which the United States seeks to enhance its influence. There follows a wide range of case-studies on how the right has exercised state power in Colombia and Mexico (since 2000); has wielded considerable influence on the Peruvian political process without actually attaining office; has rallied the beneficiaries of the old Punto Fijo political system against the 'Bolivarian revolution' in Venezuela and mobilized the potent forces of regional separatism against the central government in Bolivia; has allied exiles with the US in the case of Cuba; and has thwarted aspects of the reformist projects of the leftist governments of Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina and Chile. Most of the chapters provide a succinct summary of the various means, in particular control of the media, which the right employs to exert its influence. Especially good are the chapters on Mexico, Paraguay and Argentina because they deal with a shorter time span, thereby allowing for more detailed analysis. The chapter on the Venezuelan opposition, however, appears to be the antithesis of the hyper-critical chapter on Chávez by Javier Corrales in the Weyland et al. book, with only a tokenistic nod to the existence of governmental failings. The chapter on Bolivia, regrettably, goes off at a tangent and misses an opportunity to provide an in-depth profile of the regionalist opposition movement. The interesting discussion in the chapter on Chile of the social issues that have served to mobilize the right's domestic constituency draws attention to the lack of any real analysis of such issues in the other case-studies. Still, the volume provides plenty of evidence that the Latin American right remains a political factor to be reckoned with and that the pink tide, sooner or later, will likely begin to ebb despite having chalked up a number of significant electoral victories in 2009–11.

Philip Chrimes

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