Restoration of a Nation

Review by Margaret C. Lee

Alex Boraine. *A Country Unmasked: Inside South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000, 448 pp. $30.00.

It seemed like a normal day in Alexandra Township, South Africa (Alex) until the trucks, police, and security guards appeared and began forcibly removing 3,000 residents that lived along the banks of the Jukskei River. At the point at which the river passed through Alex, it was so filthy that it was deemed a health hazard to the residents. Nonetheless, this area in densely-populated Alex was home to the poorest of the poor, some of whom had constructed their homes—shacks made of cardboard and corrugated iron—on top of graves. The settlement was located on an incline, which meant that when the rains came, the shacks would slide down into the slimy Jukskei.

The 3,000 residents scheduled for removal protested when the police and security guards arrived. Teargas, stun grenades, and rubber bullets were used to contain the resistance. The shacks were destroyed and the people who lived along the river were loaded into trucks and literally dumped on vacant land that lacked shelter, proper sanitation, and electricity. The South African Human Rights Commission accused the government of violating the Alex residents' human rights to dignity and self-respect.

One would be forgiven for thinking that the forced removals in Alex took place under the brutal and repressive apartheid regime, under which over 3.5 million people were forcibly removed from their homes. However, the Alex removal took place in February 2001, under the leadership of the post-apartheid African National Congress (ANC)-led government. Ironically, it

was the ANC that led the movement in the early 1990s to develop a human rights culture in South Africa and restore dignity to the victims of apartheid.

In *A Country Unmasked: Inside South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, Alex Boraine tells a fascinating story of the effort to develop a human rights culture in post-apartheid South Africa. The first step in creating such a culture was to put in place a mechanism that would allow victims as well as perpetrators to tell their stories. This was the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of South Africa. As deputy chairperson of the TRC, Boraine provides an invaluable insider's perspective on the origins and functions of the Commission.

The TRC originated from the decision of the African National Congress (ANC) to investigate allegations of human rights violations made against the organisation. Such violations allegedly occurred in ANC training camps in Tanzania and other parts of southern Africa. The Motsuenyane Commission confirmed that human rights violations had occurred. In accepting this reality, the ANC National Executive Committee established a truth commission in post-apartheid South Africa to investigate all human rights violations since 1948. It was envisaged that uncovering the truth would allow the beginning of a process of healing and reconciliation.

The TRC was actually a compromise between those who wanted a Nuremberg-style trial to prosecute apartheid-era perpetrators and those who were opposed to such a trial. Though the TRC was to investigate all human rights violations, it was clear from the beginning that, morally, there was a difference between those who used force to maintain the apartheid system and those who used force to oppose it.

The TRC consisted of seventeen commissioners appointed by President Nelson Mandela. The selection of the commissioners followed public hearings and the recommendation of twenty-five final candidates by a selection committee. Mandela appointed Bishop Desmond Tutu as Chairperson and Boraine as Deputy Chairperson. The TRC established six objectives: to return victims their civil and human rights; to restore the moral order; to record the truth; to grant amnesty to those who qualified; to create a culture of human rights and respect for the rule of law; and to prevent the violation of human rights from ever happening again.

The South African TRC was unique among other truth commissions in two major respects. First, blanket amnesty was rejected. Instead, perpetrators of apartheid-era crimes would have to apply for amnesty, which could only be granted for political actions that were fully disclosed. Second, the focus of the TRC was to be on apartheid-era victims who were to tell their stories with the purpose of regaining human dignity.

Three main TRC committees were established: the Human Rights Violation Committee, the Amnesty Committee, and the Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee. In particular, gross human rights violations that occurred between March 1, 1960 and December 5, 1993 were to be examined. The latter date was subsequently extended to May 10, 1994.

The Human Rights Violation Committee was given the task of identifying those who had experienced gross human rights violations, verifying the facts surrounding the violations, and then allowing many of the victims to publicly tell their stories. As Boraine indicates, this was a mammoth task. It was heart-

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wrenching to read the unimaginable stories of murder and torture. One particularly horrific torture technique was called "the helicopter"; it "involved suspending the victim upside down from a wooden stick and beating and kicking him in the process, often until he was unconscious." (p. 103)

The chapter devoted to allegations of human rights violations committed by Winnie Madikisela-Mandela (the former wife of Nelson Mandela) and the so-called "Mandela United Football Club" is one of the most controversial parts of the book. Boraine is correct in speculating that he will receive considerable criticism for devoting an entire chapter to allegations against "the Mother of the Nation." The stories told by the victims in this chapter are no less horrific than those told in other chapters. Yet by revealing in such detail the allegations against Madikisela-Mandela, there is an implicit suggestion that the human rights violations committed by those fighting against the apartheid regime can be placed on the same level as those committed on behalf of the apartheid state.

As a reflection of the difficulty of distinguishing between human rights violators, the ANC, under the leadership of current South African President Thabo Mbeki, vehemently rejected the TRC's 1998 findings that the organisation had committed gross violations of human rights both during its liberation struggle and after its unbanning. The ANC unsuccessfully took the TRC to court to seek an injunction against the publication of the Commission's findings. Boraine points to the inherent contradiction between the ANC's insistence that a truth commission be established and its desire to muzzle the commission's findings.

The Amnesty Committee was given the gargantuan task of determining if the perpetrators of apartheid-era human rights violations should be granted amnesty. It was during the amnesty trials that families were finally able to learn about the fate of loved ones who had been victims. Boraine does an excellent job of portraying the devastating psychological effect that the often violent confessions had on the country. Over 8,000 amnesty applications were filed, but only a small percentage of applicants were actually granted amnesty. Now, South Africa must decide if it is going to prosecute those for whom amnesty was denied.

One of the unfortunate outcomes of the amnesty arrangement was that many were not held accountable for their role in apartheid crimes. Former apartheid-era presidents P. W. Botha and F. W. de Klerk escaped responsibility for wrongdoings committed under their regimes. This raises fundamental questions about the ability of an apartheid-era legal system to administer justice in the post-apartheid era. Unfortunately, Borraine does not explore this issue.

The third major committee, Reparations and Rehabilitation, was given the

task of determining the type of reparations that should be given to recognized victims of apartheid. As Boraine discusses, one of the most evident weaknesses of the TRC's mandate was the restrictions imposed on what was defined as a gross human rights violation. Given their stringency, only 17,000 apartheid-era victims are eligible for reparations instead of the millions that were and continue to be victims of apartheid.

Critics have argued that one of the weaknesses of the TRC process is that reparations have not been forthcoming. In response, Boraine states that many members of the Commission, including himself, felt strongly that they were unable to quantify reparations until they had heard from the victims. Hence, while making clear the limited means of the state and the Commission, the TRC often asked victims what they expected in compensation. Knowing the injustice inflicted on the majority of the population as a result of apartheid, it was perhaps irresponsible of the commissioners not to prioritize funding for reparations if they were serious about restoring human dignity to victims of apartheid. The South African government has not allocated the 3 billion rand (~$360 million) requested by the Reparations and Rehabilitation Committee. This is a small amount compared to the over 43 billion rand (~$5,220 million) allocated by the government for buying arms. Telling stories alone will not restore people's dignity. Self-worth and dignity also flow from having basic amenities and employment, which could be facilitated through reparations.

A glaring weakness of the book is that Boraine fails to mention the role that the West played in allowing the apartheid regime not only to continue, but also to flourish. In fact, volumes have been written about the role of the United States, Israel, France, Germany, and Britain, among others, in supporting the apartheid regime. A special TRC committee should have been established to uncover the truth about this complicity. Without this history, the "true" story of South Africa's past cannot be written.

Despite this weakness, Boraine's book is a must-read for those who want a better understanding of the TRC's efforts to provide justice to the victims of apartheid. Now that South Africa has begun to come to terms with its past, it is time to take seriously the challenge of restoring dignity to victims of apartheid and developing a culture of human rights. The forced removals in Alex is evidence that gross violations of human rights continue to this day. It is past time for South Africa to restore dignity to victims of apartheid-era human rights violations.

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A Time for Change: U.S.-Japan Relations

Review by Robert G. Sutter

GERALD CURTIS. *New Perspectives on U.S.-Japan Relations*. Tokyo: Japan Center for International Exchange, 2000, 302 pp. $25.00.

International observers are worried about Japan's continued economic stagnation, with apparent paralysis among Japanese political leaders compounding the problem. Some see the possibility of

a serious economic crisis or downturn in Japan over the next few years that will have dire implications for the region, the global economy, and the United States. Meanwhile, the U.S.-Japan security alliance enjoys strong and broad support on both sides of the Pacific. Nonetheless, regional dynamics, notably nascent détente on the Korean peninsula and the rise of Chinese power, together with domestic Japanese sensitivities over U.S. bases and intrusive military activities, suggest a need for alliance adjustments and change. U.S.-Japanese political cooperation also remains strong, but increasingly weak governments and fragmented national politics in Japan make it less likely that the United States and Japan can easily work out new cooperative measures regarding sensitive economic, security, and political issues.

The nine chapters in *New Perspectives on U.S.-Japan Relations* provide useful insights and perspectives on many of the important economic, security, and political issues currently facing decision-makers in Tokyo and Washington. They discuss the reasons for the decline in Japan's economic power, the impact of economic globalization on Japan-U.S. ties, and changing power relationships and other challenges facing the security relationship.

The contributors to the book are mainly political scientists with strong reputations in the field of U.S.-Japan relations who were brought together by the Japan Center for International Exchange in 1998 and 1999 to discuss and critique the now-published articles. Most of the authors focus on fairly specific aspects or issues regarding the development of the multifaceted U.S.-Japan relationship. Gerald Curtis of Columbia University leads off the volume with an intriguing historical essay, arguing that two issues—managing relations with China and bilateral U.S.-Japan trade relations—have been the main sources of tension in that relationship and in many respects illustrate important general features of U.S. policy toward Japan, culminating with the "Japan passing" phenomenon of the Clinton administration.

Five of the articles deal with economic relations. Robert Bullock of Cornell University takes issue with the prevailing pessimism over the problems and prospects of market opening in Japan. He highlights significant changes in economic forces affecting Japan that, if combined with targeted pressure from the United States and elsewhere, could lead to significant market opening in certain sectors. Bullock buttresses his argument with excellent documentation and detailed case studies.

Similarly well-researched is the article by Jennifer Holt Dwyer of the City University of New York, who takes on the often contentious U.S.-Japan relations over financial markets. She concludes that globalization injects tension into U.S.-Japan relations in this area, but that the two powers can be expected to continue to cooperate broadly as globalization binds the two economies more closely together.

In reviewing Japan's reaction to international economic pressure since the 1970s, Kato Junko of the University of Tokyo argues that good economic performance in the past made it easier for Japan to appear to accommodate outside demands, but recent poor economic performance means that Japan will have less latitude to meet outside pressures and that outside powers will also expect less of Japan in this regard.

Rounding out the treatment of economic issues, Kojo Yoshiko, also of the University of Tokyo, explains the dynamics of Japanese decision-making regarding adjustments in Japan's balance of payments since the 1970s. Robert Uriu of the University of California, Irvine, builds on his experience on the staff of the Clinton administration to demonstrate the influence of the ideas of the revisionist school of U.S.-Japan relations on American trade policy at that time.

Tadokoro Masayuki of Japan's National Defense Academy examines in detail the mutual images seen in U.S. and Japanese news media, concluding that negative images shown over time undermine close political relations. He calls for strong public diplomacy on both sides of the Pacific. Tanaka Akihiko of the University of Tokyo comprehensively describes the "difficult international context" of U.S.-Japan relations in the 1990s before concluding that the overall context prompts the two allies to focus largely on cooperation rather than divergence.

Michael Green of the Council on Foreign Relations assesses five key areas of U.S.-Japan alliance relations and concludes that growing realism in Japanese security thinking and fluidity in Japanese politics mean that Japan is likely to take more steps independent of the alliance relationship, even as broad Japanese support for the alliance remains strong.

This book provides important insights about where U.S.-Japan relations currently stand. A few authors, notably Michael Green in his discussion of security ties, give a clear and comprehensive sense of what to expect in important policy areas. In the end, however, it is up to the reader to integrate what the different strands developed in the volume mean for the changing nature, problems, and prospects of the U.S.-Japan relationship in the 21st century.

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Business as Usual in the 21st Century

Review by Rebecca Johnson

HENRY KISSINGER. *Does America Need a Foreign Policy? Toward a Diplomacy for the 21st Century.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001, 296 pp. $30.00.

In his new book *Does America Need a Foreign Policy? Toward a Diplomacy for the 21st Century,* former Secretary of State and National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger grapples with the question of how the United States should approach the challenges of an increasingly globalised world. Kissinger is concerned with the erosion of the Westphalian state system and the possibility that challenging the order that has prevailed internationally since 1648 could create an international system prone to instability and violence. The emerging trend of interventions in the name of protecting individual human rights and the growing dominance of international legal rules that constrain state action in new ways have enabled conflicts of a sort reminiscent of the Crusades. Kissinger promises a sober and level-headed analysis of the contemporary world to determine how the United States should respond to these changes.

Leaders in Washington over the past eight years failed to realise these dangers, idealistically swept up as they were with the heady promise of instant messaging and NASDAQ. Kissinger, however, wastes no opportunity to fault the Clinton administration for squandering what could have been a decade spent positioning the United States to capitalise on the next half-century.

With the Republicans finally back in the White House, Kissinger's book should serve as precisely the guide that Democrats lacked for answering critical grand strategy questions. What world would the United States construct if it had complete discretion? What world would the United States be willing to accept, as it lacks absolute control over international events? What world is utterly unacceptable? Is the world headed in a direction it could accept or one it must reject? What options are available to bring the world closer to the former than the latter, and what obstacles will the United States face in the process?

These questions are mine, not Kissinger's, but they are critical for engaging in the type of strategic planning that Kissinger argues is long overdue in the United States. In answering them, Kissinger could once again prove his central place in the United States's conservative foreign policy establishment and the United States could develop the tools it needs to begin reasserting support for traditional power politics predicated on an international system of states.

Unfortunately for the conservative establishment, Kissinger does nothing of the sort. While his book is interesting in its sometimes colorful interpretations of events over the past century and laudable for its truly global scope, Kissinger at best offers some short-range policy recommendations, roughly half of which are already being undertaken by the new Bush administration at the time of the book's publication.

This book is less a strategic text for "diplomacy for the 21st century" as promised by the title than it is a quick shopping list for a one-term Republican president. Kissinger really answers the question, "What actions can U.S. leaders take to most quickly reverse the trends their predecessors established over the past decade?" Those trends are engaging Russia as an important strategic partner, developing the international expectation that states will not violate the essential human rights of their citizens (and that if they do, other states need not remain mute), and using unparalleled U.S. power and wealth to support the expression of its fundamental values where they are threatened around the world. One can debate the merits of these trends, but Kissinger fails to offer anything to stand in their place other than the same *realpolitik* he has endorsed for the past thirty years, which is only questionably capable of responding to a world more complex and dangerous than at any other time in history.

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To illustrate his points, Kissinger outlines the major issues confronting four regions of the world and offers his observations regarding various policies the United States has adopted over the past century, bluntly criticising the Wilsonian responses of the past eight years. He also offers his suggestions as to how the United States should respond to particular contemporary issues. For example, he advocates abrogating the ABM treaty since the threat of a Russian buildup of offensive nuclear weapons is low (and the threat for a nuclear attack on U.S. soil is great), accepting India as a nuclear power, and sustaining a constructive relationship with China through geopolitical dialogue.

Kissinger sees a world divided into geographic spheres whose political characteristics parallel different historical periods in the evolution of European history. Europe and the Western Hemisphere lend themselves to relations based on idealist beliefs, Asia is characterized by nineteenth-century balance of power politics, and the Middle East is analogous to seventeenth-century Europe. Africa is the one region that does not follow the trajectory of European development; Kissinger labels the continent's problems *sui generis*. His book is divided to reflect these geographic and teleological divisions. Kissinger presents each chapter in the form of a quick review of the region's history with longer treatments of current issues facing specific states and suggestions for U.S. policy.

I commend Kissinger for undertaking such a comprehensive project; it is important and seldom done. But spots of *Does America Need a Foreign Policy?* read more like Benjamin Barber's *Jihad vs. McWorld* than a serious discussion of U.S. grand strategy. This is because in places Kissinger is long on emotional supposition and short on hard facts. It is truly ironic that the man who is arguably the world's most prominent spokesman for realism relies on unsubstantiated assumptions about the "backward" nationalism that supposedly grips the Balkans, Africa, and the Middle East.

It would be tempting to recommend this book as a primer for those unfamiliar with twentieth century foreign policy. Kissinger does an admirable job of covering important conflicts around the world since World War II. Unfortunately, however, he rather selectively omits some important events from the Cold War period such as Grenada, Panama, and Iran-Contra and offers highly disputable interpretations of other events. As someone who studies the Balkans closely I find his portrayal of U.S. and NATO actions in Bosnia and Kosovo shameful.

When writing a book of the purported reach of Kissinger's, it is always difficult to deal with editors who want books that are easily consumed by the public. However, keeping the book brief while including historical overviews from each important country or region impedes his ability to give each region the treatment it warrants. The chapter on Asia is the largest at sixty-three pages, but can one really deal with historical and contemporary strategic policy of all of Latin America in twenty-six pages? What is the implication of addressing the entire African continent in nine?

Although one can disagree with Kissinger's views of the world and the role of the United States in it, his years in various Republican administrations have provided him with some truly useful insights to guide U.S. foreign policy. At one point, Kissinger calls for leaders to overcome the Cold War political bifurcation of idealism versus realism. He also

points to the finitude of U.S. resources and calls for U.S. leaders to make some hard choices to prioritize foreign policy goals. This is an action that is long overdue in the debates and conduct of foreign policy, and a challenge so large that it could well take a name as large as Henry Kissinger to carry it out effectively.

Unfortunately, throughout the book Kissinger fails to question outdated ways of conceptualizing foreign policy. His discussion of contemporary international politics, full of snide jabs at the foreign policies of this century's Democratic presidents, is yet another attempt to vindicate realism and a foreign policy based on a narrow definition of national interests in a rapidly changing world that increasingly refuses to comply with his vision of international politics.

Kissinger uses his regional chapters to launch his critique of what is commonly labeled the "idealist" or "Wilsonian" school of foreign policy. His first objection is to the messianic zeal with which Democrats seek to hasten the corruption of the Westphalian system. By promoting international institutions that are able to sanction sovereign states that violate human rights, Wilsonians foster an international system that glorifies the individual to the detriment of the state and therefore emboldens ethnic conflicts and wars for independence.

Kissinger seems to think that if the United States stopped promoting human rights abroad, separatist groups would simply never think to rise up against repressive regimes or demand their independence. Yet Kissinger's opposition goes further. Not only does the United States's adoption of a language of human rights incite individuals to demand their freedom from oppressive states, it draws the United States into the business of defending those rights, with troops if necessary. But Kissinger overstates the likelihood of a defense of human rights resorting to military force and understates the willingness of the American people to support such actions if it does.

This last point illustrates Kissinger's second objection to Wilsonian foreign policy. In his conclusion, Kissinger writes, "... [T]he United States will drain its psychological and material resources if it does not learn to distinguish between what it must do, what it would like to do, and what is beyond its capacities." It is with some regret that the reader reaches the end of the book only to find that Kissinger offers no answers to these questions. One may disagree with a defense for a strictly realist grand strategy in the twenty-first century, but one would certainly like to see that defense first.

Such a defense would require another task Kissinger fails to take up, somewhat ironically given the title of the book—a clear discussion and articulation of his understanding of what constitutes U.S. national interests today. Without explicitly defining what they are, he characterizes national interests in very traditional security terms, though when discussing Africa he allows that the United States has a moral obligation to organize a multilateral effort in the region, which is only vaguely mentioned and not explained. However, Kissinger is unwavering in his belief that the United States must take every precaution to ensure the preservation and strengthening of the norm of state sovereignty internationally.

Does the United States need a new strategy to guide its foreign policy? Yes, and that strategy should be based on precisely the value traditional *realpolitik* adherents spurn—a belief in the unalienable

rights of the individual. Kissinger may need to find geographic pockets of the world still dominated by the balance of power to justify business as usual, but he forgets a key observation he himself makes—the United States is the world's undisputed power and is in the position to shape the trajectory of international politics. It is neither the responsibility of the United States nor in its interest to make every state on the planet look and act just like itself. Yet it is the obligation of the United States to do what it can to promote and defend its values. The United States must not merely extol those values; it must live by them. And that means moving past the narrow self-interest and power politics espoused by Kissinger.

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