

Behind Every Photo a Photographer

Review by Markus Cleverley

Greg Marinovich and João Silva. *The Bang-Bang Club: Snapshots from a Hidden War*. New York: Basic Books, 2000, 320 pp. \$26.00.

One could argue that there is no longer a need for the fantasies of fiction after reading the accounts of these photographers put to paper. The physical and emotional circumstances of violence, politics, and government conspiracy in which the authors found themselves are almost too dramatic to be true; yet the forty-plus startling photographs included within the book attest to their veracity. "The Bang-Bang Club," as this informal group of South African photojournalists came to be known, consisted primarily of four work-related friends, among them Pulitzer Prize winners Greg Marinovich

and Kevin Carter. Though they were employed by different news organizations, the Club members found strength and support in one another while working in life-threatening situations.

The images contained within this work leave no doubt that these photojournalists were as daring as the world they covered was crazy. Like Forrest Gump, who always seemed to be in the right place during significant historical moments, they found themselves present during many of the key events on South Africa's road to democracy (with occasional stints in Somalia, Bosnia, Rwanda, and Sudan). At other times, however, these photographers found themselves caught in the crossfire of the daily and all-too-common township violence. Marinovich was wounded four times, risking his life to capture images on film. Of the four core members of the Club, two survived. Ken Oosterbroek lost his life in the violence, while Kevin Carter committed suicide. The two surviving members,

Marinovich and João Silva, narrate this account of the Bang-Bang Club, covering a period from about 1990 to 1994.

The work itself is not the most academic or scholarly of books—by no means are the authors professional writers or political analysts. Nevertheless, the writing of Marinovich and Silva is honest and insightful. Moreover, it touches upon powerful lessons of human morality.

At the appearance of anything remotely violent, the Bang-Bang Club was there to cover it. Members witnessed and photographed riots, shootings, killings, and much more. They were present as thousands of Zulu warriors marched down Khumalo Street, Thokosa, at the start of the so-called "Hostel War." They photographed policemen firing into the unarmed

The images contained within this work leave no doubt that these photojournalists were as daring as the world they covered was crazy.

Haunted by the horrors they witnessed and by the friends that they lost, Marinovich and Silva confess that the often introspective work serves as a catharsis for themselves, if nothing else. Fortunately for us, their story is worth being told. It is a frank, first-hand perspective of a history that many know but only through the photos the Bang-Bang Club have taken.

Marinovich was forced to flee South Africa for failing to appear in court for exposing pictures of township violence that he took. Upon his return he continued, with his friends, to follow the outbreaks of violence between African National Congress (ANC) members and the predominantly Zulu nationalist Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), wherein an estimated 14,000 people were killed. The authors speak out against the "peacekeeping" troops, who shot and killed Oosterbroek. They portray the "peacekeepers" as the primary instigators of the violence, supplying the IFP with arms (a fact later confirmed through the Goldstone Commission) and employing various tactics to create tension and instability within the ANC.

crowd at Boipatong after President F. W. de Klerk was chased out. They covered the funeral of Chris Hani, the fall of the Ciskei homeland, and the ANC-IFP clashes in Alexandria township, and they were first on the scene when the extreme right-wing AWB (Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging, the Afrikaner Resistance Movement) attempted to establish its regime in Bophuthatswana. The list goes on. Marinovich and Silva describe each of these events in detail as they communicate their account from a photographer's perspective.

The Bang-Bang Club highlights profound issues of journalism with which the photographers continually struggled. The authors incorporate moral questions of photojournalism as well as the impact their eyewitness accounts of violence had on their mental well-being. Which photos should not be printed because they are too gruesome to view? How will a photo affect public awareness? At what point does one put the camera down in order to lend a helping hand? Does witnessing an atrocity bring a moral responsibility to act?

These questions are clearly influenced by Kevin Carter's story. Carter's assignment in Sudan was a double-edged sword—what he saw and photographed was his claim to fame, but it also led to his undoing. He photographed a famished young child in Somalia that had a vulture by his side, waiting for the child to die. The photo received international acclaim, but also left the public wondering what the photographer did to help the child. The answer: nothing. Each day Carter was haunted by the burden of guilt he felt for not aiding the child. This weight, coupled with the stress of his job and a problem with narcotics abuse, left Carter an emotional mess. Not long after receiving the Pulitzer Prize for the photo, he took his own life. In contrast, Marinovich won the Pulitzer Prize for a photo he took of a burning man, whose agony he had attempted to prevent.

The Bang-Bang experience is almost larger than life. Though its members were perhaps partly on a crusade for fame and excitement, they also grasped the opportunity to make a difference in the world by creating snapshots of the hidden war. Not only do the photos evoke a powerful array of emotions, the words of Marinovich and Silva support an imagery that cannot be solely defined by film. Their words grasp the emotion, pain, and suffering of the artist.

Markus Cleverley is an Analyst at N.M. Rothschild & Sons in Washington, DC. A recent graduate in International Politics from Georgetown University, his major interests include South African politics and contemporary Africa.

An Alternative to Kick-Ass Diplomacy

Review by Joseph V. Montville

John D. Steinbruner. *Principles of Global Security*. Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2000, 272 pp. \$18.05.

John Steinbruner, Director of the Center for International and Security Studies at the University of Maryland and a Brookings mainstay for decades, opens and closes this meticulously researched and comprehensive study with references to former Senator Sam Nunn. The first comes in a report on a series of meetings in 1991, where security specialists and government officials wrestled with the threat to international security posed by nuclear weapons proliferation. A conclusion was emerging from the discussions that the traditional concept of international security through deterrence based on the confrontation of opposing military forces was, in itself, a major threat. The United States, its allies, and the rest of humankind would have much greater security through a policy of reassurance based on collaborative rules designed to head off mobilization in response to perceived threats from an adversary.

A policy of reassurance would entrench the advantages of hotlines, confidence-building measures, joint exercises, and many other new cooperative relationships between competitors. Deterrence relies on a continuous threat. Reassurance would rely on restraining threats with persuasive, real-world data. Nunn remarked to his colleagues, "Well, you have human nature and all of history going against you there. What have you got going for you?"

At the end of the book, Steinbruner reports on a 1999 Aspen Strategy Group meeting on the United States's relationship with Russia and its implications for international security. The experts, including high government officials, were still very worried about the threat stemming from the proliferation of nuclear weapons, a condition intensified by further deterioration of Russian safeguards and nuclear tests by India and Pakistan. There was a consensus that international security relationships

the rich and the poor. Each factor is influenced by the rapid rate of population growth. Sustaining the world's projected population in 2025 will require tripling energy and doubling food production while mitigating the negative environmental consequences. International security policy will not be able to endure as a stand-alone phenomenon. It will evolve in combination with the pursuit of global prosperity, the expanding need for social welfare, and the prevention or containment of

Principles of Global Security reminds me of one of those aged, hefty Christmas fruitcakes packed with rich ingredients.

had to be transformed, but neither a plan on how to achieve it nor an agreement that transformation was possible emerged. By this time, Sam Nunn had an answer. "We must reverse the course of history," he said.

Principles of Global Security is John Steinbruner's weighty contribution to the task of transformation of international security relationships. The book assesses the technical and psychological problems posed by contemporary nuclear deterrence policy. It also offers practical solutions for reducing the threat of disaster by accident, confusion, or system breakdown. It analyzes the missions of conventional forces and the assumptions of U.S. political planners about our rights as the sole remaining superpower.

Many factors are forcing us to rethink international security concepts, including the runaway technological advances driving globalization, serious transnational threats to the environment, and the increasing gap in income between

political violence. These vast systemic changes will cause tension between the United States, China, and Russia, as the imbalance in current deterrence relationships becomes more apparent.

The potential for nuclear catastrophe ten years after the end of the Cold War remains staggering. In 1998, using only 40 percent of its weapons capacity, Russia was capable of killing 75 million Americans. The United States, meanwhile, could kill 65 million Russians with only one-third of its nuclear arsenal. Even with expected reductions in nuclear forces on both sides, the potential for reciprocal holocaust remains stunning. In *Principles of Global Security*, Steinbruner is not proposing to dismantle the nuclear deterrent, but rather to downsize and reorganize the system to make it safer. He offers his suggestions in a conceptual language that reveals his mastery of the arcane vocabulary of nuclear deterrence theory, an element that the non-specialist reader will find challenging.

Principles of Global Security reminds me of one of those aged, hefty Christmas fruitcakes packed with rich ingredients. There is no way to indicate the rewards awaiting the reader in a short review. There is intricate dissection of defense budgets, technical data on the clutter of satellite systems in space, and the implications of this for space-based defense systems. There is information on the dispersal rates and killing capacity of biological pathogens, and, of course, detailed tables with inventories of conventional and nuclear weapons of many countries. But for all the technical discussion, there is a persistent vein of sensitivity to human factors.

I am particularly grateful for Steinbruner's sensible approach to reducing the danger of Russia's nuclear weapons. The author recognizes the need to find a way to include Russia in the United States's security arrangements, much as it did with Germany and Japan after World War II. To succeed, the United States and the industrialized democracies will have to assist Russia not only in military security, but also in the painful transitions necessary for the creation of a viable market economy and functioning democracy.

There is a tenacious school of thought in many think tanks and graduate security studies programs advocating what I call "kick-ass diplomacy." Its approach is reflected in the structure and programs of deterrence policy and practice. Steinbruner acknowledges that, traditionally, the United States has needed an enemy in order to stay focused on foreign affairs. It is not easy to envision a painless transition to an international community that includes mutually safe and sustained development, U.S. stewardship, and mature management of international

relationships. Ultimately, Steinbruner's views belong to an emerging conceptual structure within which ideas of preventive diplomacy and preventive defense are gaining some attention. These ideas do not require us to love other people. They only require us to be smart enough to acknowledge the threat from weapons of mass destruction in a world racked with demographic explosion, global epidemics, environmental degradation, and economic shock. With such an understanding, we can begin to take some prudent steps for our own safety. This does not seem to be asking too much of Americans. And that is what John Steinbruner is asking of us.

Joseph V. Montville is Director of the Preventive Diplomacy Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

A Pacific Future

Review by Thomas W. Robinson

Robert D. Blackwill and Paul Dibb, eds. *America's Asian Allies*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2000, 143 pp. \$45.00 hardcover, \$17.95 paperback.

Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has rested on its laurels, both as concerns its overall security policy and its approach to military-related questions in the various regions. The Gulf War victory and the several interventions since, including recent operations in Kosovo, were seen as proof of American military invincibility.

With the fall of the Soviet Union, the need for fighting a global conflict has disappeared, leaving only the possibility of one or two regional conflicts—together

with assorted "peacekeeping" duties and the rising question of terrorism—as perceived threats to American security.

Most attention has been paid to the Middle East, Southern Europe, and East Africa as loci of such possibilities. And with North Korea's self-induced deterioration due to rapidly declining gross national product and widespread starvation, Washington rested easier even in Asia, where the United States retained real alliances and continued security guarantorships. In that region, the policy continued to be "forward deployment," "places not bases," "comprehensive engagement," "defense guidelines modernization," and "transparency and confidence-building."

Overall, the United States has not worried about the changing Asian security equation, despite several disturbing trends. In Northeast Asia, such developments include the near-war with Pyongyang in 1994 over nuclear weapons, two direct Chinese military threats to Taiwan in 1994 and 1996 (the latter of which could have seen direct American participation in Taiwan's defense), the re-emergence of the Sino-Russian alliance against the United States, and the general rise of China's military power projection. Meanwhile, the exacerbation of the Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan, the attendant nuclear weapons tests by both South Asian powers, and the late-1990s economic crisis that engulfed much of Asia have also undermined regional stability. In spite of these emerging security threats, Asia has remained largely at peace, in part because of the *Rx Americana*. Hence, incentives to make major changes in the 1990s were lacking. *America's Asian Allies*, a joint Australian-American effort, analyzes the relation-

ship between this state of affairs and the development of partnerships linking the United States and various Asian nations against the background of the region's high instability.

Nonetheless, unease has recently crept into official thinking, amplified by a few scholars and analysts in the think tank world, generating a small but growing literature on *post-post* Cold War security relations, globally and in Asia. *America's Asian Allies* represents one contribution to this literature. The driving force behind the current debate is not only the realization that the United States cannot remain king of the hill forever merely through a few superficial changes in its *pro-status quo* policy, but also that the facts on the ground are changing. Pressing issues include the challenge posed by China's growing power, Japan's gradual re-emergence as a full-scale military power, the changing nature of the Korean question, Southeast Asian stability, and the several South Asian issues centered around India.

America's Asian Allies consists of six short chapters. The Australian editor, Paul Dibb, writes on the Asian strategic environment, and the American editor, Robert Blackwill, recommends an "action agenda" for the United States in the region. The other chapters, with one exception, are jointly authored: Stuart Harris and Richard N. Cooper examine the U.S.-Japanese alliance; Ralph A. Cossa and Alan Oxley comment on the U.S.-Korean alliance; John Baker and Douglas H. Paal consider the U.S.-Australian alliance; and Philip Zelikow discusses general aspects of American "engagement" in Asia. These chapters sketch out some of the basics of American security policies and commitments to its Asian allies, making

this book useful for the undergraduate and those policymakers newly arriving in Washington for the new administration. (It is, in fact, to the latter that this book is mostly directed.)

Missing, however, is a thorough treatment of the more extended aspects of America's Asian security policy beyond formal alliances. There is little discussion of the increasing policy fixation on China, the security guarantee for Taiwan, and Southeast Asian issues arising from the Asian economic crisis and centering on the future of Indonesia. Also absent is proper consideration of the many South Asian problems—Kashmir, domestic stability in Pakistan, nuclear weapons, and the Sri Lankan civil war. An attempt to move beyond modest suggestions for maintaining the status quo is also lacking. The book fails to discuss what alternative security arrangements are possible for Asia. In particular, the book needs to address what will continue to keep the peace and tackle Korea, Taiwan, Chinese expansion, and the Kashmir issue, while allowing the United States to continue its role as the leading influence in the region.

This work contains three tables comparing defense budgets and spending, military forces, and economic data.

While useful, these must be used with caution: Official defense budget figures are often suspect (witness the case of China), and comparing military forces only in terms of raw numbers of troops means little. Further, economic data is not the only measure—and sometimes not the most important—of national power.

There is some difference in emphasis between the Australians and the Americans. The former tend to view Asia as a collection of separate sub-entities, while the latter take a more holistic approach. Some of the most "advanced" writing on Asian security comes from the Australians, including Dobb. But because of the editors' decision to have chapters written jointly, the creativity that comes from being on the periphery of the region is submerged by the more cautious American approach.

On balance, however, this work's import is as a contribution to the emerging debate over America's long-term national security policy and place in the twenty-first century despite its shortcomings. That debate has hardly begun, so any means that helps to focus attention is worthy of note.

Thomas W. Robinson is Adjunct Professor in the National Security Studies Program at Georgetown University and President of American Asian Research Enterprise.