

The Academy of Political Science

475 Riverside Drive · Suite 1274 · New York, New York 10115-1274
(212) 870-2500 · FAX: (212) 870-2202 · aps@psqonline.org · <http://www.psqonline.org>

POLITICAL SCIENCE QUARTERLY

Volume 121 · Number 4 · Winter 2006-07

No part of this article may be copied, downloaded, stored, further transmitted, transferred, distributed, altered, or otherwise used, in any form or by any means, except:

- one stored electronic and one paper copy of any article solely for your personal, non-commercial use, or
- with prior written permission of The Academy of Political Science.

Political Science Quarterly is published by The Academy of Political Science. Contact the Academy for further permission regarding the use of this work.

Political Science Quarterly
Copyright © 2006 by The Academy of Political Science. All rights reserved.

(p. 231)—but she does not mention the oft-told story of the Saudi Ambassador to the United States, Bandar bin Sultan, telling Palestinian Liberation Organization leader Yasir Arafat to turn down Clinton's peace proposals in late 2000 because he could get a better deal from the incoming George W. Bush administration. If true, as I believe it is, this shows how little the Saudis understood American politics. Ignorance of one another's most basic political realities has been a regular feature of the U.S.–Saudi relationship.

Bronson does a quick and businesslike review of the crisis opened by the September 11 terror attacks, the slow Saudi response to American demands for cooperation and information, and the eventual assertion by Crown Prince—now King—Abdallah of greater control over Saudi policy. She ends on a fairly hopeful note that the two countries are back on track. However, writing when the price of oil was about \$35 per barrel, Bronson warns that if prices were to rise dramatically, say to \$100 per barrel, both the international economy and Saudi Arabia's own economic interests would be devastated (p. 250). With oil now approaching \$80 per barrel, it is not so clear that she is right about Saudi self-interest in keeping oil prices in a more moderate range.

Having written a fine history and analysis of the U.S.–Saudi relationship, Bronson is tempted to end with policy prescriptions. While many of her suggestions seem reasonable, the pace of change in the Middle East is so rapid these days that such guidelines are actually of little value. Still, they do little to detract from an otherwise solid achievement.

WILLIAM B. QUANDT
University of Virginia

Immigration Phobia and the Security Dilemma: Russia, Europe, and the United States by Mikhail A. Alexseev. *New York, Cambridge University Press, 2005. 294 pp. \$70.00.*

In this theoretically and methodologically sophisticated book, Mikhail Alexseev does an excellent job of synthesizing arguments from diverse literatures to draw creative and policy-relevant conclusions about a crucial global issue: prejudice and violence against immigrants. While the regression tables and occasional formal equations he includes in the text may be off-putting to non-academics, Alexseev defines his terms in simple and straightforward language, and explains why the statistics and models are important for developing and testing his arguments. The math is only a small part of the text, and should not dissuade general readers.

Alexseev's major argument is that the "immigration phobia" often found among majority populations is based on the same structural and psychological logic underpinning the famous "security dilemma" of international relations.

People see immigrants, who are by definition outsiders, as unknown actors whose intentions and capabilities are uncertain. If they doubt the ability of an outside authority (in this case, their own government) to effectively control the behavior of these outsiders—in other words, if they believe they are facing anarchy—then citizens will react with fear and hostility, assuming for the sake of self-protection that the outsiders are threatening and need to be stopped. As a result, citizens may create a spiral of reactive hostility where none is warranted, since the immigrants may in fact be not only well intentioned, but contributing importantly to the host country's economy and society. Alexseev contends that this is the same kind of spiral behavior reflected in an arms race between two nation-states who are actually only interested in maintaining their own defenses, rather than in gaining territory at each other's expense. Worst-case thinking leads to mutual perceptions of threat and mutual hardening of behavior.

This is an interesting new application of political scientist Barry Posen's argument that security dilemma patterns help explain ethnic conflict. But Alexseev goes beyond this, drawing on a wide variety of sociological and psychological literature to provide a nuanced understanding of how people treat immigrants. He notes, for example, that the true number of immigrants is less relevant in provoking hostility among a country's citizens than are perceptions about the country's own institutional weakness, or about the immigrants' group cohesion, both of which might make them seem relatively stronger in comparison to host-country natives. He uses this insight to refute the logic of political scientist Samuel Huntington's recent claims that Latino immigration threatens U.S. national security. He also notes that in contrast to how the security dilemma is defined in international relations theory, citizens seem less concerned about relative economic gains—how one group fares in comparison to another—in regard to immigrants, than they are about their own absolute prosperity in comparison to a time before immigrants arrived on the scene. This latter point will be particularly interesting for other scholars to take back to the international security literature, since, as Alexseev notes, it suggests that relative and absolute gains are not the polar opposites that many international relations theorists suppose.

What is particularly interesting is that Alexseev finds strong support for these arguments across three very different cases—fear of Chinese immigration in the Russian Far East, fear of Turkish and other immigration from the south in the European Union, and the case of ethnic tension and rioting provoked by the Rodney King case in Los Angeles. While he notes that few policies can easily undo the security spiral once it evolves, he concludes that officials at all levels of government should avoid using the language and symbols of national security to deal with immigrant issues, in order that fear and hostility can be contained.

KIMBERLY MARTEN

Barnard College, Columbia University