Book reviews

International Relations theory

The paradox of liberation: secular revolutions and religious counterrevolutions. By Michael Walzer. New Haven and London: Yale University Press. 2015. 172pp. Index. £17.00. ISBN 978 0 30018 780 9. Available as e-book.

The paradox of liberation lies in the way national liberation movements imbued with modernist secular ambition become undermined by the power of religious or ethnic identity. Michael Walzer, the eminent political theorist, examines three cases of this phenomenon: Algeria, India and Israel. In each case liberation, from both external oppressors and the submissive habits of traditional culture, is spearheaded by an educated elite infused with western and principally leftist ideas.

All three states are no longer as foreseen by their founders. The latter assumed that religious sentiment would wither in the face of modernity, and the traditional patriarchal leadership would be eclipsed. No such luck. In each case there are, of course, particularities not shared by the others. In the case of Algeria what emerged was authoritarian; the women who played a significant role in liberation were returned to subordination in a conservative society. Only lip service was paid by the new state to Islam. In India and Israel, the founding idea of physical commitment, embodied in the Gandhian cooperative and kibbutz movements, was soon crumbling.

For liberators, 'their biggest disappointment, their biggest surprise, is the large number of young men and women who are drawn to the ideologies of Hindutva [political Hinduism], messianic Zionism and ultra-Orthodox Judaism, and radical Islam' (p. 29). But should we be surprised? In all three cases the indicators were unmistakable in the 1970s. Living in Bombay, I saw Jana Sangh (BJP's forerunner) marching aggressively through the streets. Educated Indians, Muslim and Hindu, foresaw trouble, their unease was palpable. In Israel, Ben-Gurion tried to sidestep the religious impulse. Israel's Declaration of Independence avoided explicit reference to God, the signatories putting their 'trust in the Rock of Israel', an ambiguous nod to placate the religious. Yet the liberators also fervently shared with the religiously inclined an abhorrence of mixed Jewish–Gentile marriage. That, surely, qualifies how progressively secular they really were. In the Arab world, the failure of secular nationalism to deliver freedom for Palestine or prosperity elsewhere was already under challenge from Islamists, who contrasted favourably with corrupt secular politicians. Beneath the carapace of authoritarian suppression, Muslim sensibility could only grow. In Algeria, the National Liberation Front's brief flirtation with democracy, 1989–91, was abandoned when the Islamic Salvation Front threatened to sweep the board. The support the FLN received from the West demonstrated that the latter was also hypocritical about democracy.

What the liberators did not foresee, either, was that those who supported the old patriarchies had a vested interest in subverting the liberators' intentions. Brahmins, old elites,

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patriarchs, rabbis, Muslim clerics, new capitalists all had much to gain from the triumph of the religiously conservative. Walzer views the later ascendancy of the traditionalists as regressive. As children of the Enlightenment, it is natural we should think so. But should we? Walzer thinks that the values of western democracy are the best available, but that their proponents should engage positively with the specific traditions of each society. This risks naivety about the complexities and values of non-western societies, catastrophically demonstrated in Iraq and Libya, where the opportunity for democracy has led not only to chaos but also to a serious regression for women's rights.

Walzer's particular interest is Israel, but his view of Labour Zionism is rose-tinted. Contrary to what he purported to advocate, to cherish Arab citizens in the putative Jewish state (p. 99), 'Ben-Gurion clearly wanted as few Arabs as possible … no expulsion order was ever enunciated … [he] preferred that his generals "understand" what he wanted' (Benny Morris, *The birth of the Palestinian refugee problem revisited*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 597). He personally approved the largest single expulsion of the 1948 war (from Lydda and Ramle). The Arab residue in Israel was stripped of economic self-sufficiency, isolated and segmented. Systemic discrimination ever since ensured its submissiveness, exactly the characteristic Walzer tells us national liberators have to defeat. It was Labour Zionism, too, which decided to retain territories captured in 1967 and to settle them. Nothing did more to entice religiously susceptible Jews to flock to Israel to redeem the Promised Land, a process it could not or would not control. Labour Zionism thus ensured that the religious right eclipsed much of what it stood for. Ironically, it was a devout rabbi, Yeshayahu Leibowitz, who called the 'liberators' to account: 'the real black day was the seventh day of the Six-Day War. That day we had to decide retroactively whether we had fought a defensive war or a war of conquest, and we ruled that it had been a war of conquest. Israel's decline and fall dates from that day' (*al-Hamishmar*, 13 Feb. 1983).

In a postscript responding to his students, Walzer examines why the United States did not follow a similar pattern. Fundamentally, of course, it was because there was no cultural gulf between leaders and led. In this regard, the US case is closer to the French Revolution (where the Church was permanently sidelined); *il Risorgimento* (where the Church was permanently contained); or indeed liberated Ireland, where the Church was incorporated into the ruling establishment.

This is a fascinating book and, a comparative rarity among academic publications, it is beautifully presented.

David McDowall

International history

Churchill on the Far East in the Second World War: hiding the history of the 'special relationship'. By Cat Wilson. London: Palgrave Macmillan. 2014. 265pp. Index. £60.00. ISBN 978 1 137 36394 7. Available as e-book.

Roosevelt, Churchill and the Baltic question: Allied relations during the Second World War. By Kaarel Piirimäe. London: Palgrave Macmillan. 2014. 256pp. Index. £60.00. ISBN 978 1 137 44236 9. Available as e-book.

To judge by the number of times his name appears in book titles, publishers or authors clearly believe that Winston Churchill will lead to better sales. Whether this belief is justified is another matter, but it can have misleading results.

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Cat Wilson's book is modelled on David Reynolds's impressive and best-selling work, *In command of history* (Allen Lane, 2004). Indeed, Professor Reynolds was one of the examiners of the PhD thesis on which her book is based (p. viii). Wilson claims that it 'continues the comparative and contextual exercise of examining memoir and myth against the reality, as begun by David Reynolds', but argues that *In command of history* 'lacked … a close scrutiny of Churchill's treatment of Britain's involvement in the war in the Far East' while hers 'addresses this deficiency in the historiography' (p. 6).

There is certainly a lot more about the Far East in Wilson's book than there is in Reynolds's and she has put in an impressive amount of work in writing it. Over 100 pages—getting on for half the book—are taken up by detailed notes and a long list of sources reinforcing her arguments, and this reviewer found the chapters on India (five and six) particularly interesting. However, some of the author's conclusions are unconvincing. Thus, discussing Reynolds's explanation of Churchill's neglect of the achievements of Slim's Fourteenth Army in Burma as 'due to the more than usual rush, and disorganisation, in getting the proofs [of his memoirs] to the publishers', she claims that 'arguably Churchill did not include the troops in Burma because … above all, it had been the Indian Army which had been in the majority. To include them … would mean Churchill would have had to revise his opinion of Indian troops—something he was never prepared to do' (pp. 129–30). 'Arguably', perhaps, but convincingly, no.

Similarly, while Wilson's conclusion that the principal reason for playing down Britain's role in the Far East in his memoirs was 'to cement the wartime Anglo-American alliance, to give it substance and a historical foundation all of its own, in order to locate Britain and her remaining postwar empire (as well as himself) at the centre of the European Cold War world' (p. 151) may be true in part, it is surely more likely that Churchill's failure to provide a fuller treatment of the war in the Far East was due mainly to the fact that Britain not only played a relatively minor role in it, but, as the author herself shows in chapter three, Churchill must bear a considerable share of the blame for Britain's poor performance against the Japanese forces in 1941–2.

In Kaarel Piirimäe's book, on the other hand, we find more references in the index to Anthony Eden and more still to Joseph Stalin than to Winston Churchill. While Churchill—and Roosevelt—do figure frequently, the book is more a description and analysis of the evolution of British, American and Russian policy towards the balance of power in eastern Europe between 1939 and 1945, with particular reference to the Baltic states—the author is an Estonian academic—than a study of the role of two individuals, however important. This is a legitimate and important area of study in its own right and it would have been better to have used a title which made this clear.

Within his actual framework, the author has written an excellent book. He is especially adept at analysing the changing and conflicting views not only of Churchill and Roosevelt, but the evolution of policy inside the Foreign Office and the State Department. Lack of documentation renders this more difficult in the case of the Soviet Union, but he has made very good use of what is available. Particularly interesting is Piirimäe's discussion of the nature and extent of the material obtained by the Soviet Union's extensive espionage network, which must have given the Russians a considerable advantage when negotiating with their allies (see pp. 64–6, 98 and 112 in particular).

It is clear from the book that, despite some opposition, de facto recognition of the status of the Baltic states as Soviet republics was conceded by both Britain and the United States by 1942 on grounds of *realpolitik*. The Red Army would be in control of the area in the event of a German defeat and any attempt by the United States or the United Kingdom to prevent

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this would have been not only fruitless, but counterproductive. As for the failure to secure *de jure* recognition, this was a consequence rather than a cause of the Cold War. Piirimäe's impeccably researched study makes it one of the most important recent contributions to the continuing debate on the origins of that conflict.

Geoffrey Warner

A sense of the enemy: the high-stakes history of reading your rival's mind. By Zachary Shore. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2014. 258pp. Index. £19.90. ISBN 978 0 19998 737 5. Available as e-book.

Zachary Shore, Associate Professor of History at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, is a historian whose interests include international conflict, Islam in Europe, interwar-era Germany and psychology—particularly in foreign policy decision-making. In 2008, he published a book entitled *Blunder: why smart people make bad decisions* (Bloomsbury), in which he asks 'whether history can help us to act wisely'. His new book, *A sense of the enemy*, continues this theme, but seeks to address the question of 'how it is possible to know what your enemy is thinking'. This book could not be more timely. Western leaders often appear to suffer from a strong sense of strategic surprise and an inability to comprehend what rivals may want: in discussions on Ukraine or Syria, for instance, the question 'what is President Putin thinking?' loudly echoes. When foreign rivals become active competitors, they are often depicted as acting not only unpredictably but 'irrationally'.

Understanding foreign rivals appears to have become more difficult in the post-Cold War era. In part, this is because of the persistent, albeit sometimes implicit, influence in western public policy debate of the 'end of history' discourse. The concurrent unpopularity of area studies expertise in both academia and public policy, and the consequent decline in foreign-language skills and knowledge of local and regional histories and cultures is also to blame. It might be said that the former suggested that empathy—the ability to put oneself in the other's shoes and see the world as they see it—was no longer necessary, and the latter meant that fewer people were able to do it well. This is often emphasized in political debate: empathy becomes conflated with sympathy; in other words, understanding why a rival acts in the way they do (and explaining their often disagreeable actions) is depicted as being much the same as agreeing with or condoning them.

Shore makes clear his position at the outset: strategic empathy is necessary and a skill that can be developed and enhanced. He does not, however, simply posit the need for the rehabilitation of area studies. Instead, he attempts to deploy history combined with psychology, particularly heuristics (decision-making short cuts), to illuminate how we think. To understand rivals, he argues, one must avoid thinking in 'continuity heuristics' (using past behaviour as a guide to future action), and to think instead in terms of 'pattern breaks'. These are episodes, he suggests, that expose an enemy's underlying 'drivers or constraints', the 'pattern break' reveals what he values most (p. 8). Focusing on a rival's behaviour at such times will enhance our ability to understand them.

The book comprises nine substantive chapters and an afterword. The first seven chapters explore a series of case-studies on how particular statesmen have struggled with strategic empathy and used 'pattern breaks'—some more successfully than others. Chapter one analyses Gandhi's 'reading' of the British in the Indian independence movement, while chapters two and three reflect on German Foreign Minister Stresemann's attempts to understand the Russians (sic) in the 1920s. Chapters four and five look at attempts by Stalin and Roosevelt to 'read' Hitler, while chapters six and seven turn to Vietnam, particularly to

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how the North Vietnamese sought to understand the Americans. Gandhi and Stresemann, Shore suggests, were examples of 'talented strategic empaths' (p. 9), while Stalin exemplifies empathetic failure and the North Vietnamese Le Duan's record was 'mixed'. Chapter eight explores several efforts to assess enemies in the twentieth century more broadly, and chapter nine examines what Shore calls 'the troubled love affair with quantitative analysis as the basis for predicting enemy behaviour' (p. 9). The afterword offers an overview of the existing literature on enemy assessments, and theories and concepts from other fields.

To be sure, not all will agree with Shore's case-study approach to history, for instance, and some might argue that more space could have been given to the benefits of area studies for understanding foreign rivals and how they make political decisions. Moreover, the difficulty of spotting and understanding a relevant 'pattern break' as it happens is clear.

Furthermore, in an apparent attempt to make the book as accessible as possible, Shore appears shy of scholarship and methodology, tucking them away in the afterword, even suggesting that they make a cure for 'severe insomnia' (p. 190). This is a shame. Not only is there much interesting work in the wider field, but the unusual approach of blending history, psychology and prediction adopted by Shore warrants placing the methodology section at the front to avoid subsequent confusion. Nevertheless, Shore's book is thought-provoking in its ambition, and as such is a useful contribution to the wider literature.

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Need to know: eastern and western perspectives. Edited by Wladyslaw Bulhak and Thomas Wegener Friis. Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark. 2014. 283pp. $36.00. ISBN 978 8 77674 853 1. Available as e-book.

In the growing market of books about intelligence and security services, *Need to know* is one of the more unusual publications. This is a collection of mostly very dissimilar research papers. However, once readers struggle through the somewhat naive introduction and the first, very academic chapter, 'In search of a methodology in the Cold War communist intelligence studies', they will find twelve interesting chapters covering intelligence and counter-intelligence operations in several countries, east and west, during various periods of the Cold War.

Polish historians are by far the most numerous contributors to *Need to know* and the activities of Poland's communist special services are the subject of half of the book. The story of the Anglo-Polish intelligence skirmishes 1945–81 is interesting, although the author spends too much time explaining the historical setting of post-Second World War Poland. The chapter on the impact which US intelligence analysis had on Washington's policy towards Poland, between 1956 and 1970, will make many readers wonder how much US assessment bodies have changed during the last five decades. The chapter misses the Soviet dimension, an interesting and possibly deliberate gap, perhaps because US intelligence analysts relied too much on their sources in the ruling Polish United Workers Party and therefore developed tunnel vision, ignoring the changes in the Kremlin. The activities of Polish counter-intelligence against western diplomats in the chapter 'Diplomat or spy' gives the reader an excellent description of the Polish communist security organs working against westerners in Poland and would look like a good introduction to a very promising book. It will certainly interest all western diplomats who ever operated in communist Warsaw.

Poland's collaboration with Middle Eastern terrorist networks in the 1970s and 1980s is one of the more interesting and unusual parts of the book. The relatively discreet cooperation was largely driven by Warsaw's attempts to sell weapons in the Middle East, but it

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seems that the effort to control specific Middle Eastern individuals visiting Poland was not well coordinated, and that Polish Military Intelligence community interests clashed on occasion with the security interests of the country. Warsaw was also surprised by how much its western opponents knew about some of the more controversial visitors from the Middle East.

Polish intelligence operations against the European Economic Community and later European Union institutions show the Moscow agenda and the KGB's guiding hand in monitoring the organization and selected individuals working for it. Spying on the EU was one of the Warsaw Pact's particularly wasteful undertakings. Polish spying efforts in Brussels are described in an interesting chapter by a Belgian scholar, Idesbald Goddeeris, the author of a Dutch-language book on the same subject. He concentrates mainly on one specific case, a perfect example for all intelligence services of how to waste money on pointless activities. The selection of the studied target may have originally been the right choice but the incoming reports, describing his activities and his environment, should have stopped the operation immediately after it began.

The relationship between the Czechoslovak intelligence service and Great Britain until the early 1950s is covered in only a short chapter. It was an interesting and tragic period for Czechoslovakia because the communists took over only in 1948: it is a pity that the editors didn't insist on stretching their time scale, if only to emphasize the quick 'sovietization' of the service. The story of the recruitment of Austrian citizens in Austria 1945–53, like the chapter on Czechoslovakia, ends prematurely; the country gained full independence two years later.

The excellent chapter on the US–Canadian intelligence cooperation between early 1940 and 1980 does not quite fit in the general East–West narrative of the book, but is a very good read, and the early assessment of the Office of Strategic Services by the Canadians, 'overwhelmed by size, inexperience and romanticism' (p. 210), and other Canadian opinions are quite amusing. The book ends with a brief, exhaustive and well-documented description of intelligence and counter-intelligence operations in Denmark. The chapter includes the tables describing the numerical strength of Warsaw Pact and North Korean intelligence stations in Copenhagen between 1968 and 1987.

Need to know does not have a coherent theme and the result is a confusing patchwork of articles. The book appears to be a poorly coordinated by-product of three conferences on the same subject. However, most of the chapters are interesting, even if some of them could have been improved by additional editing. On the whole, this is a useful and interesting publication.

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Governance, law and ethics

Private international law and global governance. Edited by Horatia Muir Watt and Diego P. Fernández Arroyo. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2014. 400pp. £75.00. ISBN 978 0 19872 762 0. Available as e-book.

Private international law (PIL), or the conflict of laws, may be defined as that part of a system of law which deals with cases having a 'foreign element', by which is meant contact with some other system of law. (From an English perspective, both Scots and French law are foreign.) Its main justification has been said to be that 'it implements the reasonable and legitimate expectations of the parties to a transaction or occurrence' (see Dicey, Morris and

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Collins, *The conflict of laws*, 15th edn, Sweet and Maxwell, 2012, pp. 3–4). There is an overlap with public international law, for instance, where treaties between states harmonize the rules in particular areas of national systems of law, including their rules on PIL.

This collection belongs to a series devoted to law and 'global governance', a concept described by Muir Watt as being 'elastic enough to signify the various means by which the exercise of private power in transnational settings may be disciplined—while avoiding the problematic definition of global law' (p. 3). Several contributors, including the editors, hold positions at Sciences Po, that adventurous, sometimes troubled, elite Parisian institute of political studies. Perhaps it is that influence that is responsible for the approach and style of some of the chapters.

The collection is directed at improving the working of PIL. Since 1893 this has been the aim too of the Hague Conference on Private International Law, whose declared 'ultimate goal … is to work for a world in which, despite the differences between legal systems, persons—individuals as well as companies—can enjoy a high degree of legal security'. So, are we to go in for an enjoyable bit of 'private power' bashing and putting the world to rights? (The wretched of the earth might be happy if at least the exercise of public power in their countries were 'disciplined'.) Or more modestly, should we seek to improve the legal security of individuals and companies? With the growing importance of cross-border legislation like that of the European Union and international human rights law—developments that are emphasized in a number of these chapters—'legal security' takes on a wider connotation.

Unfortunately, some of the contributors choose the former project. Boo words like 'land-grabbing' and 'vulture funds' are scattered through their chapters. One is tempted therefore to concentrate on their actual arguments, but style and substance are united. This may be the consequence of an apparent disregard of Bishop Butler's aphorism: 'Everything is what it is, and not another thing'. In looking for something else beneath the surface of PIL, the field is exposed to all kinds of theorizing, often borrowed from other disciplines, unlikely to be familiar to lawyers (though possibly so to scholars of International Relations). One reason why this matters is that such theorizing appears to demand, at least at the present day, a tiresome prose style. For instance, Tomaso Ferrando's 'Global land grabbing' could surely have made its point more simply and briefly. Even Muir Watt can be guilty of this, as in her summary of the aim of the work under review: 'The aim … is therefore to draw attention to the governance gap left by the insufficiencies of an overly technical, market-driven, or dogmatic private international law, and then to explore the avenues through which, in the absence of traditional forms of government in a global setting, the tools, methods, and underlying axiology of the field could be reinvented … There is a clear need for a (both ontological and epistemological) de-closeting of the field' (p. 2). At least since 1893, it has been obvious that the working of PIL is imperfect. But those trying to make friends and influence governments would do well to reflect on the purpose of the old rhetorical device of *captatio benevolentiae*, the plea to your audience designed to gain its goodwill, which should not be taken for granted.

Not all the contributions are like this. There is a constructive piece from Alex Mills, 'Variable geometry, peer governance, and the public international perspective on private international law'. His view that much may be learned from the experience of federal states is questioned by Jacco Bomhoff in 'The constitution of the conflict of laws'. Gilles Cuniberti's 'The merchant who would not be king' is a balanced, evidence-based treatment of the subject. Worth reading too are Bram van der Eem's 'basic thoughts' on securing global financial stability, and Sabine Corneloup's confessedly optimistic suggestion that PIL may have a

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role in the control of immigration. And although Veronica Corcodel probably subscribes to the general Sciences Po attitude, her historical study of 'Henry Maine's jurisprudence and liberal imperialism' doesn't overdo it (and as a bonus quotes widely from Maine's writings).

Those unfamiliar with the way classical PIL works in practice should consider reading first the fairly short, and fairly non-technical and non-dogmatic opinion of Judge Fisher in a recent decision of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit: *Loredana Ranza* v. *Nike Inc.*, *an Oregon corporation*, *and Nike European Operations Netherlands, B.V., a foreign corporation* (cdn.ca9.uscourts.gov/datastore/opinions/2015/07/16/13-3.5251.pdf).

David Bentley

The promise and perils of populism: global perspectives. Edited by Carlos de la Torre. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press. 2015. 474pp. Index. £71.90. ISBN 978 0 81315 330 8. Available as e-book.

Populists in power. By Daniele Albertazzi and Duncan McDonnell. Abingdon: Routledge. 2015. 218pp. Index. £90.00. ISBN 978 0 41560 097 2. Available as e-book.

Populist parties in Europe: agents of discontent? By Stijn van Kessel. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. 2015. 239pp. Index. £63.90. ISBN 978 113741 410 6. Available as e-book.

What is populism? An ideology, a formula for capturing power, a specific political discourse? As a theoretical concept and an empirical phenomenon, it has never been more closely studied, largely because manifestations of populism are appearing nearly everywhere. Populism is successful in chronically infirm democracies such as those in Latin America as well as others, such as in Scandinavia, with a track record of effective governance. Of the three books under review, one examines the global relationship between populism and the people in terms of theory and comparative mobilization, and two focus on Europe.

Daniele Albertazzi and Duncan McDonnell dwell on the performance of populists in power in Italy and Switzerland and Stijn van Kessel explores their role as agents of discontent in three European countries where power has eluded them. He shows how space has been opened up for anti-establishment movements in Europe due to the salience of previously secondary issues (at least in most places): culture and ethnicity; economic hardship; and European integration. In the Netherlands, Poland and Great Britain, his case-study countries, populism has shaken but not profoundly altered the political environment. Nevertheless, he believes the discontent is an indication of the poor health of democracy. Along with others, he sees openings for populist politics that were previously blocked when the class, religious and civic dimensions of politics were strong in perhaps most European democracies. In the first part of his book, he explores the shifting priorities of the literature and offers a useful typology of populism, as well as a survey of performances in different parts of Europe that is bound to be helpful to students.

The relationship of the people to populism is a central feature of Carlos de la Torre's theoretically insightful edited volume. Many of the contributors explore and amplify debates about who the people are, and who speaks on their behalf, as well as their relationship with democratic ideals. Liberals are usually nervous about invoking a part of the people in the name of the whole. Populists, by contrast, view the people as a unified, unchanging and unbounded entity.

'The people' of populism is conceived as inherently virtuous; its voice is irrefutable: 'All institutions need to be re-created in order to bring about the people's redemption' (de la Torre pp. 9–10). Andrew Arato in the first chapter presents an explicit critique of

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the influential theorist Ernesto Laclau for defending the populists' right to make sweeping changes to the democratic order in the name of a people representing power and justice. He believes Laclau was influenced not only by Rousseau's 'general will' but by the far-rightist political scientist Carl Schmitt's advocacy of sovereign dictatorship. Schmitt advocated a plebiscitary dictatorship in which power is invested in a group or a single figure, leading to the outcome of 'the people-as-one'. Obviously, the popular will has a higher efficacy for radical populists than representative mechanisms and institutions since it is far easier to interpret and manage.

Two chapters by Benjamin Arditi proclaim the emancipatory potential of populist breakthroughs. They dwell on the ability of 'the people' to speak during the events that propel populists to power but it is left to others, such as Danielle Resnick in her chapter on Africa, to expose the shortcomings of ruling populists. Arguably, this exercise ought to have been attempted in relation to Latin America. It is the dominant regional case-study in de la Torre's volume, but much of the emphasis is on the discourse and mobilization techniques of rulers rather than their propensity for restoring absolutist rule with a deceptive radical veneer.

At least in a thoughtful theoretical chapter, Pauline Ochoa Espejo illustrates the danger of the myth of revolutionary overhaul of all institutions in the name of the people. Leader-driven mobilization often confounds the emancipatory hopes of true believers. New mechanisms supposedly delivering popular power grow into cartels enabling insiders to gorge on the fruits of the revolution. This increasingly appears to be the reality behind the populist discourse inaugurated by the late Hugo Chavez in Venezuela, which is analysed in a chapter by Margarita Lopez Maya.

In their struggle with populism, Espejo argues that liberals can be hampered by the way they construct 'the people'. They have a self-limiting perspective: they view the people as indeterminate, accept the view that the will of the people can and will change, and for this reason 'their appeal to the people will be fallible, temporary, and incomplete' (de la Torre, p. 9).

Recently, the influential historian Simon Schama bemoaned the introverted elitism of much of contemporary liberalism: 'As long as liberal politics is seen as nothing more than a contest for fine-tuning the status quo, it will continue to be shaken by "surprises". The urgent task for those who want to deny the puritans and the utopians victory is not just to find more eloquent standard bearers, it is to write something meaningful about the future on the standard and to write it in letters of fire'.

In Europe, the beached liberal whale is the European Union. It increasingly appears to be an elitist endeavour, catering for a restricted set of players on the pro-capitalist centre-right of politics and among cosmopolitan and alternative lifestyle groups on the left. These studies were completed too soon to assess the upsurge of left-wing populism arising from the EU's greatest crisis to date: the deep economic downturn resulting from the mishandling of the single currency. Anti-capitalist populism has thrived during the lengthy crisis in the eurozone in southern Europe—Spain and Greece being notable examples. Denunciations of protected oligarchies and the transnational business elite have struck a powerful chord. But there is still a readiness to support a relaunched but 'progressive' European Union committed to redistribution and neutral in its international alignments.

Changing economic conditions are not explored in depth in these volumes. If they had been, perhaps the dawn of a possible new class, the precariat, might have been acknowledged. It is based on flexible and insecure employment, transiency, lack of control over time, over-qualification and uncertainty. It is recruited from the traditional working class,

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from new minorities—and especially from the new youthful well-educated who cannot find stable work.

Studies are likely to appear that will map the contours of European left-wing populism, perhaps in ways that Albertazzi and McDonnell have already done in their appraisal of its recent right-wing forms. The Schweizerische Volkspartei in Switzerland, along with two Italian parties, the Popolo della Libertà and the Lega Nord, form the core of a comparative case-study in which the authors closely assess the perspective of grassroots supporters. In the first two of these parties they find a close engagement between grassroots members and elected representatives. This enables leaders to retain the loyalties of the base even when they have to downplay their ambitions while in, or close to, government. The view of earlier studies indicating populist parties to be brittle and prone to lose credibility when in office needs to be revised, it is argued, in light of the ability of all three to cope with the exit of founder–leaders, splits and electoral reverses. Political efficacy is within the reach of these populists and they offer lessons to floundering mainstream parties about how to socialize members. This study is refreshing because it is based on innovative fieldwork and goes beyond the clichés which still shape appraisals of European populism in parts of the media and much of academia.

In part two of de la Torre's edited volume, one of the empirical case-studies compares the Front National in France with three insignificant groupings in Britain, Italy and Catalonia which have been superseded by the Five Star movement in Italy and by UKIP in Britain, both of which can be more accurately described as nationalist and anti-establishment than as New Right. A chapter on the Tea Party movement in the US by George Michael shows that this enduring democratic polity is not immune to populist eruptions. The Tea Party emerged against a background of sweeping demographic changes, severe disruption of the economy and the decline of centrism in politics. Previous bursts of US populism were remarkably infrequent but the author warns that populism could become endemic due to economic turmoil and the government's shortcomings. The identification of numerous citizens with a real estate tycoon, Donald Trump, and his contempt for the American establishment, shows that an ossified political elite can, in North America, provoke a reaction similar to that already seen in many parts of Europe.

One of the concluding thoughts offered by Cas Mudde in this volume is to dwell on the impact of populism outside politics. In western Europe, a social culture which defends left populist ideas advocating an abolition of borders and radically different approaches to lifestyles and the distribution of resources is increasingly visible. It is influenced by large parts of the media, academia and the public sector, and already exerts a powerful hold over society. In Scotland, the rise of a popular culture in which comedians, demagogic online commentators and previously fringe celebrities amass a large following by using online media to assail a pro-British establishment may account for much of the recent success of political separatists.

Instead of searching for the Holy Grail of a general theory, Mudde suggests that it is more advisable to try to explain 'certain periods, regional forms, or ideological types of populism' (de la Torre, p. 447). It is to be hoped that the salience of populism will stimulate academic works which explore the phenomenon from the bottom up, as these three books variously do, rather than confine themselves to superficial judgements based on dated assumptions.

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Conflict, security and defence

The British nuclear experience: the role of beliefs, culture, and identity. By John Baylis and Kristan Stoddart. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2015. 299pp. £49.50. ISBN 978 0 19870 202 3. Available as e-book.

Facing down the Soviet Union: Britain, the USA, NATO and nuclear weapons, 1976–83. By Kristan Stoddart. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. 2014. 323pp. £60.00. ISBN 978 1 13744 031 0. Available as e-book.

These two books are welcome additions to the growing literature on the United Kingdom and nuclear weapons which has started to emerge in recent years, in a manner similar to the late 1980s and early 1990s when a wave of volumes mainly based on doctoral theses built on the archives that were becoming available, released under the 30-year rule. This new wave is largely led by established scholars and again draws on the now increasingly publicly available archives and the willingness of those who participated in the programmes to share their experiences.

The publication of these two works is also timely given the government's plans to obtain approval from the House of Commons for the acquisition of a new generation of ballistic missile-carrying submarines. In an ideal world, it would be nice to think that both books would be read by the MPs before they voted so that they would at least have some appreciation of why successive British governments first sought to develop a nuclear capability and then put significant effort into maintaining the British nuclear deterrent through a series of renewals. Instead, one suspects the debate will remain fairly shallow and full of inaccuracies, if the constantly bandied figure of £100 billion for cost is anything to go by. Moreover, within NATO, the issue of the modernization of its nuclear systems is also the subject of debate. Both works under review, but particularly Stoddart's single-authored book, provide a full account of the debates within the British government about an earlier modernization that resulted in the deployment of US ground-launched cruise missiles to the United Kingdom and elsewhere in western Europe in the 1980s.

Both books are well written, theoretically grounded and provide new insights into our understanding of the UK's nuclear history and should be read by those interested in this subject area, in the US–UK relationship, and British defence policy more generally and by those analysing why states retain nuclear capabilities. The authors remind us that the view of successive British governments has been far more nuanced than one simply based on deterring the Soviet Union, and that attaining and retaining a nuclear capability has become part of the country's self-image.

In many ways, Baylis and Stoddart, in their jointly authored book, provide a much needed update to Lawrence Freedman's classic *Britain and nuclear weapons* (Macmillan, 1980), filling in the most recent 35 years. However, *The British nuclear experience* is able to do much more than this, thanks to the authors' use of the archives and oral histories that are now publicly available, while grounding the book in 35 years of additional theoretical scholarship and in particular the work on strategic culture by scholars such as Jack Snyder and Richard Ned Lebow. The volume is divided into ten main chapters plus an introduction and conclusion. They chart the history of the British nuclear experience, with the last chapter covering Trident replacement and renewal from New Labour to the subsequent coalition government. It is also able to dispel a number of myths and inaccuracies that we have seen in some of the earlier works on British defence policy, particularly surrounding the 1952 Defence Policy and Global Strategy Paper.

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Kristan Stoddart's *Facing down the Soviet Union: Britain, the USA, NATO and nuclear weapons, 1976–83* is the third volume in his work on British nuclear history; the others were *Losing an empire and finding a role: Britain, the USA, NATO and nuclear weapons, 1964–70* in 2012 and *The sword and the shield: Britain, America, NATO and nuclear weapons, 1970–76* in 2014. All three follow on from Richard Moore's *Nuclear illusion, nuclear reality: Britain, the United States and nuclear weapons, 1958–64* (Palgrave, 2010) and provide a detailed history from 1958 to 1983. In this volume, Stoddart charts three major elements of the UK's nuclear history: the development of the Chevaline warhead for the Polaris fleet, the Polaris replacement decision taken by the Thatcher government (1980 for the C-4 variant and then 1980 for the switch to the D-5 system) and the UK's involvement in NATO's Theatre Nuclear Force debate that led to the eventual deployment of US ground-launched cruise missiles in the United Kingdom and the resurgence of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Stoddart unpacks the complexities of the Chevaline programme, shows how knowledge of the programme's existence was hidden from view throughout the Labour governments of Wilson and Callaghan in the 1970s, only to be announced by the new Conservative Defence Secretary in 1980. This programme, like a number of early parts of the UK's nuclear story, reveals both remarkable achievements built on a relatively small capacity as well as mistakes and errors, and how the retention of a nuclear capability was at times tenuous. Stoddart also reveals the inner debates within the nuclear targeteers and how developments in the Soviet antiballistic missile capability resulted in the temporary abandonment of the so-called 'Moscow Criteria' for a number of years in the late 1970s and early 1980s, until the Chevaline warhead was deployed.

Thus, for those interested in the British nuclear programme and questions of nuclear replacement both by the United Kingdom and by NATO, these books are must-reads and should be added to your Amazon wish lists for Christmas.

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The political impossibility of modern counterinsurgency: strategic problems, puzzles and paradoxes. By M. L. R. Smith and David Martin Jones. New York: Columbia University Press. 2015. 262pp. Index. £30.95. ISBN 978 0 23153 912 8. Available as e-book.

The political impossibility of modern counterinsurgency is an assault by the followers of Clausewitz on COINdinistas—the advocates of counter-insurgency theory. Indeed, M. L. R. Smith and David Martin Jones don't think that 'counter-insurgency' is a useful categorization of warfare at all: 'Theoretically and logically, irregular war does not exist' (p. 156). For the Clausewitzians, there is just one relevant category and that is war.

This is not just about the future of war and the best approach to dealing with enemies, but it also represents a serious split in King's College London's War Studies department. The KCL 'Insurgency Group' was 'reviewing UK army Countering Insurgency' in June 2007 when the COINdinistas, notably John Mackinlay, author of *The insurgent archipelago* (Hurst, 2009), clashed with Smith, who argued that the 'denial of Clausewitz facilitated the avoidance of politics and the recourse to technique in its place' (p. 105).

Smith and Jones make some telling criticisms of the over-generalized claims of the COINdinistas and their cooking-style manuals for success. They are also critical of COIN's 'grievance-settling', materialist, 'hearts and minds' approach that, to them, looks like 'appeasement' of the enemy and encourages violence. All wars are unique and, therefore, COIN manuals cannot account for their diversity or avoid consideration of the political goals that are being pursued. This leads COINdinistas to promote tactics as strategy, rather than considering the political goals for which a war is being fought.

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Ironically, Smith and Jones replace over-generalized COIN theory with over-generalized strategic theory. The strategic approach simplifies the world using analogies: war is the struggle between two wrestlers locked in a mutual grip (p. 159)—as though a state is a single rational actor; escalation is like a ladder (p. 160)—implying equally spaced escalation. It also seems to be assumed that the insurgent is the 'weaker side' (p. 161) even though we know that insurgents or revolutionaries do sometimes win against 'materially stronger' adversaries (p. 162).

The assumption that the 'more powerful' can crush its opponent is tautological. Identifying who is 'more powerful' is rather more difficult and, of course, we might identify examples when the more 'powerful side' failed. The strategic theorist will then claim that if the 'powerful side' failed then it couldn't have been the most powerful. The danger of this assertion is that it encourages states to assume that they can simply choose to defeat their enemy through escalation and brutality. The only 'problem' in a liberal democratic state is 'soft' public opinion and, perhaps as a result, 'weak', 'politically correct' politicians who will not accept the military necessity for brutality and escalation. This means that politicians are effectively 'stabbing the military in the back' by not demonstrating and, therefore, failing to communicate the 'political will' necessary to defeat the enemy. It is then claimed, for example, that in Northern Ireland the British government 'never went down the road of an Argentine-style dirty war' (p. 167) although these are 'differences in degree rather than in kind' (p. 170). Britain's 'dirty war' in Northern Ireland may not have been on the scale of Argentina, but some might think that the phrase 'dirty war' does capture the use of internment without trial, 'Bloody Sunday', torture, shoot to kill and collusion. Smith and Jones do cite Huw Bennett's outstanding work, which suggests that in Kenya, Northern Ireland and Iraq the British military committed atrocities and were not prosecuted for breaking the law (p. 136).

Smith and Jones assert the power of the state to crush opposition, yet we are not told what level of escalation is necessary for 'victory'. The danger is that advocates of repression and escalation can always claim that it hasn't been applied to a high enough level or for long enough. Strategic theory implies that the state can out-escalate the weaker insurgent although, at the same time, 'the actor cannot know the full consequences of his [*sic*] action' (p. 161). The 'lesson' is: 'Northern Ireland demonstrates that in the end the reciprocal act of escalation in irregular wars is likely to benefit the more powerful actor, even if that actor is theoretically restrained by a liberal ethical value system. Sufficiently determined, it has the capacity to recontain any conflict with a lesser actor to a level of its choosing' (pp. 172–3). But in 1972, the IRA probably saw itself as the 'stronger side' because it viewed the conflict as a 'colonial' one from which Britain would withdraw as it had from the rest of empire. During the period of 1974–6 the Labour government did indeed seriously consider withdrawing from Northern Ireland because the conflict appeared to be spiralling out of control. This was *after* the Northern Ireland escalation or 'surge', an 'overwhelming exercise in hard power' in 1972 (p. 171). There is little evidence presented to support Smith and Jones's assertion that the IRA's campaign 'withered towards a slow military defeat' in the early nineties.

For Clausewitzians who emphasize the role of politics, there is little understanding or weight given in this book to politics and 'soft power' in managing conflict. Smith and Jones claim that the primary objective of strategy must be to maintain liberal democracy, but this sits uneasily, to say the least, with their advocacy of 'hard power', escalation and 'dirty war'.

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Political economy, economics and development

The future of the euro. Edited by Matthias Matthijs and Mark Blyth. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. 2015. 339pp. £57.60. ISBN 978 0 19023 323 5. Available as e-book.

This is quite simply the best edited book that I have read in a long time. Indeed, it is a vindication of the very merits of edited books, which have lately fallen out of favour with many academics on the grounds—for which there is no evidence—that they do not cut the mustard in the world of formalized research assessment. However, what Matthias Matthijs and Mark Blyth have done here shows exactly how to deploy this genre to excellent effect. What you do is assemble the very best analysts of the chosen issue, set them clear questions that fit into a coherent intellectual agenda, discuss their initial papers at a workshop that explicitly encourages contributors to engage with each other's arguments, and then firmly but judiciously edit the revised versions into a whole that is inevitably then greater than the sum of the constituent parts. The outcome is the production of a better book than any of the editors or contributors could have hoped to write on their own.

It is fortunate, too, that the editors and contributors have taken as their core question the future of the euro, because the crisis of the new European single currency has indeed threatened (and may still threaten) to bring down the whole edifice of postwar European integration, with the gravest of consequences. Europe is in trouble and we need to understand what has happened and what our options are. Matthijs and Blyth are sage guides. They have divided their book into three distinct but subtly interrelated sections. The first poses 'the euro problem' and argues that 'the currency's lack of "embeddedness" in truly supranational European financial, fiscal, and governance institutions was a significant omission that would eventually come to a head', as we know it did in 2010–12. The second section considers 'the euro experience' and tells the story of Europe's economic divergence (as opposed to the proclaimed likely economic convergence) by reference in turn to Germany, France, Italy and Spain, with plenty of passing references also to Greece. Finally, the third section turns to 'the euro future' and assesses it from different perspectives: through the politics of its reluctant German leader; through the capacity of the European Union as a whole to build something better out of crisis, as many of its advocates and analysts claim it has always been able to do; and through the lens of the wider global political economy wherein the euro acts as a global reserve currency.

Every chapter in the book is worth reading and adopts, to the editors' credit, the same careful, judicious and thoughtful tone. I had my favourites, as every reader will, but I will not single out any chapter, because (unlike many edited books) there are no duds at all. Many of the chapters also cross-reference each other in clever ways, which again adds to the sense that we are being presented with a considered and coherent overall argument about the political economy of the euro by a group of like-minded observers.

The book concludes with an ambitious summary chapter written by Matthijs and Blyth themselves. In it, they seek to assess 'possible futures, risks, and uncertainties' relating to the euro and, in so doing, they produce rich food for thought. They argue that, 'without developing a political process to legitimately embed its economic and financial institutions', the future of the euro will be 'fragile at best'. They affirm that Europe knows which institutions need to be built; that there are no technocratic, but only political, solutions; and that the major current risks derive from decisions to give priority to national-level austerity strategies over the restoration of eurozone growth. They assert, intriguingly, that the key

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to the actual future that will unfold depends, above all, on how 'the timing of politics outside Germany' interacts with 'the timing of German politics'. Lastly, they suggest that the eurozone 'will gradually take over the EU in institutional importance' and note that this will have significant consequences for 'euro-outs' like Sweden, Denmark and of course Britain.

On this note I should perhaps mention a final thought that struck me again and again as I devoured this fine book: namely, just how trivial and superficial, and in many ways irrelevant, is the standard British debate about the country's role in or out of the EU when compared to the critical, indeed existential, issues around the euro with which the leaders of Germany, France, Spain, Italy and others have been grappling. It is no wonder that David Cameron struggles even to get into the diaries of these leaders as he seeks to pursue his narrow little agenda of renegotiation.

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Structural change and industrial development in the BRICS. Edited by Wim Naudé, Adam Szirmai and Nobuya Haraguchi. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2015. 528pp. £65.00. ISBN 978 0 19872 507 7.

In the relatively short period since Jim O'Neill of Goldman Sachs coined the term BRICs in 2001, Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (which was invited to join the group in 2010) have become a crucial reference in the debate on economic development, global governance and international security. This book makes an important contribution to our understanding of the role of structural changes in first sustaining the emergence of the BRICS economies (expressed in terms of their parts of global GDP, global manufactured value added and global manufactured exports) and then making them resilient enough to weather the global economic crises.

Structural change and industrial development in the BRICS examines the emergence of the BRICS over the past three decades, identifies both differences and commonalities, and derives lessons for other industrializing countries. Six country studies (two on China) provide a detailed analysis of the long-term experiences of each of the countries. A set of thematic studies focus on specific topics such as global value chains; the role of transnational corporations in the food chain; the role of foreign versus domestic investment and of domestic versus foreign demand in economic growth; and the diffusion of environmental energy technology.

Three chapters are of particular interest. Gaaitzen de Vries and co-authors 'deconstruct' the BRICs (without South Africa in this case), to show the linkages between structural transformation and aggregate productivity growth. Their contribution is derived from a new database that provides trends in value added and employment at a detailed 35-sector level. Structural decomposition analysis suggests that reallocation of labour across sectors is contributing to aggregate productivity growth in China, India and Russia, whereas in Brazil it is not. However, this result does not apply when a distinction is made between formal and informal activities within sectors. In Brazil, increasing formalization since 2000 appears to be growth-enhancing, while in India the increase in informality after the reforms has reduced growth.

Justin Lin—possibly China's best-known economist and a former Chief Economist of the World Bank—analyses the role of industrial upgrading in reducing poverty in China. He and Miaojie Yu argue that a 'dual-track' strategy has allowed successful economic reforms. On the one hand, the government provided transitional protection and subsidies to mature

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sectors and state-owned enterprises as a way of maintaining stability. On the other hand, it adopted growth identification and facilitation to support entry to sectors, consistent with a comparative advantage strategy to achieve dynamic growth. This dual-track reform strategy has led to two important changes. One is the reform of micro-management institutions, which aims to provide more incentives for workers and foster production efficiency. As a result, China has successfully upgraded its industrial structure in accordance with the dynamic evolution of its comparative advantages. Lin's chapter is also highly relevant for the debate on appropriate development strategies in Africa, which in theory can diversify through either services, as the West has been pushing it to do for the past two decades, or manufacturing and agriculture, as China is helping many African countries to do. This explains the boom in Chinese-invested Export Processing Zones (EPZs) in Africa.

Renato Perim Colistete and Dante Mendes Aldrighi take a long-term perspective on industrial growth and structural change in Brazil. Compared to the other BRICS, the South American giant started its transformation from a primary export economy (dominated by coffee) much earlier, already in the late nineteenth century. Employing new data and estimates, the authors also identify a sharp break with the earlier period of high output and productivity growth in Brazil's manufacturing industry before the 1980s, that is much earlier than for fellow large emerging economies (at least outside Latin America). This reveals an asynchrony with respect to China in particular, where the highly successful process of learning and technological advance by manufacturing firms began in the 1990s, when Brazil's productivity growth started declining and eventually stagnating.

Finally, this collection is also a timely contribution to the analysis of the BRICS' current difficulties: against the background of their recent development record, are they now hitting the ceiling of their long-run potential, or simply going through a transitory adjustment? From this point of view, the 2014–15 slowdown is a useful reminder that the distortions in the factor and product markets have become significant hurdles for sustainable growth, in China no less than in the other BRICS.

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Hall of mirrors: the Great Depression, the Great Recession, and the uses—and misuses—of history. By Barry Eichengreen. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2015. 512pp. £15.00. ISBN 978 0 19939 200 1. Available as e-book.

Charles Kindleberger once said that 'economics is a countercyclical industry that attracts adherents when times are troubled'. He was right. Today, to say that there are parallels between the Great Recession of 2008–9 and the Great Depression of 1929–33 is commonplace. This book is the first to go beyond this, and offer a systematic comparative analysis of the two crises. *Hall of mirrors* comprises 26 chapters and four parts: 'The best of times', 'The worst of times', 'Toward better times' and 'Avoiding the next time'. It is a brilliantly conceived dual-track account, full of wit and wisdom.

Barry Eichengreen shows that the 'lessons' of the Great Depression shaped how policymakers perceived and responded to the Great Recession, and that the latter will reshape how we see the former—hence the 'mirrors' in the title. Eichengreen follows the American historian H. Morse Stephens in arguing that just as every generation *writes* its own history, every generation *remembers* its own history: 'For many members of the FOMC [the Federal Open Market Committee] in 2008 the influential history was that of high inflation some thirty years earlier, that is, in their own lifetime, rather than the more distant echoes of a Depression-era past. For members of Congress, the relevant history was of recent decades

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characterized by chronic budget deficits, not of a Depression-era crisis when additional government spending could have been part of the solution and not the problem' (p. 190).

Both the breadth and depth of Eichengreen's research are impressive. Whether it is the house bubble in Florida in the 1920s or in Spain in the 2000s, the gold standard in the 1930s or the euro in the 2010s, not a single relevant story is left out. The book is full of anecdotes and biographical accounts. Some 300 *dramatis personae*, from bankers to milkmen (p. 108), are called on stage: from Karamanlis to Keynes, Mellon to Merkel, and Obama to Roosevelt. Roosevelt stuck to the principle of balanced budget until he publicly recognized in Pittsburgh, on 1 October 1936, that 'we accepted the final responsibility of Government, after all else had failed, to spend money when no one else had money left to spend' (p. 327). He was inconsistent, perhaps, but experimented unremittingly, and one cannot help but be impressed by the imaginative effort deployed by his Brain Trust. The lesson to be learned is that success belongs to those who are quick, lucky and intelligent enough to understand (and convince others) that when conditions change, policies should do so too. Readers should also look out for Takahashi Korekiyo, the Japanese finance minister who, in 1932, proposed that 'the government and central bank would be working in harness to actively bring deflation and depression to an end' (p. 257). Pages on Hitler also challenge received wisdom (pp. 262–4).

However, Eichengreen dismisses simplistic narratives. Yes, there are parallels between the two crises, but also differences. For instance, in the 2000s the process of securitization 'achieved a scale and complexity not seen before' (p. 76). Yes, some of the lessons of the 1930s were learned, and this prevented the worst. But, ironically, having avoided another Great Depression, leaders (and those with vested interests) could declare the emergency over and call for an early return to normal policies.

Those interested in European affairs will find the account of US responses to the crisis mirrored there. In 2012, Mario Draghi, the president of the European Central Bank (ECB), announced that the ECB was ready to do whatever was needed, but he never made (or could make) an open-ended commitment to keep interest rates low and continue security purchases until the economy healed, as Bernanke's Federal Reserve did. If the US recovery was disappointing, the EU was stuck. Chapters 24–26 show how European leaders have been 'out of touch with reality' (p. 351). Jean-Claude Trichet, ECB president until 2011, raised rates when he should have lowered them. Merkel and Sarkozy's walk on the beach in Deauville in 2010 was destructive: 'the unqualified declaration that there would be a restructuring whenever a country got into trouble sounded alarm bells for investors. Yields on Irish, Spanish, and Portuguese bonds shot up … Had they purposely set out to create a fiscal and financial crisis they could not have done a better job' (p. 351). The Troika did no better in Greece; Draghi would do *just enough* to keep the euro alive. To do more would have meant relieving pressure on governments committed to reforms—reforms whose aim was to increase export competitiveness; the fall in domestic demand was forgotten. The eurozone is 'impossible to dismantle and equally impossible to complete' (p. 376).

The book is replete with masterful observations. Here are three: 'The government can step up. It can lend when banks don't. It can substitute its spending for that of household and firms. It can provide liquidity without risking inflation given the slack in the economy. It can run budget deficits without creating debt problems, given the low interest rates prevailing in subdued economic conditions' (p. 6); 'a balanced analysis would have observed that for every reckless borrower there is a reckless lender' (p. 385); 'the disappointing recovery from the crisis reflected not just headwinds from deleveraging, but also a long period of underinvestment in infrastructure, research, and education' (p. 386). The

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introduction and the conclusion should be bound together and dropped from airplanes on European capitals. Even then, eyes to see and ears to hear would still be needed.

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Energy, environment and global health

Networks in contention: the divisive politics of climate change. By Jennifer Hadden. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2015. 222pp. Index. £54.95. ISBN 978 1 10708 958 7.

Non-state actors such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and activist networks have played an important part in international environmental negotiations for some years. In this clearly written, research-led book, Jennifer Hadden analyses how different types of activists and different networks have sought to influence climate change politics and each other. Her book focuses especially on the 2009 Copenhagen Climate Change Conference, which had aimed to provide a successor agreement to the Kyoto Protocol. The conference failed in this objective, but it attracted the largest number of political protests since climate change conferences began (p. 144).

Hadden analyses these contentious politics by discussing, in cognitive fashion, the different positions and tactics of networks. She compares two broad theories: that organizational behaviour responds to opportunities (based on political process theories), and that tactics reflect an organization's ideology, structure and resources (based on organizational theories) (p. 5). She argues that both theories matter, but her key contribution is the observation that 'organizational decision-making is fundamentally relational: it depends on the actions of other organizations working in the same field' (p. 64). From this position, she argues that 'organizations are more likely to adopt contentious forms of action when their peers have already done so' (p. 64), but also that 'we cannot simply study civil society participation in the UNFCCC [the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change] as if the institution were the target of a single coordinated campaign' (p. 168).

To make this point, Hadden presents detailed research on two complementary networks within climate change activism, based on interviews and social network analysis (which shows the connections and shared values of different groups and activists like a topological map) (pp. 63–88). She looks especially at two complementary networks. The Climate Action Network (CAN) is a longstanding and 'conventional' (p. 89) activist network fighting to achieve strong commitments under the UNFCCC by giving activists a 'single voice' (p. 93). In contrast, the coalition called Climate Justice Now! (CJN) includes NGOs such as Friends of the Earth, ActionAid Asia and Carbon Trade Watch, which seek to challenge various aspects of climate change politics, including some of the proposed solutions to climate change such as carbon trading (p. 116).

These networks differ in both their style and their objectives. CAN focuses largely on influencing current negotiations, for example by preferring to discuss 'equity' (or fair targets) to guide the reduction of greenhouse gases (p. 155). CJN, on the other hand, uses the word 'justice' to include various aspects of social and economic inequality (p. 158), while adopting principles of public protest and disruption used during the anti-World Trade Organization protests in Seattle in 1999 (p. 122). Although Hadden does not say this, one can imagine CAN members in suits and carrying smart phones and CJN activists sporting beards and political T-shirts.

The book argues that the rise of the justice activists at Copenhagen led to discussions about climate change which took into account wider questions about global political and economic structures (p. 151). CAN also reformed its own activities and structure,

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for example increasing its presence in developing countries, appointing a director from the Middle East and forming a new committee to consider equity. In the Warsaw climate change meeting in 2013, CAN members also collaborated in a group walkout from the negotiations to demonstrate their frustration with the lack of progress made (p. 161).

Yet Hadden also argues that the climate justice activists became more harmonized in their outlook and moderate in their tactics as a result of greater collaboration and deliberation between different groups (pp. 137–8). In some cases, this trend became stronger as climate justice groups increasingly professionalized, although some large NGOs such as Friends of the Earth have always adopted a contentious approach (p. 139). But Hadden also notes that some activists have now accepted that the UNFCCC might never furnish a solution—they are learning from environmental justice networks to focus on deeper social transformations in order to change consumption and other behaviours.

Hadden's conclusion is that the relationships between organizations—rather than their beliefs or tactics—control how networks contest and merge (p. 9). She also argues that the UNFCCC can only benefit from increasing public participation in negotiations and allowing NGOs access to official documents—although mutually agreed rules to limit activism may be necessary (pp. 170–71). Curiously, though, she does not discuss whether these same proposals should relate to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (the scientific body advising the climate change negotiations).

This scholarly work will be of interest to students and specialists in environmental politics and climate change and to analysts of social movements.

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Europe*

Havel: a life. By Michael Zantovsky. London: Atlantic Books. 2014. 543pp. £19.80. ISBN 978 0 85789 852 4. Available as e-book.

A political biographer is presented with a tricky task. We live our lives into the future, but biographies are written as the past. To live means to embrace the unknown, yet to tell somebody's life amounts to recounting the known and uncovering what is hidden. Even four years after his death, Vaclav Havel remains an enigma. How could a declared 'enemy of the people' become the people's beloved president? What should we make of Havel, the moralist, as distinct from Havel, the political leader? Can the two ever be reconciled?

This is the third major study of Havel's life in English. The lesser-known *Vaclav Havel: civic responsibility in the postmodern age* (James F. Pontuso, Rowman & Littlefield, 2004) is not mentioned in the current book, which is a pity because it complements it very well, focused as it is on Havel's political philosophy developed both in his essays and in his plays. By contrast, John Keane's bestselling *Vaclav Havel: a political tragedy in six acts* (Bloomsbury, 1999) presents Havel as a power-hungry manipulator, rather than a philosopher king eschewing all trappings of power. Keane wanted his Shakespearean story to be spectacular and complete. In his last chapter, he conjured Havel's state funeral more than ten years before Havel died—an artistic device of questionable value and bad moral taste, particularly considering that Havel was diagnosed with lung cancer in 1996. Michael Zantovsky does a far better job of dealing with Havel's life as it was—warts and all (demolishing Keane's account in passing, in numerous footnotes). And what a life it was! From a privileged childhood to an outcast who, defying all odds and lacking formal education, became a hugely successful

* See also Matthias Matthijs and Mark Blyth, *The future of the euro*, pp. 1426–7.

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playwright, an effective dissident leader and the first democratically elected president of post-communist Czechoslovakia. His sudden, fairy tale-like elevation to power may have been unexpected, but as Zantovsky compellingly shows, Havel was not an accidental president. His stubborn determination to 'repair the world' repeatedly forced Havel to accept leadership positions—first as a dissident, later as a president.

While living our lives we do not have the wisdom of a biographer, yet we ought to be living as if we did. This is the premise of Havel's quasi-religious concept of the 'memory of being', the idea that it is impossible to escape responsibility for all our actions, which resulted in his conviction about the necessity to 'live in truth'. 'Perfect, though, Havel was not' (p. 405). The high moral demands that he placed on himself—and on others—were at times impossible to meet. Zantovsky, who for many years was Havel's close collaborator and friend, exposed more of Havel's many shortcomings than Keane ever could, but has done it in a way that is both respectful and enlightening. He doesn't sensationalize. The result is a marvellous book about a truly remarkable life, which is nevertheless not free of contradictions. Havel was a hugely successful playwright, but not all his plays were great; an original political philosopher, yet not all his insights were profound; and an admirable politician, though not all his political decisions and judgements were right. We can learn from Havel about love and marriage, though he was anything but a good husband, and we can learn a great deal about politics, though Havel had often displayed a remarkable lack of political acumen. A vignette about Havel taking up chess during one of his many imprisonments in communist Czechoslovakia is as endearing as it is damning: 'He had the wrong temperament for the game, approaching it as a creative artist with a preconceived plan, but without fully taking into account his opponent's moves. He later exhibited a similar tendency in politics, much to his own disadvantage' (p. 234).

To be sure, no politician could have avoided mistakes in the fluid period of post-communist transition, which Havel decisively shaped. But some missteps stand out as stemming from a misguided attitude to politics, driven primarily by values and disregarding practical constraints. More than once, Havel had to observe how noble intentions may lead to undesirable outcomes. However hard he tried, for example, his attempts to preserve the unity of the Czechoslovak state proved ineffective. Havel's decision to discontinue arms exports, as acknowledged by Zantovsky, alienated a significant proportion of the Slovak electorate, since the armament industry was mostly based in the Slovak Republic. This in turn strengthened the hand of the populist leader there, Vladimir Meciar, who could not reach an agreement with his Czech counterpart, Vaclav Klaus, to maintain Czechoslovak unity. Havel resigned. What Zantovsky omits to mention is the fact that Havel vowed not to rule over a divided republic and maintained that he was not interested in merely a ceremonial role. In the end though he accepted both and served as Czech president with significantly reduced powers for ten years (too long, I believe).

It is striking how much more balanced and convincing the first half of the book is, which is based on meticulous research rather than lived experience. Around 1989, Zantovsky enters the scene first as Havel's active supporter (p. 285), and then as his spokesman, press secretary and adviser. This makes the ensuing accounts of Havel's turbulent life more exciting, but less accurate. Such observations can be dismissed as quibbles, but they raise a bigger question about the treacherous nature of biography written by a participant-observer. Still, this is an inspirational book about a great life, messy as it was. As Havel wrote in one of his plays: 'If we have to die, why cannot we at least first live?' (p. 271).

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Institutional design and party government in post-communist Europe. By Csaba Nikolenyi. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2014. 240pp. £50.00. ISBN 978 0 19967 530 2. Available as e-book.

Institutions matter. They shape and guide the choices of political actors, providing incentives to follow particular strategies and disincentives to follow others. The carefully constructed analysis provided by Csaba Nikolenyi in *Institutional design and party government in post-communist Europe* highlights that 'differences in the arrangement of political institutions systematically explain variations in patterns of multiparty government across the post-communist democracies' (p. 2).

Nikolenyi's monograph has numerous strengths. In addition to guiding readers through the complex and labyrinthine world of electoral systems, coalitions and the rules shaping government formation in central and eastern Europe, the book also offers a systematic analysis of the impact of institutional arrangements in order to examine how and why patterns of multiparty government differ across the region.

Building on notions of 'institutionally designed power dispersion and power concentration' (p. 3), Nikolenyi argues that during the first two post-communist decades, some countries in the region such as Hungary, Bulgaria and Estonia had institutional conditions favourable to power concentration, whereas others such as Latvia, Poland and the Czech Republic did not. The author's statistical analysis largely bears out his expectations on the power of institutional frameworks, although he is careful to point out that it is not always the overall institutional design which matters, but rather certain specific components of the electoral system. Moreover, he acknowledges that 'in some cases institutions are not designed consistently and will, therefore, have unexpected consequences' (p. 58).

The analysis of electoral coalitions is the book's most significant contribution to the study of central and eastern Europe. Electoral coalitions have not been uncommon in the politics of the region and the reasons behind their formation have been largely neglected, apart from some individual case-studies. Nikolenyi finds that 'regardless of their overall institutional design, the states that are characterized by a preponderance of electoral coalitions', i.e. Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania, have 'relatively small electoral districts, a restrictive electoral system and a positive parliamentary government formation rule' (p. 57). In one of the best chapters in the book, Nikolenyi delves deeper into the Hungarian case, showing how what he labels 'the hard constraints of the country's mixed-member electoral system' led to parties in the country developing particular strategies of electoral coalition formation (p. 86).

Nikolenyi does recognize the limitations of an institutional approach in his conclusion. Indeed, institutions do matter, but that observation should provoke us to ask why those institutional choices were made in the first place. *Institutional design and party government* acknowledges the cocktail of factors involved, such as historical memory or pre-communist traditions, the legacy of the communist era, the emulation of foreign models combined with the short-term interests and calculations of political actors in those heady days of 1989–91. But Nikolenyi does not examine these in any systematic way, even though reasons for those choices are particularly important to know given that, as he notes, there has been little change in institutional terms since the fall of the communist regimes.

Moreover, the relative stability of institutional frameworks may assist in testing statistical relationships, but that lack of change in institutional terms is an indicator of the limited power of those factors in explaining the broader development of political parties and party government. Institutional frameworks may be able to explain why some party systems are

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stable and some unstable, but institutional continuity does not explain well why patterns of party politics can change significantly at what are often dubbed 'earthquake' elections. The behaviour of parties, the electoral and governing coalitions formed at those times and the likelihood of their durability owe much to the other side of the equation: not the institutional frameworks, but the political actors who operate within those constraints.

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The Baltic: a history. By Michael North and translated by Kenneth Kronenberg. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. 2015. 448pp. £21.25. ISBN 978 0 67474 410 3. Available as e-book.

With Russia flexing its muscles in the Baltic, the region is in the spotlight again. The Mediterranean's colder, greyer cousin takes centre stage in this history by Michael North, professor and chair of modern history at the University of Greifswald, Germany. Originally published in German in 2011, this translation incorporates newer research. 'There is no such thing as a single Baltic', writes North, whose approach views regions not just as physical places but constructs (p. 2). His book charts how, over the centuries, the Baltic has been 'constantly reinvented and reconstituted', leading up to its emergence as 'a northern Mediterranean' since the end of the Cold War (p. 302).

The ten chapters proceed chronologically, from the tenth century to the present, taking in the fall of communism and the European Union's eastern enlargement of 2004, when Poland and the three Baltic states joined; the cast of Scandinavians, Slavs, Finns and Balts giving way over time to empires and modern nation-states. North's focus is on the connections between them. People, goods and ideas have been crossing the Baltic for centuries. Trade and cultural exchange came first, with politics entering the stage later (p. 327). Connections aside, he devotes considerable space to the internal political and economic systems of the countries surrounding the Baltic Sea. He looks at processes such as agrarian reform, industrialization and the emergence of national identity, and the ways these were often intertwined. He also finds space for interludes on the rise of Baltic seaside resorts and the 'Nordic cult of the summer house'. The result is a useful overview of the history of several countries. At times though, these detailed journeys inland seem like a distraction from the main thread of the book.

Tensions between separateness and togetherness, conquest and cooperation, permeate the book. For instance, during the interwar years, the Baltic region was 'culturally torn between the creation of national cultural identities and the integration of western and central European cultural norms' (p. 245). North touches on efforts to create a 'Baltic League' in the 1920s and on the Council of the Baltic Sea states, founded in 1992. In the final pages, he mentions the emergence of 'a regional consciousness that has been shaped by state and non-state actors', which invokes a common cultural heritage (p. 317). Yet it would have been interesting to read more in this book on cross-border identity and regional self-awareness—or lack of it.

North ends on an optimistic note: the fall of communism created new possibilities for the Baltic, which he suggests could become a 'model region' for others in Europe and beyond. The elephant in the room is Russia. Moscow's increasingly assertive behaviour since the annexation of Crimea in 2014 has prompted concerns not only in Vilnius and Tallinn, but also in Stockholm. North takes a historian's long-term perspective and rightly does not overstate Russia's role in the region over the centuries; as he points out in a chapter on the rise of Russia, the turning point came only at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Yet

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in a book that views regions as 'constructs', there could be more on what military, economic and cultural roles Russia sees for itself, not just in the Baltic states, but in the region more broadly. The book leaves readers with a sense of ever-closer cooperation in the Baltic; the extent to which this includes Russia is left ambiguous.

With its scope and ambition, *The Baltic* is a timely addition to the literature on this region, long overlooked or parcelled up into smaller areas. It joins the ranks of other histories that take a body of water as their starting-point, such as Charles King's *The Black Sea: a history* (Oxford University Press, 2004). Refreshingly, North does not project Cold War divisions between 'East' and 'West' onto the region, and gives the writers and artists of the Baltic states the same consideration as those of Scandinavia. Not just for historians, his book will be of interest to anyone who wants to have a sophisticated conversation about today's Baltic, its hopes and its fears.

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The PKK: coming down from the mountains. By Paul White. London: Zed Books. 2015. 216pp. Index. £70.00. ISBN 978 1 78360 037 3. Available as e-book.

Anyone hoping to understand what is happening in Turkey, Syria and Iraq must have a good grasp of how the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) fits within what is a very complex geopolitical puzzle. Not only is the group at the centre of domestic strife in Turkey—a sad contrast to the once-hopeful negotiations with Turkey's governing Justice and Development Party (AKP) to end the PKK insurgency that has seen more than 40,000 people killed since 1984—the PKK is also a major element of the front-line forces fighting Islamic State in Iraq and Syria and therefore a key player in the high-stakes conflict that has drawn in the United States, Russia, Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Paul White has long been familiar with the region and the PKK. In the 1990s, he visited PKK camps in Lebanon's Beka'a Valley and interviewed PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan (who has been in a Turkish prison since his capture in 1999). *The PKK* is, as White describes, 'a sequel to and an updating of' his *Primitive rebels or revolutionary modernizers?* (Zed Books, 2000).

Despite being apparently well-positioned, White proves a problematic guide. Rather than putting us in touch with the realities and dilemmas the PKK faces (and creates)—a job well done by Aliza Marcus's *Blood and belief* (New York University Press, 2007) and by more specialized monographs such as Ayşegül Aydın and Cem Emrence's *Zones of rebellion* (Cornell University Press, 2015; reviewed in *International Affairs* 91: 4)—White's book is a poorly organized account that would have been even more vulnerable to charges of bias if the writing itself was not so often simply incoherent.

White's prose is prone to question-begging: 'The PKK's ability to transform itself from a classical guerrilla organization inspired by Marxism-Leninism [*sic*] to one seeking a peaceful resolution of Turkey's Kurdish problem rests directly upon the organization's capacity to undertake radical ideological innovation' (p. 126). He presumes to narrate in an omniscient present tense: 'Öcalan is well aware of the dangers that [PKK acting leader Cemil] Bayık potentially poses'. Throughout, the laudatory tone White uses when speaking of Öcalan is left unleavened by critical reflection; in his enthusiasm, White can even lose his grip on grammar. Writing of Öcalan's 'bold scheme' to negotiate a settlement with the Turkish government, White tells us that the 'PKK leader has relentlessly pushed both his own party and the AKP government towards the most hopeful peace initiative of the entire conflict in Turkey. Abdullah Öcalan admits that his party has committed terroristic deeds at times

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in the past, but now does not condone these. It is he, more than any other individual in the PKK, who has been responsible for persisting with unilateral ceasefires, even though these have usually been fruitless' (p. 103).

Readers interested in learning more about how the Turkish government's own interests in bringing the PKK 'down from the mountains' have intersected with the PKK's recent history will find nothing here. Nor is there sufficient treatment of how the Syrian civil war has boosted the PKK, especially in the eyes of the West. White provides no analysis of how violence—against both the Turkish state and rival Kurds—has legitimized and consolidated the PKK's place at the vanguard of Kurdish nationalism. In short, the book fails to deal with the crucial issues of the day.

White rightly highlights what he calls the PKK's 'feminist transformation'. In fact, much more attention should be given to this phenomenon. Still, his analysis is left wanting.

In a particularly disconcerting paragraph—built almost entirely of non-sequiturs—White endorses the view that the PKK's female suicide bombers have represented emancipation from male subordination and argues that the PKK has *in general* provided Kurdish women 'with a "productive" role for the first time', and that because Kurdish women were 'less suspicious to security forces' they were 'attractive to the PKK' for suicide attacks (p. 139).

White's whole enterprise is called into question by his analysis of how the fundamentally transformed civilian–military relationship in Turkey has impacted the PKK and the Kurdish national movement. With apparently no knowledge of, or interest in, the nature of the deeply compromised lawsuits and mass trials by which civilians took control of the perniciously meddlesome army (which had for decades presided over elected officials), White writes that the AKP fell out with its erstwhile ally, a religious movement led by the exiled preacher Fethullah Gülen, over Gülen's common cause with the army (pp. 122–5). The Gülenists and Turkey's 'neutered' generals, who were in fact arch-enemies, would no doubt find it tragicomic—at the pathetic minimum—to find themselves allied with each other in White's account. But these issues are no jokes. White's thinking is muddled and too often he gets his facts wrong. This is an urgent topic which deserves better treatment.

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Russia and Eurasia

Russia and the new world disorder. By Bobo Lo. Baltimore, MD: Brookings Institution Press. 2015. 336pp. £24.95. ISBN 978 0 81572 556 5. Available as e-book.

Bobo Lo's latest book invites an immediate question: what exactly is the 'world disorder' to which the title refers? In Lo's view, disorder comes not so much from the erosion of what was there before—American leadership or Cold War bipolarity—but rather stems from 'the demise of international leadership in general', a lack of consensus around a set of rules or norms other than self-interest (p. 62). In this, Lo rejects notions of the 'end of history', the 'rise of the rest' or the 'post-Washington consensus', suggesting instead a 'Sinatra doctrine': the near universal commitment to 'do one's own thing' (p. 64).

Yet Lo's objective is not just to deliver the latest salvo in an intellectual skirmish over the nature of world order. In fact, after just a few scene-setting observations, the 'disorder' concept quickly recedes into the background, and the book sets out to be what it is, namely a treatise on Russian foreign policy. This is a much narrower but entirely worthy remit, and one in which the author excels.

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The book is careful, sharp and accessibly written. It would make a fine addition to any specialist's library and a good handbook for policy-makers, but it would shine too as a foundational text for an advanced course on Russian foreign policy. In this, the author's painstakingly modular structure is a valuable asset.

In part one of the book, Lo lays out the pillars of Russian foreign policy thinking: historical, cultural, psychological and political factors that provide the impetus and ammunition for Russia's sense of itself as an indispensable Great Power (p. 20). He also outlines the country's deep-rooted foreign policy constraints, especially a 'reactionary reflex' to crushing conservatism, which has been increasingly evident in the persona and policies of Russia's current ruler, Vladimir Putin. Lo's focus on Putin as a foreign policy leader clearly benefits from his own previous work *Vladimir Putin and the evolution of Russian foreign policy* (Blackwell Publishing, 2003), and that of others, notably Fiona Hill and Clifford Gaddy's *Mr. Putin* (Brookings Institution Press, 2015).

In part two, the author launches on a deliberate and compelling review of Russia's diverse regional and global priorities and challenges. Russia's signature foreign policy dilemma, it seems, is to prove its worth as a contributor on the global stage. As Lo puts it: 'simply demanding respect and talking up "indispensability" do not come close to demonstrating relevance' (p. 72). Nor are Russia's putative partners in the BRICS, the Collective Treaty Security Organization or the Eurasian Economic Union much interested in forging 'a consensus of the rest to counterbalance the United States' (p. 79). This leaves Russia in the unenviable position of playing spoiler, seeking to remind others of its prerogatives rather than enticing them with its potential (p. 99).

Lo next turns to the post-Soviet space. His assessment of Moscow's relations with three distinct tiers of post-Soviet neighbours (Ukraine at the top, Tajikistan at the bottom) may be too much for some close observers to swallow. In Lo's view, Russia seeks 'control, not conquest' in the territories of its former empire. Yet official and popular Russian attitudes towards the annexation of Crimea and the war in the Donbas suggest that conquest may be seen as a wholly viable form of control (p. 111). Lo considers this possibility in the book's final chapter, 'Russia and the world in 2030', but concludes that 'the colossal expense and other difficulties of resurrecting an empire suggest that Russia, even under hard authoritarian leadership, might behave with relative restraint in its neighbourhood' (p. 235).

Lo's treatment of Russia's troubled relations with the United States and Europe recalls excellent recent work by Angela Stent in *The limits of partnership* (Princeton University Press, 2014; reviewed in *International Affairs* 91: 1) and Lilia Shevtsova in *Lonely power* (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2010; reviewed in *International Affairs* 87: 2). By far the highlight of this part of the book is Lo's insightful discussion of the Russian role in and thinking about Asia, China especially—which should be no surprise considering he is the author of *Axis of convenience: Moscow, Beijing, and the new geopolitics* (Brookings Institution Press, 2008; reviewed in *International Affairs* 85: 2).

In part three, readers can appreciate Lo's unusually open-minded and creative look at Russia's possible future. He urges us to 'avoid lapsing into a lazy fatalism' about Russia's overwhelming challenges and ingrained conservatism, describing unexpected change as a present imperative, and a proven fact in history (p. 205).

Lo's recommendations for Russian foreign policy follow comfortably from the essentially realist Sinatra doctrine. Moscow, he urges, must abandon its 'preoccupation with form over substance' and focus on effectiveness (p. 209). It should trade in the 'anti agenda' and the 'culture of envy' for a commitment to modernization, starting with Russia's own Siberian and Far Eastern territories (pp. 211 and 229). Treating this space as more than a

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natural resource cache and a security buffer would be the first step towards a genuine Asian pivot (p. 212). In the West, Russia's Ukraine problem can be solved through accommodation—accept Ukraine's European ambitions, but exercise hard power restraint and restore soft power ties—after all, 'Russia would still profit from having a stable neighbour and reliable economic partner' (p. 219).

Lo's approach is plausible and persuasive. Yet its biggest obstacle is likely to be the Kremlin's zero-sum obsession with US power—a legacy, as Lo notes, of Lenin's famous question: 'who wins over whom (kto kogo)?' (p. 176). If Lo is right that the Kremlin harbours an unproductive preoccupation with constraining and balancing Washington, then the Russia-baiting already on display in the 2016 US presidential campaign could become a self-fulfilling prophecy. The Russia that so many westerners are convinced is an inveterate foe trapped in a terminal downward spiral may be exactly the Russia they help to create.

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Dilemmy Britanii: poisk putei razvitiia [Britain's dilemmas: the search for development paths]. Edited by A. A. Gromyko. Moscow: Ves' Mir. 2014. 480pp. ISBN 978 5 77770 566 2.

This book contains a collection of 21 essays written by a number of scholars in the Russian Academy of Sciences, many of them long-time observers of the British scene. The collection focuses on the period from the last years of the Labour government under Gordon Brown to the early years of David Cameron's coalition government, though some of the chapters set the analysis in a much broader historical context going back to the end of the Second World War. The book analyses the evolution of British domestic politics and the welfare state, the challenges for the British economy in the aftermath of the global financial crisis and British foreign policy.

Its approach is primarily factual and historical. The contributors eschew theoretical approaches. Their analysis relies heavily upon material and commentary from the *Financial Times* and other British media sources, as well as official government publications and think-tank reports, although there is some engagement with the academic literature too. They acknowledge the persisting international attraction of the British 'model' of development. The authors are meticulous in their presentation of facts, apart from the lapse of describing Sir Max Hastings as the editor of the *Financial Times*. This period has been marked by renewed frictions in bilateral relations and the book acknowledges various British concerns, for instance corruption in Russian business, bureaucratism, the lack of government transparency in Russia, the lack of an effective, fair legal system, and the stand-off over the murder of Alexander Litvinenko. But it ignores British, as well as European, concerns about Russia's attempts to exploit energy supplies for strategic purposes as a disincentive for closer economic ties.

One surprising gap is the lack of any extended analysis of the impact of the 2008 financial crisis on the British government's ability to play a global role. The costs of bailing out the banking sector and its impact on GDP are mentioned, but the main focus of the analysis is on the politics of recovery—turbulence at Westminster and the experience of coalition government—rather than on political economy, for example the impact on the government's overall finances for the longer term. By comparison, the political problems of immigration and the UK's relations with the EU receive much fuller coverage.

The chapters on foreign policy deal with Britain's relations with the United States, Britain in Europe, Anglo-Russian relations, the commercialization of British foreign

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policy, Anglo-Irish relations (though only the G20 summit in Northern Ireland in 2013), Britain and the Commonwealth and case-studies on British involvement in the crises in Libya, Mali and Syria. The book claims that the UK remains a difficult partner for many countries, including Russia, and that in recent years Moscow has been more inclined towards a cooperation of equals than has London. In their discussion of British policy towards Libya and Syria, the authors stress the priority of long-term British strategic interests driving the country's foreign policy and understate the political impact of media reports of the sufferings of refugees on government policy. The chapter on bilateral relations presents evidence of British assistance—albeit limited—to Russian civil society organizations, for example in the north Caucasus, and the promotion of human rights. The introduction notes Britain's declining role in world affairs, but links it to the broader issue of a more general decline of Europe as a whole, including Russia.

The book was no doubt completed in 2013 and it looked forward to cautious improvement in Anglo-Russian relations. It noted the establishment of a 2+2 bilateral strategic dialogue involving the foreign and defence ministers of both countries in 2013, as well as renewed Anglo-Russian cooperation to strengthen security and peace in Europe 'without dividing lines', and it stressed the need for Russia to respond positively to British initiatives.

All this has been overtaken by recent events in Ukraine. The underlying reasons for the changes in Russian behaviour deserve the same focused, multidimensional analysis in the West as has been devoted to Britain in this book, but the task would be much easier if Russian politics and economics were as transparent to British analysts as this book shows that they are in Britain to Russian ones.

Peter Ferdinand, University of Warwick, UK

The last empire: the final days of the Soviet Union. By Serhii Plokhy. London: Oneworld Publications. 2015. 528pp. Pb.: £8.90. ISBN 978 1 78074 529 9. Available as e-book.

Thirty years ago, in March 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev was elected general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Soon thereafter, the ideocratic regime founded by Lenin and consolidated by Stalin and his successors entered an era of unprecedented turmoil. Gorbachev and his supporters, many of whom were members of the party intelligentsia, were determined to liberalize the system, abandon the most obsolete ideological shibboleths, revisit the darkest pages in Soviet history and renounce the confrontational stances in foreign policy. Institutional restructuring, known as perestroika, and openness in cultural debates, known as glasnost, were the hallmarks of what some perceived, like an echo to the Czechoslovak 1968 reforms, as a Moscow Spring. The West was mesmerized by Gorbachev's attempt to create a state based on the rule of law. Important personalities, including Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, George H. W. Bush, François Mitterrand and Helmuth Kohl, endorsed the Kremlin's 'new thinking' in international affairs. Yet the domestic situation in the Soviet Union grew increasingly conflictual. Mikhail Gorbachev's policies were contested both by the liberal left—known as the democrats—and the conservative neo-Stalinists.

Harvard historian Serhii Plokhy offers a poignantly accurate examination of the last four months in the existence of the USSR. His main argument is that during that period—inaugurated by the August 1991 anti-Gorbachev coup and concluded by the decision to disband the Soviet Union on Christmas Day—the fate of Lenin's state was decided primarily by the exacerbation of centrifugal trends, first and foremost the Ukrainian drive for independence. The *dramatis personae* of this breath-taking story were Gorbachev

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himself; his nemesis, the president of the Russian Federation Boris Yeltsin; the American president George H. W. Bush; and the Ukrainian leader, former communist apparatchik turned champion of an independent state, Leonid Kravchuk. The book uses new archival evidence about the byzantine intrigues at the top of the Kremlin's hierarchy. The chapter dealing with the August coup reads like a political and psychological thriller. Take the case of Gorbachev's chief of staff Valery Boldin, one of his most trusted lieutenants, a man who owed his career to the general secretary and who was one of the main conspirators against his benefactor. Or the inept vice-president of the USSR, Gennadii Yanaev, another Gorbachev creation, who rather reluctantly accepted the position of acting leader, substituting for the allegedly sick president.

Plokhy relies on memoirs, archival material and interviews to put together a grippingly captivating story. As Plokhy mentions, Khrushchev died in his own bed, not in front of a firing squad. It is doubtful that Brezhnev's death was anything but natural, and so was Andropov's. They were terminally ill, no poison was needed to expedite their passing. Another main character in this saga of irreversible decline was Vladimir Kryuchkov, Yury Andropov's former closest collaborator at the head of the KGB. Perceived as a closet liberal, he was in fact a cynical operator for whom the only significant value was his own political survival. Paradoxically, Kryuchkov, one of the main putschists, was, according to Plokhy, quite friendly with the increasingly liberal ideologue Aleksandr Yakovlev, often called the architect of glasnost.

In his introduction to the paperback edition (reviewed here), Plokhy convincingly argues in favour of what he calls a multipolar narrative. One should add that interpreting the demise of the USSR also needs a multi-causal approach. It was not only the ethnic unrest that expedited the imperial disintegration, but also the ideological erosion of a state where doctrine mattered immensely. Those who tried to get rid of Gorbachev may not have been true believers, but some were still dedicated to the old dogmas. What mattered was that they could not provide any fresh, rejuvenating ideas regarding the future of socialism in the Soviet Union. The old Leninist project was exhausted, the revolutionary utopia had disappeared. Morally, the Soviet civilizational enterprise had failed. The economy was a shambles and could not be fixed. The military industry was hugely non-effective. Altogether, Gorbachevism was an effort to square the circle, a Sisyphean endeavour to cure the incurable. The difference between Gorbachev and Yeltsin was that the former stuck to an increasingly obsolete socialist ideal, whereas the latter understood that times had changed and Leninism did not need to be revised, but jettisoned wholesale. On the whole, Plokhy's book is a corrective of the once triumphalist visions which attributed to the West the decisive role in the breakdown of the Soviet empire; its causes were predominantly endogenous and this book explores them luminously.

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Russia–China relations in the post-crisis international order. By Marcin Kaczmarski. Abingdon and New York: Routledge. 2015. 192pp. £95.00. ISBN 978 1 138 79659 1. Available as e-book.

The Sino-Russian relationship has featured numerous twists and turns over the century since revolutions transformed the domestic politics and foreign policies of both countries. Today, ongoing changes in China and Russia, and at the global level, are creating an opportunity for innovative analysis of the relationship between these two major powers. Marcin Kaczmarski's account meets that need well. And given the growing focus for each country

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on diplomatic relations with the other, it is timely and refreshingly up to date, covering events to the end of 2014.

Kaczmarski addresses an International Relations puzzle, namely why Russia has not responded to China's rise by either hedging or counterbalancing, which suggests that the Kremlin does not see China as a threat. Current interpretations of the relationship see it either as an 'axis of convenience' (Bobo Lo, *Axis of convenience*, Brookings Institution Press, 2008; reviewed in *International Affairs* 85: 2) or as a strategic partnership. Instead, Kaczmarski argues that we have been witnessing a 'peaceful power transition' (to be understood as a 'socially constructed phenomenon', p. 3) between Russia and China, one feature of which is a growing asymmetry between the two countries in many areas. He sets out to demonstrate this by a comprehensive analysis of the relationship's bilateral, regional and global dimensions. An important theme running through the book is the importance of energy diplomacy.

This comprehensive coverage is a strength of the book, as is the attention it pays to the changing global context in the analysis of the Russia–China relationship. The significance for international affairs of the global financial crisis is still being analytically digested, but as this account shows, its implications are substantial; for Kaczmarski, 'symbolically [the crisis] marked the end of US and western primacy in the international order, which dovetailed with China's ascendance' (p. 12).

Several examples illustrate Kaczmarski's thesis. Energy relations were in the spotlight last year with the agreement, after many years, on a gas supply deal from Russia to China. This is part of a wider picture of Russia's growing 'dependence on China in the energy sphere' (p. 61), something hastened by the impact of the global financial crisis, though Kaczmarski brings out the different dynamics in oil, gas and other forms of energy.

In security and defence cooperation, he describes a revival of the arms trade, an area where historically Russia has been much the stronger party, and flags the possibility that China could be the first foreign buyer of new and technologically more advanced Russian systems (p. 73). In the Russian Far East, where responses to Chinese investment are often cited as examples of deep-seated Russian suspicion of China, Kaczmarski finds a 'growing Russian openness and acquiescence to a Chinese presence', which he argues has 'confirmed Russia's gradual accommodation to the new bilateral balance of power' (p. 78).

One of the most striking examples supporting Kaczmarski's thesis is the power shifts in central Asia, where China began to extend its influence after the end of the Cold War. Since the global financial crisis, Kaczmarski finds that 'China has gained the upper hand, mostly at Russia's expense' (p. 92). But at the same time, Beijing has, he argues, shown 'strategic restraint' (p. 100), and has not monopolized central Asian energy politics. Further, common concern about the 'possible destabilization of the central Asian regimes … pushed both states towards cooperation rather than competition' (p. 93), and the central Asian states themselves have 'facilitated Russia–China relations in the region' (p. 100).

Kaczmarski goes on to argue that it is a mistake to reduce Russia–China dynamics to a 'by-product of US [global] primacy' (p. 117), and that the US factor is of declining importance to the relationship. Since 2012, there has been a convergence in the two countries' policies towards the US, sometimes coordinated, but mostly the result of parallel policy development.

When it comes to global governance, Kaczmarski argues that Russia and China have similar visions of the international order, but as China's global role has grown the 'relationship in the global dimension has become more balanced' (p. 151). Russia remains an important actor with respect to particular global issues, such as the situation in Syria.

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Overall, this is a nuanced and persuasive account which deals well with contradictory evidence and builds on the existing literature. In the conclusion, Kaczmarski briefly discusses ways in which the 'peaceful power transition' he identifies might not be durable. Finally, he sets out some implications for international order, though the book would have benefited from more in-depth conclusions on this question, to tease out the wider impact of this important relationship between a declining Great Power and one that is newly rising.

Tim Summers, Chatham House, Hong Kong

Middle East and North Africa*

Saudi Arabia in transition: insights on social, political, economic and religious change. Edited by Bernard Haykel, Thomas Hegghammer and Stéphane Lacroix. New York: Cambridge University Press. 2015. 351pp. £55.00. ISBN 978 0 52118 509 7. Available as e-book.

The other Saudis: Shiism, dissent and sectarianism. By Toby Matthiesen. New York: Cambridge University Press. 2015. 277pp. £55.00. ISBN 978 1 10704 304 6. Available as e-book.

Few countries of such importance to the global economy and regional order are as misunderstood in political and public opinion as Saudi Arabia. It is only in the past decade that the practical difficulties of gaining access to and conducting independent research in the country have begun to be surmounted. The result has been an upsurge in critical studies of Saudi Arabia that place the kingdom in comparative context and deepen scholarly understanding of the forces that are continuing to (re)shape the structures of power and influence both domestically and internationally. Cambridge University Press has added to the burgeoning English-language literature on Saudi Arabia with two works of great subtlety and timeliness.

In *The other Saudis*, Toby Matthiesen builds on doctoral fieldwork conducted in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province in 2008, to construct a detailed and enriching account of the evolution of Shi'i politics and communal identity. Importantly, Matthiesen tempers any notion of the Saudi Shi'a as a monolithic group and gives voice to their diversity both in terms of political orientation and in their partial integration into state institutions and the public sphere since the 1990s. Against the broad backdrop of exclusionary state practices that, in general, have solidified sectarian politics in the country, Matthiesen argues persuasively that the 'civil society and representative institutions of the Saudi state have become areas of hegemonic struggle' between the state and its Shi'i communities, 'with at times very different outcomes' (p. 195).

Utilizing a wide array of Arabic pamphlets and local historiographies collected in second-hand bookshops in Lebanon and around the Gulf, Matthiesen paints a complex portrait of the Shi'is of Saudi Arabia and traces how their interaction with state structures has shifted over time. *The other Saudis* is particularly strong on how the Iranian Revolution of 1979 sharpened sectarian identity politics in Saudi Arabia in its turbulent aftermath. The account of the rise and fall of Hezbollah al-Hijaz in the 1980s and 1990s is one that current policy-makers will find of great value, as attention refocuses on the role of violent non-state actors in regional conflicts from Iraq to Syria and Yemen. In Matthiesen's opinion, Saudi officials 'began to see the Shi'a in the Eastern Province as a serious security threat' after 1979

* See also Michael Walzer, *The paradox of liberation*, pp. 1413–4.

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and 'that perception has dominated the state's view of the Shi'a ever since' (p. 112)—a view reinforced by the book's closing chapter on the 'new intifada' triggered by the Arab Spring upheavals of 2011.

In *Saudi Arabia in transition*, three of the most accomplished western scholars of Saudi Arabia have assembled an 'all-star' line-up of academics to dissect the nuances of social, political, economic and religious change in the kingdom. In the editors' introduction, Bernard Haykel, Thomas Hegghammer and Stéphane Lacroix note that 'despite its reputation for being conservative and static, Saudi Arabia is in fact a dynamic and rapidly evolving society' (p. 9). Steffen Hertog's examination of the political economy of regional development highlights especially the 'drastically differing socioeconomic fate of Saudi Arabia's different regions' (p. 123) that adds comparative depth to Matthiesen's research on the Shi'a in the Eastern Province. Amélie Le Renard's profile of consumerism in Riyadh, seen through the prism of young Saudi women, offers further insight into the pace and scale of lifestyle changes and their impact on social hierarchies.

One of the strengths of *Saudi Arabia in transition* is the variety of different voices among the 13 contributors; noted critics of the Saudi regime such as Madawi al-Rasheed and Toby Jones feature alongside the measured technocratic assessment of Saudi Arabia and world oil markets provided by Giacomo Luciani. Some of the most interesting and thought-provoking chapters come from the (too few) Saudi contributors to the volume—of special note are Saud al-Sarhan's analysis of the rise of a new group of 'Shaykhs of Jihadi-Salafism' in the 1990s whose outputs 'offered the theoretical justifications for the violent operations of Al-Qaeda' (p. 206), and Abdulaziz al-Fahad's study of Arabian genealogical traditions. The paucity of Saudi voices (three out of 13 authors) is the major drawback of the book, as it is their contributions that offer perhaps the freshest perspective to an Anglophone audience; another oversight is the absence of any biographical information for each of the contributors.

These issues notwithstanding, both *Saudi Arabia in transition* and *The other Saudis* have extended and deepened our understanding of contemporary Saudi Arabia, at a point in time when the kingdom is flexing its muscles internationally as never before. As Haykel's epilogue makes clear, its response to the Arab Spring saw the Saudi government 'break with its traditional policy approach of cautious deliberation and understatement' and take instead 'several unprecedented and rushed decisions' (p. 332). Both books under review benefited enormously from the cutting-edge research conducted by the authors during periods of fieldwork inside the kingdom, but the problem now facing scholars and practitioners alike is that such openness may be abandoned for a policy of renewed restrictions on access and study. Should this indeed prove the case under King Salman, whose January 2015 accession came as both books were at press, the relevance of their local insight will increase still further.

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The iron cage of liberalism: international politics and unarmed revolutions in the Middle East and North Africa. By Daniel P. Ritter. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2014. 288pp. £48.50. ISBN 978 0 19965 832 9. Available as e-book.

Are theories of International Relations (IR) capable of explaining what has become known as the 'Arab Spring'? First, the Arab Spring seemed to suggest the possibility of non-violent transition of power under the pressure of mass demonstrations. In a new, bold analysis, Daniel Ritter theorizes unarmed revolutions by studying foreign policy rather than looking

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at internal balances of power. He suggests the key to understanding why authoritarian regimes surrender to unarmed revolutionaries is in their alliances with western democracies.

Classical revolutions, from France to Russia and China, were violent and bloody affairs. Authoritarian regimes are built on repression and responded to any act of resistance by institutionalized violence. It is not possible to get rid of the *ancien régime* without recourse to armed insurrection. The Iranian Revolution of 1979, Daniel Ritter reminds us, confronted social science with a new phenomenon: the success of a non-violent revolution. In other words, unarmed popular mobilization succeeded in toppling a regime known for being autocratic and ruthless. How is this possible, and how can we harness theories of revolutions to explain it? And why do unarmed revolutions succeed in some cases, while they fail to bring down autocratic regimes in others? Ritter examines three successful cases of unarmed revolutions, Iran in 1979 and Tunisia and Egypt in 2011, then goes on to contrast them with three failed cases, Iran in 2009, and Libya and Syria in the context of the Arab Spring. In the latter case, the lack of foreign policy reliance on western democracies, close cooperation with autocratic regimes like Russia and China in international affairs, and therefore the lack of a self-imposed 'iron cage', as the author would say, are possible causal interpretations.

The reason why the regimes were overthrown by unarmed social movements, according to Ritter, needs to be sought in their foreign policy orientations, and more specifically in their geopolitical alliance with western powers—hence the title of the book which echoes Max Weber and his 'iron cage of rationality'. The book narrates the forging of alliances between the three autocratic regimes under consideration and the West, and how these alliances came with a high price: the promise of liberalism that, at the moment of mass social protests, became an obstacle to violent repression. In other words, they create limitations on the use of violent repression of peaceful social movements, while an alliance with Russia, for example, would enable a regime to drown a social movement in blood.

Ritter's thesis is interesting, but needs further corroboration through case-studies. It is surprising to see a book that addresses the success of non-violent revolutions disregard the 'Colour Revolutions': the wave of unarmed revolutions which succeeded in toppling a series of authoritarian regimes, starting with the Serbian revolution against Milosevic in 2000, followed by the Georgian Rose Revolution in 2003, the Orange Revolution in Ukraine in 2004 and the Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan 2005. Can we advance political theory by compartmentalizing our knowledge within area studies? The wave of Colour Revolutions, which happened immediately before the Arab Spring, inspired activists in a number of Arab countries including Tunisia and Egypt. If one proposes, as Ritter does, that unarmed revolutions are successful in states with a western orientation and fail when a state comes under Russian influence, it would have been useful to look at case-studies of the Serbian Revolution of 2000 or Ukraine under Kuchma. Nor is the 'iron cage of liberalism' effective in each revolutionary movement, as shown by the brutal repression of protesters in Bahrain.

Ritter writes that 'understanding regimes is as important as understanding revolutionary movements' (p. 220). Revolutions and the collapse of political systems are certainly the outcome of competition and alliances among states in the international arena, yet it is the internal power balance that is decisive in breaking autocratic rule. In this sense, we need to develop a better understanding of the nature of the state both in the Middle East and in North Africa, as well as of former Soviet-type republics.

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Sub-Saharan Africa

Africa rising? BRICS—diversifying dependency. By Ian Taylor. Woodbridge, UK, and Rochester, NY: James Currey. 2014. 194pp. £19.90. ISBN 978 1 84701 096 4. Available as e-book.

Just under a decade ago, as the scholarly and wider moral frenzy surrounding China's renewed African engagement was reaching a peak, Christopher Clapham provided a word of caution. While not diminishing the permanence or scale of such dramatic Sino-African *rapprochement*, he stressed that China's activities in Africa would 'fit into patterns that have long been established, and that Africans have historically adapted and absorbed' (*China returns to Africa*, Cambridge University Press, 2008). Downplaying such ideas of Bayartian 'extraversion' by which Africans have long deployed tactics to cope with global power asymmetries—African 'agency in tight corners' (to borrow John Lonsdale's term)—Ian Taylor's book emphasizes another register of continuity. He argues that emerging powers like China, India, Brazil and Russia are creating a diversified but essentially similar structural tapestry of historical African dependency, based largely on resource extraction. 'This has not radically changed since independence and is overlooked in the excitement to both anoint Africa as the new frontier of opportunity for speculators and exaggerate the role of emerging economies as potential redeemers' (p. 7). In so doing, Taylor does much to challenge the vaunted twenty-first century tropes of African renaissance and the progressive rise of the BRICS under the banner of 'South–South cooperation'.

Usefully for most readers in a big-picture volume of this nature, the bulk of the book is split into chapters focusing on Brazil, Russia, India and China in Africa respectively. Given Taylor's own prolific publications on Sino-African relations and reflecting the relative sophistication of secondary work on which the book is largely based, the chapter on China is the most rewarding and analytically dense. The chapter on India, by contrast, is a more well-trodden but fine synopsis of the last decade's (now quite tired) India–Africa scholarship. Each chapter provides a highly usable introduction to the major issues, with copious examples and references. That Russia is brought more squarely into the comparative frame is especially good. The 'S' of BRICS since 2010, South Africa, is consciously excluded given its small relative economic clout. The volume as a whole, and especially chapters one and six, are skilled in integrating the 'Africa rising' and 'BRICS rising' narratives, arguing that the incursions of these powerful external actors have resulted in 'de-industrialization' and 'jobless growth', a guarded reincarnation of the dependency controversies of the 1970s. Indeed, the book is punchiest when reminding readers of the spectre of patrimonialism and predatory globalized capitalism at the centre of such continued debate. 'A major issue … is that in most African countries there is a real lack of any serious ideological debate about the type of social system that will engender development and ensure broad improvements in the standard of living of the people. In this milieu there is minimal critique or profound analyses of capitalism: it is assumed as a given' (p. 156).

Nevertheless, the book's revisionist boldness, convincing in part, arguably also obscures wider sectoral and historicized contact zones. At a basic level, much academic and now popular writing on the inequities of neo-liberal frontiers severely erodes the idea of a 'rising Africa'. Moreover, the ways in which variously competing and collaborating BRICS are creating new hierarchies within the global South and especially sub-Saharan Africa (mitigating the boons of South–South cooperation) are increasingly well documented. Taylor is alive to these trends. More controversially, the book throws a little too much cold

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water on developments by so strongly stressing the unexceptionalism of BRIC engagement relative to established powers. It argues convincingly for hegemonic structural similarities in resource extraction, but is less dexterous in disaggregating the wider gamut of Afro-BRIC contacts that condition different geopolitical possibilities. The anti-hegemonic historical bedrock of 'partnership', which powerfully underpins spheres of South–South engagement such as development assistance, bolsters notions of African honour in contrast to the demoralizing memories of western interventionism and expropriation. Anti-colonial histories today can merely euphemize and cloak exploitation, but in certain contexts also drive policy in the push for multipolarity and a more diverse world order. While, as Taylor cogently asserts, the adoption of neo-liberal policies has been at the heart of BRICS engagement in Africa, there are forms of geopolitical 'code-switching' based on historical solidarities from both African producers and the BRICS (India and Brazil especially) that sustain modes of liaison and create opportunities (however instrumentalized) for more potent African negotiation.

There is *at least some* sense of the 'alternative' and wiggle room to gradually nudge the status quo as suggested in the recent work of Oliver Stuenkel (*The BRICS and the future global order*, Lexington Books, 2015; reviewed in *International Affairs* 91: 4). That such alternatives are weakly institutionalized, and more complex global and local hierarchies emerge with many African nations towards the bottom, is without doubt. But one might argue (optimistically perhaps) that there are glimmers of a brighter African future within those 'tight corners' as wider negotiating options pervade—not least given competition within and from the BRICS. This politics of choice can and will reify existing structures of dependence, authoritarianism and polarization, a crucial question excellently flagged in this book. But the situation is different to the 1960s and 1970s with the diversity of 'partners' now enjoyed. Moreover, the 'extraverted' voice of more marginalized African citizens to challenge such national and international domination is clearly now somewhat louder, if not deafening, in numerous African nations, for instance on the emotive issue of 'land grabs'. If such new civil society roads are to be taken, the journey is just beginning. Maybe the 'rising' hasn't quite started yet. But such fundamental debates notwithstanding, this is an extremely detailed, thought-provoking and boldly argued synopsis, a provocative primer for those monitoring these twenty-first century dynamics. As a bringer of debate and the product of deep expertise, it is most welcome.

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Africa: why economists get it wrong. By Morten Jerven. London: Zed Books. 2015. 166pp. Index. £70.00. ISBN 978 1 78360 132 5. Available as e-book.

Africa's new oil: power, pipelines and future fortunes. By Celeste Hicks. London: Zed Books. 2015. 254pp. Index. £70.00. ISBN 978 1 78360 112 7. Available as e-book.

South Sudan: a slow liberation. By Edward Thomas. London: Zed Books. 2015. 335pp. Index. £75.00. ISBN 978 78360 404 3. Available as e-book.

Zed Books deserves our appreciation for continuing to publish timely and original titles on Africa, remarkably in initial paperback editions: who else would print over 300 pages on South Sudan? This contribution is especially welcome as the continent anticipates a post-2015 world, which may be post-commodity boom and is increasingly post-hegemonic. Africa may no longer be hopeless, but not all Africans are hopeful, as indicated by the risks some accept to cross the Mediterranean. Just as Morten Jerven asserts in his intense

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monograph—many orthodox economists get the continent 'wrong'—so other disciples of traditional approaches such as International Relations and sociology misunderstand it, as they overlook the transnational, the informal and the illegal. Conversely, some non-traditional analysts may get it right, as is the case with Celeste Hicks on new oil and Edward Thomas on a non-state. In short, Africa deserves new attention which transcends old debates and dichotomies as the continent anticipates a post-BRICS context in which the global South is increasingly diverse.

First, Morten Jerven attempts to shake up assumptions about analytic and policy frameworks, methods and data around African development. Since the turn of the decade, some national economies have recalculated their economic results upwards; South Africa is no longer the largest economy, Nigeria is. Jerven rightly chastizes traditional popular economists for ignoring history and chasing fashions: did Africa really go 'from "Bottom Billion" to "Africa Rising" within half a decade' (p. 123)? Likewise *The Economist*'s lament at the dawn of the twenty-first century about the continent being 'hopeless' was superseded a decade later by rediscovering it as 'hopeful' (p. 1). Jerven regrets that empirical economics overlooked growth in the late colonial and early independence periods: was there ever a 'lost decade'?

But *The Economist*'s review of his work in mid-2015 suggests that Jerven 'overstates' his case. This monograph is, indeed, a scattergun: there are too many theses and targets from bad data and bad history to bad analysis. The author's somewhat rhetorical subheadings are telling: 'bad governance', 'bad geography and wrong technology', 'how we are misled by mainstream economics', etc. His writing tends to be dense and the lament variable: from quantitative economics to explanatory factors, from neo-liberalism to ahistoricism. The book reads like a series of articles which are rarely cumulative. And while Jerven mentions the informal sector (pp. 110–11), he overlooks considerable overlaps with the illegal one (see West African Commission on Drugs); he also ignores gender, African capitalism and companies, and the BRICS and other new donors or partners. Finally, he fails to mention the burgeoning range of African agencies and think-tanks which might share some of his concerns, such as the African Economic Research Consortium in Nairobi and the African Capacity Building Foundation in Harare, themselves founded some 25 years ago by the continent's best economists.

Second, Celeste Hicks provides insights into both new energy discoveries and production in sub-Saharan Africa and also into the range of 'new' non-state actors and regulations, such as the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative: an extensive, heterogeneous hybrid network which raises expectations and obligations about reporting on energy payments and profits, encouraged by Publish What You Pay (a coalition of civil society organizations) advocacy. She also analyses a range of civil society groups, the media and think-tanks—overlooked by Jerven—such as women (pp. 188–93) and global and national corporations; and she lists a useful set of websites, African and other. The author is very good on the lessons Chad, Niger and China might hold for Ghana and on comparing Kenyan and Ugandan energy policies, with the latter rushing ahead faster than the former (p. 175). Unfortunately, she does not address the really big find: the 85 trillion cubic feet of gas off the shore of northern Mozambique which could place it up with Iran, Russia and Qatar as a global liquefied natural gas producer. But she overlooks the complications created by the presence of Al-Qaeda networks in the Horn of Africa. Overall, she is cautiously optimistic that Africa's determination to get the policy framework right in association with civil society, private sector and think-tanks might serve to transcend any resource curse.

Finally, Edward Thomas's *magnum opus* may be the sort of rich economic (and political and social) history which Jerven favours. It offers historical, empirical and conceptual

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insights into South Sudan's endless struggles, particularly in its peripheries around Jonglei. And it goes beyond the stereotype of South Sudan having the slowest and fastest growth rates in successive years (Jerven, p. 119).

Thomas situates his revisionist analysis of shifting inequalities within established Marxist, mainstream economics and dependency approaches (p. 22) but goes beyond them, from the intense 1970s Dar es Salaam school or debate (pp. 25–7) to the endless violence in the peripheries (p. 292). He addresses the ongoing legacy of slavery and the cattle economy and notes that the creation of a state-employed 'middle class' exacerbated urbanization around Juba (p. 143). He recognizes that religions and prophetic status (p. 230) can impact social relations and the ability to accumulate wealth and that many problems, including ideologies and armaments, cross the porous border with Ethiopia. Chapter ten concentrates on the gendered dimensions of violence. Thomas's focus on land, energy and water plus cattle is *avant-garde* in terms of that emerging 'nexus'; as Jerven (p. 101) notes: 'The land issue has already proven to be a cause of recent conflict … and is likely to be the most serious governance issue for African economies'. Thomas echoes this: 'the food economy has been reshaped by young raiders' (p. 30).

African development continues to present a range of analytic and applied challenges, from mobile phones and finance to climate change, from human security to non-traditional security. Such challenges are unlikely to end soon—despite the adoption of the new Sustainable Development Goals—but African interests and institutions will continue to assert their agency in a growing number of policy arenas.

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Sexuality and social justice in Africa: rethinking homophobia and forging resistance. By Marc Epprecht. London and New York: Zed Books. 2013. 232pp. Index. £65.00. ISBN 978 1 78032 382 4. Available as e-book.

Sexuality and social justice in Africa is an important and timely book. It will likely become a cornerstone of post-colonial research on African sexualities, a field to which Epprecht has already made a significant contribution. This historiography succeeds in debunking western stereotypes of African sexualities as rampant, primordial, male-driven and corrupted by 'oriental' and colonial influences. More importantly, it puts (mostly male) same-sex desire on the map by demonstrating that same-sex practices, and what one may refer to today as homosexuality, existed in pre-colonial African societies, their portrayal in the predominantly homophobic and often traditionalist popular and political discourse in contemporary Africa notwithstanding.

The book's subtitle, *Rethinking homophobia and forging resistance*, is also its mission statement, as Epprecht accepts the challenges posed by queer studies and LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and intersex) activists to academia and policy-making. Epprecht advocates for 'erotic justice', a concept which he argues is more inclusive than 'sexual justice', as it expands the perception of corporeality and identity beyond a narrow focus on genitals and is thus able to address personhood comprehensively. The volume successfully lays out the concepts of analysis and arguments about homophobia, as well as strategies to address them. It is written with admirable clarity and is divided into six chapters and a conclusion.

After the introduction, chapter two is concerned with sketching out contemporary sexuality studies and in particular the concept of homosexuality. In chapter three, Epprecht delineates three African discourses which he defines as 'traditional', Christian, and Muslim.

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This is, almost inevitably, the weakest chapter of the volume, because the complexity of cosmologies, theologies and religious and spiritual practices across the entirety of African history is forced into three categories. Here Epprecht argues, as he has done in his earlier works, that an inherent African humanity (*ubuntu*) allowed for same-sex practices and desire throughout Africa's ten thousand-year history and that this is a resource that future activists can draw on. Chapter four takes a long-term look at Africa's past to examine why African states today tend to be homophobic in their outlook and legislation. This chapter moves, in the span of five pages, from Ancient Egypt to the nineteenth-century Zulu kingdom and Lady Gaga. Still, what is amply demonstrated is that against a backdrop of a long pre-colonial past, the brief period of colonial rule had a radical impact on African gender identities, roles and relations, introducing homophobic thought that tends to be rather firmly lodged in African discourse to this day. Finally, chapter five maps strategies for activism *vis-à-vis* African states and ends on a positive note by pointing out that there are, after all, observable improvements in states' policies towards the LGBTI community. Epprecht concludes by stating that academics must conduct 'ethical research'; consequently, he has donated the proceeds from this volume to activist groups.

Three observations seem to be in order. First, Epprecht takes on a monumental project in this slim volume by critically discussing sexuality studies and LGBTI activism from an interdisciplinary perspective. Even though he is very careful in his use of categories and concepts—which is most admirable—tremendous generalizations about Africa's past, especially in chapters three and four, are almost inevitable in a work of this sort. Second, on a related note, Epprecht employs the concept of African 'tradition' in a rather uncritical manner that may lead readers to form the misguided impression that this is a stable concept rather than one made and remade over time. Third, and sadly, the three-fold challenge of LGBTI activism, western prejudice and African homophobia mean that the researcher, regardless of his or her project, can hardly avoid taking a deliberate political stance. Activist scholarship has been and will continue to be an important part of the academy, but if it wants to move on to what Epprecht is calling for, namely 'ethical research', such research needs to be seen also as a contribution in and of itself. Much could be achieved as a result. Hence, one conclusion *Sexuality and social justice in Africa* inadvertently leads readers to draw is that African sexuality studies still need to be demarginalized while slowly making progress towards 'erotic justice'. Overall, despite some shortcomings, this is a fine interdisciplinary study that is suitable both as an introduction to queer, sexual and gender studies in Africa and to enrich experts' understanding of this area of research.

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South Asia*

The Arabs at war in Afghanistan. By Mustafa Hamid and Leah Farrall. London: Hurst. 2015. 328pp. Index. £20.00. ISBN 978 1 84904 420 2.

Arriving in Pakistan as Political Counsellor at the British High Commission in January 1993, my instructions from London were to focus on Pakistan and avoid the distractions of Afghanistan. But Afghanistan was to consume much of my attention. Only a couple of weeks after my arrival, four United Nations officials were killed near Jalalabad. Later, we had western diplomats kidnapped, terrorist camps training Arabs, Chechens, Uighurs, Indonesians

* See also Mohan Malik, ed., *Maritime security in the Indo-Pacific*, pp. 1454–5.

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and Uzbeks, Gulf NGOs still operating mysteriously in Peshawar, the emergence of the Taliban and, to cap it all, Osama bin Laden's return to Afghanistan in May 1996, just prior to my departure. Back in London, I followed events in Afghanistan until mid-1999 as Al-Qaeda developed into the primary terrorist threat to the West.

Little wonder, therefore, that I sat glued to this remarkable book and consumed its 328 pages in just two sittings. Mustafa Hamid, an Egyptian Islamist, moved in jihadist circles in Peshawar and Afghanistan from 1979 until late 2001 when he escaped to Iran, where he then spent ten years under house arrest. The book is in the form of a series of interviews between Leah Farrall (a former Australian Federal Police analyst) and the veteran Islamist, covering the whole of this 22-year period. As a result the style is a bit clunky, but it is saved by the quality of the discussion and the depth of insight from both authors.

Hamid's main contention is that the Salafi and Wahhabi brands of Islam are incapable of clear strategic thinking. Their focus on martyrdom (and their young adherents' desire for immediate action) means that they fall prey to short-term thinking and a lack of training and preparation. Bin Laden compounded this problem. Although personally honest, he was both rich and convinced of his own military prowess after a lucky victory against Soviet forces at Jaji in 1987 (pp. 97–105). He wanted to be a hero and he was a man in a hurry (p. 148). Unsurprisingly, young Arabs preferred to join him rather than the ineffectual and corrupt organizations, like Abdullah Azzam's Maktab al-Khadamat, operating in the relative safety of Peshawar.

Hamid correctly punctures two widely held misconceptions. First, the 'Afghan–Arabs' (as they were known—not 'Arab Afghans' as described here) were not particularly numerous (for most of the period in the low hundreds) and played a relatively minor role in the actual fighting against Soviet forces. When they did take the field, it was often disastrous as in Jalalabad in 1989 (p. 155). And second, most of the Afghan groups distrusted and often resented the Arabs. The Afghans' focus was on expelling the Soviets. Most had little or no interest in jihad in the Arab or western worlds. Hamid describes in gripping detail the various attempts by Mullah Omar (once the Taliban had won power in 1996) to persuade Bin Laden to curtail his external terrorist plans. Bin Laden's refusal to accept those strictures had disastrous results leading, of course, to the 9/11 attacks and the subsequent war in Afghanistan. Leah Farrall suggests that he intended to lure the Americans into Afghanistan (pp. 280–81) where they would be defeated (like the Soviets before them), but Hamid denies this (p. 307), assuring us that Bin Laden was no strategic thinker.

Hamid is clearly at his best when describing events in which he took part, like the Mullah Omar/Bin Laden meetings. Bin Laden's request that Hamid establish relations with Iran is another example. But, at other times, he is less convincing. His description of the evolution of the 1998 East African US Embassy bombings is implausible (pp. 236–7). Khalid Sheikh Mohamed is rarely mentioned, indicating that Hamid was probably remote from Al-Qaeda's terrorist planning. He also portrays Al-Qaeda as just one of several competing Arab militant groups in Afghanistan (and with only about 200 members) as late as 2001 (p. 262). I would argue that it had become the dominant brand by 1998, partly thanks to the US cruise missile strikes of that year, which gave the movement additional appeal and helped unify the Afghan–Arabs. Hamid also surely overstates the number of times that he 'angrily' objected to Bin Laden's terrorist plans. On this point alone I wonder if there is a hint of special pleading. Hamid is (or was until recently) still wanted by the US authorities on terror-related charges.

Much is made of the 'Jalalabad School' of Salafi extremism (pp. 165 and 322), which Hamid believes now to be dominant. He also describes this as 'anything goes' terrorism,

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with a focus on small tactical gains at the expense of strategic success. He believes that this brand of Salafism played a role in undermining the Arab Spring (pp. 324–5) and that the Muslim Brotherhood, which is too rigid and restrictive to attract young supporters (p. 318), often forms tactical alliances with it. This was the undoing of President Morsi of Egypt and some of the Syrian groups with their Gulf funding. He seems to suggest that the near destruction of the Afghan–Arabs since 9/11 means that modern, young jihadists are now deprived of the wisdom of older, wiser heads. Al-Qaeda—he says—is now seen as moderate and conservative (p. 318). I am sure there is an element of truth here, but I am not convinced that anyone in Syria has heard of the 'Jalalabad School', nor that we can rewrite modern history to the extent that the Afghan–Arabs are conceived as somehow more thoughtful and responsible than today's young firebrands.

Yet this remains a fascinating book. Above all, it provides a glimpse behind the arras at the multitude of tensions engendered among the Afghan–Arabs from 1979 to 2001. Many of them went to Afghanistan so that they could ultimately liberate (as they saw it) their own countries: Algeria, Egypt, Chechnya, Libya, Uzbekistan and Saudi Arabia among many others. It was Bin Laden who ensnared their loyalties, through money and thus his ability to offer action, and then led them to their destruction by attacking the United States.

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India's rise as an Asian power: nation, neighborhood, and region. By Sandy Gordon. Washington DC: Georgetown University Press. 2014. 296pp. £38.50. ISBN 978 1 62616 074 3. Available as e-book.

Beyond South Asia: India's strategic evolution and the reintegration of the subcontinent. By Neil Padukone. London: Bloomsbury Academic. 2014. 234pp. £65.00. ISBN 978 1 62892 253 0. Available as e-book.

In many ways, the course of India's rise presents a much greater puzzle than the rise of China. Is India destined to join the world's top table alongside other Great Powers? Does it have what it takes to overcome the obstacles that have long kept it a symbol of dysfunction and poverty? Some analysts approach this problem from the top down, looking at what Indian strategic thinking might tell us about its future. Others focus on India's progress in overcoming the economic, social and political problems that may torpedo its rise as a Great Power.

Sandy Gordon's *India's rise as an Asian power* is in the second category. His book builds a picture of India's immense problems from the ground up, which unsurprisingly leaves him more cautious than many about India's future. Gordon gives particular focus to India's governance issues, arguing that addressing problems in policing in particular will be vital to achieving better governance and security. He then looks at what he calls the 'enmeshed dissonance' of south Asia, where problems experienced elsewhere in the region feed back across the border into India.

But Gordon is not a complete pessimist. He sets out a strategy of how India could create a 'virtuous circle' of balanced growth and institutional reform. Gordon argues that India does not have the option of ignoring its troubled neighbourhood and that India's domestic problems and those of its neighbours must be alleviated before it can build its role on the world stage. He argues that India should focus on its non-Pakistan neighbours, pending better relations with Pakistan. Gordon also looks at India's hesitant and only partially successful attempts to project itself beyond south Asia into its broader neighbourhood. He

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argues that India should drop its ambitions to become a major player in the Pacific theatre and, essentially, should stick to the knitting in the Indian Ocean region.

According to Gordon, India must give much greater emphasis to its governance problems in order to achieve growth in comprehensive national power. Indeed, India's ability to achieve its objective of strategic autonomy will depend on creating the conditions for economic growth and internal stability. Otherwise, China will continue to draw away from it in terms of national power, forcing India ever closer to the United States. Gordon concludes that even though India will perhaps never be a Eurasian power in the sense that Russia and China are, it could become a more open trading state and eventually a true maritime power.

Neil Padukone's *Beyond South Asia* takes a very different approach to understanding India's rise. Padukone examines how India's Monroe Doctrine (under which India opposed the presence of any extra-regional powers in south Asia) reflected the country's previous strategic needs to secure internal unity and external dominance. He argues that India has now discarded its Monroe Doctrine as a core strategy so that it can focus on improving its relationships with its neighbours and transcending south Asia.

Unfortunately, *Beyond South Asia* is littered with factual errors that undermine the force of its analysis. Contrary to claims in the book, the deployment of the USS *Enterprise* to the Bay of Bengal in 1971 was not an attempt to ward off the Indian onslaught in *East* Pakistan (US concerns related to *West* Pakistan); China does not operate a listening post on Myanmar's Coco Island; China is not developing a naval base near Chittagong or in the Seychelles; the Ayni Air Base in Tajikistan is not set to become a de facto Indian Air Force base and India does not operate a listening post in Madagascar; nor is India part of an 'ASEAN + 4' grouping with China, Japan and South Korea. Some of these errors represent a feature of Indian strategic writing, where a combination of wishful thinking and conspiracy myths can sometimes be a substitute for real analysis.

Beyond South Asia demonstrates some wishful thinking also about India's relationships with its neighbours. It would undeniably benefit from a reset in these (as Modi has clearly recognized), but interests do not necessarily translate into reality. The author explains that increased economic engagement with Pakistan should be in everyone's interest and then goes on to claim that this means there is a 'burgeoning rapprochement' between India and Pakistan. This claim might give readers pause. It is not impossible that a detente of sorts might occur in the future (probably later rather than sooner), but that is certainly not evident now. Indeed, Pakistan is now desperately seeking to integrate economically with China as an alternative to opening its trade to India.

The book's main contention, that India has been forced to discard its 'failed' Monroe Doctrine in order to transcend south Asia, is also questionable. Certainly, India's attempts to exclude extra-regional powers from south Asia have not always succeeded. But Delhi's severe reaction to Chinese submarine visits to Sri Lanka in the latter part of 2014 demonstrated that the instincts underlying the Monroe Doctrine are alive and well—and may even have contributed to the demise of the Rajapaksa regime several months later. There is no doubt that Indian policy will continue to evolve in light of strategic realities, but the concepts of the Monroe Doctrine—or at least the instincts underlying it—will remain one among several important strands in Indian strategic thinking. It will likely continue to perceive the presence in south Asia of other powers, particularly China, as illegitimate and aimed against India. Rightly or wrongly, this will continue to be an important factor in India's strategic perceptions and behaviour for a long time to come.

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India–China borderlands: conversations beyond the centre. By Nimmi Kurian. London: Sage. 2014. 208pp. £35.00. ISBN 978 8 13211 351 5.

Nimmi Kurian's work on India–China borderlands is an important contribution to the discipline of International Relations (IR), in the context of both India–China ties and the study of borderlands. It is especially timely given the current emphasis on subnational interactions between both countries.

Kurian begins by providing a background to the increasing importance of border regions domestically, with both countries pumping large amounts of money into the economic development of their long-neglected border areas. She states that 'the massive developmental thrust that India's Northeast and China's Western Borderlands are witnessing constitutes the focus of the book' (p. 4). Kurian also points to the two important influences on the approach towards borderlands in both countries. While in India colonial policies towards border regions have influenced its policies, in China it is the Qing Dynasty's policies which have left their imprint. 'How the Indian and the Chinese states have approached this historical legacy is instructive, for there are strong elements of economic, cultural and intellectual communities that marked many of these transitions'. The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Ordinance of 1942 demonstrates a clear instance of post-independence policies towards the north-east being influenced by the colonial period (p. 45). One challenge which both countries have faced is power sharing between the centre and states. The author identifies 'a strong resistance to devolve power, stemming from a deeply ingrained fear of an erosion of state capacity' (p. 48).

Kurian also flags some of the key drawbacks of the current literature on borderlands in IR, stating that it has been relegated to the margins and that inhabitants of border regions are not given much attention in the current literature. 'The lived experiences of border communities thus have to be at the centre of any new rethinking on borderlands. Without connecting with the lives of the people who inhabit these physical spaces, IR's theoretical agendas will remain both unimaginative and reiterative' (p. 15). The author then highlights the existing literature on India–China relations, where there is an excessive focus on geopolitics and on the neo-liberal narrative that sees trade as the solution to all problems.

In the third chapter, 'Barriers to bridges: geoeconomic text, geopolitical subtext', Kurian moves on to the importance of borderlands to the foreign policies of both countries. While the current Indian government is pursuing the Act East Policy with great vigour, she reminds readers of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's speech where he reiterated the importance of the north-east: 'When I look at the north-east, I also naturally look at India's extended neighbourhood in south-east Asia' (p. 64). The author highlights steps taken by India to enhance connectivity with Myanmar, as well as an interesting example of how security has prevented cross-border exchanges there: 'The Chinese side of the Stilwell Road has been upgraded into a six-lane highway and a Chinese company, Yunnan Construction Engineering Group is upgrading the section of the road within Myanmar' (p. 81), this is in stark contrast with the Indian side. Some of the key reasons for India being cautious about opening its borders are apprehensions with regard to activities of rebel groups in the north-east. In spite of this, unofficial trade and smuggling thrive at a number of border crossings such as Moreh (India) and Tamu (Myanmar).

However, Kurian argues that New Delhi and Beijing still have much to do to change their mindsets and to increase to sub-regional cooperation, for example by putting in place clear mechanisms for the greater participation of stakeholders. However, a fresh approach is needed not only from policy-makers, but also from researchers (p. 131). The 'economic development' of borders by itself is no panacea for problems afflicting border regions.

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'While distant capitals may be quick to pronounce these an economic success, there are local level realities that peel away the idiom of prosperity' (p. 134). A number of issues are still overlooked. First of all, while discussions tend to focus on natural resources possessed by these regions, the environmental and social impact of extraction is often overlooked (p. 142). Kurian concludes that 'how creatively to define the signature slogan of borders as gateways will ultimately be a call for India and China to take not just as polities but also as societies. To realize such a vision, Delhi and Beijing must first be willing to quit playing ventriloquist and recognize the ability of the borderland to speak for itself'.

This is a useful contribution which provides readers with a fresh approach to the study of borders, but some comparisons with other border regions would have been welcome.

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East Asia and Pacific*

Maritime security in the Indo-Pacific: perspectives from China, India, and the United States. Edited by Mohan Malik. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield. 2014. 310pp. £44.90. ISBN 978 1 44223 532 8. Available as e-book.

This is a timely and incisive study of an important dimension of the emerging Eurasian strategic system. The contributions vary in originality and usefulness, and there is an unfortunate amount of redundancy, but overall the study illuminates an increasingly important dimension of the Asian power system.

The central idea of the book is this: the rise of China and India as energy-consuming and export-producing economies has led to rapid growth in shipping traffic carrying those commodities between Bab al-Mandeb and the Strait of Hormuz in the west, Indian ports in the middle and the great economic hubs of coastal China in the east. Many chapters produce statistics documenting this growth in maritime traffic. The concept 'Indo-Pacific' is advanced to capture this linkage between the manufacturing hubs of east Asia (including Japan) and the energy- and merchandise-shipping western Indian Ocean choke points. The vulnerability of China's sea lines of communications (SLOCs) to either US or Indian interdiction in the event of a confrontation is an important Chinese concern. 'The tyranny of distance' gives India a great advantage over China in the waters west of Malacca. Diego Garcia and multiple US positions in and around the Persian Gulf also give the United States Navy a similar advantage over China in those waters. How to secure this vital 'Indo-Pacific' traffic is an important Chinese concern—and a central issue addressed by this book.

Contributions by Chinese authors make clear Beijing's mounting concern. For example, Yang Yi, Secretary General of the Chinese Institute of International Studies—the Foreign Ministry's main research centre—and Zhao Qinghai, the head of maritime security at the same centre, find that the embrace of the concept of the 'Indo-Pacific' by western strategic circles is a reflection of the growing power of 'east Asian countries' [i.e. China] and the declining power of the US and Europe due to multiple economic crises. The US calculation is that by 'drawing India closer they can contain China', 'balance China's influence' and 'effectively pin China into the east Asian littoral'. The Indian Ocean is being 'gradually regarded [by the US] as an ideal location to set up a long-distance naval blockade against China' far beyond the reach of Chinese anti-access, area denial missiles targeting US bases

* See also Marcin Kaczmarski, *Russia–China relations in the post-crisis international order*, pp. 1440–2; and Nimmi Kurian, *India–China borderlands*, pp. 1453–4.

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in Japan, the Philippines and Guam. But India will not go along with US 'Indo-Pacific' schemes: 'Although happy enough to pocket a strategic dividend from those who have a balancing China agenda, India will not play the part of an anti-China chess piece on anyone's chessboard'. China's fear of possible Indian partnership with Japan and the US may well give New Delhi leverage with Beijing.

American official sources—looked at in detail by several chapters in the volume—tend to explain the US naval presence in the Indian Ocean and increased US–Indian naval cooperation in terms of preventing any country (read: Iran) from closing vital international straits; countering piracy; preventing accidents, including environmental catastrophes; preventing smuggling of narcotics, humans, or nuclear materials; and preparing humanitarian disaster relief in the aftermath of hurricanes or tsunamis. The American view tends to be that all trading countries share a common interest in maintaining good order on Indian and Pacific Ocean shipping lanes, should cooperate in that effort and should not view as threatening efforts by any country or set of countries to do this. Chinese contributors to this volume view this line of US argumentation as politically benign camouflage for a deeper strategy of preparing the capability to choke off China's trans-Indian Ocean SLOCs in an extreme situation. In the view of the independent American scholar writing this review, this sceptical Chinese interpretation of US strategy may not be inaccurate. US policy probably operates at several levels, with some levels best not talked about in polite company. One key purpose of US military forces is, of course, to prepare for war on the premise *sic vis pacem, para bellum*.

Enhancing China's own naval capabilities in the Indian Ocean is one way for Beijing to better secure China's vital trans-Indian Ocean SLOCs. Since joining the international anti-piracy coalition in the Gulf of Aden in December 2008, the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLA-Navy) has maintained a permanent presence in the Indian Ocean, rotating several ship task forces through anti-piracy duty there four or so times per year, and gaining understanding of the hydrology of the Indian Ocean and the *modus operandi* for resupply and repair at numerous ports all around the Indian Ocean littoral. Unfortunately, Malik's volume was not able to draw on the excellent monograph on these PLA-Navy operations written by Andrew Erickson and Austin Strange, *No substitute for experience: Chinese anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden*, and published by the China Maritime Studies series of the US Naval War College in November 2013.

Building overland pipelines, railways and highways connecting China with resource and commercial centres to its west (i.e. along the lines of Xi Jinping's 'one road, one belt' infrastructure construction programmes) is another way of mitigating the vulnerability of China's Indo-Pacific SLOCs. Building special relationships and 'partnerships' with key countries around the Indian Ocean littoral—Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, but most of all Pakistan—is another. Building more and better classes of warships and sending them ever further afield is yet another. All these tropes are explored in the book.

A key problem arising from these Chinese efforts, at least from the US and the Indian point of view, is that Chinese moves in the Indian Ocean region to secure its SLOCs exacerbate Indian fears of creeping encirclement by China and violate hoary Indian notions that the Indian Ocean is its sphere of special security interest into which warships of other powers—and especially China with its track record of hostility towards India—ought not intervene. Thus, the more actively unilaterally China pursues the security of its Indian Ocean SLOCs, the deeper Indian apprehension of China's growing power and the closer India moves toward cooperation with the United States.

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Incomplete democracies in the Asia-Pacific: evidence from Indonesia, Korea, the Philippines, and Thailand. Edited by Giovanna Maria Dora Dore, Jae H. Ku and Karl D. Jackson. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. 2014. 281pp. Index. £65.00. ISBN 978 1 13739 749 2. Available as e-book.

Democracy is an ongoing process that proceeds in fits and starts, and involves much more than elections or free speech. It is refreshing to find a book that assumes that democracies, particularly east Asian ones, are fraught with complexity, popular impatience and backsliding. Young democracies are particularly prone to poorly institutionalized norms and longing for the order of recently abandoned autocracies. As the book under review went to print, Thailand underwent its second *coup d'état* within a decade, and it is not clear when it will emerge from military rule. Based on extensive survey work by Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) in four Asian countries (Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia and South Korea), the volume's chapters give readers an unmatched, albeit slightly uneven, overview of the region's recent democratic progress. It is recommended to both Asia scholars and students of democratization.

Giovanna Dore and Karl Jackson find surprising convergences in the four cases. Voting in elections is how most people in the four countries define democracy, and civil society groups tend to be 'fluid, personal, and hierarchical rather than stable, ideological, and egalitarian' (p. 3). Most people have not participated in party activities, and popular political views alternate between authoritarian and democratic. Populist or charismatic leaders have much appeal, and they can relatively easily overcome the ephemeral chaff of everyday politics. Likewise, elites can shape political events to follow a conventional democratic road. Accordingly, each of the four countries has trod a slightly different path: Korea as a fast-developing nation that quickly democratized; Indonesia as a stunning success story given its start-stop-start pattern of political development since the Suharto government stepped down; the Philippines as the oldest south-east Asian republic that, ironically, kept the colonial landed elite in power; and Thailand as a state oscillating between heavy-handed military regimes and feckless civilian rule.

Dore discusses the formation of democratic and authoritarian attitudes; while most Asians possess positive overall feelings about democracy, they retain authoritarian attitudes on various specific issues. Citizens' knowledge of politics is shaped by a variety of factors, involving both government processes and the workings of national economies, but these differ by country. Indonesians stress individual assessments of government institutions, while Koreans focus more on their own economic well-being and educational attainment. Jackson insists that the role of the middle class in Indonesia's democratization is multidimensional, as class shifts have been propelled by gradual urbanization, higher levels of consumption of modern goods and increased exposure to mass media. Indonesians' political attitudes thus depend on varied factors unrelated to class, e.g. gender, region, membership of traditional personal networks and participation in civil society.

Korean political participation declined from 2000 to 2011, but Jae Ku believes that it is because the country's election-centred political system hinders development of other forms of political expression. Though voting rates have fallen from their high levels in the 1990s, they remain relatively high because elections are seen as the primary form of participation. Civil society is small, and is principally the realm of the well educated. Since the elite dominate private organizations, there is little bottom-up pressure for political change and, over time, disillusionment has grown. Thailand possesses an even more elite-centred system, Prinat Apirat shows, involving a 'trickle down' of political ideas and a 'rote democracy', in which

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Thais learn democracy only through repeated voting (p. 183). As in Korea and Indonesia, Jackson shows, Philippine voter turnout has usually been high, but the country's politics are still dysfunctional because of a 'shortage of the right kind of participation and a surfeit of the wrong', i.e. 'Tammany Hall' style deal-making over robust civil society activity (p. 218).

Levels of satisfaction with political leaders throughout Asia, writes James Kirby, depend largely on citizens' individual socio-economic conditions. When asked to grade several recent national leaders, many Asians choose a 'neutral' rating (p. 223). These tend to be urban residents without higher education degrees who are exposed to mass media, and who are somewhat pessimistic about the economy, except in Korea, where they are more optimistic. Kirby thinks that this common 'neutral' rating may also relate to lingering fears of criticizing national leaders.

A rewarding trove of polling data on democracy it may be, but the book is not an easy read. Lay readers will find it hard to get through many of the chapters in one sitting, and may resort to extensive skimming. Wherever launched, democratization is an exciting and engaging process, and we need to feel more of the drama of Asia's emerging democracies. Also, favourable views of authoritarianism are presented as noteworthy, but are they? As in new democratic countries in other parts of the world, it should not be surprising that ordinary people, still unused to norms of participation and reciprocity, would be impatient for immediate change and nostalgic for governments that seemed to make things run smoothly. The editors contribute most of the volume's articles, giving the collection a bit of an in-bred feel. Perhaps a little more sharing of the work could have strengthened its findings. Finally, tossing Korea, one of the original 'Four Tigers', in with three late-developing south-east Asian countries skews the project's findings. Even so, the book is an excellent addition to the ongoing discussion about the direction and meaning of Asia's governments of the people.

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Chinese hegemony: grand strategy and international institutions in east Asian history. By Feng Zhang. Stanford: Stanford University Press. 2015. 280pp. £45.00. ISBN 978 0 80479 389 6. Available as e-book.

Discussions of Imperial China's international relations during periods of its hegemony in east Asia typically draw three distinct conclusions: that China exercised benign hegemony and maintained Chinese world order through the tributary system; that Chinese cultural realism or strategic culture reflected a view of the world as insecure and threatening, and hence an inclination for offensive rather than defensive posture towards its neighbours; and that China maintained a façade of pre-eminence through a combination of defensive and accommodative policies.

Feng Zhang's new book on Chinese hegemony offers a refreshing look at the unique ways in which Imperial China developed and implemented grand strategies to maintain its dominance. Most importantly, the book seeks to discuss and redefine Chinese hegemony as a result of its interactions with three neighbouring countries—Japan, Korea and Mongolia—and likewise, the grand strategies of the latter in dealing with China, the regional hegemon at the time. For Zhang, the two major dimensions of the international relations of east Asia that require careful analysis are the grand strategies of China and its above-mentioned three neighbours and the fundamental institutional practices of the day. These strategic and institutional choices can only be explained through what Zhang terms 'a relational theory of grand strategy and institutional formation' (p. 3).

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Zhang's relational theory of grand strategy puts greater emphasis on the dynamic processes of interactions among actors than on their substance and attributes (p. 5). Grand strategy is often described as the purposeful mobilization and utilization of available resources in order to achieve specific goals. Zhang argues, instead, that it is an outcome of a dynamic relational process of strategic interaction between actors. He makes and clarifies a number of distinctions that are critical to advancing his theoretical arguments. While hegemony 'requires material primacy', it is perhaps its social legitimacy and recognition by other states, not material preponderance alone, that is its most important defining characteristic (p. 6). Hierarchy is both a state of relational structure and a strategy pursued by a state. In Ming China, he differentiates between two distinct approaches: expressive hierarchy (ideational) and instrumental hierarchy (material). China's neighbours, on the other hand, adopted the grand strategies of either identification with Chinese values or deference to Chinese power (p. 9).

There are three case-studies (chapters three to five) that analyse the relationships between China and three of its neighbours—Korea, Japan and Mongolia—respectively to test Zhang's theory in answering this fundamental question: was Ming China able to create and maintain a hierarchic authority over its neighbours and what specific strategies were predominant in their relations? Needless to say, the degrees of Chinese hierarchy and acceptance by the other three vary, depending on the extent to which the country pursued material interests, was influenced by cultural affinity or engaged in extended conflicts with China. In fact, his findings show that other countries rarely adopted the strategy of identification; instead, strategies of exit, access and deference were deployed in order to resist Chinese dominance and gain material benefits, they only occasionally (and grudgingly) acquiesced to Chinese authority over them. Indeed, 'China possesses no authority over other actors when those actors adopted strategies of access and exit, some authority when they adopted a strategy of deference, and great authority when they adopted a strategy of identification' (p. 155).

Zhang also goes beyond traditional discussions of regional order. China sought to maintain its hegemony in the region through tributary diplomacy to establish hierarchical relationships with its neighbours; this was a symbol of Chinese primacy. But Chinese hegemony was never complete; other institutions, from communications to trade and war, were used to sustain at least the semblance of Chinese dominance in the region, achieved through a combination of rewards and punishment.

What does the description of a period of Chinese dominance in east Asia say about the contemporary Chinese grand strategy as the country re-establishes its Great Power status in the region? Are the concepts of 'a harmonious world' and the 'China Dream' reflections of the Confucian order of the past? Zhang's discussion of Chinese hegemony and his relational approach to understanding Ming China's international relations would suggest that Chinese foreign policy is more likely to be based on and influenced by processes of relational interactions than just material attributes, such as economic and military power, or domestic agendas. If history offers any useful lessons, China's grand strategy is as much a reflection of its responses to relational interactions with others as it is an expression of intentions to pursue what it perceives to be a just, ethical and appropriate international order.

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The great wall of money: power and politics in China's international monetary relations. Edited by Eric Helleiner and Jonathan Kirshner. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. 2014. 299pp. £46.50. ISBN 978 0 80147 959 5. Available as e-book.

It seems that the world continues to be transfixed and amazed by Chinese money. Discussions on Chinese overseas investment or the internationalization of its currency, the renminbi (currently mostly non-convertible), are themes of conferences, books and papers almost weekly. The debate broadly divides into those who view this new economic prominence by China as positive and a sign of the country being a stakeholder, and those who see it as ominous, portending a China that will use the power of its money for its own political ends, in a disruptive way.

This excellent collection of essays, derived from a conference held in 2012, centres on the question posed by its editors, Eric Helleiner and Jonathan Kirshner, in the introduction: broadly speaking, will the world's second largest economy prove to be a 'taker', 'maker' or 'breaker'? Will it work in the international system through entities like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank in ways which are conducive to its own good, not seeking to change them but solely taking things useful for it where it can; will it create a new order through or parallel to these already extant entities; or will it disrupt and challenge them? Little by little, we are seeing evidence which tells us more about what sort of economic power China is becoming and how it translates this into political agendas. But as the contributors to this book make clear, there is so far no easy narrative, and evidence can be produced supporting each of the three positions above.

The strength of this collection is that it is rooted in a good understanding of history. Benjamin J. Cohen provides some general context by looking at ways in which the dominance of the US dollar as a global currency and the infrastructure set up to support this, like the IMF after the Second World War, was initially challenged by rising economies like West Germany, Japan and even Saudi Arabia, but then managed to accommodate them. Cohen argues, however, that for a number of reasons China is a less straightforward case. Its political difference to the United States, for one, stands out, as does the sheer size of its economy and the non-convertibility of its currency. For these reasons, he ends on a sober note, predicting that if China does prove to be a 'maker', it will become one only after travelling a rocky path.

Helleiner and Bessma Momani give an overview of China's relations with the IMF. They argue that, in fact, Chinese were part of the founding group for the fund in the late 1940s, and Chinese economists, albeit from the Republic of China, were key in the formulation of its founding charter and ideas about its governance. The People's Republic largely adopted a neutral attitude towards it until it eventually joined in 1980. From that point on, their relationship was initially cordial, but became more complicated after the Asian Financial Crisis in the late 1990s, when the IMF was associated with Washington-focused policies not necessarily in China's interests. Agitation for greater voting rights has had some success and China now stands as the third largest bloc after the US and Japan. Even so, the creation of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) over 2014 and into 2015 (a development this book went to press too early to cover) still shows that China wants options other than the IMF one.

Perhaps the single best contribution to the book is a superb essay by David A. Steinberg on China's foreign currency reserves. It has amassed over US$ 4 trillion of these in two periods of intense accumulation, the first in the 1990s and then the most significant in the mid-2000s. Steinberg makes clear that this vast hoard, most of it believed to be in US

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Treasuries, is hardly a good use of China's hard-earned money, simply because their yield is no more than one per cent annually. More than this, they expose China intimately to the vagaries of the US domestic economy, which should violate its sovereign pride. But with a closed capital account, China has few other options.

The most interesting argument in Steinberg's chapter is that foreign reserve accumulation represents the victory of more conservative vested interest in China, broadly coalescing around the coastal exporting regions, the state enterprise sector and the economic planners in the National Development and Reform Commission. For these, the reserves are a safe, stabilizing tool, which makes returns to a super elite of party-linked wealthy individuals who are politically loyal. The one issue with this elegant argument is that it might be too simple. Quite how a group simply labelled 'coastal regions' operates as one when it covers almost 400 million people and vastly different provinces is a moot point. But Steinberg's attempt to link China's external behaviour with its internal operations and the calculation of loss and gain by groups there is a very worthy and important one, and it is continued in Hongying Wang's and Yang Jiang's essays.

The collection also comprises a crisp overview of China's relationship with external fiscal surveillance by Andrew Walter (a topic on which it has often changed its mind, but broadly complied with regulations) and the nature of China's monetary power, by Gregory Chin (in a word: complex). This is a stimulating and important collection, but one that proves how quickly things move on in China. Already, issues like the AIIB have offered potential new insights into what China might be—taker, maker or breaker. However, the jury is still out. This book at least shows how important it is to keep an open mind about the subject.

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North America

American reckoning: the Vietnam War and our national identity. By Christian G. Appy. New York: Viking. 2015. 396pp. Index. £18.85. ISBN 978 0 67002 539 8. Available as e-book.

American reckoning is an engaged book, and all the more powerful for it. In its closing paragraph Christian Appy asserts: 'But the public is not blameless'. If Americans continue to believe in their exceptionalism, to acquiesce in the misuse of US power so evident over the past decade and a half, if they trust that US force is being used for good, the likelihood that US intervention and militarism will continue is 'guaranteed'. He concludes: 'Perhaps the only basis to begin real change is to seek the fuller reckoning of our role in the world that the Vietnam War so powerfully awakened—to confront the evidence of what we have done. It is our record; it is who we are' (p. 335).

American reckoning is a sustained reflection on US culture, society, politics and foreign policy during and after the Vietnam War. By weaving together a disparate array of sources from the official to the cultural, including books, films, television, cultural exchanges and political discourse, Appy demonstrates how, despite the ongoing wars and an abundance of other evidence on display, there is still an inclination to believe in the United States as a benevolent power, deploying force reluctantly in the service of good and for promoting democracy or liberty. Yet these ideas were sorely tested over the Vietnam War. Appy conclusively argues that while cultural interactions keep re-centring US identity on traditional assumptions, presidents, principals and congressional members continue to engage

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in and support activities that ought to call that central identity into question. In that sense, *American reckoning* fits within a line of books from the revisionists of the 1950s through to the work of Michael Sherry, and more recently Andrew Bacevich, John Dower, Nick Turse, Patrick Hagopian and many others who not only deal with the question of US identity, militarism and foreign policy, but also wonder when a 'reckoning' will take place. Despite all the disparate ways in which the Vietnam War and its legacy remain pertinent and present in the decades after 1975, the United States has implicitly refused to deal with its most profound questions on exceptionalism, identity and particularly accountability.

The book is essentially divided into three parts. The first, consisting of four chapters, examines why the United States was in Vietnam. It is brilliantly constructed around key texts and cultural artefacts and indelible narratives that exercised considerable influence on US culture. The story of Dr Tom Dooley, his work in Vietnam during the 1950s and his best-selling book *Deliver us from evil* (Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1956) illustrate how benign sentiment and narratives framed the US public's disposition to the war and its leaders. Another chapter focuses on US aggression through a series of studies that combine magazines like the *Ladies' Home Journal* with the analysis of the high politics of Washington. Section two looks at the United States at war; at the US troops and their deeds and misdemeanours; the conduct of the war, rarely reflected on extensively in US culture; and the war at home. Finally, Appy turns to examining US cultural responses to war and the framing of intervention that persists through to today. While this is an impressive book, its key tenet—that the Vietnam War 'shattered' a central faith in the United States as a force for good in the world (p. xiii)—needs to be looked at in the broader context of earlier wars; Korea, the Philippines, the US–Mexican War and so forth did not have such an impact. Had it not been for Iraq and Afghanistan, might the Vietnam War have been similarly confined in US culture? What is different about Vietnam and the more recent wars is that they brought to the American war story a new condition: 'failure' (p. 228).

Despite the attempted reckoning that Appy seeks to bring about, he is well aware of and places the US response to defeat within the broader cultural relief as a 'victim nation' and the endless veneration of those who serve without the attendant political questions on what they were serving or what they were doing. There are numerous examples, ranging from President Carter's assertion that the 'destruction was mutual' (p. 229) to Secretary of Defense Panetta seeming more concerned with '*our* morale, *our* mission, *our* reputation' after revelations of US troop misconduct in Afghanistan than with the crimes committed (p. 308).

While there are numerous books that deal with US memory and identity after the Vietnam War, *because* this book is aimed at a wider audience its reach will enhance the more recent engagements with the question of a reckoning.

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The Obama doctrine: American grand strategy today. By Colin Dueck. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2015. 336pp. Index. £14.99. ISBN 978 0 19020 262 0. Available as e-book.

The presidential election in the United States is just a year away and articles and books published on the political and foreign policy legacy of President Barack Obama already number in the dozens. Colin Dueck's *The Obama doctrine* will certainly take its place among the best in this burgeoning literature. Dueck is a renowned scholar of American grand strategy and in this new book he offers a forceful, yet highly critical, analysis of

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Obama's grand strategy. His central argument, which is repeated throughout the book, is that Obama's grand strategy 'is one of *overarching American retrenchment and accommodation internationally, in large part to allow the president to focus on securing liberal policy legacies at home*' (p. 2, emphasis in original). In place of a so-called Obama doctrine, Dueck advocates for a conservative American realism, a strategy that emphasizes forward presence in key regions to assure allies and strategies of pressure against adversaries.

Dueck develops his argument in five parts. The first three chapters deal with Barack Obama and the foreign and domestic aspects of his grand strategy. In chapter one, Dueck places Obama and his grand strategy in a wider historical context and sketches the outline of the Obama doctrine. Here he repeats his contention that 'Obama's first priority is not foreign policy, but domestic' (p. 33). The second chapter goes into detail about how the Obama doctrine functioned and fared in five key areas of foreign policy concern (counterterrorism, nuclear proliferation, Great Power competitors such as Russia and China, the Arab Spring, and relations with US allies). Dueck's verdict is clear: 'the Obama doctrine is simply not working very well' (p. 42). He argues and demonstrates, relatively convincingly, that Obama's preference for accommodation and retrenchment abroad did not advance or preserve American interests. On the contrary, whenever there has been international success (Dueck admits that counterterrorism is a partial exception to his critique), it has been a result of 'emphasizing strategies of containment or even rollback' (p. 42). In other words, Obama succeeds only when he diverges from the Obama doctrine. The fundamental problem with the Obama doctrine, according to Dueck, is twofold. First, in its quest for a low-cost grand strategy (so that Obama can focus on domestic policy) it ignores the trade-off between cost and risk. This 'has allowed multiple security threats to germinate overseas' (p. 102). Second, Obama has a sincere but mistaken 'assumption that international cooperation will necessarily follow from American accommodation' (p. 105). Dueck argues that after eight years in office, Obama has achieved very little cooperation from other Great Powers. As he puts it, 'Obama may be a bridge for many Americans; he is not and cannot be a bridge between nations' (p. 106).

In the third chapter, Dueck deals with the domestic politics of the Obama doctrine. Here, he examines how public opinion, party politics, electoral politics and congressional politics affect and are affected by Obama's grand strategy of accommodation and retrenchment. Dueck highlights the highly centralized nature, centred on the White House, of foreign policy decision-making in the Obama administration, and Obama's own policy ambiguity and ambivalence when it comes to foreign policy. This, he argues, is because Obama's first priority is his domestic liberal policy legacy and he does not want foreign policy or international concerns to derail that. He is also very sensitive to domestic political considerations; the White House spends inordinate amounts of time and energy to manage 'public presentation, media framing, domestic electoral impact, and preemptive political defense of foreign policy decisions' (p. 149). Dueck concludes this chapter by suggesting that in one sense Obama's grand strategy is very successful, given that his desire is 'to reorient American resources and attention away from national security concerns and toward the expansion of progressive domestic reforms over a full two terms as president' (pp. 151–2).

Dueck's overall appraisal of the Obama doctrine is, although relentlessly critical and explicitly partisan, clearly and forcefully argued and documented. There is, however, one glaring omission. There is almost no discussion of the 2008 financial crisis and its impact on the American and world economy despite the fact that the biggest financial crisis since the Great Depression of 1929 continues to be the background on which international politics play out. In fact, there is very little on global economy in the whole book. One suspects that

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such a major gap is not an oversight in an otherwise carefully written book, but a deliberate choice by the author as it might distract from the message he wants to get across.

In chapters four and five, Dueck presents his alternative to the Obama doctrine. His purpose is explicitly to reach the foreign policy elite of the Republican Party. He first outlines the existing factions within the GOP (anti-interventionist, internationalist and nationalist) before proceeding to offer his own version of what the next Republican president's grand strategy should look like. Conservative American realism should, according to the author, 'emphasize supporting American allies and resisting American adversaries internationally. It would emphasize strategic planning, bolstered deterrence, and presidential leadership on behalf of a genuinely prudent US forward presence' (p. 197). He offers specific policy recommendations on how to deal with adversaries through strategies of pressure such as deterrence and compellence, support allies through strategic forward presence, and increase defence spending. His writing and arguments are clear and concise and this is obviously meant to be an actionable foreign policy manifesto for the Republican nominee in 2016.

Dueck's book, despite its openly partisan purpose and omissions, is well written, engaging and largely convincing in its criticisms of the Obama doctrine. His policy recommendations are fundamentally sound and refreshing in their emphasis on prudence in foreign policy after decades of idealism (be it neo-conservative or liberal) in American grand strategy. Dueck writes for a wider audience beyond academia and his book is definitely worth reading.

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Latin America and Caribbean

Reagan and Pinochet: the struggle over US policy toward Chile. By Morris Morley and Chris McGillion. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2015. 354pp. Index. £60.00. ISBN 978 1 107 45809 3. Available as e-book.

This exceptional work appears to have been about a decade in the making. Based on a first trawl of recently available internal US government documents for the years 1983–6 when the Reagan administration's policy towards the Pinochet regime began to pivot away from its initial 'close embrace' (p. 28), Morris Morley and Chris McGillion presented their preliminary findings in an article in the *Bulletin of Latin American Research* in early 2006. They followed this up in 2007–8 by conducting in-depth interviews with leading US policy-makers, including Secretary of State George P. Shultz (1982–9), the two Assistant Secretaries of State for Inter-American Affairs during this period (Langhorne Motley and Elliott Abrams), and three out of four of the US ambassadors to Chile between 1977 and 1991, as well as with a couple of former Chilean government officials and a smattering of centrist politicians from the ranks of the opposition. The final product is one of the most thorough and complete examinations of the development over a number of years of US policy towards a single country in Latin America, in which no vital US interests were perceived to have been at stake at the time.

The book's somewhat deceptive title and the cover picture of a juxtaposed smiling Ronald Reagan and a stern Augusto Pinochet suggest, at first glance, the US President's direct involvement in the policy process. As the authors make clear, Reagan (not surprisingly) was disengaged from the minutiae of Chile policy, his proposal to invite Pinochet on a state visit during a rare cabinet discussion on how to proceed being slapped down by Shultz 'in a way you don't talk to a President' (p. 191). However, they contend that Reagan's

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more general statements from 1982 onwards, setting democracy promotion as a US foreign policy goal, provided an opportunity to those officials inclined to adopt a more pragmatic policy than was the case early in the new administration, when ideological considerations predominated. Nor is the work confined wholly to the Reagan administration (1981–9): ample coverage is provided of the 'cool but correct' (p. 13) earlier relationship with Chile under Jimmy Carter, as well as of the manner in which the succeeding administration of George H. W. Bush handled Chile policy during the crucial 1989–90 transition years.

Morley and McGillion examine, sometimes in painstaking detail, virtually every document that was seemingly drafted within the foreign policy bureaucracy, on how to respond to political developments on the ground in Chile, both bilaterally and, more publicly, through the United Nations General Assembly, in the UN Human Rights Commission, and through US votes on Chilean loan requests to multilateral development banks. US policy was motivated, they argue, by a concern that Pinochet's self-evident determination to hold on to power at all cost was facilitating the resurgence of a radical left that had been vanquished by the 1973 coup, thus potentially endangering the pioneering free market economic model that Washington was anxious to keep in place and for which it had nothing but praise. Indeed, the authors highlight the recurrent US insistence that the centre-right Chilean opposition must break its ties to the Communists and to radical social movements—'the litmus test and the Gordian knot of Chilean politics' from Washington's perspective (p. 129). They point out the few forms of effective leverage actually at US disposal in the Chilean case compared with elsewhere; moreover, in contrast to the collapsing regimes of Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines and of Jean-Claude Duvalier in Haiti in 1986, in Chile the US faced a robust dictatorial regime with a certain amount of popular support (Pinochet eventually garnering 44 per cent of the vote in the October 1988 plebiscite). This is a case-study, then, of the limits of US ability by the 1980s—as distinct from the Nixon–Kissinger era—to shape events, which were largely determined by internal Chilean dynamics. Although commending Shultz, Abrams and Ambassador Harry Barnes (1985–8) for their pragmatic policies relative to their more ideological predecessors in their respective positions, the authors are scathing about the underlying US motivation: 'At no time … did Reagan administration policy reflect a sustained and principled commitment to democracy promotion in Chile; rather, its application revealed a highly conditional and qualified support based on calculations that bilateral and regional US interests would best be served by a political transition' (p. 317) to the 'protected democracy' envisaged in the military's 1980 constitution.

Although Morley and McGillion allude occasionally to external influences on US policy formation, they do tend to treat US policy towards Chile as if it were self-contained. The book would have benefited from greater contextualization within a broader framework of US policy goals both regionally and globally: the all-consuming US fixation with Central America throughout the decade is barely mentioned and there is no reference at all to how Congress was able to force the administration to impose sanctions on South Africa in September 1985. In contrast to the abundance of detail on the internal US policy debate on Chile, there is a surprising lack of it when it comes to how the US assisted in practical terms both the 1988 plebiscite and the 1989 presidential election.

While there is still a clear need to amplify the Chilean side of the story, this book is set to become the definitive account of US policy towards Chile in the 1980s. It makes a major contribution to our understanding of an important facet of the long, painful Chilean transition back to formal electoral democracy in 1990.

Philip Chrimes

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Brazil on the global stage: power, ideas, and the liberal international order. Edited by Oliver Stuenkel and Matthew M. Taylor. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 2015. 228pp. Index. £65.00. ISBN 978 1 13749 164 0. Available as e-book.

One of the challenges facing Northern analysts grappling with Brazilian foreign policy is the need to understand the historical and cultural quirks driving contemporary decision-making. While there is an impressive corpus of scholarship addressing many facets of the history, public policy, security and cultural underpinnings of Brazilian foreign policy, much of it is in Portuguese. This is where the collection edited by Oliver Stuenkel and Matthew Taylor proves its value. Each of the chapters provides an excellent introduction to key background themes which continue to resonate in Brazil's diplomatic discourse and practice.

Stuenkel and Taylor begin the book with an excellent introduction, setting out why Brazil is often seen to challenge global order and what sort of role it aspires to on the international stage, often resulting in a contradiction between a multilateralist impulse and tight adherence to norms of sovereignty and autonomy. David Bosco and Oliver Stuenkel work through the resultant contradictions in their chapter on the growing gap between Brazil's rhetoric on multilateralism and the country's actual foreign policy practice. In particular, they argue that there is an ever-present tension between the sort of institutional frameworks Brazil would like to see and its desire for a growing pattern of South–South cooperation. The reasons for this tension are partially explained in João Maia and Matthew Taylor's exploration of the liberal tradition in Brazilian politics and society in the following chapter. In a lesson many analysts might note for the study of non-Northern countries, Maia and Taylor clearly demonstrate that Brazil has developed its own variant of liberalism, which causes traditional power centres difficulty because it follows the same general principles, but with a Brazilian twist that can result in surprising divergences from what is seen as a 'commonsense' understanding of some international issues.

Ralph Espach's chapter on Brazil, the United States and the international security order is an excellent primer on the antecedents and logic of contemporary Brazilian security policy. The central challenge he maps out for Brazil is the attempt to create a regional security architecture that excludes foreign powers such as the US, Europe and increasingly China. Interestingly, this does not rule out cooperation with these actors, but it does set boundaries on potential agreements and limits how far collaboration might go. Marcos Tourinho's chapter turns to the question of Brazil's stance on R2P, setting it in a revealing discussion of the country's attitude to the liberal norms of international society. He argues that the norms themselves are not the problem, but rather the hegemonic manner of their deployment by actors such as the United States. In effect, Tourinho explains what Brazil means when it calls for a greater democratization of global governance. Eve Bratman continues this theme with a discussion of Brazil and global environmental norms, arguing that Brazil's apparently supportive role in this area is a result more of the general international ambivalence towards the question than of proactive policy-making in Brasília.

Brazil's sometimes confusing engagement with the global nuclear order is the subject of Togzhan Kassenova's chapter, which maps out the role nuclear technology is seen to play in national development plans as well as the rationale for the 2010 attempt to broker a non-proliferation deal with Iran. The persistent themes of a liberal order applied evenly across all countries that guides this book is especially prevalent in Kassenova's discussion of Brazilian problems with a non-proliferation regime that restricts access to newcomers while singularly failing to bring about the disarmament of existing weapons holders. The

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liberal theme is taken in a different direction in Arturo Porzencanski's chapter on the global economy. He points out an inherent contradiction, which sees Brazil having ambitions for global economic importance, but reluctance to move away from inward-looking development models redolent of autarky, despite a rhetoric of economic liberalism. André Villela builds on this theme in his chapter on Brazilian trade policy, arguing that policy-makers remain committed to having a relatively closed economy, which is ultimately causing more harm than good and restricting the pursuit of meaningful rather than expedient international trade options. The afterword by James Goldgeier highlights the importance of this book by concentrating on US uncertainty about the changing global order and the weakness of policy-makers in Washington when it comes to understanding Brazil's potential impact on the future of the international system.

Stuenkel and Taylor have done an admirable job putting together a key collection of background primers on contemporary Brazilian foreign policy. Readers grappling with Brazil's growing role in the world would be well advised to include this book on their reading lists if they wish to add an important level of nuance and context to their understanding of Brazilian foreign policy.

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