

the first goal to be achieved. Mack's book provides many useful observations on security issues on the Korean peninsula, but solutions are still somewhat nebulous. The "pipe dream" may not come true unless the peninsula is relatively "Koreanized" and depoliticized.

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***The Gulf War: Critical Perspectives.* Edited by Michael McKinley. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1994. 201pp.**

The meaning and significance of the Persian Gulf War of 1990–91 for world politics is still unclear. At the time, critics and supporters heralded a "new world order" (whether George Bush's or not), but despite the vast number of books, articles and commentaries published on the causes, conduct and consequences of the war, there is still no scholarly consensus. And perhaps there will never be, nor should there be, one.

Michael McKinley's edited volume, *The Gulf War: Critical Perspectives*, might be accurately termed "second wave" scholarship on the Gulf War. Published and completed in 1994, it benefits from a couple of years of critical distance and perspective, and hence one of its goals is to contribute to a "critical" scholarly analysis of the war that goes beyond the instant analysis that characterizes much of the "first wave" literature of the early post-war period. Whether or not the book (or all its contributions) succeed equally at this is another question. The book's seven somewhat eclectic contributions can be divided into three general categories: those that are concerned with the Australian dimensions of the war, those that raise regional or comparative issues, and those of a more general or conceptual nature.

The first category includes contributions by James Richardson and Graeme Cheeseman. Richardson's thoughtful essay looks at Australia's reaction to and participation in the war through the prism of "political culture", notwithstanding the divergent interpretations ("both individualism and conformism, both forthrightness and inarticulateness") that can be given to so slippery a concept. The chapter raises troubling questions (albeit none unique to Australia) concerning the degree of "democratic" consultation in the Hawke government's decision to send warships to

the Gulf, the intolerant and constricted public debate (which sounds, to an outsider, even narrower than the debate in the United States), and the seemingly rapid abandonment of Australia's strongly promoted "sense of self" as an Asia-Pacific state, an issue also raised by Malik's contribution. These points are well taken, although one could question whether or not the prism of "political culture" is necessary to advance our grasp of these sorts of issues, except of course as a sort of *cri de coeur* for a more mature and less provincial sort of politics.

Graeme Cheeseman's chapter focuses more directly on Australian defence policy and its participation in the war, by contrasting the declaratory intent of Australia's policy (which combined a regional orientation with a policy of self-reliance) with its ready participation in an American-led military operation in the Middle East. It highlights the contradiction, and goes on to ask whether or not this should be seen as a temporary aberration or a fundamental change. Of course, framed in this way the question is unanswerable. But the tensions in policy-making — between self-reliance and the need for access to (and perhaps assistance from) leading military powers, or between common or co-operative security and the resort to force, or between being a regional actor ("part of Asia") and an "international citizen" — are important. None, however, are uniquely Australian, and the chapter would have been improved with some attempt to reflect on the lessons of this experience for other states facing similar dilemmas or choices.

J. Mohan Malik's chapter, one of two contributions that raise regional or comparative issues, examines directly this tension between Australia's residual "imperial" reflex or orientation and its desire to assume a role as a fully-fledged member of the "Asia-Pacific region" (with its ever-variable geometry). It highlights Australia's failure to live up to its apparent promises to consult with Southeast Asian states before major military deployments, and the distinctively (albeit unsurprising) "Western" cast to Australian policy, but concludes that no real rift resulted. What is most interesting, however, is the observation that the lines of cleavage in the Asia-Pacific are manifold (between developed and less developed, or between large and small), and that Australia's role may be no more complex or contradictory than that of many other states in the region.

The comparative dimension is dealt with in Kim Richard Nossal's chapter on Canadian and Australian reactions to the war. Nossal contrasts the common public discourses and policies ("followership") of both Australia and Canada with what he claims are significant differences in the élite debate, and in the use of historical references. His chapter is the least "critical" (although the term is not defined in a confining way in the book), and is fairly descriptive. One wonders, for

example, if the use of historical “lessons” is purely instrumental (to defend positions otherwise arrived at by a process of “rational calculus”), or if the historical experience is constitutive in that it shapes the way in which Australians or Canadians understand their interests. His chapter leans towards the former, although without directly addressing the interesting conceptual debate this issue raises.

The three more general chapters deal with the role of sanctions, the dangers of alliances, and the ethical dimensions of the conflict. Richard Leaver’s piece on sanctions, which argues that “the ability of sanctions to contribute to the broad range of political goals which were important in the Gulf War were also ignored”, is confused and unclear. He argues, for example, for the unique vulnerability of *rentier* states to sanctions, without acknowledging that, at least by mid-1994, the evidence from Iraq suggested this needed rethinking: for authoritarian *rentier* states, sanctions simply may not “feed into domestic economic and political processes”. His analysis of the Iraqi nuclear effort also ignores completely the abundant chemical weapons stockpiles (and biological weapons-related materials) that were discovered. The chapter also suffers from not being embedded within the abundant literature on sanctions, within international relations and elsewhere.

Michael McKinley’s chapter does not merely summarize the book, but also provides an argument against the peace-promoting nature of alliances. The central claim — that the end of the Cold War at least provided an opportunity (now lost) for “an elision of the more opportunistic and coercive reflexes of superpower politics” — is a strong one. His argument against alliances, however, suffers from the fact that few people claim that alliances *ensure* peace, although his more subtle point (that alliances in a world of power politics cannot be understood outside of the *realpolitik* impulses that drive them) is sustainable. But what is missing is a nuanced discussion of alternative conceptions: is McKinley advocating an embittered retreat to neo-isolationism or neutralism for Australia (or anyone else), or will he countenance efforts to build “security communities” (regionally or otherwise) as a partial way out of the harsh world of power politics? Positive alternatives to a self-interested neutralism need to be explored.

David Campbell’s contribution, excerpted from his book *Politics Without Principle*, is one of the strongest in the volume. It systematically calls into question the “black and white” framing of the conflict that came to dominate the discourse of the war, through assembling the evidence that many of the fundamental claims behind the rapid move to use force were less than clear-cut. The border dispute between Iraq and Kuwait, the complicated economic and diplomatic ties between

the United States and Iraq during the latter's war with Iran, and the many possible avenues (however narrow) for a negotiated solution are all well exposed. How much further Campbell can go than "problem-izing" the unambiguous claims of the victors is, however, open to question (as he himself notes). On the issues of negotiation, for example, Campbell's analysis must assume not just that a negotiated solution was possible, but more importantly, that it would have been ethically defensible. This may be the case, but a careful analysis of possible outcomes would be required to sustain the point. On the other hand, his critical analysis of the various elisions and closures of the debate (from policy-makers to the media) is an excellent model for the sort of "second wave" critique that could have informed the entire volume.

Overall, the book makes only a modest contribution to the growing debate on the nature of world politics in the post-Cold War world — by my count it is the fourth Australian-oriented book of this genre. All of the contributors had previously published works on the Gulf War, and most contributions are amplifications, extensions or condensations of earlier writings. The volume would have made a stronger "second wave" contribution if its editor could have convinced the authors to go beyond or rethink their earlier analysis, or to raise in a genuinely "critical" (however defined) fashion some interesting broader analytical issues that the Gulf War raised. It may not, as James Richardson points out, be a "defining moment" of the post-Cold War order, but the Gulf War experience can be used to illuminate the International Relations landscape more clearly.

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***Asia-Pacific: A View on its Role in the New World Order.* By M.S. Dobbs-Higginson. Hong Kong: Longman Asia Limited, 1993. 422 pp.**

Understanding the dynamism of the Asia-Pacific, Michael Dobbs-Higginson writes, requires a knowledge of the region's "discipline and focus", of its culture and philosophy, and of its newly evolving middle classes' "people-power". And a lack of understanding of these characteristics (rather than of the region's politics, science, and economics)