

technology co-operation are well illustrated in the confrontation over the Fighter Support Experimental (FSX) programme. The significance of the FSX debacle can be inferred from the attention given to it in the final section of the book.

U.S.–Japan Alliance: Past, Present and Future provides a good insight into the inner workings of the U.S.–Japan alliance and its future prospects. The book's discussion of the alliance in a wider strategic context is lucid but unoriginal, with the usual points about North Korean missiles and an increasingly assertive China. The general reader, and certainly someone unfamiliar with the “nuts and bolts” of alliance management (which forms the core of the book) might find the plethora of acronyms for international organizations, defence systems, treaties and committees mind-boggling, and the often detailed narrative comes across as rather tedious.

Nevertheless, the book is recommended as a “user's guide” for students, scholars and policy-makers interested in the internal dynamics of the U.S.–Japan alliance.

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Rethinking Geopolitics. Edited by Gearoid O. Tuathail and Simon Dalby. Routledge: London and New York, 1998.

This book begins with a fundamental question: “Is geopolitics dead?” The authors seem to say “yes”, but the average reader will probably surmise that the answer is “yes and no”. In one sense, geopolitics was never alive because its fundamental unit of analysis, the nation state, is a contested concept, a “forging” of heterogeneous histories and struggles. “Critical geopolitics”, on the other hand, is supposed to offer a necessary “counter-narrative”. It seeks to move beyond conventional inter-state relations to a discussion of the boundaries of the state. Critical geopolitics is all about “maps of meaning”, whereas traditional geopolitics is supposed to be about “maps of states”.

Yet, in another sense, one cannot say that what is constructed is somehow not true (or true enough), for durability has a power of its own. Nor can one say that geopolitics ignore the boundaries of the state, whether we discuss the revolutions of 1848, or Kosovo. It is therefore difficult to accept the straw-man conception of traditional geopolitics

shared by the authors in this collection. They take at face value Foucault's claim that geopolitics was the subject of those interested in "the right disposition of things so as to lead [the] convenient end" of a more powerful state. From this assumption, they conclude that all traditional expressions of geopolitical concerns belie a deeper or hidden truth.

The road to their truths is difficult, for the counter-narrative at times seems more like theatre of the absurd than "critical analysis". The editors tell us that the Cold War "provided strategic élites with a discourse that they could instrumentalize to further their bureaucratic careers within the military-industrial-academic complex created by the Cold War. It provided political leaders with scenes for demonstrating hardheaded statesmanship, comforting and easy applause lines, and a workable model of 'gamesmanship' in international affairs. Last, but not least, it provided the public with a recognizable and gratifying fantasy story of heroes and villains fighting for the fate of the world in obscure and exotic locales across the globe".

Strategic analysts are said to be searching for "a new global drama" and "new blockbuster visions of global space" to replace the old ones. Students of "critical geopolitics", on the other hand, bring post-modern critiques, including feminist, post-colonial, and post-structuralist perspectives, to a "much broader cultural phenomenon than is normally described and understood by the geopolitical tradition of 'wise men' of statecraft". They eschew such problems as "the expansion of NATO, the problem of failed states, the geopolitics of finance, or the regional impacts of globalization". Rather, they focus on "the conditions of possibility of geopolitical truth, knowledge and power".

One never quite gets there. Nonetheless, it is worth getting beyond the grand claims, questionable dichotomies and incredibly ponderous language to some thought-provoking chapters. The best works in this volume blend into their stories an attention to context and facts, as we traditionally understand them. James Derian writes a humorous travelogue, noting the close links between military, business, and popular uses of simulation technology. He suggests that the U.S. military, and perhaps society at large, is increasingly unable to distinguish between fantasy and reality. One wishes for a harder pursuit of the implications, although the wit almost makes up for its absence.

Kim Rygiel explains how the Turkish state constructs a Turkish identity and regulates Kurdish identity. Quite helpful is a concise recent history of relevant laws and an analysis of how women challenge the boundaries of both constructed and regulated identities. Rygiel concludes that social scientists "need to rethink geopolitics to find a more peaceful way to live with difference". It would be helpful to

explain the aims of the Kurdish, the Turkish, and Iraqi leaders, and how precisely these clashing visions could be overcome. In other words, a bit of traditional geopolitics is helpful to reach conclusions that may form a basis for action.

A provocative essay by Marcus Doel and David Clarke seeks to explain why the Nazis killed Jewish workers despite an acute labour shortage, and the need for rail and other resources for the war effort. They argue that a foreign policy of *Lebensraum*, essentially the domination of physical space, cannot be understood without regard to *Entfernung*, or the assertion of a “particular configuration of cognitive, moral and aesthetic codes” on that geographical space. The authors’ excursions into the Derridian concept of “seriasure” and into pop psychology are less helpful than would be a connection to the great body of historiography on the case, but the argument is provocative.

Timothy Luke writes on the inter-citizen relations of “Cyberia”, or society in the cyberspace age. He asks whether the traditional state as we know it (the “atom-state”) will be replaced by the “bit-state”, and the resulting implications. “Netizens” cannot be bombed and do not have hard assets that they can lose. They may also have liberties and loyalties that are separate from their physical world. While these questions have been asked before, Luke writes about them in a lively fashion. He concludes that we are on Bill Gates’ “road ahead”.

Some applications of critical geopolitics are good stories but in the end less rewarding. Jouni Hakli describes how maps, spatial analysis, and statistics are used to represent and redraw provinces in Finland, which in fact are more varied than suggested by these symbols. Paul Routledge describes the Zapatistas’ savvy use of the media. Matthew Sparke explains how Timothy McVeigh, the infamous homegrown American terrorist, channelled feelings for external enemies into imagined internal ones. None of this seems particularly surprising, which is why the authors occasionally stretch their interpretation of the facts. Sparke finds deep meaning, for example, in the word “patriot” being attached to an anti-missile system, a militia group, and various endeavours in popular culture.

Similarly, James Derrick Sidaway traces the “creation” of the Persian Gulf as a vital geostrategic entity for the United States. This reminds one of a presentation by a famous political scientist arguing against U.S. prosecution of the Gulf War. After an eloquent argument, an elderly veteran of the peace and anti-nuclear movements rose to ask, “But surely he can’t be allowed to control all that oil or weaponry?” Critical geopolitics needs to confront directly the alternative explanations that are considered as mere constructs but which are in fact based on real concerns. The work of John Lewis Gaddis, on similar

constructions of geostrategic concepts from the 1950s and 1960s, is superior precisely because it addresses the intellectual, bureaucratic, and international sources of those conceptions, which together allow for some evaluation of their utility or disutility.

Least convincing and provocative are treatments of popular culture. Klaus Dodds provides a nice critique of the work of British cartoonist Steve Bell. But his assertion that Western leaders “enframed” Bosnia merely as “a question of possible military intervention” — thus reducing the moral dimension of the problem — is highly questionable and does an injustice to the debate in many countries. Joanne Sharp’s generalizations, based on a few macho American movies, are equally questionable. The author might have used better movies and included some historical context. Long ago, for example, those icons of American malehood, Burt Lancaster and Kirk Douglas, starred in great movies (*Go Tell the Spartans* and *Paths of Glory*) that illustrate the complexities of principle and statehood. Finally, only the most die-hard post-modernist will want to wade through Anders Stephanson’s (disconnected, disjointed) “fourteen notes” on the concept of Cold War.

Another category of enlightening contributions comprises those that review literatures on culture and identity. Simon Dalby’s concluding chapter is a clear description of recent attempts to use and refine both concepts in comparative and international relations analyses. Carlo Bonura, Jr., effectively dissects the 1960s work on comparative political culture that placed a culturally-biased template on the populations of various Western states, thereby explaining away “unsettled and ambiguous” senses of identity.

One wonders whether that is always, and in all ways, a bad thing. In the final analysis, the authors do not collectively or individually come to terms with the problems of different identities sharing space, nor do they even share their opinions on the practical implications of their analyses. Critical geopolitics, then, questions the relationship between geographies and identities, but offers neither answers nor paths to the future — nor, even, debatable opinions on the desirable conceptions of that future.

Perhaps this application of post-modern theory to international relations has served the purpose of showing that sovereignty and identity are constructed. But this would hardly enlighten most world leaders or foreign policy practitioners — or even traditional analysts. What is built, must be dealt with.

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