***The Asian Dilemma in U.S. Foreign Policy: National Interests versus Strategic Planning.* By K. Holly Maze Carter.** Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1989. 247 pp.

The book is intended to be an undergraduate textbook with the purpose of providing, as the author puts it, a broad perspective on specific trends in U.S. foreign policy in East Asia. The book should be judged against this intention in terms of an overview or summary rather than as an attempt to bring to light new information or views previously not included in other works.

As an undergraduate text the book has definite appeal; it is well written in lucid, readable English, which is more than one can say about some specialists' works. It provides for student needs by supplying a chronology of events in U.S. policy towards East Asia from 1784 to 1987 (pp. 155–85) and an appendix of selected documents (pp. 187–219), leaving 152 pages of written text. Within the 152 pages the author calls for a coherent U.S. foreign policy towards East Asia, one that would be based upon strategic planning rather than reactive responses to developments. In this context, Chapters 1–2 (pp. 3–58) are largely historical and cover what have been called "past dilemmas" in U.S. foreign policy. The Asian dilemma in U.S. foreign policy is not readily defined or analysed but left implicit, and throughout the text the word "dilemma" seems to have been used as a synonym for difficulty. The quest for coherence in foreign policy arises from those who demand consistency and rationality in a world often characterized by inconsistency and even irrationality. How, for example, can U.S. strategic planning embrace policy towards disparate states or regions such as China, Korea and Southeast Asia while reconciling the defence and economic priorities in its relationship with Japan? The idea of the all-encompassing unifying formula which would resolve all dilemmas in U.S. policy towards the Asian-Pacific region is a chimera and reflects a socio-cultural impatience with the ambiguities of international politics that older cultures have been compelled to tolerate. Refreshingly, the book has none of the romanticism about China that had been characteristic of similar books by American authors in previous years. The author recognizes that the "potential for political and economic instability remains high in China" (p. 123) but also perceives that the rationale for the U.S.–Chinese strategic relationship may be removed by Soviet foreign policy under Gorbachev (p. 36).

On Japan, the author refers to Doi Takeo's concept of *Amae* (his name was misspelt on p. 226), or dependence in a particular Japanese sense. *Amae* means that the stronger partner in a relationship must indulge the weaker in the way that America is expected to indulge Japan in terms of

the latter's trade surplus with the former. The author regards Japan as America's most important ally in keeping with mainstream assessments of Japan's role for the United States. Otherwise, however, she gives vent to recent American frustration with Japan, stating that Japan's "economic expansion became a threat to U.S. national interests" and that vast increases in Japanese imports contributed to the "loss of American jobs" (p. 143).

One statement that has been overtaken by events concerns the bases in the Philippines from which the United States "cannot pull out" because they are "considered vital for U.S. strategic interests in the region" (p. 136). The idea that the changes to Soviet foreign policy under Gorbachev may have removed the basis of the U.S. strategic relationship with China, is indeed a poignant observation. The author failed, however, to examine the probable consequences of change in the Soviet Union upon other areas of U.S. policy towards the Asian-Pacific region such as the alliance with Japan and the bases in the Philippines. None the less, undergraduate texts are useful for specialists in that they provide insights into the popular political consciousness of a country in terms of what is considered important for students. This book is no exception in this regard.

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