

International organization and foreign policy

a quandary, one which it lives with to this day. On the one hand, it sees well the very negative effects that intense, rapid urbanization and industrialization have had on its natural environment. On the other hand, it has placed economic growth in prime position. It was faced under George W. Bush from 2000 with a US president who similarly felt there was no way that the US could enact protective legislation that hit the country's growth. Only with the coming of Obama after 2008 was there a radical change, with an America far more willing to sign up to emissions targets that were binding. China's travails at the Copenhagen summit in late 2009 were a moment of realization that it occupied a very isolated space as the world's single largest emitter of gases, and one well on track to equal the per capita levels of the US in the next few decades. In this area, as one commentator caustically commented, China is likely to poison itself before it gets rich.

The overwhelming impression left at the end of Foot and Walter's excellent and very readable survey is of a United States which is still able to dominate many key areas of international norm-giving and rule-making, and a China gradually coming to terms with its new strength and responsibility, but still placing narrow national self-interest at the heart of how it behaves. On this account, the key aspect of the US–China story over the last few years is how much China has adapted and changed its behaviour in order to conform with international norms, most of them shaped by the United States. The issue from here on is what will happen now that, economically at least, China is far more dominant than ever before. Will it seek to change the global rule book further to suit what it sees as its own interest, or look more internationally, accepting the consensus of the last few years? At the moment, as this book makes clear, it is a mixed picture, and one in which it is hard to know precisely which direction China will finally go in.

Kerry Brown, Asia Programme, Chatham House

The Persian Gulf and Pacific Asia: from indifference to interdependence. By **Christopher Davidson**. London: Hurst. 2010. 145pp. Index. £45.00. ISBN 978 1 84904 099 0.

Christopher Davidson has chosen an ideal time to publish his meticulously researched account of the historical development and the current trajectory of the relationship between the six Persian Gulf monarchies—Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman—and the three principal Pacific Asian economies—Japan, China and South Korea. Davidson argues that the powerful and multidimensional connections that are being forged by the very eastern and western extremities of Asia are finally making the long-predicted Asianization of the continent a reality. The book begins by examining the initial points of contact between the two regions and the genesis of a pragmatic relationship based on the hydrocarbon trade. Subsequently, it is demonstrated how this has evolved into a comprehensive and resilient commitment that will continue to capitalize on the Persian Gulf's rich energy resources and Pacific Asia's massive energy needs. This also includes extensive non-hydrocarbon bilateral trade, sovereign wealth investments in both directions, and lucrative opportunities for the Pacific Asian labour force and construction companies. There is also compelling evidence that the two regions are seeking to strengthen their interdependence by cultivating a closer diplomatic relationship with an increasing number of cooperative agreements, gifts, loans and state-level visits, which often take place at much higher levels than with western powers.

The rapid development of these ties has led some to comment on the establishment of a twenty-first-century silk road. Furthermore, with a growing realization that the Pacific Asian economies may recover more quickly from the global credit crunch than western

Book reviews

economies, the eastward reorientation of the Persian Gulf monarchies is likely only to intensify.

One area of cooperation that has thus far eluded the emerging interdependence has been security. Davidson argues that the seemingly perennial reliance of the Persian Gulf on a western security umbrella has impeded the development of such ties with their Pacific Asian partners. Nevertheless, he predicts that the bolstering of the aforementioned relations is bound to lead to a more active role in the security arrangements and defensive shields of the Persian Gulf.

Davidson's study is a timely and thoughtful contribution to the thus far modest literature on the relationship between the Persian Gulf and Pacific Asia, which is often either too broad or overly focused on China. As the author himself notes, while China is the driving force behind many of these developments, Japan remains a major economic power and partner of the Persian Gulf, and South Korea has in some cases overtaken its Pacific Asian neighbours in these relationships (p. 4). Moreover, the book gives due attention to all of the involved actors by systematically examining the relationship of all three countries—China, Japan and South Korea—with their Persian Gulf partners.

The work's most original contribution to the existing literature is the analysis of the initiatives and collaborations that are likely to take place in the near future. The most interesting and symbolic of these initiatives is South Korea's reception of the contract to construct and maintain the United Arab Emirates' nuclear power plant in the decades to come. Such developments have established an important precedent for Pacific Asia's role in the region, and are bound to further buttress interdependency. The examination of the growing ties between these actors is particularly important in light of the currently strained relations between the Persian Gulf and the West. The latter's policies towards the Arab–Israeli impasse, Iran's nuclear programme, and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have become increasingly incompatible with the regional interests of the Persian Gulf monarchies. The recent collapse of the modern Arab political order has further exacerbated concern among the monarchies, making the eastbound reorientation of their global strategy an increasingly attractive alternative.

The Persian Gulf and Pacific Asia is essential reading for academics and policy-makers seeking a better understanding of this rapidly evolving relationship, and of the foreign policies of the states in consideration. It also advances important questions regarding the effect of these dynamics on the geopolitical landscape of the Middle East, external actors and the existing liberal international order. Perhaps Davidson would be well placed to research this dimension for an updated edition.

Reyhaneh Noshiravani, King's College London, UK

Vortex of conflict: U.S. policy toward Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq. By **Dan Caldwell**. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. 2011. 389pp. Index. Pb.: £19.95. ISBN 978 0 80477 666 0.

Dan Caldwell's *Vortex of conflict* provides a welcome and comprehensive overview of US policies and responses to the three areas identified in the subtitle. Commended as a 'harbinger of a second wave of books on the Iraq war', and released in the approach to the tenth anniversary of 9/11, the work at once provides a systematic overview of the events, assumptions, ideas, tactics and strategies, and simultaneously considers together, yet separates, the three wars and interventions. In conclusion, Caldwell explains his motivation to write the book as an attempt to explain to a particular veteran, to his students and