

Naval War College Review

Volume 56
Number 2 *Spring*

Article 15

2003

The United States in the Asia-Pacific since 1945

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Recommended Citation

Elleman, Bruce A. and Buckley, Roger (2003) "The United States in the Asia-Pacific since 1945," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 56 : No. 2 , Article 15.

Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol56/iss2/15>

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(casualty avoidance via air “delivery” of military power) taken to “punish” violators of human rights and international law, Peters declares, merely emboldened lawless rogues to perpetrate more aggressive acts of human carnage and suffering.

Beyond Terror is a must-read for those who desire to get at the heart of the issues at hand without being hamstrung by political biases or organizational loyalties. The opinions of Peters will serve as a superb starting point for more detailed discussions on U.S. national security strategy and the direction that the war on terror should take in the future.

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Buckley, Roger. *The United States in the Asia-Pacific since 1945*. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002. 258pp. \$23

Even as the world remains focused on the war on terror, Roger Buckley’s examination of U.S. policy in the Asia-Pacific since 1945 reminds us of the danger of ignoring Asia. Although this area has been crisscrossed in the post–Cold War period by such formal and informal regional organizations as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Buckley cautions that “any future Asia without America is widely seen to be a recipe for possible chaos,” since “Washington alone possesses the political and military strengths to deter aggression and thereby provide the essential foundations

for nation-building, economic advancement and regional building.”

This book recounts the wars and America’s postwar difficulties after World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and the Cold War. Washington’s challenges are far from over, and Buckley’s list of contemporary difficulties includes “two Koreas, two Chinas, nuclear and conventional weaponry on a massive scale and the absence of a Russo-Japanese peace treaty.” He argues the United States must prepare to resolve such problems through cooperative partnerships that will rely less on bilateral and vertical relations and more on a variety of Asian nations accepting a greater share of the responsibility; simultaneously, the United States must retain a combination of “regional muscle,” the “political will to readily deploy” forces, and the “necessary weapon systems and Pacific Rim basing facilities” to act effectively as “insurance against aggression” and “reassurance to its allies.”

According to Buckley, by far the most dangerous Asian problem is the potential threat posed by the People’s Republic of China. Whether intentionally or not, this book’s focus on wars and their aftermaths suggests that a conflict between China and America is in the offing. In particular, Beijing sees Washington as wielding arbitrary and excessive force in a way that undermines a more equitable distribution of power. Although some have predicted the evolution of a cooperative Sino-U.S.-Japanese triad, China’s chagrin at the extent of U.S. power, and its anti-hegemonic stance, will make it even more likely that the region will see a “distancing of Beijing from an already long-established U.S.-Japan partnership.” Assuming this happens, “the

entire region will be increasingly involved in dealing with a more ambitious and yet dissatisfied Communist state, since China still recalls the humiliations of the nineteenth century when it was ‘sliced’ like a melon among rival imperialists and still shares disputed land and sea borders with many countries.” America’s potential problems with China have been exacerbated in recent years by the disappearance of the European powers from Southeast Asia, Hong Kong, and Macao, and the precipitous decline of Russia in Northeast Asia, making China the only “possible contender for the American laurels.”

Buckley, a Hong Kong-born, British-educated, and Japan-based scholar, is generally friendly to the United States and supportive of its East Asian policies. However, he has his fair share of criticism for U.S. policy makers, in particular Franklin Roosevelt’s “casualness” in his dickering with Stalin at Yalta, Harry Truman’s huge military reductions immediately prior to the Korean War, and Lyndon Johnson’s and Richard Nixon’s “humiliating” defeat in Vietnam. In the near term, Buckley warns, in addition to remaining the bulwark of Asia Washington must initiate wider regional interdependence among East Asian countries. Asian nations, instead of focusing on the United States as the Holy Grail for everything from democracy to human rights to capitalism, might do better to look at “British, European and Anglo-Pacific approaches to such issues” in order to spread their cultural horizons. To the extent that “globalization is frequently equated with Americanization,” Buckley warns, the Asia-Pacific region may one day resent such influence as an unwelcome American intrusion.

This book went to press immediately before “9/11” and the war on terror. As a result, Buckley underestimates Japan’s potential naval contribution to any multinational military effort, suggesting instead that “Japan appears most unlikely to deploy its so-called self-defense forces for anything much beyond the rescue of its own citizens in emergency situations abroad.” Buckley’s emphasis on the close interaction and interdependence of U.S. security and economic policies throughout the Asia-Pacific region are, however, as relevant now as ever. Buckley concludes by warning that Americans must energetically face up to the myriad of risks—chief among them the growing threat from China—associated with being the dominant Asia-Pacific power.

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Knox, MacGregor and Williamson Murray, eds.
The Dynamics of Military Revolution, 1300–2050.
New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2001. 203pp.
\$28

The editors of this slim volume of essays have wide ambitions. In 194 pages of text, they seek to define the nature of military revolutions; describe the tripartite sources of the concept in the still-controversial work of historian Michael Roberts on seventeenth-century European land warfare, Soviet military theory, and studies by Andrew W. Marshall’s Office of Net Assessment; and critique contemporary developments in American ground and air warfare. Furthermore, to support their arguments, Knox and Murray present case studies from seven centuries of