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The Fate of Nations

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Western themes have disappeared or diminished since Gorbachev's rise to power. They see such changes as more stylistic than substantive, however. They assert that there is no reason for the Soviets to modify or scrap their concept of peaceful coexistence, since it "has, after all, served them very well."

Some Soviet citizens would disagree. They would cite the sorry state of the Soviet economy and the heavy burden of Soviet-funded wars in Angola, Ethiopia, Nicaragua, and Kampuchea, let alone the protracted combat in Afghanistan. Indeed, strikers and demonstrators from the Baltic to the Caucasus are making demands and dredging up painful memories that discredit Soviet policy all the way back to Stalin and Lenin. Very strange things are being said in the Soviet Union these days, thanks to Gorbachev's relaxation of censorship. The impact of such grumblings on Soviet foreign policy is far from clear, of course, and Gorbachev's "reforms" are subject to all sorts of limitations, revisions, and reversals. Even so, this reviewer suspects that the unanimity of opinion documented by this study may deteriorate over the next few years.

Nelson and Schweizer address the right subjects at the right time. They examine foreign policy during an era when Western public attention is riveted on Soviet domestic policy. They stress issues on which they find broad, long-term agreement among Soviet elite groups, while our media focus on narrow, short-term

disagreements. Perhaps most importantly, they find evidence of bitter hostility toward the West, which contrasts sharply with current Soviet smiles and assurances of good will.

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Mandelbaum, Michael. *The Fate of Nations*. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1988. 415pp. Hardcover \$39.50; softcover, \$13.95

The Fate of Nations is an analytical study based on six cases and designed to present the basic varieties of security policies that are possible in the state system. Mandelbaum analyzes first what he calls the "managed" balance of power system of the nineteenth century (starring Great Britain), proceeds to France (1919-40), then to the United States after World War II, and to China, Israel, and Japan for roughly the same period.

The author explains that he has chosen these six states to illustrate the different degrees of national power and the different problems in national security. For example, he argues that Britain benefited without undue effort from the collective security system then in effect, much the same as Japan benefits from today's international economic system. For China, he examines the "strategies of weakness" and for Israel the "hard choices of the security dilemma." French policy is

characterized as "the failure of security policy."

Mandelbaum ranges widely, including much on international economic theory as well as game theory. His basic proposition is that state behavior can be understood better by observing the international situation than by any "inside-out" explanations. Nevertheless, he devotes a good deal of time to internal phenomena before he is finished.

The author's previous books have concentrated on the nuclear field. This is his first venture into a general treatise on international relations. There is much in it which is stimulating, and the book rarely drags. It is much more useful on the post-World War II era than on the earlier periods because the author is more familiar with the later period. In the first hundred pages there are some minor factual errors. For example, the author states that the secret clauses of the Nazi-Soviet Pact "left open the question of whether Poland would remain independent." But paragraph two of the secret protocol specifically says, "In the event of a territorial and political rearrangement of the areas belonging to the Polish state, the sphere of influence of Germany and the USSR shall be bounded approximately by the line of the rivers Narew, Vistula, and San." As the author states, he relies on secondary sources, but he also uses more recent ones, not listing some of the old classics like Langer. That may account for his conviction that Germany was *most* responsible for

World War I (which seriously understates or ignores Austria-Hungary's increasingly untenable position).

The chapter on Israel is a very strong analysis, excellently done. It covers from 1948 to 1979 and is focused on Israel's "security dilemma." Mandelbaum relates very well the painful series of choices Israel faced as it traded land for promises. It is to be regretted that Mandelbaum did not cover Israel to the present, since its dilemma has surely become more acute as the influence of the PLO and West Bank unrest has increased.

The treatment of Japan is also first-rate. All of the chapters covering the post-World War II period are very good. However, the book as a whole is considerably repetitious due to its structure—its mixture of facts and analyses for roughly contemporary foreign policies. It might have helped to put a succinct history of the postwar period up front. The book would have also benefited from a concluding chapter, to sum up.

Despite its minor flaws, the book displays a powerful analytic ability and is well worth reading.

This reviewer's copy was bound without pages 179 to 210 (but with two copies of pages 211 to 242). Buyers will want to check this out.

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