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World Politics in an Age of Revolution

W. K. Callam
U.S. Air Force

John W. Spanier

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The author senses a clear and present danger that China and the United States are far advanced along a course which can lead only to nuclear war and that the Chinese, unlike most Americans, have already fully perceived this. His solutions lie in the creation of a framework of relationships which would enable China to live in peace with America and vice versa. The key to the China problem is seen as food and population. Mr. Salisbury advances proposals toward solution of these problems and that of breaking down the barrier of Chinese isolation. The book is interesting, easily readable, and probably an authentic statement of the views of those consulted.

A. J. PICKERT
Commander, U.S. Navy

Spanier, John W. *World Politics in an Age of Revolution*. New York: Praeger, 1967. 434 p.

In this book the author attempts to provide the reader with an understanding of the forces that shape the present world. He has limited his analysis to three forces — the revolution in military technology, the nationalist and social revolution throughout the underdeveloped areas, and the “permanent revolution” of communism. The author believes that each of these three revolutions or forces has profoundly transformed the nature of international politics since World War II. Mr. Spanier is not content with the usual explanations of the behavior of states that conclude there are certain enduring trends such as the “seeking of power” and the

pursuing of “national interest.” He delves further, elucidating the specific motives that compel states to behave in certain ways. His contention is that a state’s environment determines its behavior, and an examination of any state’s environment must be made to determine why a state has acted in a certain manner.

One of his principal arguments is that the very nature of the international system will affect, to a large degree, the behavior of states unless a careful study is made of the prevailing conditions at that time. He cautions the reader not to ignore the relationship between domestic and internal factors and foreign policy decisions and that any study of international politics must be a “two-level” analysis of both international and domestic considerations. His chapters on communism (ch. III and IX) vividly make this point for his reader.

This book is not easy to read but contains much useful information for the student of international relations. Mr. Spanier has overcome one serious defect that most authors overlook; that is, he presents each topic separately with its own conclusions so that his reader may pursue his quest for knowledge at his own speed. His conclusion that we must learn to live “with” many of our problems rather than hope to “solve” them is worthy of serious contemplation.

W. K. CALLAM
Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Air Force

