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REVIEW ESSAYS

A REFLECTION OF SADDAM'S BIOGRAPHY

Brenda L. Connors

Post, Jerrold M., and Amatzia Baram. *Saddam Is Iraq: Iraq Is Saddam*. Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.: Air Univ. Press, 2002. 69pp. (no price given)

This book is a psychological assessment of the style of decision making, motives, and perceptions of the former Iraqi dictator, Saddam Hussein. Its focus is on the deterrence of Saddam's use of weapons of mass destruction before Operation IRAQI FREEDOM.

The first author is Jerry Post, a psychiatrist, former CIA analyst, and current director of George Washington University's Political Psychology Program, and the other, Amatzia Baram, is a professor of Middle Eastern history.

Brenda Connors is senior fellow in the Strategic Research Department, Naval War College. The Director of Net Assessment, Office of the Secretary of Defense since 1996, has supported her investigations into nonverbal communication research and its application to international and military affairs. Her research assesses the human body and its signals to infer propositions regarding leadership style, performance, cognition, emotion, and credibility. Her most recent publications include "Saddam's Telling Movement Signature," published in the Providence Sunday Journal, 27 July 2003. A primer titled Body Leads: A New Approach to Understanding Leadership and Performance Style, with accompanying CD-ROM produced in 2002, is forthcoming from the Naval War College Press. Brenda Connors, a former Department of State officer, holds a B.A. and M.A. in political science from Tufts University and is a certified movement analyst.

The book's title captures the psychological theme of Saddam's grandiose self-concept that renders him and Iraq indistinguishable. Yet the authors show that beneath such grandiosity lies devastating psychological trauma for which grandiosity is only partially an effective compensation. Post and Baram relate the story of Saddam's early life in great detail to construct a picture of his fundamental psychology. Deep isolation, abuse, and resultant rage during Saddam's first twenty years created in him a messianic ambition and an insatiable pursuit of power and control that made him well adapted to revolutionary Ba'athism and the fragmentation of Iraqi politics. Post and Baram argue that in this context, and that of the Middle East more generally, Saddam cannot be considered "mad" but

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rather a judicious “political calculator, dangerous to the extreme.” Though Saddam is “paranoid” and suffers from “malignant narcissism,” in their view he is nonetheless a “rational actor.” They build their argument convincingly and offer insights by intimately connecting Saddam’s “psychological architecture” to domestic and foreign policies that proved quite successful. For example, the book contains documented analyses that argue how Saddam’s psychological view of himself and the world enabled him to exploit skillfully the United States and the Soviet Union, and later the United States, the United Kingdom, and the other permanent members of the United Nations Security Council.

The book concludes with the statement that Saddam would not accept exile because his main goal was “survival in power.” A life not in power would be death for the dictator. The exile conclusion proved correct, but the notion that a life not in power would kill Saddam reveals the limitations of this analysis. For Saddam, one could argue the struggle to survive at any cost, in or out of power, lies at the basis of his psyche.

This book demonstrates the power and pertinence of such psychological studies, but it also provides examples of the difficulties that can attend such an approach to leadership assessment. For example, studying someone from afar involves collecting enough “reliable” data, which is often difficult, if not impossible, and there are many levels of interpretation that separate actual events from the account of an adversary. A key issue is how meaningful it can be to describe someone as clinically paranoid and suffering from malignant narcissism, while at the same time asserting that he is a judicious political calculator and a rational actor. The authors cannot have it both ways. Either Saddam must be psychologically and politically out of touch with reality, at least to some extent, or there is little point in using this approach.

In fact, it can be argued that both Saddam’s psychology and his political actions stem from one and the same source. Analysis of an adversary requires that we appreciate him from “his” perspective.

Each of us has experienced the ability to identify someone because of the familiar way they hold themselves, gesture, or walk. We also, impressionistically, use those same sorts of physical cues to help evaluate an individual’s intentions. Nonverbal communication researchers (of whom this reviewer is one) systematically examine these kinds of commonsensical observations. Moreover, a formal, rigorous study of identity can be derived from recurrent patterns of physical movement and expressions that underpin personality characteristics, motivations, and decision-making style.

The field of movement analysis has made notable progress, especially through the use of modern technology to permit close study of so-called

microexpressions related to emotions, cognition, and performance that are generally not under the conscious control of the subject under observation.

A great strength of this direct observation approach is that it eliminates the data problem so often acute in more traditional methods of investigation. The observer has direct contact through video with the subject's visible physical movements. Therefore, the primary repository of intelligence about Saddam and his perspective is himself, and that information is detectable through direct analysis of his physical behavior, which underlies his thought and action in all contexts. The personality issues described by Post and Baram are represented on the deepest level in Saddam's body—his biography is reflected in his patterned expression.

Not surprisingly, Saddam has long been the subject of movement analysis. Most noticeable in him is a disconnection between the movement of his arms



The Umm al-Maarek (Mother of All Battles) mosque, built as a tribute to the 1991 Gulf War, was completed on Saddam's birthday in 2002. It is a vast edifice of gleaming white limestone and blue mosaic. The inner four minarets, each forty-three meters high (for forty-three days of aggression) are in the form of Scud missiles. The outer four minarets, each twenty-eight meters high, were built to resemble the barrel of a Kalashnikov rifle, pointing skyward. Saddam's actual birth date (28 April 1937) is embedded into the mosque's very design.

(*New York Times* photo by Tyler Hicks, 13 December 2002)

and his torso. While observing him making speeches and public appearances, he displays his arms to especially emphasize his status and power. In a sense, Saddam's arms *are* his power. They are as visceral and personal to him as his next breath, unconsciously integral to his identity. This is reflected in his quintessential wave to the crowds—a symbolic gesture to “relate,” but the appendage is so controlled that the arm is energetically detached from the torso.

As a form of self-compensation, Saddam relates to his “military arms” as powerful appendages to compensate for his fractured self (and the torso/arm connection). The authors link Saddam's psychological architecture directly to the Mother of All Battles mosque, which has four minarets shaped like Scud missiles and four others shaped like assault rifles. Behaviorally, however, Saddam and his weapons of mass destruction are one and the same, virtual appendages of the man, which, as this profile rightly suggests, made exile or relinquishment out of the question—the equivalent of further dismemberment.

Saddam's effective routing of the international community in its attempt to expose fully his weapons and inventories powerfully fed his need to prevent this

dismemberment. It is likely that he enjoyed considerable pleasure at his success. These observations are consistent with the essentially impoverished self that is Saddam, as described in the book. The psychophysical data enables us to understand more clearly what those weapons mean to Saddam psychologically, and therefore the poor prognosis of any policy designed to cut off his access to them.

It also makes sense of his self-destructive decisions over the weapons inspections to defy the United States directly, when, as so many have observed, if he had negotiated a little here, or withdrew a little there, the American position would have been seriously undermined. Certainly many U.S. planners expressed concern in 1990 that Saddam, at the last minute, would partially withdraw from Kuwait while retaining its northern oil fields. From a psychological viewpoint, for Saddam, that strategically wise move was very unlikely.

A similar example of disunity of expression occurred during Saddam's February 2003 interview when he told an astonished Dan Rather that he had won the 1991 Gulf war. While we can presume his statement reflects to a degree calculated defiance against the United States to garner Arab support, direct analysis of his expression reveals a high degree of segmentation in his gesticulation. This is a reflection of the sort of compartmented cognition that suggests both that he believed what he was saying and that he is assuredly not psychologically in touch with reality.

In a last example, Saddam's physical body attitude communicates his passive detachment, symptomatic of how he was organized to survive early in his difficult childhood. It also provides him with a patterned sense of "timelessness," which offers another explanation for his being "out of touch" and his tendency to ignore ultimatums and deadlines, so that he can continue to exude the belief that he remains powerful. While today deposed, Saddam surely tells himself that he is here to stay, and his notion of permanence is abetted by the seemingly delusional belief in his weapons, again pointing to the intimate connection between them and Saddam's psyche.

THE KOREAN WAR REMEMBERED

Donald Chisholm

Stueck, William. *Rethinking the Korean War: A New Diplomatic and Strategic History*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 2002. 285pp. \$29.95

Mills, Randy K., and Roxanne Mills. *Unexpected Journey: A Marine Corps Reserve Company in the Korean War*. Annapolis, Md.: U.S. Naval Institute Press, 2000. 271pp. \$32.95

Millett, Allan R. *Their War for Korea: American, Asian, and European Combatants and Civilians, 1945–53*. Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 2002. 311pp. \$25.95

Taken together these three volumes indicate the variety of published works on the Korean War to appear during the past several years, coinciding with the fiftieth anniversary of that once-forgotten conflict.

Only one of these books, however, Stueck's *Rethinking the Korean War*, follows the format of a conventional academic disquisition. Stueck, a distinguished professor of history at the University of Georgia, published his similar but much longer *The Korean War: An International History* (Princeton University Press) in 1995; that edition relied heavily on primary sources made available in the wake of the Soviet Union's collapse and the slight but promising opening of China. He argued reasonably enough that, when viewed in the sweep of history and in the context of the new world order assembling itself from the ravages of World War II, the Korean War constituted a less bloody substitute for what might otherwise have been World War III. Well researched and largely persuasive, the book effectively and clearly demonstrates the vast complexity and uncertainties that characterize the international system, the strangeness of those internal decision-making processes of states that produce foreign policy decisions, the attendant opaqueness of motivations underlying the behaviors of states, and the often bizarre foundations of coalitions and alliances.

As an empirically grounded historical work it was marred, however, by two recurring indulgences that Stueck apparently could not resist: his evaluations of the morality of American motivations and behaviors, based, evidently, on the author's own unstated ethical code and related "counter-factuals"—those seductive but ultimately empty conjectures that

Donald Chisholm is professor of Joint Military Operations at the Naval War College. He is the author of Waiting for Dead Men's Shoes: Origins and Development of the U.S. Navy's Officer Personnel System, 1793–1941, which received the Rear Admiral Samuel Eliot Morison Award in 2001.

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frequently bemoan that if such and such had happened the world would be a better place.

Stueck's *Rethinking the Korean War* represents a distillation and updating of its predecessor, reflecting both the author's further reflection on the subject and additional information provided by recently declassified archival material from both sides of the Iron Curtain. In a very real sense, it constitutes the book that Stueck would have liked to have originally written. As its title suggests, it directs its attention to the broader canvas of international politics on which the conflict was played out. The book is most persuasive in its analysis of the disparate chain of events that began in various places across the planet and that came together to produce the Korean War: the ideological rigidity, stunning parochialism, insularity, and centuries-old geopolitical concerns of the Soviet and Chinese leaderships; the naiveté of the United States and its confusion about the extent of its global interests and new responsibilities; fear of a monolithic international communism; Kim Il Sung's unabashed drive to unite and dominate the recently divided country from the north and Syngman Rhee's equally intense push to do the same from the south—provided all the variables needed to cause the war. Stueck's narrative of China's decision to intervene actively in the war is especially well done. He concludes that while operationally and tactically brilliant, the success of the Inchon landing and MacArthur's subsequent efforts across the thirty-eighth parallel, by rapidly and dramatically reversing the tide of the war, so alarmed the Chinese that their direct involvement on the ground was virtually assured, consequently concluding one war and commencing another.¹

For this reader, the zenith of Stueck's efforts is in his analysis of why the conflict did not expand beyond the Korean Peninsula. He argues that the most important limiting factor was that both sides reassessed their political aims in light of changing military conditions on the ground and in the larger context of pressures from their respective allies. The Chinese and North Koreans consistently sought more active participation from the Soviets, particularly direct air support from their ground troops (the lack of which had proven their undoing in their autumn 1950 operations). Notwithstanding, the Soviets confined their air operations to a narrow area in the far north of Korea, affording them what more recently would become known as plausible deniability.

For its part, the United States was not anxious to see greater Soviet involvement, and in 1950, at least, America kept very quiet about its use of depth charges on unknown submarine contacts and the shooting down of a Soviet reconnaissance aircraft immediately prior to the Inchon operation. Chinese nationalists actively pursued a larger war, recognizing that this would afford them their only opportunity to retake mainland China. In the early stages of the war, the United States sent its Seventh Fleet into the Taiwan Strait, as much to keep

Chiang Kai-Shek in Taiwan as to deter the communists from mounting a cross-strait invasion. The Chinese nationalists also unsuccessfully tried to gain U.S. approval (General Douglas MacArthur at least entertained the idea) to place their own forces in the Korean ground war. Rhee saw this as his best chance to reunify Korea under his control.

Unfortunately, Stueck falls into the same pattern in this book as he did in his first—he succumbs to the temptation to engage in several what-ifs. Even so, Stueck has written a very good book that deserves to be carefully read, particularly for his lessons on the necessity to grasp the complexities of international relations at multiple levels of analysis in order to understand the origins and courses of important historical events.

Unexpected Journey is at opposite ends of the earth when compared to Stueck. Following the adventures and travails of the members of C Company, the 16th Infantry Battalion corps reserve unit from Evansville, Indiana, from its mobilization through combat, as part of the 1st Marine Division in late September 1950 to its return to the United States in 1951, the book is clearly a labor of love. Rather than a history of operations, the authors provide a collective memoir of the war from the vantage point of reserve Marine riflemen, based on interviews, letters, diaries, and personal recollections. In so doing, they complement well those earlier memoirs of Marines who served in the war.²

The story of how a drastically drawn-down Marine Corps managed hurriedly to scrape together, first a provisional brigade with air group, then a reinforced 1st Division with air wing, to hurl into the fight in Korea is by now well known. It withdrew troops from the 2d Division, leaving only a skeleton crew, pulled in personnel from miscellaneous duties, stopped retirements, called up the reserves, and folded in a battalion landing team afloat in the Mediterranean. The effort proved decisive for holding the Pusan perimeter, the Inchon and Wonsan landings, and the fighting withdrawal from Chosin. It also ensured that a Marine Corps much buffeted in the post-World War II defense unification fights would no longer have to worry about its survival.

This account shows that beneath the positive reports to the public from senior Marine officers, all was not copacetic.³ Despite the high percentage of reservists—especially noncommissioned officers and company-grade commissioned officers—with at least some World War II experience, a significant number had little or no training at all. The protagonists were mostly among those who were in high school or recent graduates who had joined the reserves for all the usual reasons.

Company C did not go to Korea as a unit but rather as a cadre to fill in existing units. Its first battle was the operation to take Seoul. Some of its members remained there as late as December 1951, after participating in the spring

counteroffensive and the static hilltop war in central Korea that followed. Their words reveal how quickly they had matured into Marine infantrymen, recognizing the sublime value of hot water in the front lines, their initial disdain for their opponents that changed into grudging respect, and understanding the “law of averages” and “no more volunteering.”

Overall, this is a worthwhile read. *Unexpected Journey* balances the overly sanguine official Marine reports and reconstructions by senior officers of the mobilization and deployment process. It shows clearly how even in democracies the interests of individuals are inevitably subordinated to national needs, the danger of counting paper units as effective combat forces, and the historical tension between regular service members and the reserves. However, mostly this book illustrates the extraordinary capacity of the individual American to rise to the occasion.

Their War for Korea presents a puzzle. The author, Allan Millett, is a distinguished professor at Ohio State University who is well known in military history circles and has contributed significantly to the published research on the Korean War. He writes that his aim for the book is to “find the meaning of the Korean War through the experience of individuals and small groups of people caught within the third bloodiest conflict of the twentieth century.” However, it reads like nothing so much as a visit to the bits and pieces of interview notes reposing in the author’s research archives. Having gleaned the substance from those notes for previous works, the author apparently believed that what remained would make a good read.

Alas. Although Millett attempts to give structure to his “war stories” by grouping them into “The Koreans,” “The Allies,” and “The Americans,” the author offers no rationale for the collection, and this reader, at least, could discern no pattern and no criteria for inclusion, other than that the stories constitute the universe of people with whom the author had occasion to speak over the years about the war—even though some stories are obviously assembled only from documents and secondary sources. Thus one finds a retired Australian army major general cheek by jowl with several Belgian officers and the People’s Republic of China’s Renmin Zhiyuanjun. Apparently, those on land experienced the war but those at sea hardly at all. If a book promises to provide a close-up and personal view of war, then unexpurgated oral histories rather than casual third-person narratives are much to be preferred.⁴

To his credit, Millett provides an introductory overview of the war that provides even the uninitiated reader with historical context for what follows, and an appendix offers a categorized list of selected reading. However, the value of what is published here will most likely accrue only to those well versed in the war’s history and who have a rich context into which to place the stories.

NOTES

1. For more information on the Chinese decision to enter the war and the role of the Soviet Union, see Russell Spurr, *Enter the Dragon: China's Undeclared War against the U.S. in Korea, 1950–1951* (New York: Newmarket, 1988); Sergei N. Goncharov, John W. Lewis, and Xue Litai, *Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao, and the Korean War* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Univ. Press, 1993); and Patrick C. Roe, *The Dragon Strikes, China and the Korean War: June–December 1950* (Novato, Calif.: Presidio, 2000).
2. See Joseph R. Owen, *Colder than Hell: A Marine Rifle Company at Chosin Reservoir* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1996); and James Brady, *The Coldest War: A Memoir of Korea* (New York: Orion Books, 1990).
3. See “Lemuel C. Shepherd Oral History, 27 July to 4 August 1966” (Washington, D.C.: Marine Corps Historical Center); Victor H. Krulak, *First to Fight: An Inside View of the U.S. Marine Corps* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1984); Lynn Montross and Nicholas A. Canzona, *U.S. Marine Operations in Korea, 1950–1953*, based on research by K. Jack Bauer, *The Inchon-Seoul Operation*, vol. 2 (Washington, D.C.: Historical Branch, G-3, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1955); and Robert Debs Heinl, Jr., *Victory at High Tide: The Inchon-Seoul Campaign* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1968).
4. Published oral histories of the Korean War include Donald Knox, *The Korean War: An Oral History—Pusan to Chosin* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1985); and Rudy Tomedi, *No Bugles, No Drums: An Oral History of the Korean War* (New York: John Wiley, 1993). Historical archives of the several services contain substantial unpublished oral histories from officers both senior and junior.

WHAT THE BENEFITS OF ENLARGING NATO AGAIN MIGHT BE

Joyce P. Kaufman

Ramet, Sabrina P., and Christine Ingebritsen, eds. *Coming in from the Cold War: Changes in U.S.-European Interactions since 1980*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002. 256pp. \$80

Szayna, Thomas S. *NATO Enlargement 2000–2015: Determinants and Implications for Defense Planning and Shaping*. Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2001. 165pp. \$15

Valasek, Tomas, and Theresa Hitchens, eds. *Growing Pains: The Debate on the Next Round of NATO Enlargement*. Washington, D.C.: Center for Defense Information, 2002. 126pp. (no price given)

Each book reviewed here offers a different perspective on the relationships between the United States and Europe, between the West and Russia, and among NATO allies. This topic has become especially important to students of international security in light of the issues surrounding the decision to go to war with Iraq and the divisions that this decision caused between the United States and its NATO allies in Europe. In spite of the different approaches taken by each book,

certain common themes emerge. Where they vary is how each one makes its case and arrives at its conclusion. It is important to note that all three books were published prior to the war with Iraq, which could have changed some of the authors' points.

Joyce P. Kaufman is currently professor of political science and director of the Whittier Scholars Program at Whittier College. She is the author of NATO and the Former Yugoslavia: Crisis, Conflict and the Atlantic Alliance, published by Rowman & Littlefield in 2002.

Dr. Kaufman has served as project director for grants from the United States Institute of Peace, the National Science Foundation, the Fund for the Improvement of Post-secondary Education, and the Parsons Foundation.

Prior to coming to Whittier College in 1985, from 1977 to 1979 she served as a foreign affairs specialist in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs. She spent the next four years working in Washington, D.C., for defense contractors on policy-related issues.

She received her Ph.D. in 1978 from the University of Maryland in the areas of international relations and comparative politics, and her B.A. and M.A. in political science from New York University.

Sabrina Ramet and Christine Ingebritsen's work is by far the most academic of the three. Of the two edited volumes reviewed here, *Coming in from the Cold War* allows the reader to know it is the result of consultation and interaction between the authors, virtually all of whom are associated with an academic institution. As a result, it is more cohesive and broader than the other edited work.

Rather than focus on the issue of NATO enlargement and what that means for the alliance, *Coming in from the Cold War* offers a general introduction to and discussion of relations between the United States and Europe. The chapters range from Ramet's general

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introduction that establishes the context, to such specifics as relations between the United States and Britain, France, and Germany. While discussion of this topic is expected in a volume such as this, the book also includes less-explored relationships, such as those between the United States and Poland, and the United States and Spain, both of which have emerged as important in light of issues surrounding the war with Iraq.

Of all the chapters, Christopher Coker's "NATO as a Postmodern Alliance" is especially prescient, particularly in his comment that "the most likely theater of peacekeeping in the future lies not in Europe itself but in its hinterland: in the Middle East. . . . These theaters are the origin of international crime." As the situations in both Iraq and Afghanistan continue to unfold, it will be interesting to see the ways in which the allies play a role, especially in the peacekeeping function that NATO has been moving toward.

The other two books offer insights of "practitioners," rather than academic perspectives. *Growing Pains* deals specifically with the debate surrounding the next round of NATO enlargement, with each chapter centering on a different aspect of the issue. Beyond the common theme, however, I found that there is little that ties it all together. It would have been helpful if the editors had given the reader an idea of when each chapter was written and if it was written specifically for this book or for a conference. Although the chapters are thematically related, I found them to be of uneven quality, more so than the Ramet-Ingebritsen book. For example, I found the chapter by Tomas Valasek well written and thoughtful (perhaps because I agree with him for the most part); however, I did not have the same reaction to some of the other chapters, which I found laden with sweeping generalizations that could not be substantiated and that undermined some of the important and interesting ideas. In short, this book offers the reader an introduction to many issues surrounding NATO enlargement, as seen through the eyes of a range of experts in the field, although not necessarily all academics. Given the caveats noted, anyone interested in this particular topic will find at least parts of the book to be of interest.

NATO Enlargement 2000–2015 was written by Thomas Szayna and published by RAND specifically for decision makers. It "develops and applies an analytical framework to evaluate potential members' relative readiness for and likelihood of admission to NATO." While documenting approaches to enlargement, Szayna also notes, "The pace of enlargement would change . . . if the security environment deteriorated rapidly and a military threat arose. Under such circumstances military, rather than political, imperatives would become the important drivers of the process." This is an important point, not only after 9/11 but also because of the war in Iraq and the pressure it has placed on the alliance. Because of the book's publication date, it is unfortunate that the implications of the war,

especially in light of the above statement, could not be explored further. Szayna, however, does offer a number of guidelines to help us draw our own conclusions about NATO subsequent to recent events, such as Iraq. This is not an academic piece, nor does it purport to be. Nonetheless, this small book offers an interesting and well documented approach to understanding NATO enlargement and what the next round might mean for the alliance.

Despite the apparent differences between these books, they all arrive at some common conclusions, such as the importance of politics—both domestic and international—and how it influenced the first round of NATO enlargement and will no doubt affect the next round. They also suggest (either explicitly or implicitly) that only academics or researchers who study the topic have given much thought to questions about what an enlarged NATO will mean. John Newhouse raises the question in his essay in *Growing Pains*, asking “what the benefits of enlarging NATO again might be.” Another point made in all three books is that there is no single “European position”—or any single Europe, for that matter. The United States in particular must be reminded that Europe is made up of many different countries and cultures and that each looks differently at the broad questions regarding their relationship with the United States and with one another. Another common theme deals with the relationship between the countries of the West and Russia, especially under President Vladimir Putin. While Russia’s grudging acceptance of Round One of NATO enlargement has been well documented, its reaction to the next round and its relations with the United States are far less certain.

In the wake of the war with Iraq and the attendant issues surrounding the decision to go to war, I have found most interesting how many of the assumptions made by the United States about security and defense have changed since 9/11 and the subsequent war on terror. Each book reviewed here offers different ways to look at these important concepts as they pertain to relations between the United States and Europe.