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What Does the World Want from America? International Perspectives on U.S. Foreign Policy

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Lennon, Alexander T. J., ed. *What Does the World Want from America?: International Perspectives on U.S. Foreign Policy*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002. 209pp. \$22.95

This volume is a collection of sixteen articles originally published in the *Washington Quarterly* in 2001 and 2002. It is part of the *Washington Quarterly* reader series, in which domestic and international perspectives are applied to a topic. Twelve of the articles were solicited from academics around the world. The editor of this book, Alexander T. J. Lennon, is the editor in chief of the *Washington Quarterly*. He offers no explanation of how the twelve were chosen, other than to say that each author is “preeminent” and has spent some time in the United States. The authors were asked to describe their idealized vision of U.S. foreign and national security policy in the future, emphasizing the role they would like the United States to play in their particular regions. The remaining four articles are the reactions of American scholars to those collective visions.

The *Washington Quarterly* typically runs accessible, jargon-free, mainstream articles, and those in this collection are no exception. They are well written and get to the point quickly.

It is a useful exercise for Americans to learn the views of non-American experts on foreign policy. Predictably, many of these academics from other countries emphasize that the United States could do more to understand (and sympathize with) the perspectives and cultures of other countries. Otherwise, the foreign authors tend toward a sanguine view of America as the world’s only true superpower. This could reflect

the timing of the articles and their geographic locations.

It is important to note that all twelve articles were published before “9/11” and the war on terrorism. If writing to-day, perhaps their opinions would be different.

The four articles by American scholars were written after “9/11” and when the war with Iraq was inevitable. Their analyses are both more current and out of alignment with the others. For understandable reasons, they reach beyond the range of their colleagues by paying considerable attention to post-11 September priorities and the fears that accompany them. Having said this, however, they do agree that the United States should be alert to the potential downside of power and compensate by being more politically and culturally sensitive. The Americans also advocate a balance between multilateralism and unilateralism, conceding that drawing this balance is more of an art than a science. Their articles imply that on this point the Americans arrived at their conclusion independently of the views of their foreign counterparts. They appear to be swayed more by the practical aspects of the war on terror and the risk of imperial overreach than by the opening twelve articles.

Christopher Layne suggests that the United States avoid overreaching by “shifting” the burden of maintaining stability to others on the assumption that in some regions U.S. interests are less intense than those of other major powers. He argues, for example, that Japan, China, and India have greater interests in Persian Gulf oil than does the United States and should therefore be responsible for stability in the region. The other American authors, however,

tend more toward sharing the burden with international organizations and other countries rather than totally relinquishing responsibility.

One theme addressed by the Americans is anti-Americanism in the Arab world, the cultural divide between the Arabs and the West. Unfortunately, none of the authors who wrote on the Middle East is an Arab. One is an Iranian, who observes that today the average Iranian has (or perhaps did in the summer of 2001) a “far more positive” view of the United States than the average Arab, and the other is an Israeli. They appear to be unusual choices to represent the region at this juncture in time.

Readers who hoped to learn more about Arab views of American foreign policy should look elsewhere.

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Lindberg, Michael, and Daniel Todd. *Brown-, Green- and Blue-Water Fleets: The Influence of Geography on Naval Warfare, 1861 to the Present*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2001. 242pp. \$64.95

Given the subject, this book appropriately covers a lot of territory. It is more than a treatise on geography; Lindberg and Todd have managed to incorporate fairly substantial discussions on naval strategy, tactics, history, force structure, and ship construction. The central theme is that historical concepts of “distance” remain central to modern naval operations, leading to the hypothesis that “the navies with the longest reach—those with the greatest geographical power-projection capability—are in possession of not just the most

sophisticated fleets but the most elaborate infrastructures to boot.” In developing that idea, the authors provide a useful compendium of intellectual rigor to support the strategic prescriptions not only of the U.S. Navy’s *Forward . . . from the Sea* but also of navies of all sizes, worldwide.

The authors progress from an introduction to the concept of time-distance as related to the maritime environment, comparing land versus sea warfare, to exploring historical case studies of naval warfare on the high seas, the littorals, and riverine warfare, before concluding with some thoughts on the influence of geography on navies. The theoretical background chapter is a generally solid overview of the works of Alfred Thayer Mahan and Julian Corbett, but it also discusses the often-overlooked Sir Halford Mackinder. The historical examples comprise several such obvious scenarios as Gallipoli and Okinawa, as well as many lesser-known ones—for example, the Russo-Japanese War and the Falklands campaign. Riverine warfare was especially interesting, with the arrival of the review copy in time to read the section on the Mesopotamia campaign of the First World War just in advance of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. Although necessarily slight, these case studies are far from shallow, drawing out the larger themes in often-novel ways.

In and of themselves, with a few exceptions, the authors’ observations and discussions are hardly profound. However, the judicious combination and interplay of geography, history, and strategy lead to many quite compelling derivations. Prospective readers be warned, however: This is a dense book with tightly spaced pages and is definitely not for the novice. There is a