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Global Engagement: Cooperation and Security in the 21st Century

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BOOK REVIEWS

A book reviewer occupies a position of special responsibility and trust. He is to summarize, set in context, describe strengths, and point out weaknesses. As a surrogate for us all, he assumes a heavy obligation which it is his duty to discharge with reason and consistency.

Admiral H.G. Rickover

“A Theme As Old As Politics Itself”

Nolan, Janne E., ed. *Global Engagement: Cooperation and Security in the 21st Century*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1994. 623pp. \$39.95

One would be hard put to describe *Global Engagement* more accurately than as a *manifesto*. Its 593 pages of text in sixteen chapters offer a comprehensive description of the post-Cold War world's political, economic, and security environments, as well as a recommended approach for U.S. security policy in the future. An ambitious undertaking, by Brookings' Dr. Janne E. Nolan, this work represents the culmination of eighteen months of effort by a consortium representing Brookings, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and Harvard and Stanford universities. It acknowledges roots in a 1992 Brookings Occasional Paper entitled “A New Concept of Cooperative Security” and features chapters by current and previous government decision makers including, *inter alia*, Ashton B. Carter, Antonia Handler Chayes, Geoffrey Kemp, and, of greatest interest to the readers of the *Naval War College Review*, the current Secretary of Defense, William J. Perry.

Those who believe that the replacement of national security considerations by economic concerns requires scaling back military forces, that new security challenges cannot be met by the same approaches as in the past, that the core security interests of the United States and other nations have become inescapably interdependent, that the key security objectives of national military establishments around the world are fundamentally compatible, and that these premises lead directly to the conclusion that traditional forms of readiness and deterrence will be ineffective to meet future challenges, will find comfort and intellectual nourishment in large measure in these pages. Yet those largely unsurprising postulates do not entirely capture the book's thesis.

“Cooperative security,” a term used interchangeably in the book with “global engagement” and “cooperative engagement,” deliberately “replaces preparations to counter threats with prevention of such threats in the first place and replaces the deterring of aggression with actions to make preparation for it more difficult.” Moreover, “in the process the potential destructiveness of military conflict—especially incentives for the use of weapons of mass destruction—would be reduced.” In brief, cooperation is preferable to competition among states, and much safer and cheaper to boot.

This constitutes an indirect articulation of the three vintage goals of arms control—to reduce the risk of war, to lessen the destructiveness of war should it nevertheless occur, and to lower the economic burden of providing for a state’s security. Indeed, *Global Engagement* is not self-conscious in the slightest about its warm embrace of arms control as the pivot point for U.S. security.

The central theme of the book—as old as politics itself—contrasts international security systems that are based on competition with those that rely on cooperation among states. Chapters are devoted to describing the ideal international architecture, the instruments of cooperative security, the importance and the contributions of political economy, how global institutions interact with global engagement, and to a series of regional applications and analyses.

The contribution by Secretary Perry is provocatively entitled “Military Action: When to Use It and How to Ensure Its Effectiveness.” Perry was coauthor, along with Ashton Carter and John Steinbruner, of the precursor Brookings study. It seems reasonable, therefore, to conclude that it represents Perry’s thinking on the subject and is not merely a brief contribution buried in a long book. Perry’s opening two sentences are in full harmony with the overall theme of *Global Engagement*, and they should be read as an attempt to effect a redirection of U.S. security policy: “A fundamental principle of a cooperative security regime is that each member agrees to limit its military forces to what is necessary for defense of its territory. However, a small number of nations, including the United States, must maintain certain elements of their armed forces beyond that required for territorial defense and make these elements available to multinational forces when needed.”

To elaborate on that opening salvo, Perry describes the “special role” of the U.S. military as providing airlift to bring coalition forces to the scene of action, military intelligence, and “most of the stealth aircraft to suppress enemy air defenses.” Other members of the coalition would join the United States in “achieving air and naval superiority in the theater,” and those partners would “play a dominant role in the ground forces of the coalition.” Noteworthy is the absence of argument about how the United States in this approach might persuade the rest of the world that it was one of those “small number of nations” that could retain *offensive* capability, on what criteria those special states would

be selected, and how the number of such nations would be kept small. A fit between the suggested roles and the forces to accomplish them would be achieved by major restructuring that would include “a significant reduction in the size of the U.S. ground and naval forces,” capabilities to provide a “core contribution to the strategic intelligence evaluations that assess the emergence of new threats,” and “important elements of the reconnaissance strike military forces.”

Perry later defines reconnaissance strike forces as C3I (i.e., command, control, communications, and intelligence), precision-guided munitions, and defense suppression. For a patient—the U.S. military—that is not currently sick, this amounts to strong medicine. For a nation that since World War II has pursued a much more ambitious and active security vision, here is a radical shift of long-term goals.

Global Engagement has been expertly edited and copiously footnoted, and its arguments have been presented with elegance and consistency. Its policy approach and the means to accomplish the objectives it details, however, suffer from a fatal shortcoming. That is, insofar as it mirrors the thinking of the years between World Wars I and II, it helps to ensure that the current post-Cold War phase will become yet another interwar period. Its apparently flawless argument and seamless logic echo the Pact of Paris (or the Kellogg-Briand Pact) of 1928: the contracting powers “agree that the settlement or solution of all disputes or conflicts, of whatever nature or origin, which may arise between them shall never be sought except by pacific means.” Like Kellogg-Briand, global engagement cannot grapple with the truly malign, the immoral, and the evil forces in the world. As a consequence, again like Kellogg-Briand, it risks catastrophic failure as a policy guide.

In the final analysis, *Global Engagement* offers solutions for a globe on which the sun never ceases to shine. Because its policy approach provides an exercise in virtual reality, readers should be cautioned to remove their helmets at the end of the book.

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Guertner, Gary L. *The Search for Strategy: Politics and Strategic Vision*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1993. 328pp. \$59.95

Gary L. Guertner has expertly consolidated an extraordinary collection of

works written by an exceptional group of scholars and practitioners. The authors address the complex issues confronting United States strategists in the “new world order” and also its capacity to promote its national interests in that