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## The Soviet Union as an Asian Pacific Power: Implications of Gorbachev' s 1986 Vladivostok Initiative.

Donald E. Nuechterlein

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Thakur, Ramesh and Thayer, Carlyle A., eds. *The Soviet Union as an Asian Pacific Power: Implications of Gorbachev's 1986 Vladivostok Initiative*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1987. 236pp. \$31.50

What does Mikhail Gorbachev's major foreign policy address, given in Vladivostok in July 1986, imply for East Asia? Ten Australian scholars and government officials, plus a Soviet diplomat, set forth their analyses in a symposium held in March 1987 at the Australian Defence Force Academy. For Americans who desire a better understanding of how Gorbachev's new foreign policy appears from an Australian viewpoint, this book is worth reading.

The range of topics includes: Gorbachev's policy agenda; his China diplomacy; implications for Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia and South Asia; the impact on Australian foreign policy and defence policy; the response to Soviet objectives in the South Pacific; and implications for Afghanistan and Kampuchea. The full text of Gorbachev's address is appended as are remarks by the Soviet Ambassador to Australia.

As with most books containing symposium papers by a diverse group of participants, this volume displays unevenness in the depth of analysis among contributors. Nevertheless, the editors have done a creditable job of producing a readable and relevant volume that should prove useful to American scholars and policymakers. U.S. Navy and other planners will find the Australians' view of

future security arrangements in the Pacific to be provocative.

Three contributions were particularly interesting to me: "Vladivostok and Australian Foreign Policy," by Stuart Harris, Secretary of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs; "The Soviet Union and the South Pacific," by Richard Herr, Senior Lecturer in Political Science at the University of Tasmania; and "Implications for Southeast Asia," by Robyn Lim, Senior Lecturer in Political Science at the University of New South Wales.

Stuart Harris suggests that Australia's foreign policy requires little change in the short run, at least not until the full implications of Gorbachev's initiative are clearer. He does not think a policy of rejection and possible confrontation of Soviet objectives in East Asia would be prudent: "The significant factor is that Gorbachev reasserted an already growing interest in the region. . . . Many in the region, including Australia, will accept—some more grudgingly than others—that the Soviet Union has legitimate interests as an Asian-Pacific nation." Harris concludes that Gorbachev's initiative probably means that Australia will end up "applying more, rather than fewer, foreign policy resources to the pursuit of our interests in the region."

Richard Herr believes that it will be nearly impossible for the West to deny the Soviet Union a larger role in the South Pacific: "Whether or not Gorbachev's Vladivostok Initiative can be said to have caused it

directly, the Western security posture of 'strategic denial' is now close to collapse, and there are signs that a more accommodating fallback position is being developed." Such a change will concede, he thinks, the policy of a general Pacific economic interaction that Gorbachev espoused at Vladivostok.

Robyn Lim thinks that Gorbachev's reference to "confidence-building measures and the non-use of force" in the Asian-Pacific region is certain to attract increasing attention among the ASEAN nations, which have begun a serious discussion of a regional arms control agreement known as the South East Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone. She believes that "while the ASEAN countries are prepared to concede Soviet claims to 'legitimacy' as an Asian-Pacific power, they will be reluctant to devise a regional arms control regime which threatens American strategic mobility in the region." Lim observes that although growing antforeign military bases sentiment will put pressure on the Philippine government to terminate the bases agreement with the United States, for the foreseeable future the ASEAN countries "will continue to value the 'over the horizon' American presence afforded by the Pentagon's access to bases in the Philippines."

In sum, this book challenges some conventional thinking in Washington about the U.S. ability to remain an unchallenged power in the Pacific. It suggests that President Bush will need to reexamine U.S.

security policy in East Asia in order to deal effectively with a new Soviet political challenge that is having a noticeable effect on the nations of the area.

DONALD E. NUECHTERLEIN  
Federal Executive Institute  
Charlottesville, Virginia

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Sleeper, Raymond S., ed. *Mesmerized by the Bear*. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1987. 371pp. \$22.95

The great bear is the symbol of one of the most powerful nations on earth. Is it deceiving the Western world in its every move and deed? This book attempts to put forth historical examples and current theories to provide a creditable basis for a positive answer to this question.

This work is a compilation of 19 articles, from as many authors, ranging from general condemnation of the Soviet Union and its political being to specific examples of how the Soviets have used the art of deception to overthrow governments, sway Western public opinion in the Soviets' favor, infiltrate world organizations, and achieve treaties that further their cause of world communism.

A common theme that runs throughout the book is aptly expressed in the first chapter, "The Empire of Lies," by Dr. Michael Voslensky, a former Soviet citizen and scholar. The Soviet government lies to its people, to its allies, and to the world. The reverse side of the