

1979

## Political Handbook of the World: 1978

Evan M. Jones

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## 100 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

### BOOK REVIEWS

Banks, Arthur S., ed. *Political Handbook of the World: 1978*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978. 627pp.

This is an extremely useful reference work for anyone who desires a convenient encapsulated description of the governmental structures, the political elites, and the history and demography of the nations of the world, together with a short synopsis of the most pressing issues with which each must deal. Of particular interest is the listing of the major political parties of each nation along with each party's prominent leaders. This work also identifies each party's legislative strength and in those nations that adhere to the parliamentary system of government, the governing party is listed. In those parliamentary nations where no party commands a majority in the legislature, the *Handbook* names those parties that constitute the governing coalition.

The description of the nations is highly readable. The work suffers from drawbacks identical to those of other handbooks of this type. Because the world is changing so rapidly, both in the internal political composition of nations as well as the number of nations, the book becomes outdated almost as soon as it is published. Even publishing a new edition each year does not enable the publisher to remain absolutely current.

I found that a major factor distinguishing this work from the ordinary almanac or political handbook is the inclusion of an introduction of the major problems and issues that affect bilateral and multilateral relationships between and among nations on a regional basis. By following this regional formula, some problems or issues peculiar to a particular area of the world are investigated, whereas if one were to attempt to spotlight only global problems, many of these issues would be overlooked. The division of the world into regions for this purpose also lessens

the probability that the ethnocentrism of the editors governed the selection of issues deemed important enough to identify.

Another factor enhancing this work is the description of the composition and operation of a significant number of international organizations. The inclusion of this section enables one to have a ready reference to the multitude of these organizations that play such an important role in the various international relationships throughout the world.

I highly recommend the *Political Handbook of the World: 1978* as a comprehensive reference tool. It is well worth the cost.

EVAN M. JONES  
St. Cloud University

Barnds, William J., ed. *China and America: The Search for a New Relationship*. New York: New York University Press, 1977. 254pp.

This book is a series of professional papers presented at the 1975-76 Council on Foreign Affairs session on the development of Sino-American relations. Dealing with past and present issues, the papers analyze Sino-American relations and propose future direction for American foreign policy.

The introductory chapter, written by the editor, gives a foundation for current political patterns in the normalization of Sino-American relations. The chapter skeptically appraises the possibility of an East-West alliance.

Akira Iriye wrote the second chapter on how the People's Republic of China (PRC) views the United States in Chinese foreign policy. Presenting an historical background by dividing the period between 1930 to the present into six identifiable segments, Iriye defines the contemporary issues. Drawing the conclusion that PRC-U.S. relations his-