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## The Wealth and Poverty of Nations: Why Some Are So Rich and Some So Poor; The Wealth of the World and the Poverty of Nations

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control, inconsistencies and turbulence in force structure, and disparity between objectives and means have proven fatal to success.

Hillen generally avoids political issues and normative judgments, but he is bluntly critical of nations on the Security Council, including the United States, for succumbing to political expedience and passing the buck to the United Nations to conduct operations they are unwilling to undertake themselves. He also makes clear his belief that the capacity of the UN to conduct large, complex operations in hostile environments will not improve significantly whatever reforms it may undertake, because the ultimate cause of failure stems from a lack of sovereign authority, which will continue to reside in the nation-state.

Hillen's analysis should be of interest to a broad spectrum of theorists and practitioners. While the realism he exemplifies may be anathema to some utopians, if it saves the UN from being tasked with operations that can only result in failure, it may ultimately serve to strengthen the organization.

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These two books, although dissimilar in size and scope, are vitally connected to an understanding of long-term strategic stability in the post-Cold War world. The titles of both books derive from Adam Smith's 1776 classic *The Wealth of Nations*.

David S. Landes is an economic historian at Harvard University. He reviews the standard geographic explanations for the disparities in wealth and in relative levels of industrialization. He then affirms that it is the relationship between secular and religious authority, the willingness of government to protect rather than impinge upon private property rights, and the cultural work ethic that, in sum, determine which nation shall be rich and which shall be poor.

Landes then tests his hypothesis with elegantly written historical case studies on such modern overseas empires as Spanish colonial America, British colonial Africa, the Europeanized rim of modern Asia, and Japan's regional empire projects in Asia, to name a few. Using the very best of historical sources and highly sophisticated interpretation, Landes horsewhips virtually every buzzword theory of economic development. For example, Landes shows that the Spaniards really did exterminate huge segments of indigenous people in the Western Hemisphere, that Spanish economic organization and technological knowledge were necessary to jump-start modernization, that the Spanish monarchy stifled much of the resultant economic growth, and that Latin America is nevertheless far better off today for the Spaniards having colonized it long ago. In the powerful telling of this process, Landes

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Landes, David. *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations: Why Some Are So Rich and Some So Poor*. New York: Norton, 1998. 650pp. \$30

Cohen, Daniel. *The Wealth of the World and the Poverty of Nations*. Translated by Jacqueline Lindenfield. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1998. 152pp. \$27.50

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partially vindicates the Black Legend view of Spanish cruelty; demolishes the noble-savage theory in regard to the Incas, Aztecs, Mayas, and Chibchas; buries the interpretation that wise Catholic kings knew what was best for their subjects; tears Marxist and neo-Marxist hypotheses to shreds; and leaves the postconstructionist worldview in tatters.

No cynic is this historian. Landes weaves his own powerful vindication for the intermix of the Calvinist work ethic with neoliberal economic policy. He concludes that economic development is not for the faint of heart—social injustices, great disparities of wealth, and even great waves of death and suffering are often the inevitable early by-products of the process.

Daniel Cohen, the author of *The Wealth of the World and the Poverty of Nations*, is a professor of economics at the University of Paris (Pantheon-Sorbonne) and a consultant to the World Bank. His short treatise is part critique of contemporary economic theory and part articulation of Cohen's own economic worldview.

When economic development of a traditional culture is undertaken by a modern society, new and yawning disparities in wealth are certainties. Wealth is created, states Cohen, by a tiny and highly competent sector of economic risk takers who understand applied technology. Developed nation citizens who fulminate over supposed job loss to the less-developed countries do not comprehend that a worse polarization of rich (the new technically elite worker) and poor (the manual-process worker) has already happened at home.

According to Cohen, booming new world trade dynamics can break nations apart as well as bind them together. On the African continent, pandemic corruption is the factor that most impoverishes the citizens. In the U.S. labor force, strains on the institution of marriage tend to follow vocational fault lines. All these disparate forces, collectively, are the world's third industrial revolution. Like Landes, Cohen has little patience for Marxism, postconstructionism, programmatic Keynesianism, or the morally smug dimensions of neoconservatism.

What has all this to do with national defense and strategy? Three issues leap from the comparative analyses of these two books. First, Alfred T. Mahan concluded a century ago that international trade was the appropriate vehicle of modernization and democratization but that it was also a major vehicle for conflict. Second, Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, John Locke, and Thomas Jefferson are only a few of the dominant intellectuals who posit that armed revolution is a natural consequence of perceived economic injustice during developmental times. Third, Landes and Cohen reveal the intellectual bankruptcy of both Marxism and its nihilistic replacement, postconstructionism, as worldviews during this age of neoliberal global economics and booming democratization. However, they also avoid the common Pollyanna nonsense about those turbulent processes, allowing the strategist an avenue by which to think rationally about war and the U.S. role in its deterrence.

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