# Pacific Passage: The Study of American-East Asian Relations on the Eve of the Twenty-First Century

**Edited by Warren I. Cohen**

New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.

Reviewed by Dana Laird

Although much had been written earlier on American relations with East Asia, the formal organization of the field dates only to the 1960s, with the formation at Harvard of a committee under the guidance of historians John King Fairbank, Ernest May and Dorothy Borg. Conferences of the Committee on American-East Asian Relations have twice previously—in 1972 and 1983—produced volumes surveying the historiography of the field and trends in research.[1] *Pacific Passage,* a recently published collection of essays by scholars of U.S.-East Asian relations, constitutes the third in this series. Despite a more pronounced unevenness of style than its predecessors, this work follows them in integrating useful bibliographic material with informative summaries of current research and debate, and it moves beyond them in its diversification of approaches to the field.

The 14 essays of *Pacific Passage* are divided into three parts. The logic of this division is never directly laid out, and although it generally categorizes the chapters, there are portions that overlap, creating a certain awkwardness. Part One is devoted to reviews of Chinese, Japanese and Russian scholarship on East Asian relations. Non-American literature had been touched upon in a single essay in the earlier volumes of the series, but here the treatment is greatly expanded. Part Two consists of seven chapters united by their focus on the primary relationships of the field: Sino-American and Japanese-American. The first four of these essays develop non-traditional approaches to regional relations; the final three adhere more closely to chronologically organized historiography. Part Three takes up the "other" relationships of the field, with chapters on the Philippines, Vietnam and Korea. The inclusion of the latter country in this part is somewhat confusing, as American relations

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with Korea in the first part of this century are also covered in an earlier chapter as part of the discussion of US-Japanese relations. *Pacific Passage* closes with an epilogue by Ernest May, which, fittingly, pulls together the threads that both connect this work to its predecessors and distinguish it from them.

The conference participants themselves also reflect this blend of continuity and change, with leaders in the field—some having appeared in each of the previous volumes in the series—being joined by a number of younger scholars from a range of disciplinary perspectives. Of note, too, is the advancing internationalization of the survey itself, signaled from the beginning with the opening chapters surveying foreign scholarship. These contributions come at an opportune time, with releases from Soviet and Chinese archives opening research opportunities unforeseen a decade ago.

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Chen Jian's chapter provides a thorough introduction to new work in both the People's Republic of China and Taiwan. Constantine Pleshakov's Russian survey is less bibliographically oriented, but it too assesses the impact of declassified materials and new political openness. Both essays caution that scholarship in these countries is still highly subject to political constraints. Pleshakov even organizes his discussion explicitly around the politics of *perestroika* and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and he highlights some of the political and personal agendas informing much of the new archival analysis.

All three of the international chapters should remind American readers of the ineluctable influence of political context upon scholarship—a fact no less the case here than elsewhere, but one which often remains unacknowledged in the United States. These essays also offer alternative perspectives on familiar episodes in the American-East Asian relationship. Chen, for example, catalogues Chinese analyses of American imperialism, though he notes tentative departures from this party line in some interpretations. Aruga Tadashi submits similar cases from the Japanese side. He contrasts, for example, American pride in its mentoring role in the opening of Japan with a persisting Japanese sense of humiliation at such "forceful diplomacy backed by naval power" (p. 39). He cites a recent study of Admiral Yamamoto's psychological motivations: the World War II commander "allegedly said he had entered the navy to obtain revenge for Commodore Perry's intrusion" (p. 39).

*Pacific Passage* also differs from its predecessors in the range of disciplinary approaches its contributors bring to the field. Straightforward diplomatic and military history has been enriched with economic, social, and cultural analysis. The chronologically ordered traditional historiography of the 1972 volume and the slightly more experimental collection of 1983 (an essay by Akira Iriye introduced a cultural orientation) have given way to a more complete

interdisciplinary conception of American-East Asian relations. These new perspectives add an energy to the field that is reflected in the rich texture of the offerings here, especially the chapters on Sino-American relations. This diversity also manifests itself in a heterogeneity of style and focus that may be distracting to readers accustomed to more standardized field surveys. Stylistic inconsistencies are not, however, a major shortcoming and are probably to be expected as new ways of looking at American-East Asian relations are assayed.

Of the four chapters that most fully utilize interdisciplinary approaches to the field, two were commissioned after the main Committee on American-East Asian Relations conference, which indicates an interest in including this new research, but also an inchoate integration of it with the more traditional approaches. One of these additional selections, Gordon Chang's survey of Asian immigration and its connection to American foreign relations, shifts more decisively than any other essay away from the Cold War "preoccupation with high policy and leadership decisionmaking" and toward "the broader social dynamics of foreign relations" (p. 115). The other, Eileen Scully's article on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Chinese-American relations, brings a social science perspective to the historical survey. Of note is her extensive discussion of the role of missionaries in this era, a theme that recalls a major interest of John King Fairbank, one of the founders of the field.

The Sino-American relationship is brought into the present century in Charles Hayford's chapter, which incorporates a similar cultural orientation but colors it with a theoretical analysis of imperialism borrowed from political science. William Kirby covers almost the same period of relations between the two nations. His chapter is less an independent analytical piece than Hayford's and more a survey of new work, much of the best of which, he claims, has focused on cultural and economic ties. The field has become "multidimensional and multiarchival," a characterization he amply documents with references across a wide range of disciplines, including business and legal history (p. 177).

As significant as these ventures into cultural, social and other alternative approaches to international relations are, *Pacific Passage* also includes chapters grounded in more traditional analyses of the American-East Asian relationship. The two chapters covering relations with Japan fall into this category, as does the survey of the contemporary era of U.S.-Chinese interaction. The periods examined are all ones of conflict—World War II and the occupation of Japan, the Korean War and the Cold War—and each of the essays scrutinizes developments in the competing interpretive schools of each of these troubled phases of East Asian international history. This is an analytical motif that has figured prominently in each of the three field survey volumes. The perennial appearance of such arguments—"conflict over conflict"—may be taken as an indicator of characteristics of the field as a whole.

One characteristic is simply the maturity of military, diplomatic and political interpretation relative to the cultural, social, psychological and other newly-opening dimensions of international relations. The forays into these latter areas

remain largely speculative and exploratory; time and personnel have not yet been sufficient to generate the dynamic interchange and heated controversies in these newer fields that serve as motive forces in the more thoroughly staked-out academic fiefdoms.

A second reason for conflict over interpretations of these periods may be their political sensitivity, a point made clear in *Pacific Passage,* with its international assemblage of scholars working in a variety of political contexts and subject to their corresponding constraints and influences. Considered in terms of the still troubled relations among the nations of this region, it may be remarkable that there can be as much agreement as there is on issues touching many unhealed wounds.[2]

A final point is made in the epilogue by Ernest May, when he calls for a shift in the balance of themes of conflict and harmony in scholarly analysis of regional relationships. May, the only surviving member of the original organizers of the Committee on American-East Asian Relations,[3] reflects on where the field has been and where it might be heading. His sweeping view of the past and humility before the future set an appropriate counterpoint to the more focused historiographic analysis of the rest of the work. He identifies themes of exploitation, conflict and cooperation in American-East Asian relations, and he extends only a cautious optimism that the latter might be the future direction for the region and its scholarship. But he also indirectly charges the assembled researchers with a responsibility in this regard. Perhaps he has in mind the dynamic debate centering on periods of hostility in the region when he frames his closing statement:

> We already know a great deal about exploitation and conflict. We know very little about how cooperation comes about and is sustained or not sustained. As Thomas Hardy comments in *The Dynasts,* "war makes rattling good history, but peace is poor reading." It will do us good if we can learn more about the processes of peace—perhaps even how to make them "rattling good history" (p. 388).

This volume itself can be seen as a step in that direction, with its valuable exploration of new approaches to the study of American-East Asian relations in both war and peace. *Pacific Passage* moves beyond its predecessors in this regard while largely matching their high standards of historiography. As such, it will be a fitting companion to them on the shelf of anyone with an interest in the history and future of American-East Asian relations.

## Notes

1. Ernest R. May and James C. Thomson Jr., eds., *American-East Asian Relations: A Survey* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972); and Warren I. Cohen, ed., *New Frontiers in American-East Asian Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).
2. An exception to the general tone of sympathetic engagement is the chapter by Bruce

Cumings. Cumings enjoys standing as the leading Korea scholar in the U.S., and in *Pacific Passage* he takes advantage of that position to bring his fellow academics—and, indeed, American citizenry in general—to task for neglect of "invisible" Korea. His arguments against oversimplification of a people or their history are unobjectionable, but they do little to contribute positively to understanding Korea's place in the field of American-East Asian relations. Instead, Cumings trots out numerous negative examples of American misperception or neglect of Korea, Koreans, and Korean-Americans. An over-reliance upon popular, rather than scholarly, works to establish his points weakens his position; all credibility is sacrificed when he includes P.J. O'Rourke's report on the Seoul Olympics for *Rolling Stone* in his catalogue of grievances against American analyses of Korea.

Even more dismaying is his discouragment of scholars from "premature" use of new Russian, Chinese, and American archives relevant to the Korean War. His position that the full picture cannot be known until all Korean archives are also available is valid to a point, but his railing against internationalist interpretations of a war that "had long indigenous beginnings before the end of the Pacific War" comes across as a pitiable attempt to deflect challenges to his own thesis about the domestic origins of the Korean War. This position was daring and significant when he first elaborated it, but his refusal to entertain the possibility of alternative interpretations, even in light of new archival evidence, speaks poorly of his capacity for true scholarly engagement.

Almost the only positive notes he strikes in his polemic are ones in support of North Korea. Perhaps he has the wisdom not to press this point too far, but even the extent to which he does take it—with little persuasive evidence for why South Korea and the rest of the world are mistaken in their suspicions of the North—leaves the reader with further doubts about the quality of his judgment.

3. In honor of another of those organizers, the 1983 book is subtitled "Essays Presented to Dorothy Borg," and the present volume bears a dedication to her in memoriam.

# Just War: Principles and Cases

By Richard Regan

Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996, 247 pp., with bibliography, notes, and index.

Reviewed by Shaun Casey

The end of the Cold War brought a host of new challenges to be faced by governments and scholars of international affairs alike. Some of the thorniest issues are those dealing with normative concerns that either did not exist previously or were relegated to secondary status, drowned out in the louder discussion over the morality of nuclear deterrence. The problem of intervention, in particular, is receiving increasing attention today from moralists as the problems of genocide, failed countries and famine have not gone away. Developing an ethic of intervention to deal with these problems is one of the most pressing issues facing the world.

The Just War ethic is a body of moral criteria that seeks to establish why it may be morally permissible to go to war, under what conditions a just cause might be pursued, who has the authority to initiate a war and how war may be conducted in a just manner. While the tradition traces its roots back to Augustine, the current renaissance in the ethic began in the late 1950s and early 1960s with the work of the Protestant ethicist Paul Ramsey and the Roman Catholic moral theologian John Courtney Murray.

Against this background of renewed urgency, Richard Regan has written an incisive and provocative work which will serve to advance the Just War ethic as a fertile resource in sorting out moral duties in light of the new international realities. His major objectives are to introduce readers to the Just War ethic and to make a specific, constructive argument about the locus of legitimate moral authority—a classic concern of the ethic itself. In addition, he advocates adding humanitarian intervention as another entry into the log of just causes that may legitimate intervention. That he succeeds modestly on all counts is enough reason to take his contribution seriously.

Regan sees this volume as an introductory text for either undergraduates or graduates. Thus, he divides the book into two parts: The first part is an

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exploration of the principles of the ethic, while the second part consists of eight case studies with questions for discussion. Since the focus is on the contemporary state of Just War thinking, there is no deep investigation into the historical development of the tradition. Yet, the work does an admirable job of introducing the moral criteria of the Just War ethic and demonstrating the continued relevance of the ethic to contemporary issues.

The primary contribution of the book to developing the Just War ethic is to argue for a stronger role for the United Nations in war-related decisions. Regan makes a case for establishing the military structures envisioned by Articles 43-47 of the U.N. Charter. He sees the United Nations as representing the best, and perhaps only, hope in our imperfect world for maintaining world peace among and within countries. These are, doubtless, controversial positions, but they do highlight the need to move the legitimate authority to make decisions to go to war into the hands of regional and world actors and out of the hands of single countries. Such a move would not be a panacea, but it would have the salubrious effect of increasing the moral legitimacy of any military action.

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The author also calls for expanding the moral reasons for intervention to include humanitarian aid to prevent genocide, anarchy or massive human rights violations. Here he makes a case for the necessity of a world authority, in the form of the U.N. Security Council, as the locus of decision for such intervention in order to reduce any pretext of any single nation intervening for its own parochial interests in the name of humanitarianism. He is quite aware that there are powerful systemic and historical reasons for not intervening in the domestic affairs of nations. Yet, the magnitude of humanitarian need calls out for principled thought about why and when to override claims to absolute sovereignty.

The author's natural law account of "right reason" as the source of moral norms within the Just War ethic will evoke dissent from many quarters. His version of natural law is perhaps the best version available today in that it follows in the Roman Catholic natural law tradition as mediated through the U.S. Catholic bishops in their pastoral letter, "The Challenge of Peace." Regan fits somewhere between conservative Catholics such as George Weigel and Michael Novak and the more progressive views of David Hollenbach and Bryan Hehir. Yet, any version of natural law will be criticized by philosophers and realist theorists of international relations. Philosophers will question the very existence of any self-evident "right reason," and realists will be wary of any sources of moral norms beyond the interests of individual nation states.

The epistemological test for the Just War ethic is how to navigate the pluralism of available forms of philosophical justifications available today. This natural law version, which is assumed and not defended, is just one of many options.

In the eight case studies and their attendant questions, Regan offers a wide variety of chances for students to grapple with the application of the Just War ethic. From World War I, through Vietnam and the Gulf War, to Somalia and the war in Bosnia, there are many complex moral issues to be assessed. Each case is presented in a straightforward journalistic manner with a minimum of analysis or comment. It is in the question section that traces of Regan's own opinions are to be discovered.

In the end, it would have been more satisfying to have had a brief essay from the author, after the case is stated and his questions asked, in order to see precisely what he believes the ethic brings to the moral assessment of these specific examples. While the author makes a strong theoretical argument for the continuing relevance of the Just War ethic to foreign policy, his position would have been much stronger if he had demonstrated more forthrightly how moral analysis can guide us through these difficult cases.

Just War theorists are currently attempting to adapt the ethic to current political concerns. This entry into the discussion is a serious and fruitful contribution. Regardless of one's orientation, whether realist or idealist, pacifist or crusader, devout or impious, the reader will be challenged to grapple with the tough questions associated with the search for justice in the international order. Regan certainly believes that practical wisdom can lead to the establishment of a more just order, and that is an affirmation worth defending.

# Pop Internationalism

## By Paul Krugman

Cambridge, MA: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1996, 221 pp., including index.

Reviewed by Lisa Gentile

In this collection of 13 essays originally published in various trade journals, Paul Krugman launches an assault on what he terms the "pop internationalism" prevalent in the discourse on world trade. An eminent professor of economics at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and author of the best-selling book *Age of Diminished Expectations*, Krugman offers an incisive economic analysis in a simple and captivating style. Krugman defines "pop internationalists" as those who propagate the idea that competition among nations determines the economic fate of their citizens. According to Krugman, conventional wisdom perpetrates the fallacious analogy that nation-states engage in competition similar to corporations.

Sharply criticizing this "win-lose" vision of the world, Krugman suggests that many economists deviate from the rudimentary principles of trade theory, thus spreading misperceptions about international trade economics. Consequently, so-called trade experts and policy advisers misguide decision makers who, in turn, misdirect government policy. Krugman exhorts non-specialists to consult a freshman economics textbook to gain an understanding of the fundamentals of comparative advantage in international trade. Eschewing technical economic jargon and formulas, Krugman makes elementary principles of international economics accessible to the lay reader. His central thesis is that free trade is not to blame for declining standards of living in advanced economies.

The first group of essays discusses the notion of a zero-sum world in which foreign economic gains must correspond to losses in the American economy. In Krugman's view, the widespread obsession with competitiveness among countries is dangerous. He points out that countries, unlike corporations, cannot go out of business and that the balance of trade is not a measure of com-

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petitiveness. Krugman warns of the danger of providing fodder for demagogues and gloom-and-doom populists—such as former presidential candidate Pat Buchanan—hence stoking the flames of protectionism and running the risk of trade war. He demonstrates how the folly of the pop internationalists can be further compounded by careless arithmetic and the dubious representation of statistics.

Conventional wisdom maintains that foreign competition has eroded the U.S. manufacturing base and that international competition is the cause of U.S. economic woes. But, the media and political hype is much ado about nothing. A sober analysis of the numbers reveals an untold story of trade, jobs, and wages. In order to test the hypothesis that deteriorating terms of trade have put a strain on the U.S. standard of living, Krugman examines command gross national product (GNP) figures which are a measure of national purchasing power in terms of U.S. imports. He demonstrates that recent stagnation in U.S. living standards and sluggish GNP growth can be explained by a decline in domestic productivity growth. Data for Europe and Japan tell a similar tale: domestic, not international, factors are determinant.

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It is true that the U.S. manufacturing sector has shrunk, but it is mistaken to attribute this phenomenon to international trade. Although there is an inclination to blame deindustrialization on imports, domestic factors are the primary contributors to declining wages in the United States. Manufacturing as a portion of gross domestic product (GDP) has steadily declined since the 1950s, and Krugman's figures confirm that trade deficits in recent years have barely contributed to the overall declining share of manufacturing in the U.S. economy.

> The share of manufacturing in GDP is declining because people are buying relatively fewer goods; manufacturing employment is falling because companies are replacing workers with machines and making more efficient use of those they retain. Wages have stagnated because the rate of productivity growth in the economy as a whole has slowed, and less skilled workers in particular are suffering because a high-technology economy has less and less demand for their services. Our trade with the rest of the world plays at best a small role in each case (p. 48).

In order to correct America's economic ills, it is essential to assess accurately the root causes. It has become fashionable, however, to view economic success in the Third World as a menace to First World prosperity. Emerging economies have become the new economic nemesis of the United States, Japan and Europe. Low-wage competition from the Third World has been identified as the cause of unusually high long-term unemployment rates in Europe.

Krugman asserts that these apprehensions are unfounded. In theory, higher Third World productivity and higher Third World wages may result in lower First World wages, but those First World wages also benefit from increased purchasing power. "Popspeak" about declining wages ignores relative international gains in purchasing power. Krugman's model shows that increases in Third World productivity have reduced real wages in the developed world by a mere 0.15 percent—hardly the economic devastation predicted by the pundits.

In a scathing condemnation of the exponents of the imminent conflict in international trade, Krugman offers an enlightening discussion of the state of academic economics and the widespread disdain for trained specialists. With military metaphors and amateur economists abounding, the discussion of the effects of Third World competition has been convoluted by even such revered figures as historian Paul Kennedy. According to Krugman, Kennedy has confused Adam Smith for David Ricardo and made the common mistake of citing comparative advantage when, in fact, he was speaking of absolute advantage. Moreover, he claims that amateur economists tend to overlook simple truths of national accounting such as savings minus investment must equal exports minus imports. Failure to take this equation into account leads some to the erroneous assumption that a Third World country can run a trade surplus and attract foreign capital at the same time.

The second group of essays is devoted to basic economic theory. An explanation of the elementary concepts of comparative advantage sheds light on the myths of international competitiveness. Some valid concerns over U.S. international competitiveness do exist, although these are not the issues raised by pop internationalists. Most notably, self-reinforcing external economies can corrupt pure international competition and may work to exclude countries whose industries might otherwise possess a comparative advantage. In such circumstances, government intervention may be necessary.

Krugman's review of Laura D'Andrea Tyson's *Who's Bashing Whom* notes that traditional trade theory does not pretend that everyone gains from free trade. While every country stands to gain from free trade, it may have significant effects on the distribution of income within countries. Therefore, in theory, it is possible that trade hurts unskilled American workers. Thus, Tyson qualifies the case for free trade based on the notion of "increasing returns" due to historical accident and economies of scale. Her new trade theory holds that government action can create comparative advantage and supports the argument for strategic trade policies. There is scant evidence, however, of any significant effect on the trade balance. According to Krugman, Tyson's work merely attempts to merge economic scholars with the high profile group of competitive internationalists, of which President Clinton is a premier devotee.

A typical competitive internationalist statement would read as follows:

> We need a new economic paradigm, because today America is part of a truly global economy. To maintain a standard of living, Amer-

> ica now has to learn to compete in an ever tougher world marketplace. That's why high productivity and product quality have become essential. We need to move the American economy into the high-value sectors that will generate jobs for the future. And the only way we can be competitive in the new global economy is if we forge a new partnership between government and business (p. 118).

Krugman proclaims that these popular views can be dismantled in an introductory undergraduate economics course, where one should learn that: 1) international trade does not change the basics of economic activity; 2) international trade is about mutually beneficial exchange and not about cutthroat competition; 3) high productivity is desirable, not because it allows countries to compete with each other, but because it provides for increased production and therefore, increased consumption; 4) high-value sectors are not the issue; 5) employment is a macroeconomic issue, with microeconomic trade policies having little net effect; and 6) the main competition consists of U.S. industries against each other and is not country versus country.

The third section of essays addresses the situation in emerging economies in light of the central themes of the preceding chapters. Krugman's fundamental approach to comparative advantage and international trade serves to support his positions on the utility of currency devaluation in the case of Mexico, the callous truths about the North American Free Trade Agreement, and the popular myths of Asia's economic miracle. In sum, the debate on these areas of international trade are mistakenly mired in the basic precepts of pop internationalism "based more on the circular process of important people reinforcing each other's dogma than on really solid evidence" (p. 133). Much of the confusion stems from anxieties over a real problem of rising wage inequality and unemployment in the advanced economies.

The final two essays identify the apparent paradox of technological change and efficiency. When the confusion subsides, the hard evidence reveals that technological progress is the true culprit. Nevertheless, if the pattern of the technological revolution follows that of the industrial revolution, one can speculate—like Krugman—that "the current age of inequality will give way to a golden age of equality."

Numerous comments and concepts are reiterated throughout this series of essays. Rather than seeming repetitious, they serve to clarify, illustrate and reinforce the formidable complexities of international economics. Krugman's task to redress what has gone asunder might be unpleasant and unpopular at times, however, his contribution to the current understanding of international trade relations is indispensable. Touted as one of the most important economic books of 1996, *Pop Internationalism* should be priority reading for any internationalist who wishes to make sense of the muddled world of trade among nations.