

the representation of a wider spectrum of perspectives can be expected in a subsequent edition of this book.

I would highly recommend this book to readers who wish to gain an insight into an exciting and dynamic area of the law which will only continue to flourish. This book demonstrates that while the Kyoto Protocol seeks to address an environmental issue, the legal implications of emissions trading extend well beyond environmental law, encompassing and interacting with many other areas of the law including commercial law, property law, competition law, securities regulation and so on. The editors of *Legal Aspects of Implementing the Kyoto Protocol Mechanisms: Making Kyoto Work* deserve much credit for this invaluable contribution towards the literature on the Kyoto regime.

reviewed by JOLENE LIN

Beyond the Age of Innocence: Rebuilding Trust Between America and the World BY KISHORE MAHBUBANI, [New York: Public Affairs/Perseus, 2005. xx + 236 pp. Hardcover: US\$ 26]

Mr. Kishore Mahbubani is the Dean of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, following a very distinguished career in the Singapore Foreign Service which culminated in two terms as Singapore's Ambassador to the United Nations (New York). He was Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 1993-1998. His latest book, *Beyond the Age of Innocence: Rebuilding Trust Between America and the World*, lies, at first glance, in the tradition of a seminal American work, first published in 1959.

In that year, the prominent American historian William Appleman Williams (1921-1990) first published *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, new ed., (New York/London: Norton, 1988). Its impact was modest at the time of its publication, which also served to limit the controversy it caused. Criticised by some as a Stalinist tract at the time, during the height of McCarthyism, or perhaps worse, as an irrelevance, it is recognised today as the classic work on the economic interpretation of American foreign policy. One of the themes explored by the late Professor Williams was the tragedy of American attempts to make a better place of the world, or at least of individual nations in America's own image. Tragedy because America, with the best of intentions and the

highest ideals, had transformed countries like Cuba, for example, from a Spanish colony to an American protectorate, had grown the local sugar industry, fostered representative government and the rule of law, and so on, while remaining at the same time oblivious to the other, more controversial, effects of American policy in other countries.

The Tragedy of American Diplomacy begins by exploring a reality which Americans glimpsed only vaguely, but a reality which nonetheless threatened to impinge on the idealised "consensus" American conception of American power, its use and deployment. From a Cuban viewpoint, America failed to deliver what it promised. It fell to Cuba and Cubans to create for themselves the ideal which had been promised—enjoyment of the right of self-determination and a modern and balanced Cuban political economy. In short, America created Castro and the Cuban crisis of 1958 to 1961, and Williams argues that such examples represented American diplomacy as a whole by the twentieth century.

In *Beyond the Age of Innocence*, Mahbubani says that Americans know less about the world around them than the world does about America. Americans today live in a goldfish bowl—what happens in America is broadcast into living rooms globally. The world watches America watch TV and what America sees on TV tells America less about the world than what others outside America see about America. In the meantime, Mahbubani explains, the consequences of American policies has stirred discontent towards America internationally, while American-led economic globalisation has shrunk the world and therefore brought that discontent closer to America's shores. In Chapter Two (at 27-58), he deals with "How America Has Harmed the World". With the collapse of the Soviet Empire and the end of the Cold War, America found itself without "vital short-term interests" in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Indonesia and many other parts of the world, and it abandoned these countries. In the case of Afghanistan, for example, this caused chaos in Afghanistan while a borderless, shrinking global reality brought the issue home to America: "These were, in simple terms, the origins of the catastrophe that occurred in September 2001" (at 38). The other examples given are equally disturbing, as they are compelling; strong American support had helped to sustain the regime of President Suharto but in 1998, during the Asian financial crisis, the United States and the International Monetary Fund

demanded reform, carrying with it the suggestion that the Suharto regime was short on legitimacy (at 43-45). According to Mahbubani, that crisis brought an estimated fifty to a hundred million Indonesians which the Suharto Administration had previously lifted out of poverty back into poverty. This probably helped to fuel the radicalisation of Islam in a region previously better known for its gentle approach towards Islam, a religion of peace.

The metaphor which Mahbubani employs to describe America today is that of a “large, ordinary elephant”. The world has now realised that America, large and powerful though it may be, is not exceptional. That it acts according to its own interests, just like any other nation, despite the long gestation of mainstream American thought about America’s promise to the world. A gestation which Williams, for example, had traced to the concentration, initially, of foreign policy decision-making in the hands of a small executive elite who possessed a vision of the “American Way” from President McKinley to Teddy Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman. Mahbubani himself quotes the Kennedy-like tones of President William Jefferson Clinton in the 1990s (at 31):

In a new era of peril and opportunity, our overriding purpose must be to expand and strengthen the world’s community of market-based democracies. During the Cold War, we sought to contain a threat to survival of free institutions. Now we seek to enlarge the circle of nations that live under those free institutions, for our dream is of a day when the opinions and energies of every person in the world will be given full expression in a world of thriving democracies that cooperate with each other and live in peace.

Mahbubani’s thesis is therefore a juxtaposition of the rhetoric of American exceptionalism and the reality of American ordinariness. Ordinary countries design and execute policies in light of what is sometimes a very near-sighted view of what its interests require, while exceptional countries (we suppose) have a grand vision about the betterment of the world. There is more than an echo here of Williams citing the rise of Jacksonian democracy in the earlier part of the nineteenth century, and which was “inextricably connected with individualism, private property, and a capitalist marketplace economy”. Detractors from this vision were

viewed in America as “quixotic idealists, ignorant dreamers, or dangerous radicals—or all three”. By the 1950s, however, decision-makers were no longer controlling the levers of the machine which maintained this broad vision—they had become hostage to the vision itself. According to Williams: “Not only could the elite answer critics by explaining that it could not change course because of popular support for existing policy, but even reformers within the elite believed and acted upon that reading of political reality”. The elephant was now loose, and a large elephant it may be but by the 1990s, anyone could see that it was only a mythical animal. The true American elephant was quite ordinary, behaving as any ordinary political animal would. According to Mahbubani (at 53):

The world expected benign or moral leadership from America. Instead, as the decade of the 1990s unfolded, the world began to be aware that America was perhaps an ordinary country. The problem here was that this ordinary country had become massively powerful...The rest of the world discovered that it was sharing this shrinking space with a large elephant. This large elephant did not intend to harm the occupants. But it was nonetheless quite indifferent to the impact of its actions on the rest of the world. Gradually, as this became the perception of America around the world, the process of disillusionment began to grow.

In Chapter Three, “America and Islam”, Mahbubani proceeds to expand on this theme, arguing that globalisation driven by Western technology, such as the “modernising” effect that the Arabic television channel Al-Jazeera, for example, was supposed to have on a Middle-Eastern audience became instead a contributory cause of radical Islam on a global scale. It was Western technology which helped to “wire” the Middle Eastern Question to the global network grid of the Islamic faithful by broadcasting the issue to moderate Muslims the world over, including Muslim-concentrated maritime Southeast Asia. This was “the Al-Jazeera effect” (at 68-69). Yet in all this, Americans remain puzzled, for example, about the current negative global reaction towards America. The sort of animosity that fueled 9/11 was something that caught most Americans wholly by surprise, not only by the animosity or hatred shown towards America, but also for its sheer proximity.

Mahbubani's is a sympathetic account. Indeed, the first chapter is devoted to showing how America has benefitted the world in many ways (at 1-26). According to Mahbubani, America, unlike the European colonial powers, did not believe in "democracy at home, empire abroad" (at 9). Instead, it became a champion of decolonisation and exported its domestic convictions about equal rights and equal dignity abroad. America's more natural instinct was to liberate, not subjugate (at 11). Why should the Japanese wish to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the arrival of Commodore Perry, for example, Mahbubani asks. It may or not be true, as Mahbubani says, that "few Japanese have bitter or resentful memories of General MacArthur's occupation". His explanation nonetheless is that many Japanese would accept that the "right course" was set for Japan as a result (at 14). Mahbubani extrapolates from the Japanese experience as "the first nation in East Asia to appreciate the virtues of America" (at 15). There is a lively account, for example, of Deng Xiaoping's American visit of 1979 where, by allowing the visit to be broadcast in China, Deng subtly used "the American dream to smash the 'iron rice bowl' " provided by Chinese Communist Party rule (at 16-18). Likewise, with India's "big leap" into the modern world (at 20). Today, Dean Mahbubani points out, while America is bogged down in Iraq, Vietnam provides quiet assistance (at p. 26).

The association between Mahbubani's views and those of Williams referred to above is perhaps not an obvious one at first glance. Mahbubani is interested in the global context of American foreign policy decisions, from the standpoint of the classic "insider-outsider". The "insider" view of someone who has lived in America and enjoyed access sits alongside the "outsider" viewpoint of the British post-War Singapore generation growing up in the ensuing decades of the American Age. This is unlike Williams who tore into establishment thinking from the viewpoint of critical American expert opinion. More will be said below, but Mahbubani's Chapter Four, "America and China", provides the clearest example of his somewhat unique authorial standpoint.

In the fourth chapter, Mahbubani begins by expressing his reservations about the sorts of views key Bush Administration policy-makers would tend to hold about China, bearing in mind the participation of such key figures in the controversial post-Gulf War "Defence Planning Guidance" (see Jim Lobe, "Politics: Bolton's Nomination Could

Signal Return of 'Unipolarism'", online: <www.globalinfo.org>; Michael Flynn, "The War Hawks", *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 13 April 2003). According to that document: "Our first objective is to prevent the re-emergence of a new rival" (at 98). Mahbubani argues, however, that what is important for China will be what has always been important to China—cultural recognition in the form of such political and psychological tribute to China so as to "mark the restoration of China's place in the world" (at 101). American strategic thinkers commit a serious error by simply assuming that China, as it becomes stronger, will inevitably, as Japan did, behave as the European Powers of the past. Mahbubani challenges this view that China will follow the path of Japan (at 100):

China will not. Superficially, China will behave like any other nation state, joining in and participating in various multilateral fora. But if China continues to succeed and develop in strength and emerges as a real great power, it will fall back on its own distinct history in determining the role it will carve out for itself in the world.

Thus, China's attempt to ensure its "peaceful rise" should not be compared, *a priori*, with Japan's imperial "civilising mission" which culminated in the Tanaka Memorial, presented to the Japanese Emperor on 25 July 1927 (R.P. Anand, *Studies in International Law and History: An Asian Perspective* (Leiden/Boston: Nijhoff, 2004) at 72):

... Japan cannot remove the difficulties in Eastern Asia unless she adopts a policy of Blood and Iron. But in carrying out this policy we have to face the United States which has been turned against us by China's policy of fighting poison with poison. In the future ... we must first crush the United States just as in the past we had to fight the Russo-Japanese War. But in order to conquer China, we must first conquer Manchuria and Mongolia. In order to conquer the world we must first conquer China. If we succeed in conquering China the rest of the Asiatic countries and the South Sea countries will fear us and surrender to us.

In a sense, America has won, Mahbubani points out. China has bought the American vision: "... that nations need no longer pursue paths of military conquest to grow and prosper. Instead, trade and economic integration provide a surer path to economic prosperity and peace.

China has observed how well both Japan and Germany emerged from the ruins of World War II" (at 108). The fear he expresses, however, is that American miscalculation, especially over the Taiwan issue, could unwittingly unleash the demon of Chinese nationalism, whereupon "conciliatory leaders can easily be swept away by uncontrollable domestic political forces" (at 111). Mahbubani criticises the American perception that "good Chinese Communist Party rule" is a contradiction in terms, that it may "indeed be a lesser evil", but "good it could never be" (at 114). He sees the question essentially as one about what sort of course best ensures the legitimacy of the current Chinese leadership, and which best meets both the needs of order in China and China's millennial view-span of history. In the "long term", China will have to move towards democracy, but calculations of time-span, he cautions, will simply have to be performed within the Chinese worldview, not outside of it. Time will no doubt tell, but whichever way one looks at it, the Chinese Communist Party is, for "now", the surest guarantee against populist nationalism in China. This review, for example, is being written amidst reports of Chinese student protests over the "Japanese textbook" incident.

Chapter Five, "The Nature of American Power" (and Chapter Six, below) is of special interest to our readers. Here, attention to the various causes of contemporary discontent with America and larger strategic and policy questions give way to discussion of particular events, and the legal regulation of such events. There is a discussion of the Guantanamo detentions, for example. Dean Mahbubani reveals: "The feeling in the American government ... that America had to create new rules and norms to deal with the new category of "non-military combatants" (at 132). If true, this would be wrong, as a matter strictly of law. The detainees are not entitled to protection under Article 4(A)(2) of the *Geneva Convention (III) Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War*, which extends protection to militia and volunteers under closely specified conditions only, conditions which the Taliban militia do not fulfill. If the argument were to be that they are "regular armed forces" instead under Articles 4(A)(1) or (3), customary international law would still require that these closely specified conditions (being under responsible command, carrying fixed distinctive signs, carrying arms openly, conducting their operations under the laws and customs of war) should be fulfilled as a pre-condition to such legal protection. *A fortiori*, protection does

not extend to terrorists (see the article by former U.S. Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Professor John C. Yoo, "The Status of Soldiers and Terrorists under the Geneva Conventions", (2004) 3 *Chinese J.Int'l L.* 135). The issue, really, is whether the detainees are entitled to the protection of American justice nonetheless. According to Mahbubani, Guantanamo is to be measured against Tiananmen in this regard.

Elaborating on the theme of the dangers of double (legal) standards, the most fascinating parts of the chapter deal with Mahbubani's views on the recent armed campaign in Iraq. One must remember that Ambassador Mahbubani, as he then was, was Head of the Singapore Mission to the United Nations. He emphasises, however, at the outset of the book that his views do not (the lawyer would add—"necessarily") reflect those of the Singapore Government (at xi): "I have tried to be true to myself, not to the institution that I happily served in for most of my career. This book does not represent the views of a diplomat. It represents, I hope, the views of an individual scholar trying to make sense of the difficult times we live in".

Mahbubani commences by pointing out the authorial hand of America in Article 2(4) of the *Charter of the United Nations*, governing the prohibition of the use of force in international relations (at 136):

One reason why the rest of the world was in some ways astonished and taken aback by the decision of America to go to war after having failed to secure a legitimising Security Council resolution was because of the realisation that America had violated the principles that it had embedded into international law at the end of World War II.

In fact, it all goes back further than that. Writing to President Woodrow Wilson as far back as 22 November 1918, Secretary of State Robert Lansing had cautioned that (Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *On the Law of Nations* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1990) at 39):

In order to avoid the recognition of force as a basis and the question of dominant force with the unavoidable classification of nations into "big" and "little", "strong" and "weak", the desired result of a [League] guaranty might be attained by entering into a mutual undertaking *not* to impair the territorial integrity or to violate the political sovereignty of any state.

The breach of this undertaking would be a breach of the treaty and would sever the relations of the offending nation with all other signatories.

Mahbubani leaves it unclear, however, whether he thought a “second resolution” was absolutely necessary strictly as a matter of law. He seems to suggest that it might have been, in his personal view. What is meant by a “legitimising” Security Council resolution, in this regard? It could (rightly) be taken to refer to the fact that the dichotomy between lawful and unlawful acts fails to capture, in a more nuanced fashion, the actual reality of everyday international law observance. In reality, questions about legality and legitimacy often shade into one another, where legality may be perceived to be absent without legitimacy, just as legitimacy may be perceived to be absent without legality. The arguments of the United States are well-known in this regard, any of the following three grounds presented a sufficient justification for the campaign, and all three legal grounds were present:

- 1) Self-defense under (contemporary) customary law and the law of the *Charter*;
- 2) Humanitarian intervention;
- 3) Security Council resolution 687 (1991).

The first argument was famously expressed in Chapter V of the *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (White House, September 2002, at 15) while the second may also be found in the pages of the *American Journal of International Law* (e.g., Michael Reisman, “Sovereignty and Human Rights in Contemporary International Law”, (1990) 84 A.J.I.L. 866). Others, such as the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Singapore seem to have limited themselves to the third argument. So far as Singapore was concerned, the absence of a “second resolution” did not necessarily make the campaign illegal (Singapore Parliamentary Debates, Official Record, 14 March 2003, Cols. 857-858). The British debate is especially clear, however, on the contours of the third argument. According to this view, breach of the ceasefire conditions imposed by resolution 687, even if it did not automatically revive the original authorisation to use force in Security Council resolution 678, nonetheless provided the grounds for “technical legality”. As Professor Christopher Greenwood had argued before the U.K. House of Commons Committee on Foreign Affairs, some authoritative pronouncement by the Security Council

confirming Iraq’s material breach of resolution 687 would nonetheless be desirable, although this may (we speculate) have been said with an eye cast as much towards legitimacy as it was to strict technical legality. Whichever way one looks at it, however, Security Council resolution 1441 which was passed unanimously on 8 November 2002 subsequently supplied that necessary pronouncement; namely, that Iraq had for (12) years been in material breach of the terms of resolution 687, thus resulting in a threat to international peace and security (see also “UN Security Council Open Debate on the Situation between Iraq and Kuwait—Statement by Mr. Kishore Mahbubani, Permanent Representative of Singapore to the U.N.”, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Singapore, Press Release, 12 March 2003).

Saying, as China, Russia and France did, that resolution 1441 is not to be taken to authorise force, does not require the legal conclusion that resolution did not do precisely that (Joint Statement issued by Russia, China and France, 8 November 2002). As a matter of law, the argument here has never been that clear words are required to authorise force; clearly clear words are required. But what clearer words could there have been to revive a previous authorisation that was clear? According to Dean Mahbubani, however:

Part of the strong European reactions may be due to their sense of betrayal over America walking away from the norms on the use of force that America and Europe had built jointly after the war.

While the American three-prong legal argument above risked confusion, the British (and Singapore) view at least had the merit of reliance on clear technical principle. Nonetheless, in relying so strictly on technicalities, the British legal view could also be said to invite a different set of risks in the eyes of global public opinion.

What more, however, could be had in the face of political constraint than the clear pronouncement in resolution 1441 itself? Resolution 1441 was for all practical intents and purposes the “second resolution”. In practical political terms too, little else could have been done about the question of legitimacy short of subscription to the other extreme view, that a so-called “second resolution” in the specific Chinese, Russian and French sense was somehow absolutely necessary as a matter of law. Nor could it be said, uncontroversially, that “the UNSC” refused “to endorse the war in Iraq” (at

151). Strictly speaking, what was required was only a legal endorsement, not a moral one.

This is not to say that many did not feel that “American intervention to change the political course of any society is wrong” (which countries like Chile, for example, understandably possessed strong historic concerns about, at 146-147). But, so far as the *legal* authority to engage in regime change was concerned, it came from a unanimous Security Council in the form of resolution 1483 of 3 May 2003. However, it may be putting it too strongly to say in this case that “[t]he subsequent efforts to find a viable solution in Iraq that would be acceptable to both the Iraqi people and the international community were perceived to be legitimate” (at 188). Resolution 1483 authorised the United States and the United Kingdom to act as the “authority” in Iraq and to manage regime-change in Iraq, but the jury is still out on whether the entire affair was “perceived to be legitimate”. Reliance on legitimacy conferred by technical legality here is surely no more or less precarious than in the case of the justification for the armed campaign.

The problem with the question of legitimacy in such hard cases is that, at the end of the day, concern with (perceptions of) legitimacy may provide only a very rough guide to the correct foreign policy option, and may not in any case solve the problem of subsequent negative public perception entirely. One might argue instead that the more fundamental question of “legitimacy” is not the sense in which Thomas Franck uses the word (*i.e.*, international public perception), but was defined instead by a young Harvard Assistant Professor in 1957 (Henry Kissinger, *A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh and the Problems of Peace, 1812-1822* (London: Phoenix Press, 2000) at 1-2):

Legitimacy as here used should not be confused with justice. It means no more than an international agreement about the nature of workable arrangements and about the permissible aims and methods of foreign policy. It implies the acceptance and framework of the international order by all major powers ... A legitimate order does not make conflicts impossible, but it limits their scope. Wars may occur, but they will be fought in the name of the existing structure ... Diplomacy in the classic sense, the adjustment of differences through negotiation, is possible only in ‘legitimate’ international orders.

Mahbubani’s critique appears closer to the mark, therefore, where he says that: ‘When America decided to go to war despite having failed to get an enabling U.N. resolution, America tore a hole in the very consensus that had been an American gift to the world’ (at 209). But this too masks further and deeper complexities. For example, he says that “[i]n the past, the U.N. Security Council would intervene selectively, only when the direct interests of the major powers were affected” but that “in a shrinking globe, the Security Council must develop a more consistent set of principles”. In this regard, “American leadership to achieve such consistency is vital” (at 207). Could not the same be said of the other P-5 members of the Security Council? Again, the example in mind seems to be Iraq, but hard cases, while they may make bad law, also make bad examples. You could turn it around. At present, not only does the Security Council wield a broad discretion in determining threats to the peace under Article 39 of the *Charter* when it is united, but that broad discretion could also serve as a cause of disunity in the Council. It has been argued, for example, that the Security Council and the *Charter* have not been designed with the terrorist in possession of weapons of mass destruction in mind. This, however, does not entail that the terrorist with weapons of mass destruction could not be accounted for nonetheless by sharpening what we mean by a threat to the peace, so as to sharpen Security Council Members’ *a priori* understanding of the kinds of situations in which the Council may be called upon to act collectively. This could ensure, as much as assurance may be had in such matters, that the Council does act when required. The “sanction” here is that failure to act where warranted may actually *compel* unilateral action, as recent events have shown. My point is that the responsibility is therefore as much that of the entire P-5 Membership, as it is the responsibility of the United States (See Professor Thomas M. Franck, “What Happens Now? The United Nations After Iraq”, (2003) 97 A.J.I.L. 607, 614 *et seq.*, discussing Dean Anne-Marie Slaughter’s proposal in the *Washington Post*. See also Lee Feinstein & Anne-Marie Slaughter, “A Duty to Prevent”, (2004) 83 *Foreign Affairs* 136). At the end of the day, there was a perception that genuine interests were at stake in the Iraq campaign (Singapore Parliamentary Debates, Official Record, 14 March 2003, Col. 846):

We want world peace and security. We want the world economy to grow, so that

our economy can also grow ... Given the current political and security situation in the world, and if it takes a war regardless of how it is to be fought to get a chance for security, we must be ready for it. Our only hope then is that it will be a short and decisive war for peace and security.

One difficulty here is that the absence of any discovery of actual weapons of mass destruction has tarnished the argument that “it takes a war”, instead of giving Iraq more time, just as the Abu Ghraib affair has tarnished the argument that the Iraqi people will be the ultimate beneficiaries of regime change. That, it may be said, is “only” a matter of public perception, but if the United States engages in a pre-emptive departure from Iraq instead, and Iraq falls into chaos, no country’s true interests will be secured and the true interests of the Iraqi people would not be served.

The remainder of Chapter Five, which paves the way for the penultimate chapter, Chapter Six, argues that America, acting in pursuit of its interests, would sometimes act contrary to the interests of other nations. If anything, this is a kind of interest-convergence dilemma faced by any foreign policy but unless we are talking about a foreign policy which is blindly altruistic, the accommodation of external interests must surely halt where this threatens any nation’s own genuine interests, even a nation which aims to be exceptional and not simply ordinary. Mahhubani accepts this, but argues that (at 183):

As the Cold War ended, American policymakers began to realise that America had far greater power than any other country in the world. And the temptation to bend the international order to serve American national interests became greater with each passing year. The international system had not developed any checks and balances to counter this huge American power. No one knew how to. And the power began to be asserted more often.

This is where we encounter one of the more troubling philosophical wrinkles in the present work. Williams, in the work cited above, as well as others from the “Wisconsin School”, had *questioned* in a fundamental way, the more conventional belief that attention to the relationship between American policy and American motives was likely to reveal a basic unselfish American outlook. New Left critics like Williams “forced

us to acknowledge the extent to which an obsessive self-interest has been central in American foreign policy” (Robert W. Tucker, *The Radical Left and American Foreign Policy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1971) at 148). Mahhubani’s views, with the greatest respect, address neither these complexities nor the wealth of “Wisconsin School” scholarship on America’s “open door imperialism”, “overseas commercial expansion” and “ideological offensive” (see Bradford Perkins, “‘The Tragedy of American Diplomacy’: Twenty-Five Years After”, (1984) 12 *Reviews in American History* 1, reprinted in Williams, above). The tragic view of “America misunderstood” risks overstatement as a result and reminds us instead of the comfortable view which historians took of American power until the 1950s.

Putting Iraq aside, and Europe’s concerns about the relative geographical proximity of the Muslim world (at 159), some greater acknowledgement is required of the kinds of effect United States policies and policy prescriptions may have abroad (at 145). Chapter Six, “Managing American Power”, dwells on these questions and takes on a new critical tone—if unchecked, America could prove the greatest cause of turbulence in the world this century (at 161). According to Mahhubani, the world looks at America and learns about democracy, while at the same time feeling the adverse effects of American-led economic globalisation. The effects felt outside America are not matched by the enfranchisement of the global populace who are just as likely to be affected adversely by American policies as they are to benefit from them. American cotton subsidies of over US\$ 2 billion depress cotton prices to below 35 cents a pound. An African farmer produces cotton at less than 50 cents a pound, whereas a subsidised American farmer produces cotton at over 70 cents a pound (at 169) (see further *US-Subsidies on Upland Cotton* (WT/DS267/R, 8 September 2004; WT/DS267/AB/R, 3 March 2005)).

Again, as Mahhubani points out, 4% of the total global population produces 25% of global pollution (at 171). Imagine, Mahhubani asks, if the per-capita pollution levels in China and India were to rise to only half the levels in America (at 172). And yet America walks away from the *Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*. Absent American moral leadership, 141 countries representing 55% of global greenhouse gas emissions have nonetheless ratified the treaty to date and they have pledged to cut emissions by 5.2% by 2012 (see “Kyoto

Protocol Comes into Force”, 16 February 2005, online: <www.news.bbc.co.uk>). Likewise, during the 2004 Presidential Campaign, Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 which had formed the basis of United States policy on the Middle Eastern Question fell by the wayside (at 176). Such examples erode the legitimacy America enjoyed during the Cold War and represents what Mahbubani calls the contemporary “Sovietisation” (*i.e.*, delegitimation) of American power.

The niggling remarks that I have made, here and there, should not detract from the great value of the present book, not to mention the lively and accessible style in which it is written. The metaphors are often well-conceived and insightful, and they show the profound thought and professional experience that have gone both into the message and its packaging. The ultimate message, expressed in the final

chapter, “The Way Ahead”, is that America must now consider the coherence of its foreign policies: “The time to make a strategic decision is now”, while the world has not (yet) turned “irreversibly” away from America (at 196). This is a broad work, and insightful as a result, but nonetheless rich in interesting detail. It should be read for those reasons alone by anyone interested in the causes of 9/11, or anyone interested in American foreign policy and international affairs. That it also contains the professional, as well as rather more personal, reflections of a prominent diplomat is a bonus. That it was written in such an engaging manner and style, and with such compassion and humanistic sensibility, took me completely by surprise. I could not put it down.

reviewed by C.L. LIM