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U.S. Foreign Policy and the Other edited by Michael Patrick Cullinane and David Ryan

Niall Michelsen
Western Carolina University

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Cullinane, Michael Patrick, and David Ryan, eds. *U.S. Foreign Policy and the Other*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2014. vi + 244 pages. Hardcover, \$95.00.

This book, edited by the historians Michael Cullinane and David Ryan, covers a lot of territory both in terms of historical coverage and theoretical ground. It adopts a specific focus, namely, how the United States has viewed other political actors, typically those in some sort of adversarial relationship to the U.S. government. No chapter attempts a comprehensive survey of the full sweep of U.S. foreign policy. Chapters range from the pre-Revolutionary War era relationship between American colonists and Native Americans, to the current global war on terrorism. Some chapters cover traditional topics, such as the Monroe Doctrine, the Spanish-American War, the two World Wars, the Cold War, and the Vietnam War, each shedding new light on what might be familiar historical narratives and could serve as useful supplements to standard accounts. Other chapters examine non-traditional topics such as the chapter on consumerism as it pertained to foreign goods.

The concept behind the title is straightforward and simple. When the U.S. (or any other political actor) recognizes someone else as adversarial or dangerous it naturally tends to ascribe negative attributes to them. However, this simple concept is developed in some important ways in the introductory chapter with the other chapters adding greater detail. What this volume contributes is sustained attention to the implications of the second stage of ascribing characteristics to the Other, which is that those characteristics have to be distinct from, and inferior to, our own characteristics. For instance, if we are civilized, then they are savages. The main implication of this is that when we are defining the Other, we are likewise and simultaneously, defining ourselves. Conversely, who we identify as adversaries or threats is partly a product of how we define ourselves. So, if we are champions of freedom, then every tyrant is a potential adversary. One further implication of this approach is that, in defining the Other and ourselves, we inevitably paint with a very broad brush, and in the process lose the nuanced understanding that might facilitate the making of good and successful foreign policies. For example, we neglected the differences that existed within the Communist world during the Cold War, and we tend to neglect the differences in the Muslim world today. It was left to the Nixon-Kissinger team to act upon the recognition that Communist U.S.S.R. and Communist China were not homogenous, and that we could use their heterogeneity to our advantage. George W. Bush's claim that everyone is 'either with us or with the terrorists' epitomized the broad brush approach.

The chapters vary in terms of how well they carry out the book's mission. Some chapters provide a fairly standard analysis of their time period, seeming to tack on the concept of the Other without really going beyond defining the Other in negative terms. Other chapters explore the interdependence between characterizing the Other and clarifying our own identity, thereby adding some historical substance to the claims made in the introductory chapter. A concluding chapter tying together the evidence drawn from the various chapters would have been valuable.

The heterogeneity of the chapters expands the appeal of the book to diverse audiences. Someone wishing to learn more about some of the important periods of U.S. foreign policy will find plenty. An example is the chapter dealing with the difference between the way 'Germany', 'Germans', and 'German Nazis' were viewed prior to and into WWII, and the way we see them today. The chapter revealed that many Americans - elites, mass public, and soldiers fighting in Europe - felt that the Germans were much like Americans, and their government had been hijacked by political thugs. The chapter charts the progress from pro-German sentiments prior to war, to the view of innocent Germans, and then to a view that German national identity prior to

the war was to blame. (What would have been intriguing to see would have been how the Japanese were depicted during this same period.)

Others, who are looking for a recurring theme to tie different episodes and time periods together, might find the conceptual framework very useful. This might be particularly helpful for developing deeper insights into the contemporary era where the Other is frequently depicted as the exact opposite of ourselves. This recurring pattern could help students understand how the contemporary situation is unique in some ways, but familiar in others.

The authors are quite well recognized in their respective fields, and the writing is very clean and accessible. The chapters have extensive citations which will provide other scholars with useful primary and secondary sources.

In summation, the book is a valuable contribution to the field of U.S. foreign policy literature. Its greatest contribution will be in its elucidation of the symbiotic relationship between U.S. identity and the identification of U.S. adversaries, with the recognition that a nuanced understanding of its adversaries may facilitate the drafting of more successful foreign policies. In this sense, it bridges the approaches to U.S. foreign policy which focus on the external behavior, or on the domestic constraints on foreign policy makers. Its focus on the idea of 'Ourselves and the Other' is consistent with trends in social science, including the constructivist school in international relations theory. The book should find a wide audience within the foreign policy analysis field and become a valuable addition to many libraries.

Niall Michelsen, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Political Science
Western Carolina University
Cullowhee, North Carolina