

sad plight. Let us hope that one day someone can write a happier book on the long-suffering Northerners, and they can awake from *their* seventy-year nightmare.

Joel Campbell, Troy University, Global Campus, Japan-Korea

North America

The end of the American world order. By **Amitav Acharya.** Cambridge: Polity. 2014. 138pp. Index. £45.00. ISBN 978 0 74567 247 2. Available as e-book.

Amitav Acharya, a well-respected professor at American University and president of the International Studies Association, has produced a stimulating argument even when one disagrees with parts of it. In his view, the debate about the decline of the United States is inconclusive, but the American world order is coming to an end whether or not the United States is itself in decline.

What is the American world order? He uses the term interchangeably with 'American-led liberal hegemonic order' which is supposed to have a universal quality. Following the Princeton scholar John Ikenberry, he describes a hierarchical international order with liberal characteristics where 'weaker and secondary states were given institutional access to the exercise of American power' and 'the United States provided public goods and operated within a loose system of multilateral rules and institutions' (p. 36).

Acharya argues that there is a lot of fiction mixed with the facts in this common description of American hegemony. It was never really a global order, but a group of like-minded states centred primarily in the Americas and Western Europe, and it did not always have benign effects on non-members. Since the largest countries of China, India, Indonesia, the Soviet Union and the continent of Africa were not members, the American world order was really less than half the world.

Geir Lundestad, a Norwegian scholar, once categorized the American world order after 1945 as an 'empire by invitation' and its proponents have argued that by fostering multilateral institutions and allowing access to power for other states, the Americans legitimized a liberal order that, in principle, could survive their gradual decline. Can China and other emerging powers be co-opted into this order? Acharya thinks not, and its decline may be good for the US if it limits over-reaching. He foresees a world order based on regionalism and plural narratives. He offers the image of a multiplex theatre where rather than one film playing, there will be many equal choices under a common architecture. 'Hence, instead of pining for the American-led liberal hegemonic order, we should prepare to "boldly go where no-one has gone before"' (p. 11).

Acharya makes a number of important critical points. First, the term 'hegemony' is an imprecise word. Sometimes it means having a preponderance of power resources; sometimes the behaviour of setting the rules for others, and getting the outcomes one prefers. If there was a US hegemony, it would have been from 1945—when the US had nearly half the world economy as a result of the Second World War—to 1970—when the US share of world product declined to its prewar level of a quarter of world product. Yet during this period, the US often failed to get what it wanted: witness Soviet acquisition of nuclear weapons; communist takeover of China and half of Vietnam; stalemate in the Korean War; Soviet suppression of the revolts in Hungary and Czechoslovakia; Castro's control of Cuba and so forth. The reason was that the world was bipolar, and the Soviet Union balanced American power. Unipolarity did not come until the collapse of the USSR in 1991. As for the benign hegemon providing public goods, the American world order did

provide shared goods such as security and prosperity for part of the world, but these were club goods rather than global public goods. For many non-members of the club such as India, China, Indonesia, Congo, Iran, Guatemala and Chile, among others, the measures taken to provide security and prosperity for members of the club did not look so benign.

Acharya's criticisms are more convincing than his alternatives. His multiplex theatre with multiple narratives and regional dialogues assumes an architecture without saying much about how it will be provided. As I argue in *The future of power* (PublicAffairs, 2012; reviewed in *International Affairs* 87: 6), there are two great power shifts occurring in this century: power transition from West to East, and power diffusion from governments to non-state actors as a result of the global information revolution. This may or may not lead to new architectures. Will China step in to provide the public goods that hegemonic stability theorists search for? Certainly China has benefited greatly from the liberal institutions like the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund, but China's record is far from perfect. Nor are we likely to see global public goods provided by other emerging powers. Perhaps there is some consolation in the projection by the National Intelligence Council that estimates that the US will remain the most powerful country in 2030, though it will need more help in providing global public goods.

Joseph S. Nye, Jr, Harvard University, USA

Oxford encyclopedia of American military and diplomatic history. Edited by Paul S. Boyer, Timothy J. Lynch, David Milne, Christopher McKnight Nichols and Danielle M. Holtz. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2013. 1,488pp. 2 vols. Index. £192.50. ISBN 978 0 19975 925 5.

In over 450 articles on 1,488 pages in two volumes, the *Oxford encyclopedia of American military and diplomatic history* marshals hundreds of authors to offer 'a path through the central themes of America's rise—its accomplishments, its many imperfections, its glories, and its failures—and into the period of what many claim is its inevitable decline.' (By 'America' the editors mean the United States.) They succeed admirably: readers will find articles signed by authorities, complete with bibliographies, that assess subjects like 'Manifest destiny', 'The strategy and ethics of bombing' and 'Counterinsurgency'; profile more than 80 individuals from Crazy Horse to Billy Mitchell; give short histories of key events, wars and treaties like the battle of Antietam and the Mormon War, and review broad topics in foreign relations, historiography, scholarship, theory and institutions. A directory of contributors lists authorial affiliations: famous names are legion; most are from universities in North America, the United Kingdom and Australia. These volumes are a valuable reference for professionals and will launch a thousand student papers—likely many more.

This is not to say the *Encyclopedia's* judgements, from a prefatory claim that the US is 'the greatest political, economic, and military power in world history' to its asserted arc from glory to decline, will be universally accepted. Its strength is the verve and determination with which its well-informed authors press their claims. Thus, for example, John Arquilla of the Naval Postgraduate School writes of Ronald Reagan, 'It is hard to find another example, in any era, of a world leader who was able to bend the arc of history so decisively, and almost completely on the basis of powerful ideas rather than by means of the use of force.' Donald M. Snow of the University of Alabama concludes in 'National security', 'For the roughly two-thirds of American history prior to World War II, national security was not a continuous or major concern.' Robert S. Singh of the University of London states in 'Terror, war on': 'As prior commitments made it politically damaging to bring new