

Problems of Australian Defence. Edited by H. G. Gelber. Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1970. 372 pp. U.K. price: £7.25.

Asia and the Pacific in the 1970s: The Roles of the United States, Australia, and New Zealand. Edited by Bruce Brown. A. H. and A. W. Reed, Wellington, 1971. 244 pp. N.Z. price: \$5.

MR BRUCE BROWN'S book stems from a conference in Canberra in February 1970 and contains all but one of the papers plus commentaries and discussion summaries. The Institute for Defense Analyses, Washington, and the Australian and New Zealand Institutes of International Affairs chose the conferees to discuss problems the three ANZUS countries might face in the 1970s.

Dr H. G. Gelber had more freedom and has used it well. He chose the contributors to his book and from a larger pool of talent than that available to the conference. Between them they cover their subject comprehensively and make a solid addition to knowledge in a field that has only recently attracted serious academic attention. It is, moreover, a field of rapid change and Gelber and his publishers have processed the work so quickly that documents and references as late as March 1970 are included. Brown's book did not appear until late 1971 and editorial notes up-date the conference papers on many points.

Writing for an invisible audience of readers is perhaps a more challenging task than addressing a select group of more or less like-minded conferees, benevolently chaired and seeking some sort of consensus. Gelber's own chapter on Australia and the USA gives a more perceptive view than any in the Brown book, especially on opinion within the USA and the likelihood of future American involvement in Asia. Equally Professor Makoto Momoi of the National Defence College of Japan deals more convincingly than the various conference speakers with Japan's likely future roles in the region. Dr John M. H. Lindbeck, too, is more authoritative on the subject of China. At the political and strategic level the Gelber book also deals with Great Britain, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore, as well as maritime and nuclear strategies. The panel of authors deals in addition with oil, foreign trade, capital inflow, telecommunications, procurement and administration — all relative to Australia's defence. Two 'outsiders' are Admiral Arleigh Burke on anti-submarine warfare and Dr Charles Wolf, Jr, of the RAND Corporation on controlling small wars. New Zealand academics should note that the David Hamer who writes on maritime strategy is not an historian but a former RAN officer, now a Victorian MP.

The two books overlap very little, though inevitably they touch on some common concerns. The conferees were asked to look at the future roles of the United States, Australia and New Zealand in Asia and the Pacific, but they did so with many a backward glance. When not extrapolating specific historical trends, they tended to fall back on a rather simplistic model on which to base their predictions. All too often they assumed that American policy would largely dictate the policies of Australia and New Zealand in the Asian-Pacific region in the 1970s — not that they would have to toe the American line, but that events would be shaped by and large by American involvement or non-involvement. The speakers then went on to speculate about American policy. There were soul-searchings about the Guam doctrine, the nature of the ANZUS alliance, and the

future roles of Japan. Nobody at the conference seems to have been much concerned about what China might do except vis-à-vis the USSR. So the two great questions of the conference, at least for the Australian and New Zealand participants, were whether a new ice age of isolationism was overtaking America and what limits would be imposed on the ambitions of a resurgent Japan.

One of the themes which particularly concerned New Zealand participants was the relation of economic and security interests. On this Professor L. V. Castle, in a paper on economic relations, comes close to head-on collision with Bruce Brown himself in his paper on political and strategic relations. 'Only at a most general level, largely meaningless for practical policy decisions,' Castle says, 'can the political and economic aspects of United States relationships with Australia and New Zealand . . . since 1950 be linked together.' Brown, on the other hand, says, 'It is the breadth of its international political interests and involvements which have substantially helped to win for New Zealand the hearing so far achieved in the United States for its important trading interests.' American participants, having endured strong criticism of American trading policies, then found themselves, as Brown says, 'sitting bemusedly on the sidelines' when their Australian and New Zealand colleagues were at each other's throats. That their two countries, with every reason to present a united front on security issues to Asian countries and their American ally, should have let barriers continue to obstruct inter-communication and the achievement of a common understanding of the problems they jointly faced was something of a revelation to American observers. All seem to have agreed, however, that, at least in the immediate future, regionalism in the Asian-Pacific area, while it had some economic advantages, offered no solution to security problems. As Dr Joseph A. Yager of the IDA said, the militarily weak countries of Asia 'do not see how combining weaknesses can result in strength.' Mr J. L. Richardson of Sydney University, however, made the interesting suggestion that since 'non-alignment has lost much of its magic, regionalism may prove a useful political myth', promoting solidarity and raising morale, even helping to deter encroachments on the region by great powers.

Bruce Brown's book, then, consists of broad surveys of political and economic developments in east, south and south-east Asia and the south-west Pacific and of some of their high-level strategic implications, particularly as they relate to the ANZUS alliance in a hypothetical 'post-Vietnam' world. The discussions well reflect the vast disparity among the capabilities and interests of the three allies, but they are very much policy-oriented and do not get down to detailed analysis of strategic problems such as Professor A. L. Burns provides in his chapter in the Gelber book on 'Australia and the Nuclear Balance'. The conferees dealt with a rarified kind of strategy that hardly touched on armed forces or weapons or, for example, Australian support of the American global nuclear deterrent.

Gelber's book is more down-to-earth. It gives facts and figures on defence budgets and procurement, a detailed critique of defence administration, and in an appendix a full list of existing or proposed defence and scientific establishments in Australia operated jointly with other nations, as well as the comprehensive statement on defence made by the minister, the Hon. Malcolm Fraser, on 10 March 1970.

It would not be easy to assemble a comparable book of readings on New Zealand's defence. Those who write in this subject — and they are few — are mainly concerned with the political, moral and occasionally economic aspects, rarely the strategic or technical ones. This may be partly because of the smallness of New Zealand's defence efforts and defence-related industry, which leave fewer choices in, for example, weapons procurement. But New Zealand has introduced some interesting innovations in defence administration which might well repay academic study. New Zealand began to move along the road to the unification of her armed forces two years before Canada did. And she faces difficult problems that are only partly financial in providing appropriate higher education for the profession of arms and the formulation and administration of defence policy in the changing circumstances of the 1970s. These and other related matters surely warrant serious academic concern.

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