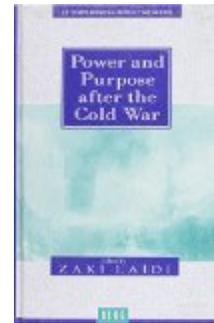


H-Net Reviews

in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Zaki Laidi, ed. *Power and Purpose after the Cold War*. Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1994. xv + 213 pp. \$45.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-85496-807-7.

Reviewed by Robert C. Perkins (Methodist College)
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The Shape of the Post-Cold War World?

This collection of essays was originally published as *L'ordre mondiale relache* (1992). This is the first English edition. The foreword was written by William Zartman of Johns Hopkins. Six of the authors—Zaki Laidi, Anne-Marie Le Gloannec, Jean-Marie Bouissou, Elizabeth Picard, Jean-Luc Domenach, and Jean-Louis Margolin—are associated with the Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Internationales in Paris. Helen Milner is at Columbia. Georges Couffignal is associated with the University of Paris-III and Francois Constantin is at the University of Pau et des Pays de l'Adour.

Laidi sets the theme with his essay "Power and Purpose in the International System." Le Gloannec then discusses the role of Germany, and Bouissou probes that of Japan. Picard deals with the Middle East; Milner describes international trade. Domenach investigates the evolution of China, and Margolin discusses the impact of economic prosperity in the Far East. Couffignal describes the inter-American system and Constantin covers Africa.

The authors attempt to define the new international situation that is developing in the aftermath of the Cold War. They identify the states that they believe will be the most important players and describe the major geographical areas in which those players are operating.

I have two major reservations about this collection. First, the essays were written in 1991 and 1992, and the authors made some inaccurate forecasts concerning the years since 1992. For instance, Bouissou wrote: "The persistent gap between Japan's rate of growth and that of her partners, the unflinching profits from her colossal foreign

investments and the cumulative effects of her technological advance make the increase in her power an essential element in forming the future international system; this is more than a hypothesis, it is an inescapable certainty for the coming decade, at the end of which Japan's GNP may well exceed that of the United States" (p. 55). Given Japan's current difficulties, I suggest that, although Japan is a major industrial power, it is not the colossus that Bouissou declares.

My second reservation involves an omission. There is no essay on Russia and its "Near Abroad." Although Russia currently is mired in economic and political woes, it has the potential to be a significant economic power in the future. Russia is unlikely to disappear and must be taken into account in any assessment of the post-Cold War world.

The essays stress the importance of the Far East in the developing international arena. The collection contains, in addition to the broad essays, 68 pages on the Far East and only 88 pages on the Americas, Germany, the Middle East, and Africa. Although numerous references to Western Europe are made in various essays, I am somewhat baffled by the lack of a thorough discussion of the European Community and its potential.

This collection of essays has some value for students of international relations. For historians like myself, it provides a sample of French scholarly thought at the beginning of this decade. I would recommend it only for graduate students.

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