

is a fascist dwarf"; Deng: "whore, daughter of a whore... she monopolizes the toilet, but cannot shit."). Much of their energies have been spent on advancing personal ambitions instead of nation-building, characteristics that probably still endure in a less amplified way.

However, to advance, skill and determination are not enough. As these books make very clear, the winners have inevitably been those with commanding personalities and historical stature, like Mao, or those with extensive constituencies in the national and regional institutional networks. Lacking both, Madame Mao and others failed. The system may govern poorly, but it protects its own very well—so well, in fact, that while Deng, Zhao, and their allies have Maoists in retreat today, they, most of all, must fear for tomorrow.

PANAMA ODYSSEY by William J. Jorden

(University of Texas Press; xi + 746 pp.; \$24.50)

Jorge I. Domínguez

"It is the right, the fair, the decent thing to do. And the American people are fair and decent." So Jimmy Carter explained to General Omar Torrijos why he had committed his government to the ratification of the Panama Canal treaties on the solemn occasion of their signing in Washington, D.C. Torrijos, in turn, described what he felt: "It's like jumping out of an airplane without a parachute." These two sentences, spoken by the key actors in a historic drama, summarize much about them personally and about the events that led to a major change in the relationship between their two countries. Jimmy Carter invested enormous political capital in the ratification of the treaties, primarily for the reasons he gave; but the process of ratification was captured best by Torrijos's apt phrase.

William Jorden, a White House staffer during the second Nixon presidency and U.S. ambassador to Panama (1974-78) during the crucial years of treaty negotiation and ratification, has written what will surely become the definitive account of the process of formulation and ratification of the Panama Canal treaties. The book is also a pleasure to read. Although most readers know the outcome in advance, Jorden has managed to build suspense and to convey the joy and frustration of the participants, their insights and their foibles, with a keen at-

tention to detail that is both enlightening and attention-grabbing. His skillful biographical vignettes of most of the significant participants—presidents, cabinet ministers, negotiators, and members of Congress—is hard to match. His canvas is grand, spanning the decade-and-a-half of intensive discussions over the new treaties and involving a great many significant leaders in both countries. Most helpful of all, Jorden has given a fascinating and instructive account of the process of diplomatic negotiation and of the relationship between president and Congress over a major foreign policy issue. This is, in short, an outstanding book.

It is, however, a very long book, and many readers may find that they will learn more about the process of treaty-making and ratification than they care to. The very length has also made it difficult for Jorden to remind readers clearly what the fuss was all about. The Senate completed ratification of the treaties over six years ago. That is a remarkably short time, and yet the Canal and its fate—so passion-inspiring and so dramatic in the months before ratification—has virtually disappeared from public discussion in the United States. Ronald Reagan, who vigorously opposed ratification and made the draft Canal treaties a major issue in his campaign for the 1976 Republican presidential nomination, has to implement the treaties—albeit with greater difficulty than his predecessor. Public obscurity and routine implementation mean that the treaties have succeeded in their essential purposes.

The Canal treaties sought to keep the Canal open and secure for ships of all nations. They also sought to terminate an outmoded colonial enclave in the heart of Panama. The first goal could be achieved only if the second goal was also reached. The main threat to the security of the Canal was violence in Panama itself. Such violence was a recurring feature of the Canal's history, and the tragic riots in Panama in 1964 provided the impetus for serious negotiations.

The termination of the colonial enclave has meant that Panama is enlisted as a partner of the United States in keeping the Canal open and secure for the balance of this century. Panama's economic stake in the Canal has also risen, providing additional incentives for its government, armed forces, and people to behave in ways that serve the joint interests they share with the United States. The Canal treaties provide that in the twenty-first century both Panama and the United States will have the right and obligation to defend the Canal and to counter any aggression directed against it or against the peace-

ful transit of vessels through it. The treaties also provide that, in an emergency, warships of the United States and Panama have the right to go to the head of the line. The Canal Zone is no more. The United States has already returned most of that territory to Panama. And in the twenty-first century the Canal itself will pass to Panama.

Jorden's book tells the story of how the leaders of both countries came gradually to the realization that these provisions were, in Jimmy Carter's words, right, fair, and decent. But it took a very long time, and the treaties were nearly lost, for reasons that range from the sublime to the ridiculous—cause enough for General Torrijos to feel as if he were jumping out of an airplane without a parachute. The treaties have already worked better than their opponents and even many of their supporters had expected. They have served well the interests of the United States and Panama. As the winds of war and revolution ravage northern Central America, it is all the more important that Panama and the United States continue to work constructively to implement the treaties in the decades ahead.

For scholarly purposes, Jorden's book is a major achievement. Three disappointments, however, bear mentioning. There are no footnotes; indeed there is no presentation of sources. To be sure, much of the story had to come from interviews and private papers. Jorden has deposited "most of the documents and background materials" at the LBJ Library of the University of Texas, Austin. He explains to academic "purists" that such notes would have added too many pages to an already long book. For the purpose of historical scholarship, debate, refutation, and refinement, however, Jorden's decision is a major loss.

A second weakness is Jorden's peculiar though understandable partisanship. It is not garden-variety partisanship. He is generous in his praise of Republicans and Democrats, of liberals and conservatives, of U.S. and Panamanian leaders. But I do not believe his treatment of treaty opponents is fair-minded. Jorden's kindest words for Strom Thurmond are that he is "elderly but still vigorous," and for Orrin Hatch that he is at least "bright." Jorden judges the caliber of everyone associated with the treaty process solely according to their position on the Canal question. He ignores the possibility that many conservative members of Congress who opposed ratification also served the Republic well (at least on other occasions).

The third weakness is Jorden's systematic commitment to telling the whole story, which makes it difficult to understand why

he thinks the treaties were ever drafted, approved, and ratified. There is some hint that he believes it happened through a combination of "the march of history" and the skill and political will of a number of capable people in the United States and Panama. To make the first point would have required some elaboration. What had changed in Panama, in the United States, or in the international system to permit the unthinkable to be ratified by two-thirds of the U.S. Senate despite the opposition of public opinion? Were the Canal treaties yet another sign of the relative decline of U.S. power or, alternatively, the assertion of a vision, placing U.S. policy on a sounder footing for the future? I suspect Jorden believes the latter, but he has not quite demonstrated it.

And surely Jorden also believes that bright and good people made a difference in the outcome. The scholarly literature on the treaties is replete with "objective" causal explanations, such as legislative-executive relations (from Jorden's narrative this would appear to be a major explanatory factor for the behavior of the House of Representatives—which gets a lot less space in this book than it deserves, especially when one considers that the House's actions have already created problems of implementation) or bureaucratic and organizational politics (of course much of what the Pentagon and the State Department argued about may be explained within this approach). Yet Jorden would have made a contribution to this body of scholarship had he explained under what circumstances some people were able to rise above their bureaucratic roles. The lack of a discussion of individual factors, independent of the organizational context, makes Jorden's book more the raw material for other scholars.

Scholarly hopes or pendency, however, should not detract from an evaluation of this book's accomplishments. It tells a first-rate story in a first-rate way. It sheds light on how to conduct diplomatic negotiations. It is informative on politics in Panama and in the United States. And it is a remarkable account of one of the more significant international and domestic political battles in recent years. **WV**

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**A COVENANT WITH POWER:
AMERICA AND WORLD ORDER
FROM WILSON TO REAGAN**

by **Lloyd C. Gardner**

(Oxford University Press; xv + 251 pp.; \$22.95)

Paul Zigman

The uneasy relationship between the American people and international power politics has been a source of puzzlement for America-watchers from Tocqueville to Huntington. With this book Rutgers historian Lloyd Gardner joins the analytic fray.

Like many of its predecessors, the book begins by identifying a fundamental paradox of U.S. foreign policy. Americans since the country's birth have tended to view themselves as a breed apart. While others played power politics in the conduct of foreign affairs, the United States, it was argued, would behave differently; America would show the world the value of moderation and democracy. In the process it would provide the U.S. with international security. On the other hand, the U.S. has often practiced realpolitik in an international system that encourages coercive behavior. It has built arsenals, overthrown governments, negotiated treaties, and offered food, money, and weapons to gain favor.

The question for Gardner is how American presidents have sought to reconcile these two seemingly contradictory impulses. At first blush his answer is promising. For America's first century or so, presidents could largely afford to ignore the paradox. With such distractions at home as the Industrial Revolution, the Civil War, and "winning the West," and with British protection on the high seas and Europe's preoccupation with colonialism, there was simply no need for the U.S. to act forcefully abroad. It could, so it seemed, influence and lead by example rather than by involvement.

In the early 1900s, Gardner explains, this international order began to crumble. Growing militarism among European Great Powers threatened to spill over into armed conflict. The rise of working-class socialism within each of the Great Powers threatened to spill over into revolution. Together, these developments were a fundamental challenge to American liberalism. War would cut off the U.S. from the international markets upon which its economic prosperity, and therefore its domestic order, was built. Revolution would cut to the core of liberalism's ideological legitimacy. As a result, the strategy of leaving well enough alone could no longer work. "A much bolder

approach was needed," writes Gardner.

Enter Woodrow Wilson. Faced with revolutions in Mexico and Russia and with the Great War in Europe, Wilson was the first American president to confront the need for global activism. His task: to construct an international order that mirrored the country's liberal domestic order. Embodied in a League of Nations, this new regime would place a premium on compromise and self-determination. To achieve it, Wilson would take the diplomatic route. But it soon became apparent that diplomacy alone would not suffice. According to Gardner, Wilson concluded that the U.S. had to be prepared to back its ideals with force. Argued Wilson: "A nation, which by the standard of other nations, however mistaken those standards may be, is regarded as helpless, is apt in general counsel to be regarded as negligible." Such was the beginning of Wilson's covenant with power.

Having described well the underlying dilemma of American foreign policy and Wilson's attempt to resolve it, Gardner moves on to examine how presidents since Wilson have struggled to construct their own covenants. In principle, such an analysis should uncover a number of useful insights. In practice, the review of such events as FDR's decision to declare war, the conflicts in Korea and Vietnam, and U.S.-Soviet détente never quite delivers. The insights we get—for example, into the enduring influence of Wilson's presidency or into the long-standing mismatch between the condition of Third World conflict and American ideals and methods—are scattered and unfocused.

Like many revisionist accounts, the book appears preoccupied with failure. It takes American shortsightedness as a given, and it is largely devoid of sympathy for the predicaments of presidents and their advisors. Rarely is an eye cast toward the bureaucratic, political, and diplomatic obstacles they confront; where and why they have performed better; and how they might tackle more effectively the problems that lie ahead.

A second problem has to do with the book's method. In the attempt to be "provocative more than persuasive," Gardner dispenses with most references—a frustration for anyone seeking a context for the myriad quotations and assertions. More important, he displays a strong tendency toward overstatement. About Vietnam, for example, Gardner writes: "[It] became the ultimate test of national will and credibility, a war that would determine the outcome of the American Revolution." About superpower politics: "The Russian-American confrontation has long since become a nu-