would intuitively expect a revolutionary regime to become more aggressive with more oil income at hand, and less so with less.

In addition, the petro-state dummy status might be endogenous to whether they are revolutionary. As with recent research (e.g. Christa Brunnschweiler, "Cursing the Blessings? Natural Resource Abundance, Institutions and Economic Growth," *World Development* 36, 3 [2008]: 399–419; Daniel Lederman and William Francis Maloney, *Natural Resources: Neither Curse Nor Destiny,* 2007) demonstrating that poor institutions often prevent sound economic policy which leads to resource export dependence, we might well expect revolutionary regimes either to drive out foreign investment and/or to focus on command economics, and to expropriate (and subsequently undermine) or to neglect economic policy altogether in lieu of more politically charged priorities. The downstream result would be that the rest of the economy suffers, raising the share of GDP made up by oil income. As a result, revolutionary regimes might shrink the size of the non-oil economy, pushing the "petrostate" dummy from zero to one. Unfortunately, Colgan gives no real attention to this likely problem.

Another potential problem, this time with the case selection, is that all revolutionary petro-states are ones that overthrew monarchies. Venezuela is nowhere near as internationally aggressive as any of the main Middle East cases, and so it is very plausible to make the case that the post-monarchy regimes are unique cases. This would also suggest estimating the models in Chapter 4 without Iran or Libya to check whether potential outliers are skewing the statistical results. None of this is to say that Colgan's argument is in trouble here. Quite the contrary, it is only because of the great analytic care that is in evidence throughout that it is even possible to engage these debates. To reiterate, this is a very good book, well worthy of deep scholarly engagement, and I am confident it will take a central place in the development of the research program on resource politics.

Because the United States has only recently withdrawn from Iraq—a revolutionary petro-state under Saddam Hussein—and because oil accounts for more than 90% of the commodity revenue in the global economy, oil will continue to attract attention from scholars, policy makers and the public. That, however, should not be reason for scholars to relax the standards that give our conclusions merit. Rather it is imperative that we engage this highly public research program with a solid commitment to making sure that our measures capture the concepts we intend them to, and that our conclusions rest on solid empirical footing. As research on the politics of resource wealth continues to expand and improve, and as the size of the global oil market continues to grow, a steady focus on solid social science foundations is essential.

Worse than a Monolith: Alliance Politics and Problems of Coercive Diplomacy in Asia. By Thomas J. Christensen. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011. 318p. $75.00 cloth, $28.95 paper.

China's Search for Security. By Andrew J. Nathan and Andrew Scobell. New York: Columbia University Press, 2012. 432p. $32.95.
doi:10.1017/S1537592713002740

— David Kerr, *Durham University*

Asia's strategic politics are likely to be the growth sector in International Relations in the next 20 years as academics and practitioners attempt to keep analysis and commentary apace with regional developments in security and diplomacy. These two books provide important contributions to the study of this field, but with quite different perspectives and methodologies. Thomas J. Christensen's book is the more ambitious since it has important hypotheses to test on the nature of successful and unsuccessful alliance management in East Asia. In contrast, the book by Andrew J. Nathan and Andrew Scobell largely eschews theory and aims for a rich empirical account of China's contemporary security policy and capacity.

Christensen's concern is with coercive diplomacy defined as "the use of clear and credible threats and assurances in combination to dissuade target countries from undesirable behaviour" (p. 2). It may seem evident that, the more unified and integrated an alliance is, the more challenging coercive diplomacy becomes, but Christensen argues the opposite: Intra-alliance divisions and rivalries greatly complicate the organisation and communication of threats and assurances from, and towards, such an alliance. In order to test this first hypothesis Christensen conducts detailed historical analysis of how the alliance systems interacted in East Asia across a 25 year period, from alliance formation in the late 1940s to escalation in Southeast Asia and the U.S.-China rapprochement of the early 1970s. His specific cases are: the lack of coherent signalling from both alliances during the period of alliance formation and how this contributed to misjudgements especially in the onset and escalation of the Korean war, 1949–51 (chapters 2 and 3); an interim period, 1951–56, when the communist camp was at its most ideologically and organisationally coherent and effective diplomacy was achieved in Northeast Asia and Indo-China (chapter 4); the onset and escalation of the Sino-Soviet dispute, 1957–72, and the opportunity this generated in the communist camp for subordinate members of the alliance to advance their objectives at the expense of stability in the regional system overall (chapters 5 and 6); and the decline of coercive diplomacy in the US-China relationship in the final decades of the Cold War, 1972–91, but the return of certain aspects of coercion in the post-Cold War period especially due to changes in the US-Japan relationship and on Taiwan (chapter 7). By careful and detailed examination of primary and secondary sources on the diplomatic and strategic calculations of key actors—particularly

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592713002740 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Chinese and American leaderships—Christensen skilfully justifies his hypothesis that alliance cohesion allows effective communication of threats and assurances, resulting in a virtuous environment of mutual comprehension and predictability; whereas intra-alliance division leads to loss of communicative efficiency and increases the potential for misunderstanding, unpredictability, and miscalculations on the use of force.

If Christensen justifies his hypothesis in terms of outcomes, this still leaves open whether his explanation for the outcomes is valid. This depends on the nature of the political relationships that produce different structures and dynamics in alliance systems. Christensen's second hypothesis is that it was the particular politics and structures of inter-communist alliances that rendered coercive diplomacy in Asia so problematic. He argues that the two predominant characteristics of these alliances were revisionist ideology and divided hierarchy. First, communist alliances are formed around revisionist ideologies and this encourages intra-alliance competition due to "potentially differential levels of devotion to specific revisionist conflicts" (p. 262). Secondly, he notes problems of hierarchical binding: Divisions in the leadership of the communist movement—as in the Sino-Soviet rivalry—create conditions in which "alliance members will make decisions to support aggression for reasons that go beyond the corporate interests of the alliance as a whole" (p. 263). However, it is possible to advance other explanations for these dynamics. One factor that was evident in the Cold War and remains so today is the absence of a tradition of alliance building in Asia. When the United States and USSR organised their alliances in Europe in the early Cold War period, Europeans had been using alliances to conduct advanced balance of power politics for at least 300 years—Cold War alliances were a continuation of normal politics. There was no such tradition of alliance organisation in Asia and the U.S. alliance today remains only one mechanism for managing power/threat dynamics across the region. Differences in traditions of alliance building need to be considered as a factor shaping the organisation of coercive diplomacy in the Asian Cold War and after. If one were to point to the specifics of communist systems, moreover, it might not be differential devotion to revisionist causes that most accounts for their tendency toward intra-alliance strife. All Leninist systems are substantially de-constitutionalised; power is arbitrated by a number of informal mechanisms, not least factional struggle. At particular points in Cold War history, leadership successions and policy decisions within communist states, including both the USSR and China, were arbitrated by just such an intense personal and factional struggle. It was almost inevitable that such inner-party struggle would be replicated in inter-party competition across the communist movement, especially when ruling factions were in the hands of such volatile leaders as Khrushchev and Mao. Ideology was an important aspect of such struggles, both cognitively and instrumentally, but it never was a particularly good guide to what Soviet, Chinese, or other communist leaderships would do next. Therefore analysts of communist systems will readily agree with Christensen that it was something in the nature of communist politics and systems that made them unstable alliance partners and difficult targets for coercive diplomacy, but in likelihood variable commitment to revisionist goals was only one factor among others.

Nevertheless, Thomas J. Christensen's important book does great service to the study of strategic politics in two ways. It encourages us to think of coercive diplomacy—the effective communication of threats and assurances—as being the most likely route to regional stability in Asia until such time as effective security institutions are developed. Secondly, the book is very persuasive in its methodology; the careful reading of primary and secondary sources to develop historical case studies that can be used to test hypotheses about structures and dynamics within and between alliances over time is very helpful for analysts on a wider range of contemporary strategic problems, a point Christensen makes himself in his concluding chapter.

Nathan and Scobell's *China's Search for Security,* a largely empirical account of contemporary issues in Chinese security, could best be described as a compendium of security analysis on China. The book is divided into five parts. Part 1 has two chapters that examine the drivers and decision-making of Chinese security policy. Part 2 has five chapters devoted to the geopolitical dimensions of China's security—great power relationships and regional environments. Part 3 returns to the domestic sphere and discusses problems of territoriality with one chapter on Tibet, Xinjiang, Hong Kong, and Taiwan as territorial issues, and one chapter on the consequences of political change in Taiwan. Part 4 has three chapters on what are called the instruments of Chinese power: China's global economic role, military modernisation, and China's soft power and human rights profile. Part 5 has a concluding chapter that discusses whether China's new power will aim at sustaining equilibrium in the global system or will seek to overturn the current system. The authors' primary claim is that, even given the considerable expansion in the power instruments and geopolitical parameters of Chinese interests in the last 20 years, the main objective of Chinese security policy remains defense: "to blunt destabilising influences from abroad, to avoid territorial losses, to moderate surrounding states' suspicions, and to create international conditions that will sustain economic growth" (p. xiii). This further leads them to conclude that China has more to lose than gain from challenging the current international order and its institutions, and that the long-term goal of Chinese policy is a new equilibrium within that order that accords China the status that its self-image and interests require (p. 356). Nathan and Scobell do an admirable job of organizing and presenting their analysis across

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592713002740 Published online by Cambridge University Press

a comprehensive range of issues, but there remain some limitations in their approach. First, whether China's expanding capacities and interests are interpreted as defensive or offensive, as seeking revision or equilibrium, is substantially a problem of perception not just of fact. To put this in Christensen's terms, can China get the balance right between persuasive and coercive diplomacy, between encouraging compliance with its interests when appropriate and enforcing compliance when necessary? China's resort to coercive diplomacy around its self-defined core interests does seem defensive from the Chinese perspective, but is often not perceived as such by those in receipt of its sanctions. This suggests the largest and least predictable variable in China's security politics is China's identity, or more precisely the gap between China's self-perception of legitimate security interests and mechanisms, and others' perception of these. Nathan and Scobell do discuss the role of history, culture, ideology and nationalism as drivers of China's security identity, but these are only accorded 18 pages out of 400. Some readers may wish that the relationship between identity and behaviour was explored more fully. Secondly, as a compendium of security issues, there is some variance in the value of specific chapters. To give examples from the instruments of power section, the chapter on military modernisation is an excellent summary that covers doctrine, structure, technical up-grading and core missions. The preceding chapter considers China's global systems integration, focusing primarily on economic internationalisation but also pointing briefly to environmental vulnerability, information security, and proliferation issues. This chapter is less effective not because the right issues are not identified but because large and complex questions such as these cannot be adequately reviewed in a chapter. Having taken on the task of offering a comprehensive account of China's security behaviour, the authors' unavoidably find themselves having to compress certain key issues with some loss of value in consequence. These limitations aside, the contribution of Nathan and Scobell is likely to be widely read and used in debates about China's changing security roles.

Perhaps the most interesting thing about reviewing these two books together is that they reveal how large and diverse the field of Asian strategic politics has become. From quite different methodological approaches and problem areas they represent useful complementary perspectives on how a predictable peace for Asia might be secured.

Female Soldiers in Sierra Leone: Sex, Security and Post-Conflict Development. By Megan H. MacKenzie. New York: New York University Press, 2012. 187p. $49.00.
doi:10.1017/S1537592713002752

— Natalie F. Hudson, *University of Dayton*

Although the cover of the Megan MacKenzie's book suggests a stereotypical account of what it means to be a soldier or combatant in Africa (young, black, poor and armed with AK47s), her thoughtful analysis in the pages that follow, based on rich and original qualitative data, is anything but typical or predictable. MacKenzie's powerful and complex account of women's and young girls' lived experiences in Sierra Leone during and after the civil war provides a much needed challenge to the oversimplified dichotomies regarding male warriors/female victims, orderly phases of conflict/post-conflict, and security policy/development policy that continue to dominate stories of war and peace in contemporary policy-making and popular media. MacKenzie pushes her readers to deeply and empathetically consider the varied and even contradictory ways that women and girls participate in and are affected by armed conflict and, in turn, how those experiences determine what post-conflict security and development looks like or has the potential to be like on the ground. In this way, while her argument is firmly grounded in a theoretical critique of Western, liberal and patriarchal approaches to international security and development, it also provides insightful, forward-looking, and most importantly, locally-derived ideas and genuine "bottom-up" approaches to security and development policy. What is more, she demonstrates how accessible local insights and ideas are to those that take the time to ask and really listen. In short, *Female Soldiers in Sierra Leone: Sex, Security and Post-Conflict Development* represents a critical piece of scholarship for anyone interested in armed conflict, post-conflict reconstruction, international security policy and global development work. It challenges scholars and practitioners to rethink the dominant and highly gendered narrative of wartime violence and to radically evaluate and transform the liber and imperial roots of development policy as it increasingly overlaps with security policy.

Central to MacKenzie's argument is the development of the concept of conjugal order, which she deploys "as an analytical tool to detect and examine the laws, regulations and norms that dominate a particular region or context" (p. 4). The conceptual lens is a particularly innovative and effective means for deconstructing the gendered, imperial and regulatory nature of development policy, security sector reform, and general intervention by Western state and nonstate actors in the Global South. In Chapter 3, for example, MacKenzie details the many instances where local and international organizations make every effort to label female soldiers as anything but soldiers. From "women associated with the fighting forces" to "unaccompanied children" to "bush wives" and "camp followers," the post-armed conflict programming presumes victimhood for women and girls, denying them any agency (and the resources that go along with that) when "reintegrating" them back into "normal society." Through the lens of conjugal order this process is better understood as "reordering" and "reinforcing" specific gender roles rather than

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