

5, where Macekura details the strategies, networks, and policy battles that led to environmental impact assessments in USAID and World Bank project approvals, and new accountability mechanisms such as the World Bank's Inspection Panel. He also provides the important context of those strategies rooted in the U.S. "mandate and sue" style of governance empowered by the National Environmental Policy Act and a new brand of environmental group to leverage that power (e.g., the Natural Resources Defense Council and Environmental Defense Fund).

The "inside" account of NGO leaders and networks also leads to some significant omissions, however, including inattention to the role of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and World Bank in formulating and articulating the most politically palatable understandings of sustainable development popularized by the 1987 Brundtland Commission. They emphasized "win-win" policies that promised environmental protection *and* economic growth, which had little to do with NGO influence. Although Macekura references trends in environmental policy thinking in the North—including deregulation and shifts to market- and incentive-based policies—driving this agenda, they fall into the background of the story. Inattention to the OECD's influence is especially curious since Gro Harlem Brundtland picked Jim MacNeill to be the Commission's secretary-general because of his work as head of the OECD Environment Directorate, from which he brought ideas around market and growth-oriented policies to address environmental problems. Indeed, a central feature of the report—which arguably accounts for both its popularity and contestation—is the growth imperative as its starting point.

Chapter 7, on the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, shifts focus to foreground North–South politics that buffeted its outcomes, including the lack of major commitments of new resources, acknowledging that NGO influence waned in this process. Political scientists interested in why particular outcomes or linkages between environment and development prevailed may thus be slightly disappointed in a mode of analysis built around one set of actors (NGOs), when the evidence presented highlights the equal importance of the politics of economic and development institutions, the rise of neoliberalism, and North–South politics. Similarly, while Macekura says that his analysis draws on American political development literature and international relations scholarship on institutional change and advocacy networks (p. 7), their influence is subtle, leaving readers to draw linkages and make their own inferences about mutual influences among NGOs, institutions, and policies over time. The author deserves credit for presenting evidence of these interactions, but often in terms of countervailing forces acting on or limiting NGOs.

Of Limits and Growth's conclusion reflects on the broader positive and negative impacts of NGOs and their legacy in

the evolution of sustainable development. It raises provocative questions about how aggrandizing their influence within international institutions may have come at the expense of the more holistic reforms they supported. Meanwhile, by the 1990s, divisions had emerged among more "radical" NGOs concerned about the close relationships of traditional well-funded and professionalized organizations, such as WWF and IUCN, more willing to work with governments and industry (p. 308). This discussion presages contestation among the greater diversity of NGOs today, many increasingly focused on global justice and from the Global South, taken up in recent works like Jennifer Hadden's (2015) *Networks in Contention*.

Meanwhile, deeper and persistent political and economic conflicts around poverty, inequality, and justice, Macekura argues, remain the most important and challenging to address in ongoing efforts to better reconcile environment and development. This conclusion at once solidifies his trenchant analysis of the limits of NGO influence and suggests that a slightly wider lens could be useful in order to fully understand the prospects for change, especially in the current context of the SDGs.

The End of Strategic Stability? Nuclear Weapons and the Challenges of Regional Rivalries.

Edited by Lawrence Rubin and Adam N. Stulberg. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2018. 314p. \$110.95 cloth, \$36.95 paper. doi:10.1017/S1537592719000847

— Sidra Hamidi, *Stanford University*

Despite the prevalence and use of the term "strategic stability" in U.S. foreign policy (it is mentioned 29 times in the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review), it is rarely defined and its meaning remains ambiguous. In *The End of Strategic Stability?* Lawrence Rubin and Adam Stulberg bring this ambiguity to light by enlisting a group of contributors who consider the history and future of strategic stability in different regional contexts. These regional investigations lead to the conclusion that interpretations of strategic stability are context dependent and, as Adam Mount notes in Chapter 12, a potential guise for a loose idea of "national defense," rather than a "calculated balance of power" (p. 291). The idea of strategic stability comes from the Cold War rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union, where the goal was to achieve stability in relations through the mutual vulnerability provided by nuclear weapons. Overall, the insights of the volume provide a much-needed antidote to conventional approaches to security studies, where concepts like strategic stability and deterrence are taken for granted and applied wholesale to wildly different contexts.

The volume is organized into two parts. The first considers strategic stability in the United States, Russia, South Asia, and the Middle East. The second takes on the

concept of “cross-domain deterrence” as it applies to the technological advances brought on by cyber warfare (Chapter 6) and hypersonic weapons (Chapter 7), and it also considers cross-domain deterrence in South Asia and the Middle East. Each part also features a concluding chapter that takes up the usefulness of strategic stability given the unique nature of both the actors and threats involved in global security. Stulberg and Rubin start by asking: “How well has the concept held up and adapted to new realities?” And given the thorough explorations in each chapter, the answer appears to be “not too well.”

Because this volume focuses on the concept of strategic stability, the reader is compelled to reconsider the importance of perception and of language in strategic contexts. In Chapter 2, Andrey Pavlov and Anastasia Malygina historicize the concept of strategic stability as it appeared in Russian discourse and strategy, particularly in the Gorbachev era when strategic stability went from being an implicit goal to an explicit one (p. 42). In Chapter 7, Tong Zhao presents Chinese perceptions of U.S. motivations as a way to understand what strategic stability means to the Chinese, particularly with the advent of changing technologies (p. 190). In Chapter 8, Happymon Jacob notes that the “desire for stability manifests differently in Indian and Pakistani thinking” (p. 211). These sorts of observations go a long way to help both scholars and policymakers rethink the basic concepts inherent in strategic discourse.

The volume concludes that strategic stability is a contested concept, and this argument is made clear in the different ways that the editors and contributors refer to the idea itself. In Chapter 2, Pavlov and Malygina discuss “parity”; in Chapters 5 and 10, Annie Tracy Samuel and Ala’ Alrababa’h discuss “regional stability”; and in the Conclusion of Part II, Jeffrey Knopf discusses “mutuality.” In addition, despite the desired differentiation between deterrence and strategic stability, in practice the two concepts appear to be quite similar throughout.

The term *strategic stability* constitutes a big umbrella. This is in part why the chapters often feel disjointed. The concluding chapters in each section certainly help bring the contributors in conversation with one another, but often “strategic stability” is used as a means to discuss other phenomena, such as hypersonic weapons (Chapter 7) or the history of different regional rivalries (Chapters 8 and 9). To be sure, the main argument of the volume is to show that strategic stability is often not in the lexicon of states outside the United States and Russia. But this finding then leads to a general, and disconnected, discussion of the kinds of threats certain states face and a discussion of their strategy. For example, in Chapter 10, Alrababa’h discusses Saudi Arabia and its strategy of “ideological deterrence,” which is based on its ideological influence in the Muslim world. This kind of strategy is certainly a fascinating interpretation of the mechanisms by which deterrence can work, but it is unclear how it all relates back to strategic

stability. Similarly, in Chapter 1, Evan Braden Montgomery discusses the American perspective on strategic stability, but it reads as a history of changing security threats in the post–Cold War era rather than an assessment of what strategic stability means to the United States and how the term is used throughout its history.

Still, some of the rich regional dynamics only come out when the volume moves away from strategic stability. For example, Alrababa’h’s observation in Chapter 10 that Saudi Arabia does not actually have any consistent military strategy or Dmitry Adamsky’s observation in Chapter 6 that Russia’s modern cyber strategy is based in an older concept of *maskirovka*, or deception, both bring out regional richness.

In general, the volume is at its best when it’s focusing on specific linguistic differences between the U.S. conception of strategic stability and other similar concepts in regional contexts. Sadia Tasleem (Chapter 3), Tracy Samuel (Chapter 5), and Adamsky (Chapter 6) all make an effort to examine the term from a linguistic perspective and demonstrate the kinds of words that are used by Pakistan, Iran, and Russia, respectively. Tasleem notes that it is difficult to find a term for strategic stability in Urdu (p. 73), and Tracy Samuel notes that the Persian term for deterrence is very common in Iranian strategic discourse, but that strategic stability, as such, does not appear in its discourse (p. 114). The linguistic and discursive observations in these chapters also demonstrate the potential value of tracing the history of strategic stability as a term and exploring how it is used throughout U.S. strategic and military history. What are the domains in which it is evoked? In what kinds of documents and speeches is it used? What are its multiple meanings? Rubin and Stulberg do some of this in the introduction (pp. 4–6), but the volume would have benefited from more examples of contexts in which strategic stability is used in the American realm. If strategic stability is contested in regional contexts, then it is likely to be contested in the context of U.S. history and strategy.

Ultimately, the editors conclude that “strategic stability and deterrence are contested but persistent concepts” (p. 304), and the volume effectively illustrates this contestation and deploys the complex history surrounding not just strategic stability but other similar concepts. But it does leave open the question of persistence: Why do these concepts persist if they are not suited to an understanding of contemporary global security challenges? Or for that matter, why do other strategic concepts like deterrence, status quo, and revisionist powers, or balancing persist? In the midst of problematizing “strategic stability,” this volume also often takes other such concepts for granted. For example, in Chapter 8, Happymon Jacob continually refers to India and Pakistan as “status quo” and “revisionist,” respectively. Those terms are problematized by the very goals of probing contestation and discerning

meaning that are laid out by the editors. Perhaps it is high time for other strategic concepts to be dissected and

reassessed in the same way that is encouraged by *The End of Strategic Stability?*
