The description of leading Serbian politicians in the two camps never adequately addresses the extent to which the intellectual discourses of two Serbias are influencing major political leaders in their decision-making or public speeches. Russell-Omaljev recognizes that elements of both discourses are found in the speeches and political decisions of the dominant Serbian politicians (for example, the former and the current Presidents of Serbia, Vojislav Koštunica, Boris Tadić and Aleksandar Vučić). However, she does not adequately address the extent to which their decisions reflect either genuinely held beliefs and opposing images of a post-Milošević's Serbia or, rather, the regional and international contingencies surrounding the country (the question of responsibility for the Yugoslav wars, the EU accession, and the recognition of Kosovo as an independent state). This leads to another critical question, particularly for those relying on the discourse analysis: what, indeed, is the influence of intellectual discourses of two Serbias on the Serbian public? Moreover, how important are the communications mediums (the print media, TV, internet, history textbooks) in fostering a particular civic or ethnic image that emerges as relatively dominant in the eyes of the Serbian public? Some of these questions are touched upon in the book, but in a rather cursory fashion where a more thorough analysis is warranted.

My critique does not diminish in any way the excellent analysis that Russell-Omaljev provides in her depictions of the contested visions of Serbian national identity. In particular, her emphasis on the fluidity of Serbian national categories currently in circulation along with nuanced description within each of the Serbian discourses is the strength of the book—she aptly avoids presenting a single, unifying Serbian national identity. Instead, the passionate debates over the symbolic interpretations of the Serbian identity are the reflection of the conditions of liminality in which the Serbian state and society find itself in the aftermath of Milošević. In other words, the author has shown that the imagery of both Serbias share a commonality. Even though they offer radically different images, they are both examples of essentializing discourses that represent Serbia as static and monolithic. The book ultimately reveals that the choice between two Serbias is a false one. In Russell-Omaljev's own words, "[I]t is a choice between absorption of modernity presented as alien by Other Serbia and return to the simulated authenticity of (ethnic and religious) origins as seen by First Serbia (240)."Also, her last two chapters on the competing interpretations of the Serbian responsibility for the wars in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Kosovo, as well as the so-called Serbian "auto-chauvinism" debate, are a must read for those wanting to find their way around those complex topics that have dominated Serbia for the past twenty years.

Overall, Russell-Omaljev's book represents a very reliable introduction to the symbolic interpretations of political and cultural identity debates in Serbia. As such, it will be of particular interest to those new to Western Balkans studies. Equally important, as the author herself emphasizes, the "acerbic debates over national identity and the political misuse of history are of course not a peculiarly Serbian phenomenon (240)." Thus, the book should be on the reading list of all those engaged in broader questions of identity formation in the context of post-conflict development.

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doi:10.1017/nps.2019.26

The Central Asia–Afghanistan Relationship: From Soviet Intervention to the Silk Road Initiatives, edited by Marlene Laruelle, Lanham, Maryland, Lexington, 2017, $105 (hardcover), ISBN 978-1498546546

Standing on the road from Dushanbe to Khorog in 2013, looking across the river Panj from the Vanj district in Tajikistan to Darwaz-e Bala in northern Afghanistan, I looked across at the Afghan villages as women hurried past in their blue burqas. I asked my host how he viewed the Tajik

speakers on the other side. "We are not only separated by this 100-meter-wide river," he replied, "but by hundreds of years of development. They are like our ancestors, living last century." Afghanistan and its post-Soviet neighbors are linked in important ways. They were historically part of the same region, Transoxiana. Significant Uzbek, Tajik, and Turkmen minorities live south of the 2,000-kilometer border imposed by Britain and Russia in 1895. While the region is often viewed through the misleading lens of great power politics, *The Central Asia–Afghanistan Relationship* brings together a diverse range of scholars and specialists to consider the infrequently asked question of what is means to be in Afghanistan's neighborhood. The book is one of the first to focus on the Afghanistan–Central Asia relationship, rather than Afghanistan's relations with all its neighbors.

Western narratives on the region are often divorced from the realities on the ground, focused on stabilizing the country as a prelude to withdrawal. Authors in *The Central Asia–Afghanistan Relationship* place emphasis on local narratives and approaches to solving the region's problems. The first section of the book examines the experiences of *Afgantsy*, Central Asians who participated in the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 and its subsequent attempts to protect the communist regime there. After an introduction to the Soviet intervention by Artemy Kalinovsky, the second chapter presents the oral histories of soldiers, nurses, drivers, and translators from the Soviet republics of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan. The interviews form part of a larger two-volume Russian-language collection published by the Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies. While a small minority of veterans returned critical of the USSR, many saw themselves as "defenders of the Soviet state" (4). Like veterans from Vietnam, almost all returned home disoriented and never found themselves in a position of prominence offered to veterans of the Great Patriotic War.

The book's second section examines how states within the region view each other. Marlene Laruelle explores the way that the governments of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan have adopted "transactional policies" toward Afghanistan, using the threat of instability stemming from their southern neighbor to leverage support from the international community. At the same time, they have used their geopolitical location to gain visibility internationally. In April 2018, for example, Uzbekistan co-hosted a conference on regional stability with the Afghan government. Antonio Guistozzi explores how the decentralized, uncoordinated, and fragmented foreign policy-making environment in Afghanistan has resulted in inconsistent policies and opened the country to external manipulation. In the next chapter, Ekaterina Stepanova explores Russia's pragmatic foreign policy toward Afghanistan, protecting its interests in Central Asia by alternately supporting the northern alliance, Taliban, and central government at different times.

The peril of spillovers from Afghanistan in the form of drug trafficking and violent extremism forms the focus of Bruce Pannier's chapter. As militant groups have strengthened their presence in northern Afghanistan, the conflict has increasingly resulted in violent incidents on the border with Turkmenistan and Tajikistan. In the face of this peril, many actors both within and beyond the region have sought to counteract it with the promise of regional integration. Drawing on decades of geopolitical discourse on Central Asia, Secretary of State Hilary Clinton proposed a New Silk Road in 2011, stating the United States's aim to help create "a web of economic and transit connections that will bind together a region too long torn apart by conflict and division." Projects like the Turkmenistan–Afghanistan–Pakistan–India gas pipeline, bridges across the Amu Darya, and the CASA-1000 project to deliver Central Asian electricity to Afghanistan have all been linked to this vision. Silk Road imagery is not restricted to the USA. It has also been adopted by Central Asian states looking to present themselves as a bridge between East and West, by China through its "Silk Road Economic Belt" launched in 2013 and by most recently by India.

Part three addresses the varied ways actors have framed the Central Asia–Afghanistan relationship through the language of Silk Roads. While the last three chapters are most useful for Western policy makers looking to bring stability to Afghanistan, they all cover similar ground and come to

https://doi.org/10.1017/nps.2019.47 Published online by Cambridge University Press

similar conclusions. All of the authors argue that the New Silk Road is a geopolitical imaginary, linked to the United States's policy priorities rather than any reality on the ground. Alexander Diener argues that the New Silk Road is an "ideology of mobility," built on the flawed assumption that increased connectivity will create regional stability. Similarly, Sebastien Peyrouse and Gaël Raballand question the economic basis of the project, ignoring the limited trade between Central and South Asia, and failing to address issues of corruption, poor governance, and production patterns. But arguably, even at the time the chapters were written, the New Silk Road had already ceased to be the talk of the town after John Kerry became Secretary of State in 2013. While the Trump administration talked of reviving the imagery in early 2017, this vision is yet to have been fully articulated. A more significant connectivity-related project involving Afghanistan is now China's ambitious Belt and Road initiative, which is already resulting in China becoming involved in the Central Asia–Afghanistan relationship through security assistance to Tajikistan. Nonetheless, *The Central Asia–Afghanistan Relationship* is an excellent collection of essays that points to the ways in which regional actors are shaping politics in Central Asia and Afghanistan.

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doi:10.1017/nps.2019.47

Anatomy of a Genocide: The Life and Death of a Town Called Buczacz, by Omer Bartov, New York, Simon & Schuster, 2018, 416 pages, $18.00 (hardback), ISBN 978-1451684537

Omer Bartov's book provides the complete history of the Jews in the small border town of Buczacz in Galicia, which belonged at different times to Poland, the Habsburg Empire, again to Poland, then to the Soviet Union, and now to Ukraine. Although a significant part of the book is devoted to the Holocaust of Jews in Buczacz, the earlier history of the Jewish community and Jewish Christian relations is very important for understanding the roots of the violence and the behavior of the local gentile population during the Nazi occupation of the town.

Jews settled in Buczacz in the 16th century, when town belonged to Poland. In 1772 Galicia was annexed by the Habsburg Empire, and Buczacz was under Austrian rule until the collapse of the empire in 1918. The population of the town was always multiethnic: Jews, Poles, and Ukrainians lived there. As Bartov shows, Jews and gentiles lived in the town together and apart. Ukrainian and Polish nationalists blamed Jews for exploitation of the local Christian population and for the poverty and drunkenness of the peasants. Bartov points out that, "While Jews were relatively better off than the peasants … the vast majority of Jews in Buczacz, as in the rest of Galicia, were poor" (28). Many Jews from Galicia immigrated to the United States at the turn of the 20th century.

During the First World War, "Buczacz was swept into the carnage early on, when once again it found itself in the path of invading armies" (38). Russian troops organized anti-Jewish pogroms, killed Jews, raped Jewish women, and expelled Jews from their homes and burned them. During the occupation of Galicia, the Russian military administration blamed Jews for supporting the Austria-Hungary government and accused them of espionage for the enemy. Many thousands of Jews were expelled from Galicia, and the movement of the rest of the Jewish population was restricted, as was delivery of provisions to the region, which was suffering from the war. Famine, contagious diseases, and violence devastated the Jewish population in Buczacz and Galicia, and destroyed many Jewish communal institutions there.

From September 1920 to the beginning of the Second World War, Buczacz was under Polish jurisdiction. Bartov points out that Christian–Jewish relations were quite complicated in Buczacz in the interwar period. The Jews of Buczacz were marginalized "in a far-off corner of an aggressively nationalist and economically backward new state" (95). Although Jews made up a majority of the