

unpacking of that term (e.g., whose security, against what, to be pursued at what cost?).

The authors' central concern is the decision taken by WHO member states in 2005 to revise the IHR (which had remained virtually unchanged since 1969) in a way that changed the expectations that states have of one another in the event of an infectious-disease outbreak emergency. Since the new IHR came into force (in 2007), WHO member states have been formally obliged to build and maintain adequate capacity to detect disease outbreaks, engage in timely and transparent reporting of a wide variety of outbreak events, avoid unnecessary interference with international travel and trade, and recognize the right of the WHO to act and issue advice based on information received from sources other than WHO member states. The authors explain well the extent to which adherence to these requirements has been a function of political will on the part of national governments. However, the more intriguing part of the story they tell is that which tracks the role played by WHO bureaucrats (e.g., David Heymann, Gro Harlem Brundtland, Guénaél Rodier, and Margaret Chan) across time as promoters and defenders of IHR norms. The discursive and bureaucratic efforts of such actors are traced back as far as the mid-1990s when, according to the authors, those norms began to take shape and gain strength.

As described in Chapter 1, a revision of the IHR was eventually made politically possible by politicians, scientists, and bureaucrats who constructed an association between (in)security and infectious disease outbreaks. For several years before timely disease reporting and rapid responses to outbreaks became requirements under international law, "security talk" (p. 17) helped sustain the notion that a state's refusal to disclose the occurrence and details of outbreaks within their territory would be reprehensible (albeit not illegal). Evidently, a process of norm building to that effect was under way, and the experience with the viral disease SARS (in 2003) and bird flu (from 2004) showed that the concealment of outbreaks was by then widely regarded as deviant and damaging behavior.

Government responses to these two outbreaks are explored in Chapters 2 and 3, and here the authors argue persuasively that IHR norms were having an effect on political behavior even before they were codified into law in 2005. In Chapter 4 they go on to examine the resilience of those norms after the IHR entered into force, presenting evidence of state actions and declarations during the time of the 2009–10 swine flu pandemic. Finally, Chapter 5 explores the way in which WHO member states and the organization's secretariat sought to draw lessons for global health governance from the swine flu experience. This process, the authors argue, evidenced further international progress toward internalization of IHR norms, but it also served as a reminder that many states remain materially incapable of acting on their

normative commitments (e.g., to detect and report disease outbreaks quickly).

Overall, Davies, Kamradt-Simon, and Rushton do an excellent job of substantiating their claim that "most states want to comply with their [IHR] obligations most of the time but . . . in some cases material and infrastructural shortfalls remain a significant obstacle to their ability to do so" (p. 8). The main message to readers of *Disease Diplomacy* is that a lack of political commitment to IHR norms is less of a problem than a lack of capacity, in many developing countries, to act accordingly. It remains to be seen, however, whether this message is overly optimistic. After this book went to press, the largest-ever outbreak of Ebola occurred in West Africa, and governments in other parts of the world reacted differently. Some rushed to assist, but others responded by banning travel to and from West Africa, despite WHO advice that doing so was unnecessary and counterproductive. This nonadherence to the IHR rule against unnecessary interference with international traffic might since have generated an expectation that reporting disease outbreaks will prompt international abandonment rather than assistance. If so, the future willingness of states to adhere to IHR norms should not be taken for granted.

Aspiration and Ambivalence. Strategies and Realities of Counterinsurgency and State Building in

Afghanistan. By Vanda Felbab-Brown. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2013. 358p. \$32.95.
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— Astri Suhrke, *Chr. Michelsen Institute*

Two broad strands are apparent in the policy literature on the U.S.-led intervention in Afghanistan. One holds that there was not enough intervention to succeed (see, e.g., Seth G. Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires*, 2009) and the other that the Western presence itself became part of the problem and not the solution (see, e.g., Anand Gopal, *No Good Men Among the Living*, 2014). Vanda Felbab-Brown's *Aspiration and Ambivalence* belongs to the former; indeed, it recommends a continuous and deep U.S. involvement in Afghanistan.

Written as a contribution to the discussion over the 2012–14 transition—the scheduled transfer of security responsibility from the international forces to the Afghan government, and the closing down of NATO's International Security Assistance Force mission—the book's recommendations invite reflection today as well. After 15 years of intervention at an enormous cost in lives, injuries, and money, what can the United States do at this point to stabilize the situation in Afghanistan? What interests and obligations do the United States and its allies have in this regard? These issues were central in the discussion over the transition, and they remain equally salient today.

Felbab-Brown believes that the United States has long-term interests in fostering a Western-oriented Afghanistan with a measure of liberal political democracy and inclusive economic development. This objective, she argues, entails continuous international commitment to defeat not only Islamists with a global jihadist agenda but also Taliban and related Afghan militants who seek local and national power.

Critics might ask why previous U.S.-led efforts over more than a decade in pursuit of precisely these aims have had such modest results. So does Felbab-Brown. Her book details a long litany of shortcomings: nepotism and corruption, the failed narcotics eradication campaign, the failed police reform, the mostly disastrous Afghan Local Police project, stalled public-administration reforms, the abuse and crime attributed to local strongmen, and the unreliability of leading partners (including Hamid Karzai). These factors, she argues, have decisively undermined efforts to fight the insurgency.

There is broad agreement in the literature that governance and legitimacy are key elements in a counterinsurgency strategy. The point was put succinctly in Ambassador Karl Eikenberry's famous cable to President Barack Obama in the heat of the 2009 strategy discussion. But at this juncture, policy analysts part. Some, like Eikenberry, maintain that under prevailing conditions in Afghanistan, a U.S.-led counterinsurgency campaign cannot succeed. External parties cannot create local legitimacy, something the government itself must develop relative to its people. In its fullest version, this argument holds that externally supported democratization, state-building, and social transformation of the kind that was attempted in Afghanistan had inherent limitations and contradictions that fatally jeopardize the project. (Full disclosure: This is the thesis of my own 2011 book, *When More Is Less: The International Project in Afghanistan*).

Felbab-Brown articulates the opposing view: The United States and "the international community" must simply try harder and do it better, particularly as leverage will decline with troop withdrawals and probable reductions in aid. She singles out several areas needing sustained attention and firm interventions: corruption, public administration, and the security forces. Yet looking more closely at the general prescriptions she offers, problems become apparent. For a start, short-term objectives in U.S. policy that focus on tactical military offensives have conflicted with long-term strategies of statebuilding, not simply because of poor statesmanship but because of genuinely conflicting interests and their institutional advocates. This cannot be changed just by better prioritization of objectives, as Felbab-Brown argues.

Similarly, is shaming, naming, and punishment of Afghans involved in particularly egregious cases of corruption a solution when the problem is systemic and transnational? The recent case of the suspiciously

expensive natural-gas filling station in Shebergan near the gas fields in northern Afghanistan is revealing. The U.S.-funded station cost over \$4 million (a similar station in Pakistan costs about \$500,000), but what caught the attention of the U.S. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) was the overhead cost of \$30 million. The overhead probably flowed in part to the most powerful person in the area, General Abdul Rashid Dostum, who is vice president of the Republic and also has a large militia force in the North. The Pentagon might have gotten value for its money in the end—Dostum's militia stopped Taliban advances in neighboring Faryab Province the summer of 2015—but the transaction was neither transparent nor accountable. It was emblematic of the kind of external financial flow that has fueled systemic corruption in Afghanistan since 2001 and requires systemic corrections.

Years of training and massive support by the U.S. coalition notwithstanding, the weakness of the Afghan Security Forces are legion. Felbab-Brown recommends that U.S. forces extend their post-2014 mentoring role to continue to provide operational support. She may well be right that without such assistance, the Afghan army cannot confront, let alone roll back, the Taliban. The point was vividly demonstrated in Kunduz in October 2015 and again this year. Yet will another, say, 10 years make much of a difference to an army that is factionalized and seems demoralized? Will the U.S. military presence be just enough to keep the civil war going, too small to beat back the Taliban but too strong to compel the army and the political leadership to reform? Felbab-Brown does not pose the questions.

The book is symptomatic of the contradictory impulses in the American engagement in Afghanistan. The author is clearly sympathetic to the Afghan people. She has traveled repeatedly to the country, and not always on visits facilitated by the U.S. embassy. She conveys the sense that past U.S. involvement, and the costs for all parties concerned, has created a moral obligation to continue assistance. Yet there is a distinct lack of awareness of Afghan sensibilities and sense of sovereignty. She recommends, for instance, that U.S. forces continue to accompany Afghan forces on night raids, a role that alienated villagers whose compounds were invaded and doors kicked in by American soldiers at night. U.S. participation in night raids was strongly opposed by the Afghan government and was formally ended with the transition. Felbab-Brown also recommends that the United States intervene in Afghan appointment processes to reduce patronage, factionalism, and corruption by ensuring that promotions in the military and civil administration are based on merit. A long imperial arm of this kind belongs to another era; to the extent it was tried in Afghanistan after 2001, it proved both ineffective and counterproductive.

When the underlying logic is that this is still a winnable war, there is, not surprisingly, little discussion of the possibilities for negotiation and what an acceptable peace settlement might entail. Readers who are interested in this would need to look elsewhere. They would find that there is by now a considerable literature on this aspect of the Afghan conflict (see, e.g., Michael Semple, *Reconciliation in Afghanistan*, 2009). Texts on the rationale, strategies, potentials, and pitfalls of peace talks have ebbed and flowed with the rhythm of the conflict, but gained momentum after 2010–11 when the beginnings of a peace process seemed in evidence. Although the process spluttered, influential voices in the U.S. foreign policy establishment have continued to outline possible peace strategies (see e.g., James Dobbins and Carter Malkasian, “Time to Negotiate in Afghanistan,” *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2015).

Constructive Illusions: Misperceiving the Origins of International Cooperation. By Eric Grynaviski. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. 2014. 224p. \$34.95.
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— Christopher Gelpi, *The Ohio State University*

Much of the scholarship on misperception in international politics begins by identifying disastrous military conflicts and then scours the historical record to exhume the misperceptions that led inevitably to this dire outcome. The often unstated premise of this kind of work is that the world would be a safer and more cooperative place if decision makers perceived their environment more accurately.

Eric Grynaviski’s *Constructive Illusions* directly confronts this premise. To be sure, Grynaviski is not the first to question the truism that misperception causes war. Robert Jervis (“War and misperception,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18 [no. 4, 1988]: 675–700) is perhaps most well known for drawing this presumption to our attention. However, Jervis’s discussion is largely theoretical rather than empirical, and Grynaviski’s book brings us a step closer to answering Jervis’s question with a detailed historical interrogation of the détente period of the Cold War.

The book begins with a theory chapter that articulates the causal pathways linking misperceptions (or more specifically, false intersubjective beliefs, or FIBs) to cooperation. The book’s core is a series of three historical case studies focusing on the origins of détente, the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, and the decline of détente. The central empirical claim of these chapters is that détente was centrally founded on misunderstandings (or FIBs) by the leaders of both superpowers regarding the principles and norms undergirding the relationship. Without these misunderstandings, the author concludes, the cooperation and peace building realized through détente would have

been impossible. Moreover, he argues that the end of détente was brought about by shifts in American domestic politics, not by a clarification of the foundational misperceptions. Consequently, he concludes that 1) misperceptions had a strongly positive impact on U.S.–Soviet cooperation during the 1970s, and 2) these misperceptions had few—if any—negative consequences for subsequent superpower relations.

The first of these two claims seems well supported by Grynaviski’s historical evidence. At its core, détente was founded on the Basic Principles Agreement (BPA) of 1972. The BPA was dissonant in its very structure, which comprised two articles—the first written largely by the USSR and the second largely by the United States—that were inconsistent with each other in important respects. The placement of these articles side by side in a single accord allowed Soviet leaders to believe that the United States had agreed to political parity between the superpowers, while simultaneously allowing American leaders to believe that the USSR had agreed to the political linkage of arms-control cooperation to Soviet restraint in support of Third World clients. Nonetheless, this short, incoherent accord set the stage for a series of superpower arms-control agreements that would otherwise have been impossible. Grynaviski’s evidence draws heavily on Raymond Garthoff’s scholarship in this area (e.g., *Détente and Confrontation: American—Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan*, 1985), but *Constructive Illusions* places these findings in a broader theoretical context than the historian’s earlier work, particularly regarding the positive role of misperceptions.

The second empirical claim, however, is somewhat more speculative and left me less than entirely persuaded. While he largely agrees with Garthoff’s explanation of the origins of détente, Grynaviski seeks to rebut the historian’s claim that the misunderstandings rooted in the BPA ultimately undermined the cooperative relationship. He does so by arguing that the change in American policy toward the Soviet Union was a function of the changing domestic power and influence of different U.S. policymakers, rather than a result of any individual policymaker’s changing his or her beliefs. Specifically, he writes that “if a group did not change its beliefs about cooperation after these misperceptions arose, then the misperceptions themselves do not explain the decline of cooperation” (p. 141).

One cannot so easily infer the causes of state behavior from evidence at the individual level, however. The policies of any government are inevitably the result of a bureaucratic competition among actors with different preferences, each trying to persuade the chief executive to follow their preferred course. The relative influence of those actors, however, is likely to depend on the chief executive’s perceptions of the efficacy of their advice. Thus, at least one plausible account is that the failure of the