

Yellow Peril (Part II)

by William R. Hawkins

The Coming War with Japan

by George Friedman
and Meredith Lebard

New York: St. Martin's Press;
429 pp., \$24.95

Do not be put off by the sensationalist title. This is a solid geopolitical and economic study of power in the Pacific during the 20th century. Basing their prophesy on the record, George Friedman and Meredith Lebard conclude that a second U.S.-Japanese war is highly probable in the early 21st century. The authors do not attempt to predict the details of such a war. Instead, they concentrate on the permanent factors that have put Washington and Tokyo on a collision course and write from the clear, cool perspective of *realpolitik*. Their book is divided into three parts of equal length: a history of U.S.-Japanese relations, a survey of the current situation, and a discussion of various alternative futures.

To many observers, the Japanese seem to be unstoppable. However, Friedman and Lebard argue that the threat of war comes not from Japan's apparent strength but from its fundamental weakness. Japan may have the world's second largest economy, but

that economy is located on a series of islands too small to sustain it. If the Japanese economy is to compete with vast entities such as the United States and Europe, it must secure markets and resources that are readily at hand as have the other two. Japan has to go quite a distance before it can secure either markets or resources, and it must do so through waters controlled by the world's greatest economic power, Japan's old and dangerous nemesis, the United States.

This is the geostrategic problem that has always faced Japan, which must either create an empire or remain a vassal of the United States, subject to increasing economic pressure. Though

its first bid for empire ended in 1945, Japan was resurrected from that defeat by a new war — the Cold War — during which the United States needed Japan as an ally against the Soviet Union. The United States paid a high price for this alliance, granting Japan an access to its markets that ruined a number of American companies and undermined the nation's industrial base. Now that the Cold War is over, there is no reason for America to continue to pay this price.

Friedman and Lebard repeatedly make the point that the appeal of free trade is gone:

The end of the Cold War may well signal the end of the free-trade era and a cyclical return to segmented markets. In such a segmented and regionalized world, economic well-being will rest with those who hold political and military power. . . . The ability to close off one's markets to competitors might well bring great economic benefit, or at least social peace.

Since the United States is the only true superpower in the wake of economic collapse and ethnic strife in the Soviet Union, it is in a position to benefit from the return of "normal" power politics and mercantilism:

The power of the U.S. to impose tolls on trade and punish traders that cut into U.S. markets is a starkly real power. . . . It is utterly inconceivable that the United States will not use its vast naval power to try to gain economic advantage.

Tokyo must look to the future with trepidation. Japan imports 99 percent of its oil, and in 1988 imported 93 percent of all the nickel, 57 percent of all the copper, and 30 percent of all the coal and iron available on the world market. Exports account for 15 percent of Japan's GNP and half its annual economic growth. On average, every merchant ship in the world must visit Japan 1.3 times a year to carry its trade. And the situation will only get worse.

The United States has demanded that Japan shift from exports to domestic development, but Friedman and Lebard argue that this will not work. Increasing domestic demand will not

lessen the need for raw material imports, thus making exports necessary to cover the cost. Japan also has a severe labor shortage that requires the use of foreign workers. And as an economically mature nation, Japan is finding that its large capital surplus is attracted to foreign investments. While this money is going mainly to buy real estate, securities, and banks in America and Europe, it is also being used to develop mines, oil fields, farmland, and basic industry in Asia and Latin America.

One-third of Japan's exports go to the United States. As the creator of the world's most open market, Japanese business has been quick to exploit this golden opportunity. But Tokyo knows that these days are numbered as political resentment grows. With Europe moving towards economic union in 1992 and the United States negotiating a North American trading zone, Japan is seeking its own economic preserve, a new version of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, only its horizons will extend farther this time.

Three countries loom large in this plan: Indonesia, which offers Japan labor, raw materials (including oil), and a key to the Malacca Strait; India, which has a large potential market and is already a major source of raw materials; and the Philippines, the cornerstone of America's military establishment in Asia. New Delhi wants to control the Indian Ocean, and Japanese technology could help India build a navy and air force to do it. An Indian fleet might be a better safeguard for Japanese oil shipments from the Persian Gulf than the U.S. Navy, if the trade war heats up. And if the United States were forced out of its bases in the Philippines, it would be very difficult for Washington to project its power into the western Pacific in the face of Japanese hostility. It can be expected that increasingly Japanese influence in the Philippines will be used to support those who favor such an American expulsion.

To protect this maritime empire, Japan will have to seek naval supremacy in the Pacific. Tokyo could not depend on economic influence alone to control such a large, varied, and unstable area; as the authors note, "being rich and quite weak is normally an invitation for catastrophe." Japan has the industrial and technological means to pursue such a plan of supremacy.

The United States has taken out the wrong parts of the Cold War apparatus. Washington has been cutting back elements of its own strength, rather than of the strength of others. Nothing could be more dangerous than continued American pressure on Japan to increase its navy, and to play a larger role in world affairs. With the waning of the Soviet threat, the United States no longer has an interest in a stronger and more active Japan.

The way for a country to deter war is to become so strong that no one dares to challenge it. For a powerful America to regain economic preeminence, it may be necessary to continue to make Japan pay tribute to Washington by supporting policies that are not in Tokyo's interests, as in the case of the Gulf War. The most important thing is to keep the balance of power tilted towards America.

Japan has always wanted to dominate the Pacific and thus to control its own destiny, but it discovered in 1945 that the price for such ambition could be prohibitive. Japan underestimated American resolve in 1941. Washington should never again allow Tokyo to believe it can successfully move against American interests.

William R. Hawkins writes from Knoxville, Tennessee.

Trending West

by *Gregory McNamee*

Prose & Poetry of the American West

Edited by *James C. Work*
Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press; 733 pp., \$25.00

“Of making many books there is no end,” Ecclesiastes has it. Like the endless streams of cat-cartoon and celebrity workout books, the flow of books factual or fictional about the American West seems not only interminable but ever-increasing. The region has long been a popular setting for a great mass of pulp fiction, to which hundreds of new titles are added yearly. As writers of higher seriousness abandon the artificial canyons of New York for such sundry locales as southern Arizona and western Montana, not to mention Hollywood and even Texas, a host of books with promise to endure has been joined to what was as recently as two decades ago a very small body of worthwhile writing indeed.

Where there is a literature there is an anthologist, and with the increase of writing from the American West there has been an increase in collections purporting to represent it. In the last few years there have been serviceable

gatherings like Russell Martin and Marc Barasch's *Writers of the Purple Sage* (Penguin Books), a few dogs like Alex Blackburn's *The Interior Country* (Swallow Press), and a slew of in-betweens. James C. Work's sensibly named *Prose & Poetry of the American West* makes all but Russell and Barasch's collection redundant, and is one of the better-conceived anthologies of American writing of any kind.

Given an abundance of high-quality material—and in this instance there is no shortage of good writing on the American West, buried though it may be under a mudslide of dime-store novels—the anthologist's chief problem is organization. Mr. Work undoubtedly considered many schemes before arriving at the frame of his book, an arguable chronological division of the literature into four major eras.

The editor places the first, “The Emergence Period,” in the years 1540-1832, and he chooses as his exemplars, among other items, a sequence of Native American emergence myths, an account by the conquistador Pedro de Castañeda (a less gifted chronicler than his later compatriots Escalante and Garcés), and passages from the always stirring journals of Lewis and Clark. The section closes with Walt Whitman's lovely ode “Pioneers! O Pioneers!” Here Mr. Work's division breaks down, for by his own logic Whitman's well-known poem belongs somewhere near the middle of his next section, “The Mythopoeic Period (1833-89),” which showcases selections from Whitman's contemporaries Mark Twain, Bret Harte, and John Wesley Powell.

That section also introduces the work of early women writers like the quirky, often brilliant Mary Austin, whose *Land of Little Rain* and *The Land of Journeys' Ending* remain benchmarks of Southwestern writing; Helen Hunt Jackson, whose romantic novel *Ramona* (1884) introduced New England literary sensibilities to southern California; and Willa Cather, who ranks among the greatest Western writers, period. It is regrettable that Mr. Work could not have found room in his already overstuffed collection for something by Martha Summerhayes, a fine memoirist, but at least he had the foresight to omit an appearance by Mabel Dodge Luhan, who cultivated

LIBERAL ARTS



CULTURAL DIVERSITY AT THE IVY LEAGUE

Two Ethiopian women who came to America to study physics at Dartmouth College were killed last June by a fellow Ethiopian who struck them repeatedly with an ax. Haileselassie Girmay, a 32-year-old friend of the victims and an Ethiopian-born geology teacher at a Swedish university, was arrested at the apartment where the bodies were found. He was reportedly staying with the women while he visited. These are the first murders in the Ivy League college community in more than fifty years.