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Review

Reviewed Work(s): Les relations franco-chinoises au vingtième siècle et leurs antécédents
by Laurent Césari and Denis Varaschin

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Vietnamese parties in the conflict—an important remedy to the U.S.-centric literature that has dominated the field for far too long.

The result of Asselin's ambitious project will appeal to many. For scholars of U.S. foreign relations, Asselin attempts to decipher the complex Nixon-Kissinger relationship. In contrast to another impressive work on the topic by Larry Berman, entitled *No Peace, No Honor: Nixon, Kissinger, and Betrayal in Vietnam* (New York: Free Press, 2001), Asselin argues that Henry Kissinger, rather than Richard Nixon, desired Thieu's acquiescence to the October draft. Regardless of Washington's machinations, Asselin is keen to point out that Hanoi's resistance to reaching a settlement also constituted a major reason for why peace did not come in 1972. Here, Asselin refutes Robert Brigham's argument in *Guerilla Diplomacy: The NLF's Foreign Relations and the Vietnam War* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1998) that attributes the prevention of an agreement to the Southern communists and instead argues that the decision to stall rested with the Hanoi politburo alone. Lastly, perhaps the greatest strength—and undoubtedly the greatest appeal—of Asselin's work includes the tantalizing snippets of the North Vietnamese home front during the war. Although William Duiker has written many histories on the Vietnamese communist war effort, Asselin's work utilizes materials from the archives that Duiker did not.

Unfortunately, Asselin's greatest strength is also his greatest weakness. The reader is left wanting more on the North Vietnamese war effort. Indeed, a history of the DRV during the conflict still needs to be written. As for South Vietnam, although Asselin omits Saigon from the title, he commits a large portion of the study to the role played by the Thieu administration but unfortunately without making use of documents from the National Archives Center 2 in Ho Chi Minh City, which houses the former Republic of Vietnam (RVN) materials, or conducting interviews with former South Vietnamese officials, as Larry Berman succeeded in doing for *No Peace, No Honor*. In addition, Asselin's treatment of other major players in the diplomatic sphere of the war does not offer much that is new (the Soviet Union or China) or is nonexistent (Cambodia and Laos). In Asselin's defense, the author does admit in the preface that his work will focus primarily on Washington and Hanoi. Lastly, although Asselin's work purports to cover the entire period in which the secret talks took place, five of the seven chapters are devoted to 1972. The overall result on the emphasis of the final full year of negotiations, even if it was the most eventful year, makes for an imbalanced portrayal of the negotiations process.

Nonetheless, Asselin's work will undoubtedly advance the discussion on the Vietnamese-American War enormously. *A Bitter Peace* is an excellent contribution to the literature that will hopefully encourage present and future scholars of Vietnam to finally address issues of that most taboo war.

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Les relations franco-chinoises au vingtième siècle et leurs antécédents. Edited by LAURENT CÉSARI and DENIS VARASCHIN. Arras, Fr.: Artois Presses Universités, 2003. 290 pp. € 21.

Despite the best intentions of the organizers, it is never easy to produce an edited volume that is thematically unified and even in quality. To their credit, Laurent Césari and Denis Varaschin have done a very good job in this book on Franco-Chinese

relations, the result of a conference organized in November 2001 at the University of Artois in Arras, France. If the theme of the book (and the conference) is not one of the most original (*Sino-French Relations in the Twenty-first Century and Their Antecedents*), there is something in here for everyone, and much of it is very good.

The book is divided into three sections. The first part covers the period before the twentieth century and deals with “social and cultural contacts” between the two countries. Jean-Pierre Duteil opens with a study of the French Jesuits in China and the transfer of science and techniques in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (mainly Western ones). Laurence Baudoux examines the Western fascination with Chinese gardens and the incorporation of Chinese styles and images into European landscapes and mindsets. Bruno Benoit focuses on how Indochina (Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia under French colonial domination) became a part of the French myth of China, literally and figuratively. Bernard Krouck provides a sympathetic portrait of the French journalist Lucien Bodard, studying the latter’s fascination with China and his coverage of the 1949 revolution and its aftermath. Closing the “antecedents,” Jacques Weber produces a detailed study of the evolution of the Mixed Court in the French concession of Shanghai, relying on newly available French sources.

The second part of this book brings us firmly into the twentieth century along economic lines. Indeed, economic historians will find much of value in the contributions of Jean-François Klein, Hubert Bonin, and Varaschin, each of whom combines new research with analytical sophistication. Wielding a Braudelian brush in new ways, Klein examines the historical evolution and the geographical extension of Lyon-based silk trading networks into the Chinese market in the nineteenth century, how the Lyon merchants went about competing with wider British trading operations, and the impact that this had on Lyon’s own economic development. Bonin focuses on the role of French bankers in China between 1860 and 1950, while Varaschin moves into new territory by studying the trials and tribulations of EDF (Electricité de France) in penetrating and participating in the Chinese electricity market in recent decades. Much less problematized is Zhang Erzhen’s overview of Sino-French trade in the twentieth century. Patrice Marcilloux, clearly influenced by the renewal of cultural studies on World War I in France (and elsewhere), has provided an interesting study of Chinese worker-soldiers in France during World War I and how they triggered a great “fear” (p. 142) among many French civilians who encountered them.

The third section covers diplomatic relations. Jean-Claude Montant relies on a corpus of new sources from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs to provide a more detailed understanding of Franco-Chinese relations during World War I (although, for unexplained reasons, he does not include footnotes). The remaining contributions in this section make it clear that French Indochina was an essential theme in Sino-French relations in the twentieth century. Marianne Bastid-Bruguère makes use of sources in the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs to provide a solid and nuanced re-reading of Admiral Decoux’s relationship with the Wang Jingwei government in China during World War II, arguing that Vichy policy was much more subtle than has otherwise been admitted. In an impressively researched chapter, Pierre Grosser looks at the changing state of Franco-Chinese relations during the Indochina War (1945–54), analyzing how the war was crucial to French nationalism and the renaissance of French identity at the international level, and, with the advent of the cold war, how the Indochina War offered a way for French leaders to recast themselves as the defenders of local nationalisms in Indochina rather than neocolonialists. For Grosser, however, French delusions of grandeur allowed the Chinese to “manipulate”

Paris to advance Beijing's national interests. Césari's discussion of Georges Pompidou's policy toward China between 1969 and 1974 is of the same high caliber of research and analysis. And as Césari points out in his fine introduction, despite French attempts to affirm their importance at the world level via the development of special relations with China, this belief in "the privileged relationship" with China has been "repeatedly demonstrated" to be a myth (p. 9).

Césari and Varaschin should be commended for producing a thematically linked volume, keeping the contributors on track, and publishing some exciting new research both in terms of new sources and trenchant analysis. It will be of interest to historians of French and Chinese contemporary history and diplomatic historians of France and Asia, and very useful to those working on colonial and postcolonial Indochina. I recommend this book to those who read French, and I would urge the editors to consider an English-language translation of all or some of the chapters.

Two regrets, however. It would be nice to have had a deeper Chinese view of France. In the end, this book remains very French centered in terms of perspective and sources. Second, as I write this review, leafing through it to find my scribbled notes in the margins, I cannot but deplore the fact that the pages of the book are falling out of the binding as I write. How the publishers at Artois Presses Universités can get away with such a shoddy job is hard to understand. This is a real shame, since readers will want to leaf through this book for a long time to come.

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Makers of Contemporary Islam. By JOHN L. ESPOSITO and JOHN O. VOLL. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001. 257 pp. \$35.00 (cloth); \$17.95 (paper).

Islam in a Globalizing World. By THOMAS W. SIMONS JR. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003. xi, 111 pp. \$24.95 (cloth); \$14.95 (paper).

It would be difficult to overestimate the significance of John L. Esposito and John O. Voll's intellectually expansive yet thoroughly accessible volume. This is especially so at a time when the architects of American policy pursue strategies in the Muslim world and at home that are seriously exacerbating tensions between America and the global community of Muslim believers and that are quite likely to have grave consequences for generations to come. Focusing on internationally influential "activist intellectuals" in a broad swath of the Muslim world, Esposito and Voll's book adds to our understanding of the intellectual and cultural foundations of the diverse religious and political movements ramifying throughout the Islamic heartlands and far beyond. Particularly when read alongside the authors' *Islam and Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), which was the first of the two volumes produced in the context of this (their latest) collaborative project, Esposito and Voll's most recent book is a critical contribution to the burgeoning literature on Islam and clearly distinguishes them from the legions of pundits and talking heads who have emerged as "experts" on one or another aspect or region of the Islamic world.

Makers of Contemporary Islam opens with a twenty-page introduction ("Muslim Activist Intellectuals and Their Place in History") that clarifies the authors' conceptual orientation, including their debt to Max Weber's notion of the intellectual as someone who "pursue[s] knowledge for its own sake" yet remains to one or another degree both