

readable book extremely long and no doubt virtually indigestible), he goes on to a chronological analysis of the Contadora and Esquipulas process, and finally the implementation of the peace plan, particularly in Nicaragua but to some extent in the region as well.

Throughout the emphasis is on the peace process, the role of outside actors, particularly the Canadians (who are included among the “helpful fixers” to whom the book is dedicated), the OAS, and the vital assistance of the United Nations. Sections on the UN observer mission in Central America (ONUCA) and the demobilization of the Contras, are especially well done and needed. Comparisons are made between the UN and OAS roles which are very instructive, and a sound analysis of the nature and effects of United States actions makes illuminating reading.

It is the chapter on assessment and implications, however, which literally crowns this work by an author already well-known for his excellent books on security matters in Latin America. In it he discusses the importance and impact of the peace process at a series of levels: Central America, Latin America, the United States, Canada, the United Nations, and the OAS. He then goes on to address the importance of the process for conflict resolution, especially peacekeeping, “zones of peace,” and confidence-building measures, all rather new or at least misunderstood in Central and Latin America.

While one could quibble on matters such as a lack of maps (only one is provided and it is of only marginal usefulness), the reality is that this is the best work by far on the Central American peace process and the only one which puts it squarely into the current discussion of the peaceful resolution of disputes in regional and international contexts. It is essential reading for anyone interested in either and a highly pleasurable and stimulating read for those interested in both.

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Chen, Min. *The Strategic Triangle and Regional Conflicts: Lessons from the Indochina Wars*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1992.

A perusal of the book exhibits at the meeting of the American Political Science Association in Chicago in 1992 confirmed to this writer that the gush of titles on Vietnam continues unabated eighteen years after the fall of Saigon. This war, evidently, cannot finish providing all the lessons it has to teach. In the midst of this flow is Min Chen’s *Strategic Triangle and Regional Conflicts*, which contains flickers of real insight.

The insights offered by this book lie principally in the perspective or vantage point from which the war is considered. As we now move beyond the simple and

smothering bipolarity of the Cold War, in this work we see the war as an interaction between the systemic and regional levels of analysis. At the systemic level the war is portrayed as a triangular struggle among the United States, the Soviet Union, and China, with the latter being depicted, asymmetrically, as a smaller billiard ball than the other two. What compounded this systemic triangle was the regional interactions of Hanoi with each of these players, making this game a triangle within a triangle. The overarching thesis of the author is that the winner of this game was the actor that played the role of pivot between these triangles. Simply put, the pivot was the player who enabled the game of interaction, leverage, and influence to work, and, most of the time, Hanoi succeeded in seizing this position.

A further advantage to this perspective is that Min Chen presents it dynamically; that is, the reader sees how this game moved. He divides it into three phases: the first from 1964 to 1969, the second from 1970 to 1975, and the third from 1976-1980. In the first phase China and the Soviet Union competed with each other for influence in Hanoi. Such a pivotal position enabled Hanoi to resist American pressures for peace negotiations. In 1968, however, negotiations occurred because China and the US saw mutual advantages to a strategic role *vis à vis* the Soviet Union, and Hanoi lost its pivotal role. In the second phase President Nixon explicitly sought to end the war through triangular politics. Hanoi's successful resistance to these pressures gave the pivot role back to Hanoi in that the peace agreement was concluded largely on its terms. At the systemic level, these terms were more to Moscow's liking than to its international competitors. To the author in the final phase no one was able to grab the pivot position, but the player that retained greatest regional freedom of action was China, which exploited American fears of a Soviet defense build-up to create a *de facto* diplomatic alliance with Washington to block Soviet ambitions in Southeast Asia.

This scheme has been laid out in some detail because this might have been a good book. As it is, this work was done too quickly, and the reader is not quite able to follow along. The theory of triangular politics is too tersely presented. Neither the literature nor the workings of this system is adequately explained. Thus, when nine propositions are presented, they leave the reader both overwhelmed and mystified as to their origins. This confusion subsequently turns into irritation as succeeding analyses refer to the propositions only by number. With nine different ones to keep track of, the reader is reduced to the humiliation of unsuccessful guessing. Finally, as is too often the case in political science renderings of history, the narrative portions are too compact, too self-serving to the deductive interests of the framework, and quite often too speculative and, on occasion, inaccurate. In facing the diplomatic "black box" of the inner workings of decision-making in closed societies, the author is a little too free in passing off his own interpretations of the purposes of Hanoi's, Moscow's, and Beijing's actions as objective facts. Finally, his critical portrayal of the LINEBACKER II campaign (the "Christmas bombing") as a military failure is just plain wrong. This continual blind spot in the

antiwar literature (the bombing was immoral, therefore it was also ineffective) is what got Saddam Hussein into such deep trouble.

Still, this book is written from an important perspective. From it, one does glean the important insight that Hanoi's successes stemmed as much from its pivotal international and regional position as it did from the domestic vigor of its righteous cause. It is a work that lays out an important analytical framework, even as its shortfalls in performance calls for a better second try by another.

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Andrew, Christopher, and Oleg Gordievsky. *Instructions from the Centre: Top Secret Files on KGB Foreign Operations, 1975-1985*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1991.

In 1990, Christopher Andrew and Oleg Gordievsky published *KGB: The Inside Story*, a chronicle of the KGB's foreign operations. The following year, they published *Instructions From the Centre: Top Secret Files on KGB Foreign Operations 1975-1985*. This second book contains copies of selected KGB documents, some of which were used, along with other sources, in *KGB: The Inside Story*. Reading *KGB* and noting that some of the sources were listed as "Gordievsky," one certainly gained the impression that they were from actual documents, since the length and detail of some of the information would be too much for one individual to digest and retain adequately. Now, with *Instructions From the Centre*, a companion volume to *KGB*, the reader can view first-hand some of the documents that Gordievsky passed to the West during his ten years as a penetration agent for Britain's Secret Intelligence Service. Gordievsky, a Colonel in the KGB, was Resident-designate in London at the time of his escape to the West in 1985.

Instructions From the Centre is divided into ten chapters, and among the subjects it covers are the global priorities of the KGB, illegals and recruiting, Operation RYAN — a massive intelligence collection effort which sought proof of the (non-existent) preparations of the US and its allies for a surprise nuclear attack against the USSR — the "Main Adversary" (i.e., the USA, in Moscow Centre jargon), and China. The documents reveal a fascinating portrait of how the Centre approached intelligence collection, and are an interesting literary collage of KGB assessments, reports, and procedures. Indeed some of the assessments quoted in the book were drafted by Gordievsky (employing his KGB codename, GORNOV).

Chapter one contains documents that review some of the KGB's foreign operations in 1982-83, in addition to plans for organizing future work. For example, a report of a conference of senior officers of the KGB in January 1984 posited that