

H-Diplo ROUNDTABLE XXI-8

Paul Thomas Chamberlin. *The Cold War's Killing Fields: Rethinking the Long Peace.* New York: Harper Collins, 2018. ISBN: 9780062367204 (hardcover, \$29.99); 9780062367211 (paperback, \$18.99).

14 October 2019 | <https://hdiplo.org/to/RT21-8>

Roundtable Editors: Thomas Maddux and Diane Labrosse | Production Editor: George Fujii

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INTRODUCTION BY JAMES H. LEOVIC, GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

The ‘focus’ of Paul Chamberlin’s sweeping volume is the violent history, between 1945 and 1990, of the “nearly contiguous belt of territory running from the Manchurian Plain in the east, south into Indochina’s lush rain forests, and west across the arid plateaus of Central Asia and the Middle East.” In Chamberlin’s view, that violent history—as the locus of conflict moved from the ideological conflicts of Asia to the sectarian conflicts of the Middle East—owes directly to its global instigators, the United States, the Soviet Union, and China. As Chamberlin establishes convincingly, the ‘Cold War’ was hardly that. In the “Eurasian rim,” the Cold War was fought in “three catastrophic violent waves of warfare that killed more than fourteen million people” (1).

The term, ‘Cold War,’ constitutes an intellectual misdirection of sorts. It places emphasis on what the superpowers did *not* do—shoot at each other—rather than what they actually did, that is, what they actively promoted, sponsored, approved, and accepted, despite the horrendous human toll. Even the term, ‘Third World,’ detracts from the plight of individual countries, and their people, by reducing the vast territorial expanse to a prize in the superpower competition, or else an arena in which the contest was fought. Why focus on ‘collateral damage’ in a competition that was scored on who gained and who lost?

For much of international politics scholarship, the Cold War was fought from the skies—a world of abstraction, centered on the big powers—removed from details on the ground. Scholars focused on deterrence, alliances, the balance of power, polarity, nuclear weapons strategy, arms control, escalation, signaling in crises, and limited or proxy wars. Ground contact, when it occurred, was conducted through intellectual intermediaries. The superpowers competed for favors from ‘client’ states that sought to trade their political stances for material support. Even thinking about ‘counterinsurgency’ placed the big powers in the pilot’s seat by treating local populations as pliable recipients whose loyalty could be procured with the right combination of security and benefits.

Given its ground-level contributions, and general argument, Chamberlin’s book garners considerable praise from the assembled reviewers. Christian Lentz describes the book as a “tour-de-force of global diplomatic and military history.” Julia F. Irwin, in also lauding the book as an “impressive tour-de-force,” offers that Chamberlin “has produced a magnificent interpretive synthesis, an argument-driven narrative history that should be essential reading for scholarly and popular audiences alike.” Sergey Radchenko, despite his critical observations, concludes that this is an “excellent book” that undoubtedly “will be widely acclaimed by the general public and by Cold War historians.” Artemy Kalinovsky observes that Chamberlin “has succeeded beyond any doubt” in showing that “the ‘Long Peace’ was an illusion, and that the superpower competition, far from restraining conflict, inspired or fueled some of the worst violence of the twentieth century.” Both Radchenko and Kalinovsky praise Chamberlin for recognizing that global rivalry fueled the violence throughout the “Eurasian rim” and, in particular, for bringing China and the Sino-Soviet rivalry into his analysis.

Of course, an ambitious volume of this nature suffers from inevitable coverage shortfalls. Lentz wishes that “the bibliography had done more to signal the range and depth of relevant scholarship.” Irwin notes “the ‘seven-year hiatus’ in the narrative as it jumps from 1954 directly into 1961, too briefly summarizing the events that occurred in the interim. She also wishes that the book presented “more contextual, comparative information on the conflicts, violence, and repression occurring in Central and South America, North Africa, and sub-Saharan Africa” in the years under scrutiny. She further laments the book’s (somewhat ironic) focus on the “top-down history of leaders who were responsible for the high body counts” to the exclusion of the millions of men, women, and children who suffered from the goals, designs, and excesses of these leaders. Most of the reviewers also point to a U.S.-source bias. In Kalinovsky’s view, the bias runs deeper, in that the impression left from the introduction and many chapters is that the United States was “the main, if not sole superpower actor.” Radchenko indicates that he “was occasionally unconvinced by Chamberlin’s treatment of the Chinese and the Soviets sides of the Cold War,” including “Chamberlin’s depiction of Sino-Soviet relations.”

In my view, at least, Radchenko and Kalinovsky allude to the critical missing piece that would connect Chamberlin’s impressive effort to mainstream international politics scholarship. Radchenko notes that, from the account, “it is hard to pin down how the [Sino-Soviet] split impacted the ‘Eurasian rimland.’” Kalinovsky laments the “author’s vagueness on the

precise relationship between the superpower contest and the violence that occurred” in the period under examination, noting that “by the time we get to the war in Lebanon, the connection to the Cold War becomes quite tenuous.” In his words, what the chapters “do not always make clear is how the mechanism worked.”

Perhaps some disconnect between abstract arguments about systemic mechanisms is the inevitable price to be paid for a historical work of rich detail that, while acknowledging mechanisms, focuses more on proximate causes and their consequences. But Chamberlin’s arguments only beg for closer scrutiny when presented in stark, uncompromising terms. He states, for instance, that indiscriminate violence “was not simply an accidental consequence of local wars or superpower meddling. Rather massacres such as My Lai were integral components of the Cold War world” (19). Such bold claims require deliberative articulation. I suspect, then, that Chamberlin’s provocative work, at the very least, will set the agenda for future research on the subject.

Participants:

Paul Thomas Chamberlin is Associate Professor of History at Columbia University. He is the author of *The Cold War’s Killing Fields: Rethinking the Long Peace* (Harper, 2018) and *The Global Offensive: The United States, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the Making of the Post-Cold War Order* (Oxford University Press, 2012). He is currently working on a history of colonial violence, empire, and World War II.

James H. Lebovic is Professor of Political Science and International Affairs at The George Washington University. From spring 2015-2017, he served as chair of the International Security Studies Section of the International Studies Association. He is the author of six books, including *Failing to Plan: The US Wars in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan* (Oxford University Press, 2019), *Flawed Logics: Strategic Nuclear Arms Control from Truman to Obama* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), *The Limits of US Military Capability: Lessons from Vietnam and Iraq* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), and *Deterring International Terrorism and Rogue States: US National Security Policy after 9/11* (Routledge, 2007).

Julia F. Irwin earned her Ph.D. in History from Yale University in 2009 and is currently an Associate Professor of History at the University of South Florida. Her research focuses on the place of humanitarian assistance in 20th century U.S. foreign relations and international history. Her first book, *Making the World Safe: The American Red Cross and a Nation’s Humanitarian Awakening* (Oxford University Press, 2013) is a history of U.S. international relief efforts during the First World War era. She is now writing a second book, *Catastrophic Diplomacy: A History of U.S. Responses to Global Natural Disasters*, a history of U.S. foreign disaster assistance and emergency relief during the twentieth century.

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Sergey Radchenko is Professor of International Relations at Cardiff University. His research interests include the Cold War and the history of Chinese and Soviet foreign relations. He is the author of *Two Suns in the Heavens: the Sino-Soviet Struggle for Supremacy* (Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Stanford University Press, 2009) and *Unwanted Visionaries: the Soviet Failure in Asia at the End of the Cold War* (Oxford University Press, 2014). His next book, *The First Fiddle: a History of the Cold War and After*, is forthcoming in 2019.

REVIEW BY JULIA F. IRWIN, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

In the opening pages of *The Cold War's Killing Fields*, Paul Chamberlin confronts readers with a staggering set of statistics. Between 1945 and 1990, he writes, “more than 20 million people died in violent conflicts” (19). Put another way, that amounts to some 1,200 deaths per day, or “more than three My Lai massacres every day for forty-five years” (19). With this grim calculus, Chamberlin sets the stage for his crucial revisionist history of the Cold War. As he shows throughout this impressive tour de force, the My Lai massacre—an episode so often remembered for its exceptional barbarity, inhumanity, and violence—was anything *but* exceptional. For many people, particularly those living in the Third World, deadly episodes like My Lai were devastatingly normal and all too routine. Centering his sweeping history of the Cold War era around this theme of mass violence, Chamberlin upends conventional understandings and popular narratives of the period. Far from the “long peace” that John Gaddis and other scholars have described, the forty-five years after the Second World War should instead be recognized as a period of extreme and near-continuous violence.¹ Hardly marked by a ‘cold’ war, the era was defined by a series of bloody conflicts that erupted throughout the Third World, but which proved especially deadly, as Chamberlin documents, across the southern rim of Asia.

Chamberlin’s starting premise—that the Cold War was in fact far hotter and more violent than many historical accounts of that era acknowledge—will likely come as little surprise to most readers of roundtable. Over the last several decades, international and global historians and area specialists of Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East have thoroughly debunked the saccharine myth that the years between 1945 and 1990 marked an era of relative peace and stability. These scholars have called critical attention to the blood spilled throughout the Third World in civil wars, revolutions, and wars of national liberation during these years. They have also recovered the histories of the violence wrought by repressive regimes, counterinsurgency forces, and their superpower patrons. Historians of the United States and Soviet Union, moreover, have paid considerable attention to the violent proxy wars that most directly involved those two superpowers, namely the conflicts in Korea, Vietnam, and Afghanistan.² Chamberlin certainly does not ignore or neglect this extensive scholarship. On the contrary, he has read widely in the existing literature and demonstrates an expansive knowledge of the histories of decolonization and postcolonialism, on the one hand, and the superpower rivalry, on the other. The book that he has written is firmly grounded in, and deeply indebted to, much of this scholarship.

But Chamberlin has also done far more than simply bringing these various works together. He has produced a magnificent interpretive synthesis, an argument-driven narrative history that should be essential reading for scholarly and popular audiences alike. Drawing on local and regional histories and a wide assortment of primary documents, he offers “a global view of mass violence during the Cold War era,” weaving together histories of the Third World and Cold War in novel and compelling ways (18). Chamberlin makes no claim of providing an exhaustive grand narrative of these interlocked stories, however. Instead, opting to “let the numbers be my guide,” he focuses on the terrain where the vast majority of conflict-related deaths occurred during these forty-five years (5).

In so doing, he dispenses with traditional geographical divisions, charting a new map of Cold War era politics and proposing a novel theater of war. Though Chamberlin acknowledges that mass killings and other forms of violence occurred throughout much of the Third World during these years, he persuasively argues that the southern rim of Asia—a vast territory extending from China, Korea, and Indochina in the east to Iran, Iraq, and Lebanon in the west, and encompassing

¹ John Lewis Gaddis, *The Long Peace: Inquiries Into the History of the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

² The literature here is extensive, but for some representative surveys, see Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Greg Grandin, *Empire's Workshop* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2006); John Tirman, *The Deaths of Others* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Stephen G. Rabe, *The Killing Zone: The United States Wages Cold War in Latin America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Robert McMahon, ed., *The Cold War in the Third World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); and Odd Arne Westad, *The Cold War: A World History* (New York: Basic Books, 2017).

such Central and South Asian nations as India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Afghanistan—was by far the deadliest zone. By his calculations, some 70% of all conflict-related deaths occurred in these “killing fields” (1). Examining the military and political histories of this area, as Chamberlin shows, brings a much-needed specificity to the literature, replacing vague assertions about Cold War violence in the Third World with actual data and concrete (albeit grim) details. Studying this era and this region forces us to rethink our assumptions about not only the Cold War, but also the historical origins of the twenty-first century’s most complex global crises.

The Cold War’s Killing Fields unfolds in three acts. Proceeding both chronologically and geographically, Chamberlin traces three waves of Cold-War era violence while, at the same time, identifying three key fronts where the majority of deaths occurred. Within each section, he analyzes the central forces that drove both episodic and structural violence in the region under consideration. Making connections across the three parts of his book, he traces the intertwined threads of the superpower struggle, decolonization and postcolonial governance, and the waxing and waning appeal of global Communism over the entire forty-five-year period.

Following a brief introduction to the post-World War II international system, Chamberlin turns his attention to the first of these three fronts, East Asia. Focusing on the years from 1945-1954, he analyzes the stunning success of Communist forces in the wars that ripped through China, Korea, and French Indochina during these years. In the process, East Asia became the first major Cold War era battleground outside of Europe. At the same time—and central to Chamberlin’s broader arguments—the People’s Republic China established itself as a pivotal player in the superpower rivalry. The human costs of these conflicts proved extraordinary, however, claiming the lives of some five to six million people. Even on its own, the remarkable amount of bloodshed that occurred during these years exposes the myth of postwar peace and stability. Yet, as Chamberlin foreshadows, it only marked the first wave of mass violence.

After 1954, the narrative essentially takes a seven-year hiatus. Leaping forward in time to 1961, the book quickly summarizes the major geopolitical events of those years, providing only brief glimpses of those critical episodes. This was perhaps the most disappointing part of Chamberlin’s otherwise exceptional book. Chamberlin rationalizes this decision by explaining that those years “witnessed a sharp drop in the overall level of global violence” (177). Chamberlin seemingly opted to downplay seemingly relevant events because they fell outside the tidy geographical frame he constructs (perhaps the most notable of these omissions is the Algerian War of Independence, which despite its enormous death toll receives only a scant paragraph of coverage).

Fortunately, Chamberlin more than makes up for these issues with the second section of his book, a deeply compelling and engrossing series of chapters that span the years from 1961 to 1979. Here, he moves the story into South and Southeast Asia, the second of his three fronts, analyzing and tying together the histories of conflicts, mass violence, and repressive regimes in Vietnam, Indonesia, East Pakistan/Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and finally Cambodia. By the late 1970s, as Chamberlin convincingly argues, the political solidarities and victories that had propelled the triumphant postwar rise of global Communism had collapsed, deteriorating in response to such forces as the Sino-Soviet split, mounting tensions between China and Vietnam, and the Khmer Rouge’s horrific reign of terror in Cambodia. By the time it was all over, as Chamberlin recounts in gruesome detail, millions more had died, large numbers of them of them civilians.

As Communist solidarities and secular liberation movements splintered in Asia by the late 1970s, a new form of revolutionary politics emerged to fill the void. Turning to what he calls “this great sectarian revolt” in the third section of his book, Chamberlin charts the surge of ethno-religious politics in the Middle East and Central Asia during the late 1970s and 1980s (364). Through detailed case studies of the deadliest conflicts to grip the region during this period—the Lebanese Civil War, the Iranian Revolution, the Soviet War in Afghanistan, and the Iran-Iraq War—Chamberlin shows how a new generation of political leaders marshalled religious and ethnic affiliations to mobilize their supporters, rejecting the ideological struggle between Marxism and liberal capitalism and undermining the longstanding East-West divide. Once more, millions of people, many of them civilians, were caught in the middle of these struggles. And once more, Chamberlin poignantly documents the suffering and violence that so many were forced to endure.

If the culmination of the Cold War in the early 1990s appeared to many observers in the West to have been a victory for the United States and its liberal capitalist allies, Chamberlin's concluding chapters destroy any such illusions. From the perspective of those living in the southern rim of Asia and throughout the Third World, the situation looked wholly different. The violence and destruction that had characterized the previous forty-five years—violence stoked and actively encouraged by the superpower rivalry—had radicalized and militarized societies across Asia and the Middle East while fomenting deep and lasting resentments. Far from creating the conditions necessary for a lasting and just peace, actions taken by the United States (and, to a lesser extent, other powers) during the late Cold War had instead laid the foundations for some of the twenty-first century's most serious foreign policy challenges. The Cold War in the Third World, in Chamberlin's final assessment, was the forge in which many of today's most complex global conflicts and humanitarian crises were wrought.

Beyond presenting a sweeping overview of the Cold War and its legacies in the southern rim of Asia—in itself an impressive feat—*The Cold War's Killing Fields* is worthy of acclaim for several additional reasons. First, in narrating this history, Chamberlin takes care to emphasize the agency of people throughout the Third World, especially of the political and military leaders who populate his book. Though he acknowledges that their actions were often shaped by the actions and choices of the United States, the Soviet Union, and other powerful countries, Chamberlin makes it clear that these individuals were neither puppets nor pawns to the superpowers. To the contrary, they steered the course of the Cold War, decolonization, and postcolonial geopolitics in myriad, crucial ways. A second virtue of *The Cold War's Killing Fields* is the close attention it pays to China. By placing China at the heart of his narrative, Chamberlin productively decenters the U.S.-Soviet conflict, showing the importance of integrating Sino-Soviet and Sino-American relations (and Chinese international relations, more broadly) more thoroughly into our existing grand narratives of the Cold War. Third, in addition to offering fresh narratives of events that have received abundant scholarly attention—such as the Chinese Revolution, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Soviet War in Afghanistan—Chamberlin foregrounds many conflicts that are either downplayed or absent in many histories of the Cold War. In his telling, such events as the mass killings in Indonesia during the mid-1960s, the Bangladesh Liberation War, the Cambodian genocide, the Lebanese Civil War, and the Iran-Iraq War all take center stage. By including these lesser-studied (though no less consequential) episodes alongside more familiar events, Chamberlin further demonstrates the long reach of Cold War-era violence in the Third World.

Of course, a single book cannot hope to do everything, and many of the best books leave readers with unanswered questions. Having finished *The Cold War's Killing Fields*, I found myself wanting to learn more about several issues the book raises. First, although Chamberlin makes a persuasive case for focusing on the southern rim of Asia, given the staggering number of deaths that occurred in this region, I desired more contextual, comparative information on the conflicts, violence, and repression occurring in Central and South America, North Africa, and sub-Saharan Africa during these years. Estimated death tolls in such conflicts as the Guatemalan Civil War, the Angolan Civil War, and the Algerian War for Independence, to give a few examples, each rival the casualty figures for several of the wars that Chamberlin covers in his book. I would be curious to hear Chamberlin's thoughts on these and other violent conflicts, and how (or whether) they complicate his geographical reframing of the Cold War. Second, while Chamberlin makes liberal use of published and digitized primary documents, he relies more heavily on U.S. sources (most notably the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series, Central Intelligence Agency reports, and collections from the National Security Archive and the Cold War International History Project). Though *The Cold War's Killing Fields* is by no means a U.S.-centric story, I nevertheless came away wanting to hear more of what Chamberlin has elsewhere called “the voices of the majority of the human population whose affairs are not meticulously documented by the well-funded bureaucracies of the modern, usually Western state.”³

Third and finally, Chamberlin's book is very much a political and military history, far more a top-down history of leaders who were responsible for the high body counts than it is a social history of the civilians suffering through such terror. As such, it offers fewer details on the millions of individual men, women, and children who lost their lives in these killing fields,

³ Paul Chamberlin, *The Global Offensive: The United States, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the Making of the Post-Cold War Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 8.

leaving me wondering about their experiences. Relatedly, I would have also appreciated a more rigorous discussion of non-lethal forms of suffering: hunger and famine, displacement and forced migration, rape and other forms of sexual violence, imprisonment and torture, and bearing witness to the deaths of others. The numbers of people affected by these sorts of issues, far surpassed the incredible death tolls around which Chamberlin centered his analysis. How survivors of wars and mass killings experienced the humanitarian crises and complex humanitarian emergencies that surrounded these violent episodes is itself a history deserving of sustained attention.

Though I welcome Chamberlin's responses and reactions to these lingering questions, I want to conclude by reiterating my enormous praise and enthusiasm for his book. It is essential reading, not only to understand the linked histories of the Cold War and the Third World, but also to appreciate the lasting legacies of this violent history and their current geopolitical implications.

In mid-November 2018, while I was reading *The Cold War's Killing Fields*, two breaking news stories caught my attention. First, in a landmark ruling, a mixed Cambodian and international tribunal found former Khmer Rouge leaders Nuon Chea and Khieu Samphan guilty of genocide. Nearly 40 years after the fall of Pol Pot's infamous regime, and following years of trials and eighteen months of deliberations, this judgment marked a significant and symbolic step, holding at least some individuals responsible for the deaths of 1.7 million people.⁴ If news of this decision proved somewhat cathartic after reading Chamberlin's sobering account of late-1970s Cambodia, a second set of headlines painted a far grimmer picture of contemporary global affairs. Since 11 September 2001, according to a report released by Brown University's Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs, some 500,000 people—roughly half of them civilians—have been killed in the U.S. wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Syria, at a cost to U.S. taxpayers of some \$5.6 trillion.⁵ (For those wondering about the comparative calculations, this equals another 1,250 My Lai massacres over the last seventeen years, with a staggering price-tag of \$11.2 million per death).

Together, these concurrent news stories demonstrate both the timeliness of Chamberlin's book and the importance of coming to terms with the history he so vividly recounts. Validating his arguments, such stories show us that the legacies and memories of Cold War era violence in the Southern Rim of Asia (and the Third World, more broadly) endure, continuing to shape contemporary politics and societies across the region and throughout the Global South in profound ways. They remind us, too, that it is hardly coincidental that so many of the casualties of twenty-first century warfare have occurred in the Middle East and Central Asia. The mass violence that the superpower rivalry spawned and fanned in these regions during the late Cold War, as Chamberlin argues in his concluding chapter, laid the foundations for many of the gravest geopolitical challenges now gripping the contemporary world. If we ever hope to achieve a truly global 'long peace,' it will only be by acknowledging, engaging with, and atoning for the historical roots of this bloodshed.

⁴ Hannah Ellis-Petersen, "Khmer Rouge Leaders Found Guilty of Genocide in Cambodia's 'Nuremberg' Moment," *The Guardian*, 16 November 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/nov/16/khmer-rouge-leaders-genocide-charges-verdict-cambodia>.

⁵ "Neta C. Crawford, "Human Cost of the Post-9/11 Wars: Lethality and the Need for Transparency," Watson Institute for International & Public Affairs, Brown University, November 2018, <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2018/Human%20Costs%2C%20Nov%208%202018%20CoW.pdf>.

REVIEW BY ARTEMY M. KALINOVSKY, UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM

As a historian who has written about topics like the Soviet war in Afghanistan but who interacts primarily with scholars of Russian and Soviet history, I have been asked, more than once, what the field of Cold War studies is really about. “Isn’t that just counting warheads?” one Russianist once asked. Somehow, the field’s reputation in some corners, at least, seems to have been stuck somewhere around the publication of John Lewis Gaddis’ *The Long Peace* back in 1986.⁶ This always surprised me, since even in my undergraduate days in the early 2000s courses on the Cold War went far beyond the simplistic paradigm of superpower conflict; by the time Odd Arne Westad’s *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* arrived in 2005, it was already building on a substantial body of literature on the Cold War outside of Europe, even as it introduced plenty of original evidence.⁷ Nevertheless, the perception of Cold War studies as a conservative field, focused on the U.S.-Soviet confrontation in the narrowest diplomatic and military sense, persists in some corners of the profession, at least in my experience. (The popular perception of the ‘Cold War’ field is, of course, even more problematic—note how breezily the term ‘New Cold War’ has been thrown around in recent years.)

The great achievement of Paul Thomas Chamberlin’s *The Cold War’s Killing Fields: Rethinking the Long Peace*, is to bring the results of two decades of historiography on the Cold War in the so-called ‘Third World’ to a wide audience. Fluidly written and fast-paced, but still packed with evocative examples and ample evidence, this book should reach anyone who still believes that the Cold War can be thought of as a ‘Long Peace.’ Even for this historian, fairly well versed in the historiography, the episodes related in this book frequently evoked shock and emotional discomfort. This is a testament both to how the narrative is arranged, but also to how Chamberlin relates the individual cases.

The book draws on the available (English-language) literature and contemporary accounts, supplemented by U.S. documents, primarily from the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series. Yet while using the tools of the diplomatic historian, Chamberlin keeps the politicians and diplomats in the background; they appear here as supporting actors. Their decisions (and indecisions) have earth-shattering results, but they are not the main actors of the drama. That role belongs to the people doing the fighting, and those caught in the crossfire. Particularly strong in this regard are the chapters on the Korean War, the India-Pakistan war and the creation of Bangladesh, and the section on Cambodia.

This is a book aimed at general audiences, not specialists. The books’ strengths, in some ways, may somewhat limit its impact on the field. One issue is the author’s vagueness on the precise relationship between the superpower contest and the violence that occurred during the chronological span associated with the ‘Cold War.’ Almost all of the conflicts that Chamberlin describes could be (and are, in this book) presented as civil wars or regional conflicts, which are then fueled or exacerbated by the participation of one or the other superpowers. But what is the precise relationship between the superpower contest and this larger pattern of violence? This is much less clear. The American bombing of Cambodia, which in the end contributed to the victory of the Khmer Rouge and its murderous regime, was clearly an extension of U.S. fighting in Vietnam (330-358); the Nixon administration’s non-interference in East Pakistan was connected to Pakistan’s role in opening U.S. relations with China (264-270). By the time we get to the war in Lebanon, the connection to the Cold War becomes quite tenuous. True, U.S. officials (and their Soviet counterparts) continued to evaluate conflicts as zero-sum contests: a victory for one’s allies was a defeat for the main adversary. But the actual relationship of the conflicts to the superpower rivalry is less clear.

⁶ John Lewis Gaddis, *The Long Peace: Inquiries into the history of the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

⁷ Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of our Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

To put it another way, Westad's *Global Cold War*, now nearly 15 years old, had a strong (if not uncontested) thesis at its heart: that the superpowers were driven by ideology, and so were many post-colonial states, and that it was ideology as much as anything else that explains the breadth, and ferocity, of the actual conflict across the world.⁸ Chamberlin's interpretation is more cynical and his focus narrower. Westad believed that "both powers saw themselves as assisting natural trends in world history and as defending their own security at the same time."⁹ Chamberlin does not reject the premise, but he does not quite endorse it either. The behavior of U.S. officials in particular, as related in subsequent chapters, suggests more basic motives of maintaining security and influence. Moreover, Chamberlain is interested not in the contest between socialism and capitalism as such, but rather in the way that contest transformed local and regional antagonisms in the post-colonial era. He argues in his introduction that "Conflicts that might have ended in quick, decisive victories instead became drawn-out campaigns fought by local forces armed and funded by outside powers." (12) The subsequent chapters certainly bear this out. What they do not always make clear is how the mechanism worked.

Part of the problem, I suspect, is that Chamberlin is working primarily with English-language scholarship and English-language sources. In and of itself this is not a problem (let the scholar who knows the language of each group represented in this book cast the first stone), but it does mean that the story of Soviet and Chinese involvement is dependent largely on the (English language) secondary literature of that involvement. Where such literature is available (for the Korean War, or the war in Afghanistan), the Soviet role is clear. Where work on the Soviet involvement has been limited (the East Pakistan crisis, the war in Lebanon), the Soviet role is vague or missing.¹⁰ Of course, we get glimpses of Cold War thinking from President Richard Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who asked why Washington should "criticize a pro-U.S. government in order to help India, a state that leaned toward the USSR." But as Chamberlin points out further in the same paragraph "no concern was more pressing than the White House's central diplomatic gambit of 1971: preparations for an opening to the People's Republic of China," in which Pakistan was to play a leading role" (270). In other words, Nixon needed West Pakistan to reach out to China so that he could extricate the U.S. from Vietnam. Even if Vietnam was unequivocally a Cold War conflict, we are now several steps away from the Cold War as an ideological conflict.

It is hard to avoid a sense of disconnect between the argument in the introduction, which insists on the importance of superpower competition, and the sense one gets reading many of the chapters, where the main, if not sole superpower actor is actually the U.S. This seems important historiographically. There is by now a well-established divide between scholars who see U.S. intervention abroad as primarily a project of U.S. empire, for which the superpower competition was not a causal mechanism but a political excuse.¹¹ Chamberlin's introduction seems to place the book squarely in Westad's camp. Parts of the book, however, suggest a different conclusion.

⁸ Westad, *Global Cold War*, 4-5.

⁹ Westad, 4.

¹⁰ The point here, though, is that more scholars working on the Soviet Union should be paying attention to Soviet relations with the Third World, and particularly Soviet involvement in military conflicts. See, for example, Philip E. Muehlenbeck and Natalia Telepneva, *Warsaw Pact Intervention in the Third World: Aid and Influence in the Cold War* (London: IB Tauris, 2018); Natalia Telepneva, *Our Sacred Duty: The Soviet Union, the Liberation Movements in the Portuguese Colonies, and the Cold War, 1961-1975*. Ph.D. Dissertation, The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), 2014. Timothy Nunan, *Humanitarian Invasion: Global Development in Cold War Afghanistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

¹¹ See, for example, Anders Stephanson, "Cold War Degree Zero" in Joel Isaac and Duncan Bell, eds., *Uncertain Empire: American History and the Idea of the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 19-50 and Odd Arne Westad, "Exploring the Histories of the Cold War: A Pluralist Approach," 51-60.

Ultimately, I do not think it was the book's intention to wade into that debate. Rather, it was to show that the 'Long Peace' was an illusion, and that the superpower competition, far from restraining conflict, inspired or fueled some of the worst violence of the twentieth century. In this, Chamberlin has succeeded beyond any doubt.

REVIEW BY CHRISTIAN LENTZ, UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

Published two decades after the fall of the Berlin Wall, *The Cold War's Killing Fields* offers a timely and useful corrective to a persistent myth that the superpower rivalry in the wake of World War II was peaceful, or 'cold' as the era's defining conflict has long been called. Rather, as Paul Chamberlin demonstrates, the Cold War was often scorchingly 'hot,' or violent and deadly, for much of the world between 1945 and 1990. Urging diplomatic historians and international relations scholars to turn away from Europe and North America, Chamberlin focuses his book on a geographic arc stretching from Korea across southern Asia to Lebanon. In this arc—where the United States, Soviet Union, and People's Republic of China (PRC) fought so-called 'proxy wars'—any notion of the Cold War as a "long peace," as John Lewis Gaddis memorably theorized, fails to account for bloodletting on a massive scale.¹² Chamberlin estimates that violent conflicts there left over 20 million dead, mostly civilians. Neither simply a byproduct of superpower meddling nor peripheral to strategic aims, such incidents of mass violence, he argues cogently, must be understood as "integral components of the Cold War world" (19).

The book's most innovative contribution to understanding the Cold War is its geography. Chamberlin approaches the conflict as a "worldwide phenomenon" (4) but observes that associated conflicts in the developing world were "neither random nor evenly distributed" (5). Instead, he shows that foreign aid flows to, and killings in, the Third World concentrated in a borderlands running roughly along the southern edge of China and the Soviet Union. In so doing, he defines a political region where Cold War battlefronts moved roughly from east to west in three phases. The first front opened during the Chinese Civil War when Mao Zedong led the Chinese Communist Party to victory in 1949 and then sponsored Communist movements in neighboring Korea and Indochina. The second battlefield shifted south and west in the 1960s to engulf southern Vietnam and Indonesia before claiming Cambodia and Bangladesh in the 1970s. As brutal war and mass killing spread from Southeast to South Asia and, eventually, the Middle East, its character began to change from secular to sectarian, and from Communist versus capitalist to identitarian and communal. Beginning with the Lebanese Civil War in 1975, the great powers enlisted rival factions, often mobilized along religious affiliation, to open a third front running through Iran and Iraq to Afghanistan. By 1990, when the Cold War closed, the seeds had been sown for new conflicts to grow from the ashes and creep into the present.

Writing on a global scale entails risks and rewards. For area specialists, most of the Cold War's history of hot conflicts is well known, and Chamberlin acknowledges that "a book of this topical breadth would not have been possible" without their contribution (18). Nonetheless, as a historical geographer reading sections on Southeast Asia, for example, I found myself wishing that the bibliography had done more to signal the range and depth of relevant scholarship. The argument that by 1947 "the twin forces of the Cold War and the struggle for decolonization were on a collision course" echoes the insights of historians Christopher Goscha and Christian Ostermann from a decade ago.¹³ Likewise, anthropologist Heonik Kwon has argued forcefully that ideas of a "cold war" overlook approximately six million victims of the Vietnam and Korean wars.¹⁴ On the 1965 massacres in Indonesia, Chamberlin cites classics by Geoffrey Robinson and Robert Cribb as well as recent contributions by John Roosa, Brad Simpson, and Doug Kammen.¹⁵ But he neglects to mention surging documentation both

¹² John Lewis Gaddis, *The Long Peace: Inquiries into Histories of the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

¹³ Christopher Goscha and Christian Ostermann, *Connecting Histories: Decolonization and the Cold War in Southeast Asia, 1945-1962* (Washington, D.C. and Stanford: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Stanford University Press, 2009).

¹⁴ Heonik Kwon, *After the Massacre: Commemoration and Consolation in Ha My and My Lai* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), *Ghosts of War in Vietnam* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), *The Other Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

¹⁵ Geoffrey Robinson, *The Dark Side of Paradise: Political Violence in Bali* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995); Robert Cribb, *The Indonesian Killings of 1965-1966* (Clayton: Monash University, Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, 1980); John Roosa, *Pretext for Mass Murder: The September 30th Movement and Suharto's Coup d'État in Indonesia* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009).

of the experience and the strategic relations between the rising Suharto regime and his anti-Communist American allies, including two feature-length documentaries.¹⁶ Precisely because the book brings together readers from so many areas of geographic specialty, the bibliography seems a lost opportunity to put them in conversation.

No author can read everything, and any area specialist will find reason to quibble over details in a book so expansive. But more carefully attending to the relevant sources might have helped avoid some mistakes—whether adding “the People’s” to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (184), asserting simplistically that “Beijing bankrolled the PKI,” the Communist Party of Indonesia, in the years prior to its eradication (215), or erroneously implying that the Indochinese Communist Party was still active in 1953 Cambodia (302) when, in fact, it had been dissolved and replaced by national organizations as of February 1951. Of course, working at such a grand scale risks small mistakes of historical precision. But these ones matter because they unintentionally rehearse the same Manichean worldview of Communist and capitalist that Chamberlin otherwise challenges and complicates. As such, preserving such nuance could strengthen his argument that the great powers willfully ignored the complex social realities characteristic of an embattled postcolonial world.

Just as writing a global history risks missing texts and mistaking details, most of which are minor in this case, writing about diplomacy at that scale also risks relying on particular sources and privileging certain voices. Chamberlin’s narrative centers on the United States (18), so it makes sense that Chamberlin draws on primary sources familiar to diplomatic historians, including *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) and documents from the departments of Defense and State as well as of the presidency. In addition, he makes excellent use of U.S. documents gained from intelligence agencies through Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests and of U.S., Soviet, and PRC records collected (and sometimes translated) by the Woodrow Wilson Center’s Cold War International History Project and the National Security Archive at George Washington University. The narrative that results often reads like a military history of the Cold War, with contrasting effects. On the one hand, telling a story about the almost continuous warfare that characterized the Cold War effectively rebuts conceptualizations of the period from 1945-1990 as a long peace. On the other, focusing on statesmen, presidents, and generals at times conflates a legitimate attempt to recoup ‘local actors’ (101) with an assumption that political elites alone determine political outcomes, if not always to their liking.

None of these criticisms compares with what the book accomplishes. Most of all, Chamberlin connects seemingly disparate sites in Asia’s postcolonial world and explains violence across this global arc as part and parcel to the superpowers’ Cold War geopolitical strategy. Making connections and analyzing the relations underlying them made for a revelatory reading experience, particularly when considering these connections required me to think beyond Southeast Asia and rethink my area of expertise. For example, Chamberlin deftly moves from the 1968 Tét Offensive in Vietnam, to a 1969 border dispute between the PRC and USSR, to early 1970s Pakistan and South Asia, and then back to Southeast Asia to close out the decade. In so doing, he explains why President Richard Nixon, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, and PRC leader Mao Zedong chose Pakistan to broker détente and then tolerated Pakistan’s genocidal war against an emerging Bangladesh—helping spawn a war between India and Pakistan; demonstrates how they negotiated an American withdrawal from Vietnam but, in the process, helped give rise to the murderous Pol Pot regime in Cambodia; and cites Kissinger himself on the reasons why the U.S. supported the PRC and the Khmer Rouge against Vietnam (343) even as Mao’s junior partner led the Cambodian genocide through 1979. Here, Chamberlin’s focus on decision-making in Washington, Beijing, and other capitals is fully warranted, even necessary. With ample evidence and tight argumentation, his book exposes how and why political elites caused mass violence but displayed callous disregard for the common people who suffered it.

2006); Bradley Simpson, *Economists with Guns: Authoritarian Development and US-Indonesian Relations, 1960-1968* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008); Douglas Kammen, *The Contours of Mass Violence in Indonesia, 1965-1968* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2013).

¹⁶ Joshua Oppenheimer, *The Act of Killing* (Copenhagen: Final Cut for Real, 2012) and *The Look of Silence* (New York: Drafthouse Films, 2016).

Built on sturdy geographic foundations, Chamberlin's *Cold War Killing Fields* is a tour-de-force of global diplomatic and military history. Its analysis of Asia's postcolonial arc in the decades after World War II helps explain mass violence there in relation to superpower conflicts. Histories of the Cold War must take this violence into account, he argues convincingly. Amidst the overwhelming evidence marshalled in support of his thesis, Chamberlin often captures statesmen making the case for him, as CIA chief William Casey did in the early 1980s. While the Reagan administration escalated aggressive tactics against the USSR in Afghanistan, Central America, and Europe, Casey declared that the Cold War's "primary battlefield" was "not on the missile test range or the arms control negotiating table but in the countryside of the Third World" (495). Understanding the motivations for and consequences of these actions is reason enough to read this book. As such, it will benefit anyone interested in twentieth century history and foreign relations more broadly. And it ought to be required for a new generation of American decision-makers as they reckon with the Cold War's aftermath.

REVIEW BY SERGEY RADCHENKO, CARDIFF UNIVERSITY

Paul Chamberlin's new book fits easily within the broader shift in the focus of Cold War historiography from Europe and Soviet-American relations to what one may, for the sake of convenience, call the 'Third World.'¹⁷ This shift was so profound that a generation of Cold War historians (including this reviewer) barely remember any other paradigms. ('What? There was also Cold War in Europe? I always thought it was just some Maoist guerrillas fighting in the jungle').

There are good reasons for the shift in perspective. The Third World is where, during the Cold War, people did most of the dying. Chamberlin counts up to 20 million victims of various conflicts that were in one way or another tied up with the global Cold War. Another reason is that many of these conflicts continued to fester well past 1989, influencing the direction of world politics today. Exploring the unfolding of the Cold War in the Third World becomes crucial for understanding why its end did not result in a peaceful, democratic, and prosperous world. These factors alone make Chamberlin's doorstopper of a book a worthwhile read. His masterfully crafted narrative carries the reader through some of the most gruesome episodes of the Cold War. These are stories that must be remembered and retold.

The focus of his book is on what he calls the "Eurasian rimland" (556) or, broadly speaking states along the southern periphery of the Soviet Union. The first few chapters recount the Chinese Communist revolution and the Korean War, with the narrative predictably shifting to Vietnam, Indonesia, then to South Asia, and ultimately to the Middle East. Chamberlin shows how a clash of ideologies yielded to sectarian strife in a development that neither superpower anticipated but did much to exacerbate. There is something vaguely Huntingtonian about the argument, and Samuel Huntington is even briefly paraded in the conclusion, although Chamberlin is careful to distance himself from the 'clash of civilizations' by putting the (in)famous thesis in quotation marks.¹⁸

I am, too, working on a general history of the Cold War, and I am intimately familiar with the kinds of dilemmas that Chamberlin faced in the course of writing such a massive book. What goes in? What goes out? How do you avoid making simple mistakes while discussing subjects that are not particularly close to your field of expertise? On the whole, Chamberlin does a good job, though of course any regional expert will find plenty to criticize. Since I am no better than your average regional expert, let me dig into a few particular points I find contestable before I move on to broader conclusions.

I was occasionally unconvinced by Chamberlin's treatment of the Chinese and the Soviet sides of the Cold War. Too often, I felt, Chamberlin relied on contemporaneous U.S. intelligence accounts or misleading generalizations to characterize this or that aspect of decision-making in Moscow and Beijing. Consider the first part of the book, titled "The East Asian offensive." The vaguely menacing term is reminiscent of the Manichean narratives of early American Cold War, and a relevant footnote points to a December 1951 CIA report on a Sino-Soviet military conference to draw up "global war plans" (571). The details of this supposed conference are suitably murky (the names of the Soviet participants, for instance, are complete abracadabra). Chamberlin could have engaged with the scholarship of, for instance, Shen Zhihua, the Chinese historian who has written the most about the revolutionary division of labour between Stalin and Chairman Mao Zedong.¹⁹ Instead, he

¹⁷ On the chequered history of the term, see Artemy Kalinovsky and Sergey Radchenko, eds., *The end of the Cold War and the Third World: New Perspectives on Regional Conflict* (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2013).

¹⁸ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

¹⁹ Zhihua Shen and Yafeng Xia, "Leadership Transfer in the Asian Revolution: Mao Zedong and the Asian Cominform," *Cold War History* 14:2 (2014): 195-213.

apparently buys into the CIA narrative of an imaginary Moscow-directed ‘offensive,’ which unnecessarily obscures the complexities of Chinese and Soviet foreign policies in the early Cold War.

I would have liked to see a better-argued description of the Chinese Civil War (the contention that Chinese Communists had been fighting Japan while Chiang just waited for the Americans to rescue him has long been disproved, for example, by Rana Mitter).²⁰ I would have also appreciated more on the claim that Soviet leader Joseph Stalin provided “substantial amounts of aid” to Viet Minh (114). Stalin deeply mistrusted the Vietnamese revolutionary Ho Chi Minh, and the Soviets were barely involved in Indochina until well after Stalin’s death.²¹ I have my share of disagreements with Chamberlin’s depiction of Sino-Soviet relations. For example, he argues that “Mao and his comrades balked at what they saw as [Nikita] Khrushchev’s moderate Cold War policies.” This is somewhat misleading, since Chinese foreign policy also took a moderate turn post-1954 (in the context of Geneva and Bandung). On the same page he contends that the Soviets “call[ed] for Chinese caution during the Taiwan Strait Crisis.” The Soviets were indeed surprised, but there is no evidence that they called for caution, or that the Chinese were irritated by Moscow’s handling of the crisis. Also, despite Chamberlin’s claim that the Soviets refused to share nuclear weapons technology with the PRC, the Chinese actually had extensive access to Soviet nuclear and missile technology, as Khrushchev rightfully acknowledged in 1964.²²

Chamberlin argues that “Mao’s decision to launch the Great Leap Forward masked the growing animosity between the Communist powers” (173). I am not sure that it masked anything. Indeed, the Great Leap worsened the Sino-Soviet split, as demonstrated in recent work by Shen Zhihua and Xia Yafeng. On the same page, Chamberlin writes that Khrushchev refused to support China in the 1962 Sino-Indian War, adding “another line to Mao’s list of grievances.” In reality, Khrushchev did support China (even if he did so mainly for self-serving reasons; the conflict overlapped with the Cuban Missile Crisis). In short, the whole Sino-Soviet section of the book could have received better treatment. I explain below why this is important.

Moving on to some other issues. I was favourably impressed by Chamberlin’s treatment of the 1965 killings in Indonesia. His arguments are broadly in agreement with Brad Simpson’s excellent study of the subject but it is just useful to be reminded of the callousness of the U.S. approach to the brutalities of the Suharto regime.²³ (Chamberlin quotes U.S. Ambassador in Jakarta to the effect that Indonesia would be “infinitely more healthy and more promising” (227) as a result of the unfolding massacre). The Indonesian events are of particular importance in Chamberlin’s narrative, for they “served as a harbinger of future sectarian violence in the post-colonial world” (229). Of course, one can easily dispute Chamberlin at this point: surely the partition-related violence in South Asia was harbinger for sectarianism, marring the dividing lines of Chamberlin’s book.

The book boasts an excellent chapter on the 1971 conflict between Pakistan and what would become Bangladesh. There are no great revelations (others have published very detailed studies of the conflict).²⁴ But Chamberlin brilliantly narrates the drama. President Richard Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger look as bad as you would expect—and worse. He

²⁰ Rana Mitter, *China’s War with Japan, 1937-1945: The Struggle for Survival* (London: Penguin UK, 2013).

²¹ Ilya V. Gaiduk, *Confronting Vietnam: Soviet policy toward the Indochina conflict, 1954-1963* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).

²² Zhihua Shen and Yafeng Xia, “Between Aid and Restriction: Changing Soviet Policies toward China’s Nuclear Weapons Program: 1954-1960,” Nuclear Proliferation International History Project, Working Paper No. 2 (May 2012).

²³ Bradley R. Simpson, *Economists with Guns: Authoritarian Development and US-Indonesian Relations, 1960-1968* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008).

²⁴ Gary J. Bass, *The Blood Telegram* (Noida: Random House India, 2013).

sees the conflict as a turning point in the Cold War in so far as it inaugurated the “unlikely alliance of an authoritarian Islamic regime [Pakistan], the world’s most populous Communist state [China], and a liberal-democratic superpower” (297). “A tectonic shift in the politics of postcolonial revolution,” Chamberlin calls it, and it is hard to disagree (Ibid.).

The last third of the book focuses largely on conflicts in the Middle East—the long, drawn-out civil war in Lebanon, the Iranian revolution and the Iran-Iraq war, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. To use Chamberlin’s own words, “fuelled by ethnic strife, tribal politics, and religious disputes rather than clashes between Marxism and liberal capitalism, these new wars were low-intensity conflicts, fought by insurgents, paramilitaries, international peacekeepers, and guerrillas rather than conventional armies” (368). Chamberlin assigns a good portion of the blame on the United States for helping create a Frankenstein’s monster by supporting anti-Soviet jihadists. The argument is well known but its eloquent rendering in the book will be appreciated by those attuned to the long-term perspective on America’s troubles in the Middle East.

Here, as elsewhere, I thought the Soviet angle of the book required more nuance. Chamberlin over-relied on various CIA estimates of Soviet intentions, which is why we learn that the Kremlin was mainly concerned about the impact of radical Islam on the Soviet Muslims (there is very little actual evidence of this), or that the Soviets “coveted the region’s oilfields and access to strategic waterways,” (493) but the author provides no actual evidence of this. The argument that the failure to win the war in Afghanistan “was preventing efforts to implement broader reforms” (540), falls flat: there was very little connection between the war in Afghanistan and the broader agenda of Soviet reforms. These are, of course, just minor points that do not detract from the general flow of the narrative, which I find very convincing.

Now that I have flagged up a few minor points of disagreement, I should also state where I find the narrative to be the most compelling and, at the same time, somehow not entirely satisfying. The issue is at the core of Chamberlin’s book, and it has to do with that shift from ideology to sectarianism that half way through changed the basic character of the Cold War. The big question is: why did it happen? How did ideology become so devalued, even as ethnic and religious concerns came to the fore? Chamberlin is right, in my opinion, to look for answers in the dynamic of the Sino-Soviet relationship. The Sino-Soviet split, he argues, destroyed global socialism as a political force. Deng Xiaoping’s economic reforms took the radical edge off China’s foreign policy. “Combined with Beijing’s antagonism toward Moscow and its Cold War tilt toward Washington, these transformation shocked left-wing forces around the world” (374).

There is something to this argument but since Chamberlin’s account of the Sino-Soviet split (briefly summed up above) falls far short of answering profound questions about the nature of the evolving relationship between Moscow and Beijing, it is hard to pin down how the split impacted the ‘Eurasian rimland.’ For instance, how would the Vietnam war have unfolded if Moscow and Beijing remained on the same page? Should have we expected a different outcome to the conflicts in Indonesia or South Asia? Would Lebanon have turned out differently? Part of the complexity stems from the fact that the early Cold War overlapped in time with de-colonization across Asia: should the differences in the nature of conflict be sought in the fact that Communism, as an ideology, was particularly well-suited to anti-colonial struggles, and once these died away, sectarianism naturally came to the fore? These are massively complex questions, which this book brought to mind. Chamberlin does not always provide satisfactory explanations, but he certainly succeeded in stimulating this readers’ thinking.

I was therefore left with a positive impression of this volume. The only thing that consistently annoyed me was Chamberlin’s referencing. To a substantial extent the book benefits from sources acquired from the ‘other side’ of the Cold War. In particular, Chamberlin relies on the digital archive of the Cold War International History Project (CWIHP), which contains thousands of documents obtained and translated by pioneers of Cold War research. I really wish Chamberlin (and many other scholars drawing on the CWIHP translations) would follow the citation instructions appended to each document in the digital archive. As Cold War historians, we should collectively strive to acknowledge the work of these (in many instances) young scholars who make this sort of archival research possible and carry out that very risky business of collecting evidence, shred by shred, from Cold War archives world over.

On this hopeful note: this has been an excellent book to read and review. I have no doubt that it will be widely acclaimed by the general public and by Cold War historians who will devour Chamberlin's account with their usual zeal. One thing I learned over two decades of research and writing on the subject: nothing beats Cold War history as much as more Cold War history.

 AUTHOR'S RESPONSE BY PAUL CHAMBERLIN, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

I would begin by expressing my gratitude to the editors of H-Diplo for the tremendous amount of work that they do, to James Lebovic for writing the introduction, and to the four reviewers for their serious and thoughtful reviews. I realize that *The Cold War's Killing Fields* is not an easy book to review. Beyond its tragic subject matter, the book defies simple categorization, challenges many preconceptions that the reader might hold, and covers a breadth of territory in which no single scholar could possibly claim expertise.

The idea for *The Cold War's Killing Fields* came from the simple realization that, unlike other 'global' conflicts, historians lacked a clear understanding of violence in the post-1945 world: we had no sense of geography or periodization to give shape to the history of the Cold War's battlefields. Where was the Cold War's Waterloo, where was the Somme, where was the Cold War's Stalingrad? Accordingly, the book began as an attempt to trace out a rough map of the patterns of mass violence during the Cold War era. I wanted to know where and when large conflicts happened and to determine what, if anything, this told us about the international history of the post-1945 era.

It seemed to me that estimated death tolls represented the most straightforward, though by no means uncontested, metric for tracing this sort of violence. Such numbers provided a means of tracing the intensity of the dozens of conflicts that took place between 1945 and 1990. But in taking this approach, I was unwittingly challenging one of the cornerstones of U.S. foreign relations historiography. Whereas scholars in the field have traditionally focused on those subjects that gained the interest of U.S. policymakers, death tolls provided a different angle to the story that often operated independently of official U.S. or Soviet interest. As a result, the book quickly diverged from prevailing narratives—many of which had shaped my own research and teaching—about the Cold War.²⁵

By employing mass violence as a lens through which to view the conflict, I discovered an entirely new picture. As I explain in the book, the peoples of the world experienced the Cold War very differently depending on where they lived. And, as I discovered, the most violent region of the post-1945 era (by a wide margin) was the southern rim of Asia. Ultimately, the book reveals that the notion of a Cold War fought in the form of superpower interventions all over the Third World is an overly simplistic explanation that does little justice to the realities of world conflicts between 1945 and 1990.

To be honest, the easiest thing for me to have done would have been to write *The Cold War's Killing Fields* as a sort of 'greatest hits' of the Cold War in the Third World -- Korea, Guatemala, Suez, Cuba, Vietnam, the Arab-Israeli Conflict, Nicaragua, South Africa, and Afghanistan. But in doing so, I would have merely been offering an updated picture of a fundamentally shapeless Cold War in the Third World. This was an approach suggesting that outside of Europe and North America, the Cold War was everywhere. But of course, if the Cold War was everywhere, it was nowhere. A ubiquitous Cold War would necessarily be shapeless. By focusing on death tolls, I chose to break from this established narrative of an omnipresent Cold War in the Third World that had been a staple of undergraduate lecture courses—mine included—for many years.

This meant, then, that *The Cold War's Killing Fields*, as a revisionist, international history of the Cold War-era violence, would be fighting two simultaneous uphill battles. As a work of revisionism, it would challenge prevailing explanations; as an international history, it would expose itself to scholars with a deep regional expertise who would find minor mistakes and narrow points of disagreement.

²⁵ These include works such outstanding works as John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: Penguin, 2005) and *Strategies of Containment* (New York: Oxford, 2005); Melvyn Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007); Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia and the Cold War* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2006).

I was thus faced with the challenge and opportunity of writing a book in the face of the strong misconceptions of my intended audience. As I explain in the book, I chose to concentrate on the largest conflicts of the period that had clear relationships to the Cold War struggle. Although my initial plan for the book included chapters on some of these conflicts, I ultimately concluded that by including large sections on Latin America and Africa, I would be untrue to my research findings and would be diluting my argument to fit my readers' misconceptions. My purpose in writing the book was to challenge overly simplistic preconceptions, not to confirm them for the purpose of avoiding criticism. Because so many readers have asked about these points, it is worth taking a moment to explain my position.

Latin America proved problematic for several reasons. First, the death tolls in Latin American conflicts tended to be far lower than in their Asian counterparts -- even when accounting for the region's smaller population. Moreover, in a striking mark of superpower priorities, 95% of Soviet combat casualties and 99.9% of U.S. casualties took place in Asia and the Middle East. (1, 6-7) Clearly, Moscow and Washington were far more willing to send their soldiers to fight and die in Asia and the Middle East than in Latin America (or Africa). Second, the United States exercised a preponderance of power in the region throughout the Cold War period. Moscow challenged this influence, but Latin America was never truly in play in the same sense as Southeast Asia or the Middle East -- each of which switched Cold War alignments multiple times during the era. In other words, Latin America was never really as contested as the southern rim of Asia. Third, Latin America was not postcolonial in the same sense as Asia, Africa, and the Middle East -- something that matters for my argument. Unlike the postcolonial world, Latin America was not simultaneously struggling with the process of state formation and with the currents of the superpower struggle. Finally, the suggestion that U.S. interventions in Latin America were a Cold War phenomenon would never satisfy any Latin Americanist; Washington had been meddling in Latin America since the nineteenth century. The issue here was the Monroe Doctrine, not the Cold War.

Africa is more complicated. It bears repeating that only miniscule numbers of U.S. and Soviet troops perished in African conflicts during the Cold War, and Washington and Moscow sent far less foreign aid to Africa than to Asia and the Middle East. Moreover, while conflicts such as the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Soviet-Afghan War were clearly made more lethal by superpower interventions, the case is far more difficult to make for any African conflict. Likewise, I would struggle to make a compelling argument that large wars in Africa dramatically changed the Cold War in any way comparable to post-1945 era conflicts in Korea, Vietnam, or Afghanistan. Africa's clearest example of a proxy war, the Angolan Civil War, witnessed the largest non-African intervention not from either of the superpowers but from the Cubans. Suffice to say, when it is Havana which fields the most noteworthy non-African force in a conflict, said conflict struggles to qualify as a pivotal superpower battlefield. The key takeaway in Africa's case, I believe, is quite simply that not every conflict that took place between 1945 and 1990 fundamentally shaped or was shaped by the wider Cold War struggle.²⁶

Thus, to include Latin America and Africa would have been to replicate the very approach that I was challenging. It would have regurgitated an essentially shapeless history of Cold War-era violence. It would have miscategorized conflicts that had very little to do with the Cold War as a series of superpower proxy conflicts. It would have forced an artificial balance on the book that would ultimately reproduce the analytically hollow notion that the Cold War became violent in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East—a region containing 70 percent of the world's population. In short, such an approach would merely tell us that the Cold War became violent everywhere except North America and Europe. This is neither satisfying nor true.

The reality is that most societies in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East did *not* experience massive wars. The book is an attempt to explain why some did. Nearly all of the largest wars of the period took place in the Cold War borderlands along the frontiers of the Soviet Union and China, a region I call the Cold War's killing fields. This is where 70

²⁶ Matthew Connelly's seminal "Taking off the Cold War Lens," *American Historical Review* 105:3 (June 2000): 739-769 makes a similar point about Algeria.

percent of wartime deaths occurred; the region received 80 percent of superpower aid; and 999 out of every 1000 U.S. troops killed in combat died in this zone. I wanted to know why.

By approaching the Cold War through the lens of body counts, a number of new features of the conflict came into focus. First, the overwhelming majority of war deaths occurred in a relatively contained strip of territory running along the southern tier of Asia from Manchuria, south into Indochina, and west to the Mediterranean. Seventy percent of those killed in violent conflicts died in this strip of territory. Moreover, this strip of territory, the Cold War's killing fields, roughly corresponded with the borders of the two largest Communist powers, the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. Here was a completely new geography of the Cold War.²⁷

Second, the era's greatest violence fell into waves in terms of both timing and geography. The first wave of violence broke out between 1945 and 1954 in East Asia, the second washed across South and Southeast Asia in the 1960s and 1970s, and the third swept through Central Asia and the Middle East between 1975 and 1990. These three waves constituted a new periodization of the Cold War.

Third, the United States tended to take a far more active role in Cold War interventionism than the Soviet Union. As reviewers Artemy Kalinovsky and Sergey Radchenko note, the Soviet Union receives comparatively less attention in my book than the United States. While U.S. forces intervened extensively in many of the largest conflicts of the Cold War—Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia, Lebanon, Iran-Iraq—the only major Soviet intervention in the postcolonial world was in Afghanistan, which receives two chapters of the book's attention. To devote equal space to Soviet interventionism would have distorted the record of events. The stark reality is that the United States was far more active in postcolonial warfare than the Soviet Union. Washington, not Moscow or Beijing, projected military power across vast oceans on a scale unmatched by its rivals. *The Cold War's Killing Fields* reflects this dynamic, which represented a core element of the post-1945 international order. Again, I was faced with a choice: to impose an artificial balance upon regions and actors or to be true to my research findings.

The other significant challenge I faced was the one endemic to any broad international history. Regional specialists—and I am guilty of this myself—are bound to find fault with any international history that devotes only part of its attention to their areas of expertise. For example, my two chapters on Bangladesh could never offer as thorough or polished a treatment of the topic as a good monograph on the same subject. However, those same regional specialists would also criticize a book such as mine if it neglected their areas of study. International historians, then, are damned if they do and damned if they don't. Either include the chapters on Bangladesh and be skewered by specialists or leave out the chapters on Bangladesh and be attacked for ignoring a critical story. This remains one of the greatest challenges for the field of international history. The other option, of course, is to abandon the endeavor of international history altogether and return to the days when U.S. diplomatic historians studied the view from Washington, Soviet historians studied the view from Moscow, and rarely did their paths cross. Such a return would be as unfortunate as it would be unlikely. Ultimately, I remain convinced that, for all its pitfalls, there is a great deal of value in the study and writing of international history. In my view, it is better to have broad international histories that connect disparate events—even with their inevitable mistakes and oversights—than to not have them.

Having made these general comments, I will now turn to address some of the points made by the individual reviewers.

Julia Irwin praises my book as an “impressive tour de force” and “a magnificent interpretive synthesis, an argument-driven narrative history that should be essential reading for scholarly and popular audiences alike.” Her review is particularly attuned to the ways in which my focus on mass violence directed the book's narrative away from traditional histories of the

²⁷ I was, however, surprised to find that this geography roughly corresponded to Nicholas Spykman's ‘rimlands’ circa 1942. Walter Lippman also hinted at this dynamic in his critique of the “X” article. Nicholas John Spykman, *The Geography of the Peace* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1944), 41, 43, 50-51; Walter Lippmann, *The Cold War* (New York: Harper, 1947), 21, 23.

Cold War in the Third World. For example, she regrets the “seven-year hiatus” between 1954 and 1961, which figures so prominently in many other histories of the period—providing such famous episodes as the Suez Crisis, Algerian War, and Cuban Revolution. That the second half of the 1950s were so peaceful—in relative levels of global violence—surprised me as well. However, as before, to include a lengthier section on the period simply because previous histories had done the same would have been to force an artificial balance onto the narrative. Irwin also wishes that the book had engaged more deeply with non-lethal forms of violence such as hunger, forced migration, and sexual violence. Unfortunately, an expansion of the text to include these topics would likely have made an already long book much longer. I agree with Irwin, however, that these other forms of violence merit attention. Indeed, I would be thrilled to see other scholars consider similar projects that are focused not on death tolls but on metrics such as refugee populations, famines, etc.

Artemy Kalinovsky compliments my book as “[f]luidly written and fast-paced, but still packed with evocative examples and ample evidence,” and notes that “this book should reach anyone who still believes that the Cold War can be thought of as a ‘Long Peace’.” He writes that the book “has succeeded beyond any doubt” in showing that the Cold War “inspired or fueled some of the worst violence of the twentieth century.” He expresses some reservations regarding what he calls the “vagueness on the precise relationship between the superpower contest and the violence that occurred during the chronological span associated with the ‘Cold War.’” He notes that most of the conflicts covered in my book were civil wars that were “then fueled or exacerbated by the participation of one or the other superpowers.” I believe Kalinovsky’s review articulates a good bit my argument regarding this relationship.

That said, I believe that the first five pages of the book’s introduction explain my argument fairly clearly. In a nutshell, the book proposes a new *geography* and *periodization* of Cold War era violence and identifies some of the *patterns* that said violence took. The bloodiest conflicts broke out along the postcolonial borderlands of the Soviet Union and China, which, as I argue, constituted contested spaces where both superpowers felt vulnerable. It was precisely this liminality that made these Cold War’s killing fields so lethal. Local forces usually initiated the fighting in the form of civil wars and revolutions—three in particular, the Chinese, Vietnamese, and Iranian revolutions, proved particularly disruptive. The superpowers, feeling vulnerable along these Cold War borderlands, intervened, dramatically escalating the death toll. Caught between the dual forces of violent nation-building and vicious warfare, civilians suffered the most.

Christian Lentz praises my book as “a tour-de-force of global diplomatic and military history” that “ought to be required for a new generation of American decision-makers as they reckon with the Cold War’s aftermath.” Lentz approaches my book as a specialist and, as one might expect, finds some space for criticism. He notes that my chapter on Indonesia relies on “classic” scholarship without taking full advantage of more recent works including documentary films. This is a fair criticism, and I make no claims to have conducted an exhaustive review of the latest literature on each theater. Indeed, no scholar would approach my book as a one-stop-shop for the history of Indonesia in the 1960s. If I have done some justice to the “classic” literature on these topics, I am pleased. Lentz has also caught a couple of mistakes in my section on Southeast Asia.²⁸ While I cringe at typos, I think it is a stretch to say, as Lentz does, that such errors “unintentionally rehearse the same Manichean worldview of Communist and capitalist that Chamberlin otherwise challenges and complicates.”

Sergey Radchenko writes that the *Cold War’s Killing Fields* was “an excellent book to read and review.” He praises my book’s “masterfully crafted narrative” and predicts that it “will be widely acclaimed by the general public and by Cold War historians who will devour Chamberlin’s account with their usual zeal.” A specialist on Sino-Soviet relations, Radchenko offers some specific criticisms regarding my treatment of the Sino-Soviet relationship. From such a distinguished scholar of the topic, I would expect nothing less. In my defense, however, I would emphasize that my goal was not to blaze new trails on topics well outside my specialty such as the Sino-Soviet relations. Rather, I hoped to bring subjects such as the Sino-

²⁸ For example, a typo that refers to troops from the People’s Army of Vietnam as belonging to the People’s Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The sentence reads: “Clad in the green uniforms of the People’s Democratic Republic of Vietnam, Communist troops entered the city in Soviet trucks, jeeps, on bicycles, and on foot” (184). It should have read, “Clad in the green uniforms of the People’s Army of Vietnam ...”

Soviet Split more squarely into broader discussions of the Cold War that have too often focused on squabbling between Washington and Moscow. Indeed, this is precisely what another reviewer, Julia Irwin, took from this part of the book.

That said, I would respectfully push back against a few of Radchenko's points. For example, on the Chinese Civil War, I do not claim that "Chiang just waited for the Americans to rescue him."²⁹ Rather, I argue the opposite:

Both the CCP and the GMD had fought against the Japanese occupation, but the Communists were able to make the most of the situation. Chiang's decision to retreat from the coastal regions into the southwest and establish a new headquarters in Chongqing gave the *impression* that the regime was biding its time for the Allied powers to defeat Japan. Communist leaders pushed this *narrative* in a bid to discredit the GMD while simultaneously *exaggerating* the impact of their guerrilla operations against the Japanese. Likewise, the Japanese occupation highlighted Chiang's inability to liberate China at the same time that it created room for Mao's forces to amass greater power. As *Chiang's strength slowly bled out* over the course of the Japanese occupation, Mao seized the opportunity to become a potent challenger to the GMD (58-59, emphases added).

Likewise, Radchenko questions my statement that Moscow provided "substantial amounts of aid" to the Viet Minh. In response, I would cite Vladislav Zubok's *Failed Empire*, which explains that, "In Indochina, the Chinese and the Soviets agreed to provide aid to the Viet Minh army."³⁰ In fairness, this interpretative difference stems from my use of "substantial," but the matter strikes me as subjective. In the same section, Radchenko challenges my take on Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev's refusal to back Beijing in the 1962 Sino-Indian War. Here I would point to Jeremy Friedman's *Shadow Cold War*, which explains: "the Soviet stance of neutrality [in the 1962 War] coupled with Khrushchev's enthusiastic embrace of Eisenhower ... led China to believe that the Soviets prioritized peace and detente over the anti-imperialist struggle."³¹

Later in his review, Radchenko suggests that there is something "Huntingtonian" about the book. On this point I would firmly disagree. Indeed, the book directly challenges Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" thesis by arguing that such clashes were more the product of Cold War era violence—and the collapse of the Third World Communist project—than any imagined ancient hatreds or fundamental civilizational divisions. Radchenko also accuses me of buying into "the CIA narrative of an imaginary Moscow-directed 'offensive'." Again, I disagree with his reading. My interest in this "East Asian Offensive" is twofold. First, the years between 1945 and 1954 did indeed witness a string of East Asian Communist advances that were connected in significant ways – the Communist victory in China reverberated across the region and the wider world. However, as a look at my book's table of contents reveals, my focus here is much more on Chairman of the People's Republic of China Mao Zedong than Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin. My book treats China rather than the Soviet Union as the key player. While neither Moscow nor Beijing was pulling the strings, the actions of the Communist powers—and the United States—had important repercussions across regions and the wider Cold War world. This interconnectedness shaped the post-1945 era in multiple ways. Second, I consider it significant that many U.S. officials *believed* that they were witnessing a coordinated offensive. Although they exaggerated the level of leftwing coordination, these anxieties provide an important window into how U.S. officials understood global events in this formative period of the Cold War. They also help us understand why East Asia became the most violent theater of the early Cold War period. After all, it was the Americans, not the Soviets, who chose to send such large numbers of soldiers to fight and die on East Asian battlefields in the 1950s and 1960s. To downplay this dynamic is to ignore one of the core dimensions of the Cold War struggle.

²⁹ However, I do note that this was the impression of some American officials, 63-64.

³⁰ Vladislav Zubok, *Failed Empire* (Durham: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 79.

³¹ Jeremy Friedman, *Shadow Cold War* (Durham: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 43.

Radchenko also raises an important point regarding the simplified citation method for documents from the Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) used by myself and many other scholars in the field. Indeed, for a number of reasons, I chose to employ a shortened citation system. On some level, I think that this speaks to CWIHP's success in establishing itself in the minds of historians as a vital archive that has transformed our understanding of the Cold War. In this regard, CWIHP has become a resource akin to the National Security Archive or the State Department's *Foreign Relations Series* that scholars such as myself treat as indispensable troves of documentary material without always acknowledging the difficult work that goes into assembling said materials. That said, on this point I think Radchenko is absolutely correct—the field owes a tremendous debt to these scholars and archivists. In the future, I intend to follow CWIHP's suggestions and encourage other scholars to do the same. CWIHP, after all, is not simply an archive; it is also one of the most ambitious, most successful, and most generous manifestations of collaborative scholarship in the field of international history. All of us in the field have benefitted from the work that CWIHP and its associate scholars have done and I appreciate Radchenko's call to give credit where credit is most certainly due.

I remain grateful to the four reviewers in this roundtable for their thoughtful critiques of my book. My thanks goes out once again to the reviewers, to James Lebovic for writing the introduction, and to the editors of H-Diplo for hosting this roundtable.