

pendent judiciary, and individual political awareness—that it would certainly threaten the present constellation of administrators who mistake their survival for the survival of Japan. To convert Japanese subjects into genuine citizens, Van Wolferen concludes “would require realignments of power akin to those of a genuine revolution.”

Although *The Enigma of Japanese Power* has caused an uproar in Japan, Van Wolferen is not condemning a society which has almost no street crime, no homeless, 100 percent literacy, and—to be sure—huge trade surpluses. But, as Fallows observed, “Japanese-American relationships have a fragile, walking-on-eggs quality, which makes people think it’s dangerous to talk frankly in public.”

BARBARIAN SENTIMENTS: How the American Century Ends. By William Pfaff. Hill and Wang. 198 pp. \$19.95

Beyond the daily drone of Washington’s debates over defense and foreign policy, there are a few hopeful signs that the crippling post-Vietnam schism within the nation’s foreign policy establishment may slowly be healing itself. *Barbarian Sentiments* is one of them. In the lucid prose one would expect of a regular contributor to the *New Yorker*, Pfaff takes his readers on a tour of the globe, at every stop pointing out how badly Americans have misunderstood the forces at work (especially nationalism) in the nations where they have become involved since 1945.

Pfaff’s assessments are bold and refreshing. The strength of West Germany’s peace movement, for example, he ascribes to Germany’s age-old failure to achieve a satisfactory political and cultural identity for itself. As a result, he observes, “Germany has consistently looked for justification in causes larger than mere national aggrandizement.” But he is also capable of gross misjudgments (dismissing communist ideology as a cause of the Khmer Rouge’s genocide in Cambodia in 1975–79).

The world, Pfaff argues, is a much more complicated place than most Americans have appreciated, the problems of nations more intractable. He decries the naive American optimism that has given birth to “an activist foreign

policy which presumes that nations and international society can be changed into something more acceptable to Americans.” Curiously, however, he seems to think that only conservatives have been guilty of this naiveté; liberals prone to it are exonerated simply by omission. And Pfaff seems convinced that the impersonal forces of nationalism and history run so deep that neither men nor ideas can greatly alter the fate of nations. At times, Pfaff seems to collapse into a kind of “neoisolationism” or to embrace the politics of resignation.

What is most encouraging about the emergence of thinkers like Pfaff is the assumptions they share (without acknowledging it) with others across the political spectrum. If liberals follow Pfaff’s lead, they soon will find themselves competing with conservatives over who has the more “realistic” view of the world and of American interests rather than the most morally unimpeachable one. Such realism would be a very good thing for the United States—and possibly for the world.

THE POLITICS OF EARTHQUAKE PREDICTION. By Richard Stuart Olson with Bruno Podesta and Joanne M. Nigg. Princeton. 187 pp. \$19.95

By June 28, 1981, all outbound flights from Lima, Peru, were booked; Peru’s first census in many years was postponed; property values had dropped drastically; those who could afford it had left town. An unknown U.S. government physicist, Dr. Brian Brady of the U.S. Bureau of Mines, had driven the entire population of Lima to panic by predicting, almost to the day, a disastrous earthquake that would level that country’s capital.

Olson, an Arizona State University political scientist, poses a vexing question: When scientists make a prediction, what are the politicians to do? The question was, in this case, further complicated by the fact that Brady had invented a method of prediction that contradicted all the accepted ones. Traditionally, earthquake predictions are, at best, carefully hedged approximations, based on past earthquake patterns in a particular area. But Brady claimed that, given enough seismic, geophysical, and microphysical data, he had a math-