

[Stover on Robb and Gill, 'Divided Allies: Strategic Cooperation against the Communist Threat in the Asia-Pacific during the Early Cold War'](#)

Review published on Wednesday, December 14, 2022

Thomas K. Robb, David James Gill. *Divided Allies: Strategic Cooperation against the Communist Threat in the Asia-Pacific during the Early Cold War.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2019. 288 pp. \$35.99 (e-book), ISBN 978-1-5017-4185-2; \$53.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-5017-4184-5.

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Printable Version: <https://www.h-net.org/reviews/showpdf.php?id=57860>

When thinking about the Cold War, one usually remembers it as an ideological clash between the United States and Soviet Union during the latter half of the twentieth century. Sometimes the United Kingdom and China are included in this narrative (depending on the author), but often they are overlooked along with Australia, New Zealand, and a host of other countries that also made contributions to Cold War efforts on both sides. What makes *Divided Allies* a revolutionary work is that it includes these countries while seeking to explain why strategic cooperation among the Western powers of the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand was so challenging in the Asia-Pacific during the early Cold War period. In doing so, the authors, Thomas K. Robb and David James Gill, explore the “quadrilateral cooperation” among these four nations in their fight against communist threats from approximately 1945 to 1955 (pp. 1-2)

Through an introduction, seven chapters, and a conclusion, Robb and Gill show that it was not the United States but Australia and New Zealand that led the “push for their longtime goal of a security treaty” with the US, with their effort ultimately leading to the creation of the Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty (ANZUS) in 1951. In creating this treaty, the three nations excluded the United Kingdom because there was an overriding desire by the two Oceanic countries to secure an American commitment to their postwar security, in some form or another, as a rebuilt Japanese threat became a possibility. By highlighting this interplay of nations on an international scale, the authors show that Australia and New Zealand were not just followers or observers during the Cold War. Rather, by using diplomacy to advance their own national interests, they proved themselves to be influential, at least in terms of their own region, during the early years of the Cold War.

By analyzing the creation of the ANZUS Treaty, Robb and Gill not only break down and explain the economic impact and military implications it had but also get into the racial preferences of the treaty. The authors emphasize the importance of racial and cultural elements that were important in crafting the 1951 treaty, not just for regional security but also for domestic stability resulting from international cooperation. In their explanation of excluding the British, they mention that the planners of the treaty did not want it to be a “white man’s club” (p. 90). But because of a perceived monolithic Sino-Soviet expansionist agenda that caused the strategic landscape to begin deteriorating, the United Kingdom was eventually courted to join a wider Pacific pact that included a

number of Asian allies. The ensuing South East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO)—or Manila pact—which included British involvement, was now seen as a necessary instrument in combating communism in the Asia-Pacific region.

Divided Allies does a remarkable job adding a new aspect to existing Cold War historiography. Through their use of archival material from each of the four countries studied, and secondary works that support and flush out their findings, Robb and Gill are able to make a cogent and informative argument that flows throughout the book. For this reason, it is a welcome addition to not only Cold War but also diplomatic historiography, and is a must read for anyone interested in new work on the topic and period of this study.

Citation: Paxton Stover. Review of Robb, Thomas K.; Gill, David James, *Divided Allies: Strategic Cooperation against the Communist Threat in the Asia-Pacific during the Early Cold War*. H-War, H-Net Reviews. December, 2022. **URL:** <https://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=57860>

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