

like so many Americans, focuses only on what he conceives to be American strategic interests. Thus, he underestimates the risk that the North Korean missile and nuclear threat to Japan will so undermine Japanese confidence in the US 'nuclear umbrella' that Japan will decide that it needs its own nuclear weapons.

In Bush's final days in office, the Japanese show palpable anger at the president's betrayal of Japanese interests in striking this latest 'deal' with North Korea. The response of the Bush administration is that Japan just has to get out of the way. So much for the 'realists' in the Bush administration, who used to pillory Clinton for his 'appeasement' of North Korea.

Yet Japan has all it needs to make nuclear weapons, except warhead technology. And that would not stop Japan for long. It's not just North Korea that Japan is worried about. A far bigger threat is China, which targets Japan with nuclear weapons. Indeed, Japan may be starting to think that it can no longer rely on US-extended deterrence where China is concerned.

Chinoy, like many American liberals, is inclined to underestimate the fear that drives policy in many countries now that the Cold War is over. If Japan comes to think that it can no longer afford to rely on the US 'nuclear umbrella' that sheltered it during the Cold War, our region could soon see the rapid spread of nuclear weapons. The US focus on North Korea should begin with the need to keep Japan reassured, not with the delusion that 'real negotiations' would lead to North Korea's abandoning nuclear weapons. But with Obama about to succeed Bush, that is a faint hope.

**Reviewed by Robyn Lim**

*Grand New Party: How Republicans Can Win the Working Class and Save the American Dream*

by **Ross Douthat and Reihan Salam**

Doubleday

New York, 2008

US\$23.95, 256pp

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With Democrats in control of the presidency and both houses of Congress, the Republican Party is set to experience the period of introspection and infighting that inevitably follows electoral defeat. A work germane to these reflections is *Grand New Party* by Ross Douthat and Reihan Salam, modestly subtitled *How Americans Can Win the Working Class and Save the American Dream*.

Despite the elite media obsession with the Iraq War and 'unilateralist' US foreign policy, public disenchantment with the Bush administration stems from domestic failures more than military adventurism, and this is the focus of *Grand New Party*.

Slightly more than half the book is devoted to a history of modern US conservatism, beginning with the maternalist movement at the beginning of the twentieth century. The authors then attempt to diagnose the domestic policy shortcomings that have cost the Republicans the working-class base Ronald Reagan won over three decades ago. Finally, they prescribe key elements of a new policy agenda designed to woo them back.

The lengthy historical survey may seem excessive to readers enjoying broad familiarity with twentieth-century US politics. It is nonetheless necessary, as the authors use this survey as a source of insights with which to diagnose contemporary failures.

The book's central thesis is that both major political parties have failed to acknowledge the challenges that beset the American working class. Most Republicans would agree with the authors' sketch of a Democratic Party that actively undermines the social mores that, while burdensome for affluent coast-dwelling elites, are a necessity for hard-pressed working-class Americans struggling to maintain the family stability that stands between them and poverty.

Yet while the Republican Party caters to this need with its social policies, the authors argue that it turns a blind eye to the growing income disparities between socioeconomic classes, which are entrenching the power of an educated elite and undermining the American Dream of class mobility. It also ignores the growing sense of economic insecurity faced by working Americans, even before the financial crisis, about the safety of their jobs in an economy marked by offshoring of increasingly high-end activities.

The authors argue that the current trend will lead to a politics driven by greater xenophobia and economic populism, with the US morphing into something more akin to a European welfare state. If the Republicans are not interested in proposing a solution to working-class insecurities, the Democrats will.

Douthat and Salam paint a grim picture of the possible future:

Imagine higher taxes, vastly expanded public sector employment, infantilized upper-middle-class men and women who live with their parents because their jobs don't pay them enough to buy a house of their own, illegitimacy rising toward 50 percent and a growing social services bureaucracy that steps in to pick up the slack, plunging birthrates as rearing

children grows ever more expensive, and an ever-larger stream of immigrants being imported to fill the breach.

Having established the problem, they proceed to outline some solutions, a number of which will be greeted with derision by traditional Republicans.

Foremost, in this regard, is a more generous set of state subsidies and workplace regulations to facilitate child-rearing, along with pro-family adjustments to the tax system.

The second solution is to do something about the untenable state of America's healthcare system, which leaves millions uninsured. The authors touch on heretical options such as a system of universally mandatory private health insurance, subsidised with some form of voucher system, or a mandatory health savings account akin to compulsory superannuation.

Other policy prescriptions include massive expansion of police forces to combat crime and unemployment, a crackdown on employers using illegal immigrant labour, summer-school vouchers targeted at poorly-performing children as a stalking horse for universal school vouchers, liberalisation of policies on urban sprawl, and development and tax reforms to magnify the benefits of low-wage work.

Douthat and Salam's shopping list reveals them as post-ideological Republicans, assessing each issue on its merits and advancing what appears to them to be the most effective and electorally attractive solution. While this approach sounds admirable, the absence of any underlying ideological or philosophical theme to the authors' approach is striking. If a political agenda is merely a

collection of disparate policy ideas devised on an issue-by-issue basis, the whole exercise of politics is akin to an exercise in management.

Disgruntled Republican readers confronted with this agenda might retort that electoral success and even social and economic outcomes are not the only metrics that interest them. Douthat and Salam write like a team of apolitical consultants engaged to assess the nation's ills. Nowhere do they acknowledge that the Republican commitment to, for instance, low taxes and low welfare, derives not merely from economic theory but from a deep-seated ideological aversion to government interference with private property rights.

The Republican Party cannot so easily detach itself from its ideological anchor, severing the ties of history to transform into the soulless 'Grand New Party' the authors extol. The absence of moral and philosophical considerations in its outcomes-focused analysis renders *Grand New Party* ultimately sterile.

Yet the book is not without value. By formulating a compelling diagnosis of the causes of Republican electoral failure, and proposing policy options to address these, Douthat and Salam have provided valuable intellectual fodder for Republicans to chew over as they contemplate the GOP's future.

**Reviewed by  
Alan Anderson**

*Marketing Dictatorship: Propaganda and Thought Work in Contemporary China*

by Anne-Marie Brady

Rowman & Littlefield

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US\$75.00, 246pp

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Out of Africa, always something new, as the ancient Roman adage has it, and out of China always some new restriction on liberty. China's micromanagement of information makes the oppression in *1984* look like a vicarage tea-party. No category of thought or public opinion escapes intervention, regulation, or fakery in the Propaganda State. Anne-Marie Brady's invaluable book tells us just how this has happened, and why the means of perverting truth in China has become stranger than George Orwell's fiction. Her study is a warning that only an intelligence specialist could hope to sift reality from the morass of falsehoods propagated and truths suppressed by Chinese officialdom.

*Marketing Dictatorship* pokes into every dark corner of thought-manipulation and gets full marks for clarity as well as comprehensiveness. It adds up to a damning indictment. The author is enviably well informed and remains temperate throughout, although she can be forceful about particularly outrageous distortions of the truth. While an academic work must lack the drama of Orwell's novel, this one is just as chilling. Consider as one small instance what happened to Alvin Toffler's *Revolutionary Wealth*. This was published in China in 2006, but the critical comments about the country were simply deleted and an 'explanatory' preface was added, all without Toffler's permission.

