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ISSN - (Print): 2519 – 7908 ; ISSN - (Electronic): 2348 – 0343

IF:4.335; Index Copernicus (IC) Value: 60.59; Peer-reviewed Journal

## **Book Review: Force and Statecraft: Diplomatic Challenges of our Time (4<sup>th</sup> Edition)**

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Publisher: Oxford University Press, Inc, New York (USA)

Year of Publication: 2007

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“Force and Statecraft: Diplomatic Challenges of our Time” (4<sup>th</sup> Edition) was published in 2007 by the Oxford University Press, Inc, New York. Its original text was first published by the same publishing house in 1983. The authors – Paul Gordon Lauren, Gordon A. Craig and Alexander L. George – distinguished professor emeritus of History, distinguished diplomatic historians and eminent strategic studies specialist/political scientist respectively, combined their long years of experience and expertise to produce this fascinating ‘bible’ for all historians and scholars of International Relations.

The book is divided into three parts of varying lengths and themes, albeit the general subject matter –force, statecraft and diplomacy – is explicitly kept with a total of twelve chapters. The authors’ central argument is that an international community or system based on consensual, shared and accepted rules and laws, norms and customs is the best approach to prevent violence, conflict and wars and the best way to ensure the endurance of peace in our modern period.<sup>1</sup>

Varying sets of assumptions underlie their ideas and thus became the framework on which the book was built. It was first asserted in the first place that conflicts and disagreements and violence were inevitable as organized groups of people came into contact with others whom they rarely shared any common traits and characteristics and thus a possible conflict of interest. There was the need therefore to develop appropriate mechanisms to facilitate interaction without the recourse to violence and war. Moreover, they conceived of an explicit and a shared international community with a consensual body of rules, laws, norms and customs that could minimize the occurrence of violence during this interaction between or among unknown actors.

In addition, this “viable international system” must have the following requirements such as a consensual values and norms, shared goal and objectives among the principal parties; a structure indicating the scope and appropriate number of interacting states, with the distribution of capabilities; procedures for achieving their objectives including adaptation to new development and changes. The above initial experiment collapsed in the twentieth century due to its inability to adapt to the “diplomatic revolution” – new rapid developments and changes – that was associated with the modern period. They finally assumed that modern diplomatic techniques such as negotiation, deterrence, coercive diplomacy and crisis management cannot be underestimated in a modern system of force, statecraft and diplomacy.

In a more general term, the first part transport readers and students through history of the international system: from the implicitly unorganized state system such as the period before Hobbes Leviathan<sup>2</sup> through to the mid-seventeenth century, to the moments of a somehow eighteenth century comity, through to the classical periods of balance of power consensus<sup>3</sup> and its later organization of concerts of Europe<sup>4</sup> or powers and swiftly through the much talked about collective security<sup>5</sup> of which we currently somehow upholds to our current trends of security challenges – terrorism<sup>6</sup>. In effect, it charts the developments of force, statecraft and diplomacy from the early periods, for example, the day of Thucydides and his Greek conundrum<sup>7</sup> to the present day international relations and diplomacy shaped by the end of the Second World War and the Cold War and include a more important recent event – 9/11 (the havoc Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaida forces rained on New York City, Washington, DC).

In addition to brief expositions of successive concepts, the authors also touched on the emergence, impacts and pressures of new phenomena – democratized public opinion, economic upheavals and modern diplomatic approaches – and how they delved themselves into what was once a preserved of aristocrats and kings; increased the numbers of diplomatic players and thus catapulted a “diplomatic

revolution” in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Also of important to the first part is the exposition on the troubling economic concerns and situations between the war years for example in discussing a Spanish decline only from the Thirty Years War and the argument that Bismarck’s Reinsurance Treaty overburdened his alliance system. It must be noted however that some of these issues are quite controversial to aver and they may be liable for varying degrees of critiques and disagreements.

The first part has six chapters encompassing “The emergence of Diplomacy and the Great Powers” where some early techniques and instruments of diplomacy were examined as well as the ensuing war and competition that characterized the eighteenth century. “The Classical System of Diplomacy, 1815 – 1914” delved into events and situations from the failure of Napoleon to create a unipolar structure and a subsequent French hegemony over Europe and the establishment of the Vienna Congress to the onset of the First World War. This chapter also examined events and periods and concepts such as the balance of power and the European Concert in order to achieve the desired “conclusion and affirmation” of treaties. The cessation of fighting was not sufficient enough for international peace and security unless it was based on the highest principles of justice so that it could not “be swept away by the people of the world in less than a generation”. In between these concepts were the embedded ideas such as the “Quadruple Alliance” – sought to ensure territorial guarantee; the “Holy Alliance” – sought to protect European States domestic status quo.<sup>8</sup> The chapter ended with the characteristics description and structure of the system created where “Great Powers of Europe” became the major stakeholders, the interplay between balance of power and collective security and how they fashioned out.

The authors “diplomatic revolution” took the center stage at chapter three: “The Diplomatic Revolution Begins, 1919 – 1939” spanning from the end of the First World War where the impacts and pressures of democratized public opinion, nationalism and economics upheavals up to the outbreak of the Second World War were examined. The authors discussed plans by leaders such as president Woodrow Wilson to do away with practices and assumptions of “the old order of things” characterized by balance of power, secret alliances or diplomacy, trade barriers, organized rivalries, territorial settlements, etc and replace them with “new and open diplomacy” characterized by principles of justice such as democracy, self-determination, disarmament, free trade, community of power and organized common peace through the League of Nations, albeit this received a detestation among American populace and Senate.

They also discussed security and diplomatic wrangling during and after the Cold War period in Chapters four and five where the United Nations with its entrenched collective security principles and some practical diplomatic dilemmas were observed. The last chapter of Part 1 discussed some of the modern non-conventional security threats: terrorism, weapon proliferation, and racial discrimination, and hunger, torture – with the desire of the modern system and all stakeholders to fight to bring all those against the peace of the world to justice.

The second part of the book examines the various statecrafts and diplomatic techniques with enriched analysis of specific case studies combined with some theoretical discussions. Techniques and mechanisms analyzed included negotiation, deterrence, coercive diplomacy, crisis management and détente. The second part more broadly contained the means of promoting national interests without compromising on international peace and security. The importance of the use of extensive case studies including but not limited to Vienna Congress, Crimean and Vietnamese Wars, Conference on Security and Cooperation, 1972-1975, Cuban Missile Crisis, Richard Nixon’s Détente Policy, 1956 Suez Crisis, 1979 Afghanistan invasion, Wilson, Bismarck, Roosevelt, Gladstone, etc as statesmen, offered vivid pictures into the realities of policy making and diplomacy.

It must be pointed out that despite the elaboration of diverse instruments of diplomacy, Lauren, Craig and George averred that negotiation until today remains the chief diplomatic instrument and principal technique of international deliberation without the arousal of hostilities and violence. In similar manner, among the force related aspects of statecraft and diplomatic instruments such as deterrence and coercive diplomacy, détente distinguish itself as a divergent tactic. They contended that an American détente strategy which granted more political legitimacy to the Soviet Union and in effects its spheres of influence in order to enhance reciprocity between the two superpowers eventually failed due to negative effects of international events such as the 1973 Arab-Israeli War and the 1975 Cuban intervention in Angola and other internal factors.

A unique trait of this book is the linkages and unity it drew between force and legitimacy which was more explicitly and in some cases quite implicitly shown in the part two. The various diplomatic instruments and techniques were linked with specific cases and analyzed. In more specific details on a chapter by chapter basis, negotiations – chief diplomatic instrument – was discussed and analyzed with

cases such as “The Congress of Vienna, 1814-1815; “The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1972-1975 as well as North Korean Nuclear Weapons Negotiations, 1993-2006 in chapter eight which unveiled the idea that peace could be maintained with a maintenance of shared interest and a common ground in a manner of a give and take concessions. Another important aspect of negotiations is the role and influence of non-state actors and modern technology. Although the authors revealed that “agreements will not be reached unless all sides perceive that they have secured some advantages”... and that “there must be shared benefits” and that “the rules of accommodation required consensus, this gave even the smallest states extraordinary influence”, they failed to realize that in international relations, the strong always has a way to have his way and depending on how one sees it – whether absolute gains or relative gains considerations – there will not be equal benefits in asymmetrical relationships or negotiations.

The Chapter nine more specifically talked about deterrence – Massive Retaliation – as a “case of using threats of force as instruments of statecraft to deter opponents”. Specific case studies that were discussed and analyzed with this instrument included: Post 1815 Collective Security Settlement; British – French deterrence attempts on Hitler’s Poland attack, 1939 and Contemporary American deterrence over Taiwan in relation to China. Deterrence dwells on rationality<sup>9</sup> – a careful calculation of the costs and benefits of pursuing a particular action – and therefore “not all actors see the world or calculate the value of gains and losses in the same way” as the authors themselves admitted. In some cases, result of calculation may be false due to the choice of variables used as there may not be adequate information to be able to make informed analysis. In some other cases, interpretation of conclusion may also not be accurate.

Though deterrence dwells on rationality, it must be noted that sometimes 1<sup>st</sup> Image elements such as presidents or statesmen could be really irrational. It should also not be forgotten that the ability to successfully apply deterrence usually depends on a State’s military and economic capabilities. Therefore, it seems to suggest that only States with military and economic muscles such as superpowers can engage in deterrence. It must also be noted that the authors were absolutely blind to the effects of psychology – cognitive, motivational and psychobiography – on rationality or could even deviate from rationality consideration.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, although the concept of deterrence is not at all bad, its traditional usage can be modified to suit current deterrence principles.

Coercive diplomacy as a diplomatic and statecraft technique was tackled in chapter ten. Lauren, Craig and George combined historical cases including American 1852 – 1854 ‘Gunboat Diplomacy’; the US 1938 – 1941 foreign policy towards Japan and the Cuban Missile Crisis to further their analysis. The authors recognized coercive diplomacy as an instrument of force that “offers strong powers the possibility of achieving their objectives without war” although were quick to add that “by its very nature, is a strategy that induces stress” and if not manage well, “it can trigger shock, anger, and a sense of desperation that easily can exacerbate rather than resolve crisis”. Through the various cases, they averred threats of wars as each of the states employing coercive diplomacy presented “credible and potent threat” and none “lacked either the will or the ability to carry through the punishment”. It must be emphasized that with coercive diplomacy, the authors rightfully recognized the effects of psychological, political, and cultural roots of motivation and the considerations that may influence those who are the targets of coercive diplomacy”.

The third and final part is relatively short encompassing the conclusion as well as an analysis on religion, ethical values, morality and their effects on force, statecraft, diplomacy and foreign policy in general. Religion, morality and ethics were referred to as “self-imposed restraints” which need to be given “particular careful consideration”. Lauren, Craig and George conclude their book with a reminder that despite States and their leaders’ affirmation to certain religious, moral and ethic underpinnings and thus morality and ethics cannot be ignored; the development of the needs of the State in relation to statecraft, foreign policy development and international relations require amoral approach. They shared the opinion that when expediency and morality conflict, the former always prevails.

Generally considered, no one can deny or underestimate the effects of European politics to the development of international relations, diplomacy and global governance. However, there is the need to mention that, in some case these effects are superfluously exaggerated to the total exclusion of other factors. Lauren, Craig and George’s work is purely western-centric. There was no mention of the role of Africa. How did colonization of Africa and its associated slave trade affect force and statecraft and the development of international relations and diplomacy? This implicitly maintains a kind of periphery – center status quo of world politics and the overbearing hands of the center on the periphery. One could also take issue with the criteria for selection of some cases and how a key global event such as the Japanese invasion and occupation of Manchuria and its influence to force, statecraft and diplomacy was relegated. Why was the Conference on Security and Cooperation, 1972-1975 chosen as a discussion material for multilateral negotiation as it barely had any

achievement instead of discussing a more successful negotiation such as Washington Naval Conference, 1922? Despite these few questions, the contribution of "Force and Statecraft: Diplomatic Challenges of Our Time" to the study of International Relations and Diplomacy cannot be underestimated.

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<sup>1</sup> Lauren G P, Craig A G, George L A. Force and Statecraft, New York: Oxford University Press; 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Mukherjee S, Ramaswamy S. A History of Political Thought: Plato to Marx, New Delhi: Prentice-Hall of India Private Limited; 2007.

<sup>3</sup> Kissinger H. World Order, New York: Penguin Press; 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Nye S J, Welch A D. Understanding Global Conflict and Cooperation: An Introduction to Theory and History, Beijing: Pearson Education Asia Ltd and Renmin University Press; 2012.

<sup>5</sup> ibid

<sup>6</sup> Kissinger H. World Order, New York: Penguin Press; 2014.

<sup>7</sup> Page V T (Ed.). History of the Peloponnesian War, London: William Heinemann Ltd and Harvard University Press; 1920.

<sup>8</sup> Kissinger H. World Order, New York: Penguin Press; 2014.

<sup>9</sup> Glaser L C. Rational Theory of International Politics: The Logic of Competition and Cooperation, New Jersey: Princeton University Press; 2010.

<sup>10</sup> Mercer J. Rationality and Psychology in International Relations, *International Organization*, 2005; 59(1): 77-106.