Foreign Policy Analysis: A Comparative Introduction

By Marijke Breuning
New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, 207 pages, ISBN: 9780312296193.

Foreign Policy Analysis: A Comparative Introduction by Marijke Breuning is a well-designed comprehensive analysis of foreign policy decision making that places individual decision makers, leaders in other words, at the centre. Yet, while focusing on individuals the book also takes into account the opportunities and constraints to foreign policy decision making brought about by various institutional, domestic and international factors. The author overtly accepts that foreign policy decisions are result of a "complex interplay of multiple factors" (p. 9). The argument that within this interplay of numerous factors and constraints, opportunities and choices for foreign policy decisions are predominantly determined by leaders drives this book. Within this context, Breuning makes a point of examining leaders' personalities, motivations, and perceptions to understand the process of foreign policy decision making (p. 11).

Throughout the book, the author's main concern is to discuss and explain concepts and theories of foreign policy decision making by using different historical cases as examples. Not only does she explain concepts which can be thought of as particular to the field of foreign policy decision making, such as framing, operational code, emotions, and models of decision making, she also looks at some others that are also widely used in the fields of political science and international relations, and are mostly taken to be well known to the audience, like rationality, good decision, bad decision, political culture, sovereignty, anarchy, hard power, and soft power. It would not be an exaggeration to say that this situation multiplies the value of the book by facilitating the understanding of concepts and how they are linked to each other in foreign policy decision making.

The book is organised in seven parts which are complementary to each other. In the first part, Breuning introduces the book by explaining the importance of studying foreign policy decision making with particular attention on leaders as the major actors. The questions of "how foreign policy decisions are made; why leaders make the decision they make; why states engage in specific kinds of foreign policy behaviours" are the major questions that foreign policy analysts try to answer (p. 16). Instead of making a mere analysis of historical facts, the aim is to bring out knowledge with the help of systematic comparison methods

to contribute to the advancement of understanding the similarities and differences between foreign policy decisions and behaviours (p. 17).

The second part of the book focuses on the importance of studying leaders' behaviours, motivations, perceptions, emotions, and personalities to understand foreign policy decision making. Although there may be various institutional, domestic, and international constraints, leaders determine political options and make decisions at the end. Breuning emphasises the importance of analysing leaders' personalities in order to understand their political behaviours and discusses the strategies of "operational code" and "leadership trait analysis". She supports these theoretical frameworks with examples of US presidents. This facilitates understanding not only the theories but also how these theories become meaningful in foreign policy decision making. Nevertheless, the author does not avoid one of the main difficulties of studying the personalities of leaders: whether or not the leader is giving out correct information about their political behaviours.

The third part of the book presents the complex interplay between leaders' individual capabilities and personalities on the one hand, and various constraints and opportunities beyond leaders' controls on the other hand, in foreign policy decision making. Breuning underlines the importance of problem representation and framing in the determination of foreign policy options (pp. 68-69). The representation of the same problem can change from one country to another and from one leader to another. This process is very much affected by leaders' personality traits such as how conceptually complex they are, their past experiences, knowledge, and beliefs, and how the problem has been framed.

In the fourth part, the author focuses on the close environment of leaders, namely advisors and bureaucrats who are among the most influential actors in foreign policy decision making. The interplay between the leader and this top environment in the formation of foreign policy decisions is discussed by using different historical examples. According to Breuning, the role and responsibility of individuals in foreign policy decision making is very much dependent on the structure of the political system (p. 86). In addition, leaders' personalities affect the way they organise executive bodies, and if they have influence over these bodies the more his or her personality will become prominent in foreign policy decision making (p. 94). Within this general theoretical framework, the author also compares presidential and parliamentary systems, small advisory groups and coalition governments with regards to leaders' role and influence in foreign policy decision making.

In the following two parts of the book, Breuning concentrates on the domestic and international constraints within

which foreign policy decisions are made. With regards to domestic constraints, she focuses on the role and impact of the public on the formation of foreign policy options. While even in non-democratic systems the domestic audience may have some level of influence on the determination of options, their impact increases in societies where decision makers are accountable to the public (p. 133). Moreover, societies' political cultures and national histories are also considered domestic constraints as a result of their influence on the framing and representation of problems (p. 127). In terms of international constraints, Breuning explains geographic size and location, population, economy, and military expenditure as the objective constraints that influence a country's foreign policy decisions. The author explains the influence of these constraints in this way: if all other things are taken as equal, the leaders of states with smaller territories, populations, economies and limited resources are more likely to perceive greater constraints than the leaders of states with larger population, size, economy and more resources (p. 147). However, the influence of these international constraints on a leader's foreign policy decision making will change according to their relationships with other states; objective constraints may gain importance in relationships with different states. In the last part of the book, Breuning clearly sums up the previous parts and brings together the various pieces of the foreign policy decision-making puzzle. Numerous factors at various levels of analysis influence foreign policy decision making. The interplay between these factors influences leaders' foreign policy decisions and behaviours, and these factors change from one case to another. She concludes by repeating that although the broader frame is drawn from various domestic and international constraints, leaders remain prominent actors in foreign policy decision making and the major emphasis in foreign policy analysis is made on leaders and the psychological dynamics.

Last but not least, this book is structured in a way that facilitates its argument reaching its audience. It takes its place among the must-read resources of foreign policy analysis literature with its comprehensive approach to the subject and coherent style enriched with cases not only from American history but also from various countries around the world. Regardless of their background, this book will be useful for anyone who wants to understand the process of foreign policy decision making and the role of leaders in it.

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Rethinking Foreign Policy Analysis: States, Leaders, and the Microfoundations of Behavioral International Relations

By Stephen G. Walker, Akan Malici and Mark Schafer (eds.)

New York: Routledge, 2011, 322 pages, ISBN: 9780415886970.

The foreign policy behaviours of states were until the 1950s traditionally analysed by academics within the framework of a realist perspective. The realist approach views the state as a unitary actor and accordingly its foreign policy behaviour is a result of its strategic interaction with other states. Scholars, at that time, only focused on national attributes, geopolitics and the foreign policy behaviours of the states. Therefore, domestic components of the states, sociological factors of the society, and psychological traits of the leaders were not taken into account in such analyses.

However, since the 1960s, academics have begun to examine the deficiencies of the realist method. They have started to accept that foreign policy has a much more complex decision-making process and several different factors can affect the outcomes as well as the process of foreign policy making. Scholars have started to examine the domestic components of states, such as political parties, regime types, public opinion, media, parliaments, council of ministers and other bureaucratic units on the one hand; and on the other, they have also taken into consideration sociological (identity, culture, nationalism, religion, etc.) and psychological factors (perception, cognition, attitudes, beliefs, etc.) in their analysis.

In *Rethinking Foreign Policy Analysis: States, Leaders, and the Microfoundations of Behavioral International Relations*, the editors Walker, Malici and Schafer stress the need for the incorporation of socio-psychological approaches in foreign policy analysis. By using Alexander L. George's Operational Codes and qualitative methods, they try to observe the effects of beliefs, learning, national and international factors, cognitive abilities, binary role theory, and small group dynamics on the foreign policy decision-making process. They also test their hypothesis by using various case studies, such as with Fidel Castro and American presidents. They reach very interesting and remarkable results where the correlation between a foreign policy process and the socio-psychological factors can be clearly traced via statistical variables.

The authors frequently underline the importance of taking into account socio-psychological factors to gain a better understanding of the decision-making processes. Yet, they also add that focusing only on the socio-psychological dimension would not be adequate for observing the whole process. One might think of two points in this regard. Firstly, having accepted the need for studies that makes an in-depth and advanced level of analysis, academics have been using the Operational Codes (i.e. political future), but the significance of psychological concepts and factors are still as important as the Operational Codes perspective, and thus a scholarly effort to combine and to integrate both perspectives and factors in their studies is essential in order to reach a comprehensive and realistic analysis of foreign policy decisions. Secondly, academics have to prepare their studies within the framework of other factors in addition to the socio-psychological dimension. Even the authors claim that analysing the socio-psychological and leadership dimensions per se is not sufficient to understand the foreign policy analysis field. In this respect, for example, the international/national system in which the leaders are acting and formulating their decisions has to be examined. These structures, both national and international, sometimes give an opportunity to the leaders to take more risky decisions. But sometimes they limit their behaviours.

The essays in this book use Operational Codes and game theory models as well as fundamental realist concepts, such as power, influence, etc. However, the existing international system is based upon more liberal and cooperative understanding. The scholars here seem to have only given a small role to liberal concepts, such as international organisations, morality, human rights and international law, which may also be necessary to explain the foreign policy behaviours of the states.

The Operational Codes model uses the expected utility concept in which it is assumed that after making a cost/benefit analysis, states will behave in the way that is best for them. But in practice leaders can be under the influence of (rational or irrational) psychological factors, such as nationalism, ideology, or simply emotions. Thus leaders may not act in the expected way, which may lead to problems in the scientific evaluations based on the game theory and the Operational Codes models.

As already mentioned by Richard Snyder and his colleagues, the foreign policy-making process is a social event and therefore it is not possible to totally reconstruct it in order to observe the process in a true way. Scholars who work on foreign policy analysis will continue to make evaluations and prepare their academic studies lacking that all-inclusive knowledge; therefore, their predictions will not always be completely

correct. Nevertheless in today's globalised world system it is necessary to concentrate on all the possible factors affecting the process in order to realistically analyse foreign policy and make some predictions. The realist approach, geopolitical perspectives, national attributes, the international system and states' strategic interactions are not sufficient to understand that process due to the fact that there is no clear distinction between domestic and foreign policies. As mentioned by Eric Singer and Valeria Hudson in *Political Psychology and Foreign Policy*, political psychology studies on the foreign policy "seek to build an integrated theory of world politics, linking domestic and international levels of analysis."

Last but not least, the book is helpful to understand the effects of socio-psychological factors upon the foreign policy process by using the Operational Codes; therefore, I suggest students read it carefully.

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Understanding Foreign Policy Decision-Making

By Alex Mintz and Karl DeRouen Jr.

New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010, 208 pages,
ISBN: 9780521700092.

It has become a commonplace of International Relations (IR) disciplines to fail to predict many beginnings and endings in world politics, including the end of the Cold War and other more recent gripping episodes, such as 9/11 and the Arab Awakening. Foreign policy decision-making (FPDM) is a subfield of IR, and it too has its share of responsibility for this failure. This is arguably related to the fact that since World War II foreign policy analysis has set the scientific standards and academic stakes a little too high. This was evident particularly in its search, often associated with the first generation, for a unified grand theory of foreign policy-making by way of multilevel and multicausal scientific explanations. Neither rigorous empirical aggregate data analysis nor statistical tools were able to increase the explanatory and predictive power

of the field significantly. Later, in the 1980s, a more "moderate" middle-range theory search aimed to reconcile the grand theoretical principles with the complexity of the real world. Indeed, after the ambitious first generation, the second and third generations (late 1980s to the present) have had more moderate research aims and agenda that have been less concerned with data accumulation in comparative fashion than with single case studies with sound analysis. Indeed, the end of the Cold War further encouraged more recent scholars of the third generation to investigate the particular rather than the general aspects of foreign policy-making with a view to producing less general and abstract, but more contextually informed, temporally and spatially bounded, analyses.

Understanding Foreign Policy decision-making, by Alex Mintz and Karl DeRouen Jr. is a tour d'horizon of foreign policy-making analysis that offers valuable insights into the complex world of decision-making processes, with many case studies attuned to the theoretical and conceptual frameworks presented in the book. The book is a primer providing the readers with alternative theories of decision-making that are explicated through case studies selected from a range of diverse foreign policy settings across different countries. Although the authors do not single out any research avenue or model as the determinant or most important in understanding and assessing FPDM, their emphasis clearly is on the processes of decision-making.

Mintz and DeRouen are two prominent scholars of political psychology, and their book advocates a psychological approach to foreign policy decision-making that "explains not only outcomes of decisions but also the processes and distortions that lead to decisions and the decision dynamics" (p. 9). The emphasis on the process is rather indicative of their distaste for the shortcomings of strict rational actor models, which, they argue, are limited and limiting our efforts to understand the dynamics of many alternative models of decision-making, such as the cybernetic model (p. 69) or prospect theory (p. 75). Consequently, it is clearly a strength of the book that it is engaging rather than simply dismissive of "irrational" sources of foreign policy behaviour, and as such is a valuable corrective to variants of realist theories that treat the state-level inputs of decision-making in a mono-causal manner. Diverse sources of foreign policy behaviour are thus rewardingly addressed and incorporated into analysis so as better to capture the complexity of decision-making processes.

The authors examine FPDM under four headings. The first is "the decision environment", comprising types, levels and biases of decision-making. The second section revolves around different models of decision-making categorized as rational and its alternatives. The

third explicates the determinants of FPDM, incorporating psychological, international and domestic factors. The last section presents the important issue of the marketing of decisions. A main thrust of the book is that in addition to factors such as leaders' deterrence strategies and/or arms races, Mintz and DeRouen rightly seek to underline the fragmented nature of decision-making processes that often result in sub-optimal policy outcomes. For instance, the poliheuristic model of decision-making envisages that leaders will first sidestep domestic political hurdles before moving on to choosing the optimal policy from amongst the subset of available options (p.79). The authors rightly seek to expand beyond such constraints on rational behaviour in order to show that leaders often opt for "satisfying" rather than "optimal" policy choices in foreign policy-making processes. Another reason is that there exist so-called cognitive shortcuts in information gathering and processing that guide the decision maker in his/her efforts to evade elaborate mental processing and instead simplify the issue at hand. Among such shortcuts is the use of analogies that conceptually equip the maker and taker of foreign policy decisions with a pretext for cognition and action (p.103). To fully treat diverse influences on FPDM, the authors also elaborate on various psychological factors, domestic, international and economic conditions, in addition to public opinion and cultural interactions. Another such factor is the operational codes that give a cultural lens and "cognitive map" for decision makers to find their way in the uncharted waters of world politics (p.102).

The book very helpfully presents a series of case studies ranging from the Falklands War of 1982 to the 1993 U.S. invasion of Panama, concluding with the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, with a view to animating the concepts, models and theories discussed in the chapters. It is significant to note that in their case study of the US decision to invade Iraq in 2003, Mintz and DeRouen find that most of the decision models discussed in the book are *able* to predict the invasion (p. 175) ,thus leaving it to students to choose the model that "best" explains the case. It should be stressed that, although very pedagogical, this approach seems to gloss over the murky issue of what defines "the best fit".

A characteristic research subject of the third generation has been the issue of framing in FPDM. Mintz and DeRouen take up the issue in detail. In addition to the psychological factors and external pressures that affect the foreign policy decisions of leaders, the authors demonstrate the relevance and impact of "marketing" through "frame tactics" that are used for manipulating/ massaging the truth to influence the public. Chapter 8 resourcefully discusses

framing and media effects on FPDM using illustrative case studies. The authors skilfully identify concepts and frameworks related to the marketing and framing strategies of leaders who want to garner public support. Frames are tellingly categorized as "marketing tactics" (p. 149) derivative of the decision makers' political agenda and calculus. Although the book is careful not to dismiss cases where the media effect is conspicuous or at least "one of reciprocal influence" with policy makers (p. 161), theoretical preference is, nonetheless, for the "manufacturing consent thesis" that sees governments and media controlled by power elites vying for influence. Such an approach to frames and media effect, however, may foreclose other avenues for rethinking the media-foreign policy nexus in two ways. First, the approach places the public into the picture only at the receiving end and as a rather passive consumer of the "the framing tactics" available in the meaning-market monopolized by the powerful decision makers and their spin doctors. Secondly, in such a context it would not be clear why *certain* frames resonate better with the public and how this can constrain the leaders' tactical menu for framing strategy. There are many cases where frames go beyond being simple tactics and become constitutive of decision makers' understandings of the situation in the first place; however, this aspect is not addressed in the book.

The book covers much ground remarkably well indeed, and features many conceptual, analytical and theoretical frameworks. However, precisely because of its wide scope it is sometimes not easy to see how the central argument works its way out of so many overlapping themes, concepts and theories of foreign policy. This would be particularly the case for students of foreign policy who seek to reconcile, for instance, the rational and non-rational sources of decision-making. Despite its breadth, the book is also unhelpfully reluctant to connect its robust discussion of FPDM with otherwise diverse and vigorous theories of IR. With the exception of a brief engagement with neorealism, the book regrettably sidesteps many recent theoretical overtures that fall outside the predictable gamut of realist or neo-realist schools of contemporary Anglo-American IR. This is rather disappointing, since the book could have also been used as a methodological toolkit and conceptual road map for students who are ill-equipped to apply their extremely general and unspecified theoretical frameworks to real-world case studies. This said, the book still resourcefully makes available necessary concepts, models, terminology and methods for anyone in IR discipline to become more pragmatic and programmatic. The point here is that it could have served as a corrective to the nonfigurative and

sometimes very condensed nature of theoretical discussions that often exclude more practical, real-world engagements.

A related problematic issue that is not much addressed in the book is a discussion of *agency* of decision makers in FPDM. The authors do not accept the rational actor model as the one and only viable model in FPDM, a very necessary corrective to the strictures of rational choice or neorealist schools of thought. Indeed, the authors rightly refer to their agents as having limited information-processing capabilities, and preferring "satisfying" rather than "optimal" alternatives (p. 34), due to many dynamics in "the decision environment", or because of "the psychological, domestic, international political and cultural factors" (p. 97-106). In addition, agents (leaders or decision makers) are taken to operate in a highly dynamic and complex interactive setting and under time constraints, to name but a few more hindrances. Despite all such mediating influences on agents, or many other restructuring effects/hindrances, however, the book treats foreign policy makers as having the capacity to act otherwise. Mintz and DeRouen's implication here is that human subjectivity and intentionality are autonomous and can escape the dictates of constraints or other determinants of FPDM.

Although a legitimate position, such an acceptance of an autonomous individual must also posit that agents and factors/effects/contexts exist externally and independently of each other, a position not so tenable in social theory, which prefers to posit the intersubjectively constituted nature of both agents and contexts (Giddens, 1986). Crucially, the latter view is more receptive to ever-changing contexts of meaning and more nuanced to accept indeterminancy in foreign policy practices. Such an acceptance of indeterminancy would necessarily entail an "intrinsically ambiguous and open-ended nature of practices" whose source or meaning can hardly be located in some "unproblematically given subject or generative structural principles" (Doty, 1997: 376). While the book provides a good discussion of different sources of decision-making, there exists a tension in Mintz and DeRouen's treatment of the objects of analysis and the ability of agents in making foreign policy. That is, despite its misgivings and reservations, the authors' agents/actors never seem to lose control either of their practices or of the situation in general. In other words, Mintz and DeRouen's agents could still imagine *better* courses of action in the last instance, no matter how difficult and ambiguous "the decision environment" can get. This is arguably because of their underlying ontology: social contexts, meanings, subjects and their interpretive, social dispositions and relationships are assumed to be

already in place before agents/actors find themselves in "interactive settings" of foreign policy decision (p. 28). Put differently, in spite of all the drawbacks that can work to the contrary, leaders and decision makers remain sovereign subjects while acting in and shaping the extremely complex, paradoxical and ambiguous events and settings. This is a difficult position to maintain, though. But Michel Foucault's famous dictum springs to mind: "We need to cut off the King's head: in political theory that still has to be done" (1982: 121), Mintz and DeRouen's kings appear frail, their heads are sometimes dizzy and confused, but miraculously never decapitated.

All in all, this is certainly a bold and impressive book in its sweep and ambition to present highly complex issues in a most straightforward manner. Mintz and DeRouen present a meticulous and excellent study of FPDM processes that should be essential reading for students, scholars of IR and kingmakers.

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When Things Go Wrong: Foreign Policy Decision Making Under Adverse Feedback

By Charles F. Hermann (ed.)

New York: Routledge, 2012, 194 pages, ISBN: 9780415895286.

Understanding foreign policy is one of the major tasks for scholars of international politics. Addressing that task, especially since the end of the Second World War, scholars have developed a distinct field of foreign policy analysis and introduced a vast number of theories to explain factors

determining states' foreign policy. The necessity of and ambition to understand and explain foreign policy has resulted in the emergence of a large toolbox for analysing the complex processes of decision making. Regarding the variety of complex decision-making processes, it might be reasonable to argue that the book *When Things Go Wrong: Foreign Policy Decision Making Under Adverse Feedback* just adds some additional tools into the toolbox that are quite handy when used to address and fix "appropriate problems". In that sense, the title, the foreword and the introduction of the book clearly identify the main question—what do decision makers do when things go wrong?—and provide the reader with an easy user's manual for the tools that are presented throughout the chapters. The reader-friendly organisation of the chapters together with the step-by-step and clear argumentation of the authors adds quality to the interesting topic.

The book addresses situations in which foreign policy makers receive feedback that the policy they are following is failing. The first chapter starts with the important question of after receiving negative feedback, do policy makers stay the course or change direction? (p. 1) Throughout the book the question is divided into three further questions: (1) When do leaders reconsider their prior policy/action? (2) Does such reconsideration result in a new foreign policy or do leaders continue following the prior one? And (3) if leaders decide for change what is the magnitude of that change? Having appropriated a variety of theoretical approaches (prospect theory, control theory, political psychology, group thinking, operational code analysis, etc.) the chapters in the book aim at clarifying the decision makers' response to adverse feedback in sequential and protracted decision-making processes. Different variables are at play that impact a decision makers' response varying from the significance of the problem, the nature of the ultimate decision unit (a single leader, a group or coalition, p. 12), and the expectations, power and accountability of the decision makers.

Foreign policy decisions are generally made in response to specific problems and/or opportunities. Building on this, the second chapter by Hermann and Billings analyses small-group decision making in response to protracted problems that require continious attention. In such situations, a small group of decision makers reconvene numerous times after receiving negative feedback on their prior actions. Asking the three questions mentioned above, the authors generate a number of theoretical propositions. They propose that the expectations of leaders on the appropriateness of the initial action, the nature of the decision-making group (for example, the existence of a minority positions within the group), the group's commitment to the prior action, and the accountability of the group to

domestic constituents all have an impact on the decision makers' sensitivity to adverse feedback, and the likelihood of a reconsideration of prior action and policy change.

In relation to group decision making, the third chapter by Hermann introduces "group efficacy" as a significant variable to explain decision makers' response to adverse feedback. Taking LB Johnson Administration's decisions on the Vietnam War as an empirical case, the author argues that if group efficacy is high than decision makers will become more committed to their initial policy which decreases the possibility of a policy change in response to adverse feedback. The same empirical case is used by Preston in the fourth chapter that analyses the impact of dominant leaders on in-group dynamics. He presents a leadership typology based on the leader's need for power, interest in policy area, and sensitivity to the context.

In the following chapter Garnson compares the two previous approaches by analysing the Chinese-American relationship during the Bush Administration. The author claims that both group efficacy and leadership style have affected the response to adverse feedback. If the leader chooses to get closely involved in the decision-making process, the advisory board might bolster his/her position. In addition, quite interestingly, Garnson points out that adverse feedback does not always mean that the policy is failing and sometimes, as it is in the case of Bush Administration, the leadership might decide to continue with the status-quo policy.

A similar finding is also presented by Walker, Schafer and Marfleet in the sixth chapter. Utilising "Operational Code Analysis" the authors here explore the reasons behind the British strategy of appeasement with Hitler's Germany in 1939. Through an analysis of Chamberlain's speeches, the authors argue that his operational code was oriented towards appeasement and propose that his beliefs played a critical role on Britain's persistence in following the appeasement policy despite adverse feedback.

An alternative explanation for a "stay-the-course in response to adverse feedback" policy is also proposed by Vancouver in chapter seven. Using control theory, Vancouver argues that the Bush Administration's invasion of Iraq in 2003 could have been predicted (p. 144). He proposes that control theory provides a promising approach for explaining sequential decision making.

The book ends with recommendations to policy makers in dealing with adverse feedback. In the last chapter (chapter eight) Hermann restates the major objective of the book, which is to provide "theoretical explanations that can account for the circumstances which may trigger the decisions to continue or decisions to adjust or change course" (p.

174). Then he calls for policy makers to frame their policies as experiments (or quasi-experiments) rather than definitive solutions. Accordingly, they would recognise that those experiments might fail or succeed so that it would be easier for them to admit, learn from, and correct their mistakes in the future.

When Things Go Wrong gives detailed theoretical explanations and serves the purpose that is stated by the editor both in the introductory and concluding chapters. However, it is possible to make a constructive critique to increase reader satisfaction and to develop the theoretical insights that are presented throughout the book. First, although the volume has been organised in a reader-friendly manner, the reader should be aware that the authors assume familiarity with the theoretical approaches that are presented in the relevant chapters. Such assumption requires the reader to have prior knowledge (or at least familiarity) of foreign policy analysis and decision-making literature. In that sense, the book stands as a complementary but not an introductory source to be used only by advanced foreign policy analysts. Second, although all chapters present empirical examples, the case selection remains limited as all cases are from countries that have democratic regimes and decision makers are all chosen from western countries. A more diversified case selection (for example, countries with non-democratic regimes, fundamentalist or religious governments and decision makers from non-western countries) might improve the generalisability and predictive capacity of the theoretical explanations presented throughout the book. The book in its present state tells the reader that the authors have been selective of cases that support their theoretical arguments, which hampers the applicability of the otherwise very prospective nature of the theories presented by the authors.

Finally, *When Things Go Wrong* is an interesting and useful source that provides some necessary tools for analysing complex decision-making processes. In fact, these theoretical tools might be quite effectively used in analysing recent developments in Turkish foreign policy, especially with the uprisings in the surrounding regions. With a short review of recent news, one might encounter many comments on the existing adverse feedback regarding Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmet Davutoğlu's so-called "Zero-Problem" policy. For instance, considering recent Turkish-Syrian relations, it might be valid to ask "what would Turkish leaders do when they receive negative feedback on the Zero-Problem policy? Will they follow the course, adjust or change direction?" Those analysts who are interested in such a topic might find useful theoretical insights in the chapters of this book.

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The Cold War and After: History, Theory and the Logic of International Politics

By Marc Trachtenberg

Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2012, 317 pages,
ISBN 9780691152035.

The concepts of "power politics" and "anarchy" are widely used to describe and understand the logic of international politics in the discipline of international relations (IR). Although there are many explanations regarding the nature of international politics and its working logic, realism has become one of the predominant mainstream theories for the explanation of international politics. *The Cold War and After: History, Theory and the Logic of International Politics*, by Marc Trachtenberg, a professor of political science at the University of California, deals with one of the most important problems and debates of the IR discipline: how do some researchers find ways to connect conceptual and empirical issues each other? Trachtenber answers this question by focusing on three aspects of international politics: theory, history, and policy. The field of international relations, for Trachtenberg, is supposed to be triadic. As can be understood from the chapters of the book, theory, history, and policy are three component parts, and are tightly connected with each other intellectually.

In the first section of the book, Trachtenberg examines the theory of realism, which is mainly based on the logic of power politics and the idea of an anarchical order, an influential theory in international politics. However, he differentiates himself from the central assumptions of realism and the scholars who particularly deal with the problem of international order. In each case discussed throughout the book, Trachtenberg demonstrates the value of examining detailed documentary evidence while keeping a clear-cut theory of how the international system works and of the fundamental forces influencing the way states behave in mind. As he openly states in the opening chapter, the realist school in international relations is guilty of a gross exaggeration when it goes so far as to say that states are always and exclusively concerned with the ruthless maximisation of their own power at the expense of others. Accordingly, he argues

that there are ways in which systemic forces can play a stabilising role in the international system. While he accepts the importance of the system, his main concern is to understand how exactly such a system works. Contrary to a standard understanding of the realist framework, Trachtenberg claims that systemic forces can actually play a positive role, and that systemic pressures by and large can have a stabilising effect in international politics. For Trachtenberg, it is a fundamental mistake to see conflict as an event which is essentially driven by systemic forces or, in other words, essentially rooted in the anarchic structure of international politics. Therefore, if the system is not a basic source of instability, then the real problems are generated by forces welling up at the unit level that give rise to policies which are not rational in political terms. In this sense, according to Trachtenberg, problems as a rule develop not because the system pushes states into conflict with each other, but because states overreach themselves and pursue policies that make little sense in terms of the incentives the system creates.

In the second chapter of the first section, Trachtenberg also deals with the question of international order which is another central issue of IR theory. Rather than putting forward a new hypothesis regarding the nature of the international order, the chapter makes a simple point about method that deals with the general problem of the topic. The author underlines the fact that primarily we need to deal with the theoretical issue of how things work in a purely anarchic world, and only after we reach conclusions at this level can we be in a position to deal with questions pertinent to the role of such specific real world facts as the questions of democratic institutions, international organisations, economic interdependence, and international law. More importantly, the author emphasises the importance of empirical work which deepens our understanding of what makes order in international life. Therefore, the real aim of the chapter is to understand how international politics works by focusing particularly on empirically oriented research.

With the use of a conceptual and methodological examination, Trachtenberg tests his argument by examining the relationship between the United States, Europe and the Soviet Union during the Cold War and the US's world policies after the Cold War. He focuses on how the US accepted the east-west partition of Europe after 1945 despite some belligerent sloganising about "rolling back" Soviet power; how exactly Washington decided in the early 1950s to press for the rearmament of West Germany as part of a package including the commitment of US troops

to European defence; and the tortuous course of the US's relations with France in the 1960s and 1970s. Rather than examining the general discourse of the US, France, and the West Germany towards Cold War challenges of the international politics, he prefers to show us different and competing perceptions among foreign policy leaders.

In the third section of the book, Trachtenberg focuses on the question of policy. The first chapter of this section analyses the concept of a preventive war particularly by focusing on its historical centrality in US policy. Considering the issue in a historical perspective, Trachtenberg argues that the notion of a preventive war is not alien to US traditions of foreign policy; on the contrary, such a policy was actively contemplated by the Kennedy administration during the Cuban missile crisis, by Bill Clinton as a counter to the North Korea's nuclear development in the 1990s, and earlier by Franklin D. Roosevelt against Japan and/or Germany before Pearl Harbor. For Trachtenberg, preventive strategy is not directly determined by the nature of the international system as it claimed in realism. He argues that the realist approach, at least in its purest form, somewhat overstate the importance of systemic forces. In reality, a tendency to think in preventive war terms is not built into the basic structure of the system; people are instead drawn to this type of thinking only when a certain political judgement is made about the nature and manageability of the conflict at hand. Therefore, according to Trachtenberg a preventive policy is based on a judgement about the future.

In the last chapter of the book, Trachtenberg evaluates the legitimacy of the US-led war in 2003 against Saddam Hussein's Iraq. Examining the issue in terms of international law, Trachtenberg insists that the invasion of Iraq was by no means illegal since the broad principles of international law allow states to resort to any means they consider necessary to counter a serious threat to their national interests.

All in all, *The Cold War and After* achieves its pledge of providing a non-deterministic account to serve as a persuasive response to arguments against the importance of the power politics in the Cold War era and after. Added to this, Trachtenberg does a great job in combining his powerful conceptual analysis with rich historical data regarding the Cold War and after.

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Islam Without Extremes: A Muslim Case for Liberty

By Mustafa Akyol
New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2011, 352 pages,
ISBN 9780393070866.

Islamic militancy once again occupies the centre stage in the European agenda. Mohamed Merah, a 23-year-old Frenchman of Algerian origin, murdered three children and a teacher outside their Jewish school in Toulouse on Monday, 19 March 2012. In that attack, Merah killed a seven-year old girl by grabbing her by hair and shooting her through the head in her schoolyard. Before these tragic murders, he killed three Muslim foreign legion paratroopers in Moutbaut, France. President Sarkozy made a risky announcement that Claude Guenuet, the interior minister, would stay in Toulouse until the killer was found. Within a few days, on 22 March, the killer was shot and killed by police sharpshooters after a 32-hour siege on his apartment. Merah was a home-grown Islamist terrorist and a self-proclaimed Jihadist. Being a psychologically unstable person rather than a committed religious zealot, intelligence reports show that he was under close scrutiny by the French and the US security services because of his visits to Pakistan and Afghanistan. He received firearms training in Waziristan from a person linked to Al Qaeda.[1]

The initial reactions of sorrow have been mixed with fear as the security services failed to anticipate the threat posed by Merah, a potential terrorist who professed an interest in radical Islam and who was on French and US watch lists. However, the fact that the worst Al Qaeda-inspired act of terrorism in France was done by a home-grown Islamist terrorist has dramatically changed the French political climate, which has been shaped by the overheated rhetoric about immigration and security in the intense rivalry in the presidential elections in April. France was traumatised by these dramatic incidents, which even brought a temporary halt to the bitterly contested presidential election that was happening at the time. However, we soon saw that "a race to the bottom" started between two presidential candidates, the leader of the extreme right-wing party Le Pen and then president Sarkozy, regarding how much more security France needs. Sarkozy was behind his Socialist rival Hollande before these murders and his polls received a much needed boost as the debate shifted from the economy where he is weak, to law and order where

he is strong. Sarkozy benefited from this murder and he was able to channel the fears and emotions of the voters. Sarkozy proposed to make it illegal to repeatedly visit websites promoting terrorism or to travel to abroad for indoctrination. Throughout those intense four days Sarkozy appealed for national unity bringing together the Jewish and Muslim leaders and insisting the killer's actions would not undermine the values of the Republic, which was not enough for him to win the elections.[2]

With the return of heightened debates on radical Islam, Mustafa Akyol's book is a timely text, directed mainly towards a Western audience that tries to present a moderate alternative. Akyol looks at "how the more aspiring interpretations of Islam will be able to flourish" (p. 202). And he has an ambitious task to respond to both questions from the well-informed circles on the debate as well as the average reader. Throughout the book, Akyol first analyses the deep roots of sectarian divisions within Islam and then examines the challenges that an authentic Islamic identity faces with modernity. He briefly analyses the Ottoman-Turkish ways of confronting modernity and the ways of entering into a genuine dialogue with it. Akyol expands his analysis towards the rest of the Muslim world, looking at how modernity was applied by force with imperialism in the 19th century and the nationalist authoritarian regimes in the twentieth century.

Secularism, capitalism and technology are all part of the Western challenge towards the Muslim world. Arguing that we live not in a secularising world but a de-secularising one, Akyol argues that "the secularist project is a part of the problem and not the solution. The attempt to push religion out of Muslim mind creates, in its worst forms, authoritarian regimes. Even its mild forms are unhelpful, for they fall short of addressing the religious aspirations of Muslim societies, something that is here to stay in the foreseeable future" (p. 202). Defending "democratic conservatism", defined by the Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan as "a concept of modernity that does not reject tradition, a belief in universalism that accepts localism, and an understanding of rationalism that does not disregard the spiritual meaning of life" (p. 223), Akyol rejects "terrorism" in the name of Islam, but he is conscious of the roots of Islamic terrorism: the radical methods already existing in Islam, Western imperialism, and the aggressive modernisation under authoritarian regimes. However, if a dialogue between tradition and modernity is a dimension of this, the search for building a genuine democratic political system is the other part, as seen in the current debate in Turkey.

Covering such a wide time span - from the ancient times up to today - and thematic scope - from divisions within

Islam to contemporary experiences of Muslim countries including Turkey - the book touches upon many controversial topics. This inevitably leaves it with many problems in conceptual analysis and leaps in historical perspective. The lack of conceptual integrity and frequent historical inaccuracies sometimes push Akyol into the paradoxical situation of falling into the trap of modernisation theory, the very concept that he claims to criticise. For instance, he claims that "if the fall of economic dynamism led to the decline of Islamic rationality and liberty a millennium ago, can the rebirth of economic dynamism revive them? To put it another way, can socioeconomic progress in Muslim societies also lead to progress in religious attitudes, ideas and even doctrines?" (p. 135) Terms such as "updating our religious understanding", "Islamic capitalism", "Muslim middle class" show his belief that moderation through economic development and cultural and political rationality is a way out from the radical option.

Finally, his search for Islam without radical extremes tries to reach a normative position despite reality demonstrating the reverse. Akyol sees ways of finding a compromise between them. He trusts in the secular state and believes that Islam is better placed in society and culture than in politics. Akyol states that "Accepting the secular state could also help Muslims focus on what is really important. Islamic movements have lost too much time, and caused too much tension, in the twentieth century with their endless quest for *systems* based on Islam. What they should have focused on instead was advancement of Islam's faith and culture - through arts and sciences, evangelism and advocacy, education, charity and the media. All these can be carried out by individuals and communities without backup from a state. In fact, they are almost always done better *without* state involvement - as the American experience proves." (p. 261). Unfortunately, the world is not the way the Americans, or the West in general, would like to see it. The events in France were a clear example of this. Akyol, as a Turkish intellectual, is expected to be more sensitive about this in many ways.

Endnotes

1 James Boxell, "Polite side of Mehra points to two faces for French killer", *Financial Times*, 25 March 2012, p. 2.

2 Hugh Carnegy, "Security Sarko cements his comeback credentials", *Financial Times*, 25 March 2012, p. 9.

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