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Game Theory and International Security

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Reviews

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY

GLOBAL ORDER
Values and power in international politics
Lynn H. Miller
Boulder CO: Westview, 2nd edition 1990, xiv, 269pp, US$44.00 cloth, US$16.95 paper

WORLD OF OUR MAKING
Rules and rule in social theory and international relations
Nicholas Greenwood Onuf
Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989, xvi, 341pp, US$32.95 cloth, US$21.95 paper

While, from the outside, international relations is the field of inquiry most acquainted with death, it is a rare textbook that begins with the human condition – the dual experience of mastery and mortality, sharpened on a planetary scale by current technology – and that comes to eschatology before extended deterrence. Perhaps even rarer, from inside the field, is a theoretical work that eschews the tiresome quarrels among neo-realists and neo-liberals, promises to recast international relations not as a separate reality but as part of a more synthetic political society of rule/rules, and engages towards that end 'outside' thinkers such as Weber, Wittgenstein, and Wolin. That much should enlist the initial sympathy of readers impatient at the narrowness descriptive of much of academic international relations.

Miller's position, set out in this revised edition of *Global Order*, will be the more familiar. Influenced by the world order perspective, he sheds the pretence of objectivity in favour of an introductory text with an unabashed point of view – a global view, one which sees the 'planetary social system' as a single unit whose environmental or security problems have become human instead of merely national in scale. Miller's analysis also purposefully treats values as well as power, the former being the 'basic normative choices that govern social groups' (p 11). Though he does not ask where values come from, and

how they interact with power, except to say that they are a 'product of particular historical circumstances,' his focus on principles allows a masterful, and quite generous, chapter-length account of the Westphalian state system as a *normative* order made successfully out of the bloody fragmentation of Christendom.

The balance of the book surveys the diverse twentieth-century breaches in that system of sovereign states: economic interdependence; military technology that can destroy but not defend; ideological hostility of a pre-Westphalian intensity; and the onset of resource scarcity. Miller judges the system incapable of ensuring even the order it prizes, much less economic well-being and ecological survival. Hence the worst of times but also the best; for he discerns, striving to be born, a new order built partly on an emergent global culture.

There is much in this book that is pedagogically useful, with its careful descriptions of everything from collective security to the law of the sea or its more basic challenge in the direction of globalist analysis. But Miller's globalism remains alternatively too ill defined and too benign a commodity. In places it simply assumes the guise of Western liberalism, pointing to the peace within the developed world and blaming the lingering fact of military aggression on 'oppressive [that is, non-liberal] élites' (p 129). It refuses to name, let alone inquire into, what is surely the most tangible and powerful form of globalism – capitalism – apart from a brief treatment of multinational corporations, disapproving references to 'materialism,' and a welfarist proposal (by appeal to self-interest) to ameliorate economic disparity. Once Miller appears to chide Third World states for claiming sovereignty over natural resources, in a typical 'Westphalian reaction' against the profiteering of 'distant entrepreneurs' (p 249). He probes neither the content, sources, and likely beneficiaries of his global culture nor the resistance offered, say, by a revived Islam. Finally, for a professed antistatist, his view of the modern state as originating in an exchange of protection for loyalty is remarkably rose-coloured. Such simple functionalism is key to his post-Westphalian hopes – authority must decline with the inability to defend – but it scarcely resembles the brutal history of Western state formation.

Onuf, too, can be read as a globalist, if an unhappy one; for what

lies ahead is the reinforcement of international organizational rule by a 'cosmopolitan ruling class,' as capitalism – fully transnational, yet dependent on states for order – is unable to sustain growth on its own. The shared object of a 'healthy world economy' demands organization to 'keep the machinery running.' Meanwhile, the once-different skills and roles of merchants/bankers and princes/diplomats have been fused. Onuf may well have in mind organizations like the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, though the reader is never certain; it is only on the last page that this much of his thesis is disclosed.

The more fundamental purpose of this demanding book is to *re*construct – not, in post-modern fashion, to *de*construct – the categories through which the 'reality' of international relations is comprehended. The result is, at times, frustratingly obtuse, impossibly eclectic, and parochial (betraying no awareness of the richer British international relations literature). Yet, Onuf can also be brilliantly effective in tackling the categories dearest to academic international relations in North America: notably, the presumption of anarchy and, as a result, the preoccupation with the question of co-operation by self-interested agents in the absence of an overarching authority. This way of putting the question, he argues, is paradigmatically liberal, granting to states the properties liberalism grants to individuals, and locating authority exclusively in the modern state form for which there is, of course, no global equivalent. But this liberalism does not exhaust the historical range of political societies, embodying other practices and discourses, rules, and means of effecting rule. Onuf's point is that international relations seldom constitutes an anarchy, an absence of rule. Rather, it is a site of hierarchy, hegemony, and what he terms heteromony, or relations of unequal exchange under the (liberal) illusion of legal equality and autonomy. In short, the pattern is 'one of asymmetric and involuntary relations among ostensibly free and equal actors' (p 167). While such relations extend beyond interactions of states, a good example of the notion of heteronomy would be the Canadian-American relationship, which Miller can see only in terms of the model its undefended border offers the world.

In the end, however, there is an unnerving fatalism and detach-

ment in Onuf's book, as if the author did not also have to live in the world he describes, enmeshed in a web of data flows – the modern form of rule. Perhaps, his title notwithstanding, the world is scarcely of our making after all. Miller's book has the virtue at least of wishing to empower, not to induce resignation, however fragile the 'civilizing possibilities' may seem against 'the prospects of scarcity, social ruin, and violence propelled by the rage of those who have nothing more to lose' (p 237).

Roger Epp/Camrose Lutheran University College

RIGHT V. MIGHT
International law and the use of force
Louis Henkin et al
New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1989, xii, 124pp, US$12.95

This book is a result of the intense controversy arising from the 'Reagan Doctrine,' wherein the United States aids insurgents fighting communist régimes in places such as Afghanistan, Angola, and Cambodia. Several American commentators respond to a general question – does international law permit armed intervention in support of liberal democracy? – in the context of United States foreign policy.

Jeane Kirkpatrick and Allan Gerson begin by defining the doctrine as applicable 'where there are indigenous opponents to a government that is maintained by force ... and where the people are denied a [democratic] choice regarding their affiliations and future.' They claim that the doctrine is consistent with article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter which prohibits states from resorting to force because that article must be seen 'in the context of the entire Charter.' Article 51, for example, allows for force to be used in self-defence. Moreover, it is argued that the charter is not a 'neutral' document, but one 'committed to democratic values.' In consequence, 'states are free to act to redress ... the forcible repression of these values.' This essay is strident

and hard-hitting, reflecting the natural impulse of policy-makers to respond to their vociferous critics.

Louis Henkin provides an effective rejoinder. While he agrees that the charter is 'not neutral between democracy and totalitarianism ... between respect for human rights and their violation,' he cautions that 'international law provides no more basis for permitting the export of [liberal] democracy by force than for permitting the export of socialism by force.' Henkin also deviates sharply from Kirkpatrick and Gerson by asserting that no uniform definition of democracy was established when the charter was framed and that over forty years later 'states are still not agreed as to what democracy means.' Permitting intervention for the sake of democracy would thus allow aggression 'against any one of 100-150 states by any self-styled democratic champion.'

Stanley Hoffmann's essay focusses more on international relations. He states that 'superpowers often prefer informal arrangements to solemn agreements.' Unfortunately, Hoffmann is content merely to make this observation and to argue that the Reagan Doctrine contravenes the superpowers' 'informal rules' on intervention. An analysis of the subject which considered the extent to which these informal procedures are consonant with, or actually violate, international law would have been welcome. For example, does nuclear deterrence violate strictures on the threat of force?

David Scheffer helps to delimit the juridical agenda for the coming years. He states that in Nicaragua *v.* the United States, the International Court of Justice was concerned with limiting the right of armed self-defence under article 51 to cases of armed attack lest the article become 'an all-purpose antidote' invoked for the illegal use of any type of force. Hence, the court asserted that only victim states have the right to pursue 'forcible counter-measures' for provocations below armed attack. Yet, it failed to define 'forcible counter-measures,' and this question remains at the centre of the controversy. Scheffer himself provides no definition.

In general, this book does a credible job of presenting the contending positions on intervention as an element of United States foreign policy in the 1980s and 1990s. International law is too often curtly

dismissed as irrelevant to the real world of policy, but this book shows clearly that the law is inextricably bound up with pressing policy issues.

Victor V. Fic/Tokyo

THE BALANCE OF POWER
Stability in international systems
Emerson M.S. Niou, Peter C. Ordeshook, Gregory F. Rose
New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989, viii, 359pp, US$54.50

Studies of the balance of power, like various uses of the balance-of-power metaphor itself, fall into distinct sorts. There are studies of game theory, a branch of applied mathematics where utterly abstract, self-interested, perfectly informed players seek strategic advantage. There are experimental studies of simple games in small groups laboratories where warm-blooded individuals pretend to be states competing for power measured in tokens. Much older are the studies of diplomatic historians who examine the records of those who in fact did decide the fate of states in order to explain the judgments they made and the actions they took. Such work is as free of quantitative analysis as the games are free of historical analysis. In turn, there are quantitative historical studies of war and peace and alliance formation which assess the political arithmetic of balance of power empirically. Finally, there are the grand theoretical efforts of realists who combine philosophical insights with the practical politics of statesmen into theories of what is and what should be in a world of states.

Those who do one type of book usually keep to themselves. The virtue of this volume is that Niou, Ordeshook, and Rose combine these different sorts in a clear and coherent account of alliance formations, war, and peace. They begin in the never-world of game theory and decision theory which provide the foundation for the theoretically informed historical analysis of two Near Eastern crises (1875-8 and 1885-8) and the July 1914 crisis prior to the Great War with which they close the book. Crucial to their answer to the question of why one great-power conflict escalated to war and the others did not is a distinction between system stability and resource stability. They

explore the general consequences of this distinction between transfers of resources which render a state inessential to the calculations of other states and transfers which do not in the never-world of perfectly informed rational actors increasing or decreasing in power by transferring an abstract quantity of security. An examination of great-power alliance formations between the Franco-Prussian War and World War I follows. The path from the never-world to nineteenth-century Europe is made of modifications to the thoroughly abstract initial assumptions: states can increase power at differential rates, not at identical rates; states occupy geopolitical places rather than no places at all; statesmen can be constrained by domestic politics. The assumption of perfect information is retained *in order* to demonstrate that uncertainty of estimates of power capabilities is, as Morgenthau argued, the essence of power politics. This use of an unrealistic assumption to bolster the insights of less formal realist theories is one example of the many fine touches to be found in this book. In short, there is much to be learned here by those who keep to one sort of work on the balance of power.

William B. Moul/University of Waterloo

GAME THEORY AND NATIONAL SECURITY
Steven J. Brams and D. Marc Kilgour
New York: Basil Blackwell [Toronto: Oxford University Press], 1988, xiv, 199pp, $105.00

In this book two eminent game theorists carefully construct formal models of strategic situations which explicitly incorporate threats into their structure and which go far beyond the simpler 2 x 2 matrices available in the founding work on game theory. The authors arrive at their policy prescriptions by deducing the consequences of rational play in games modelling the arms race, nuclear deterrence, war termination, Star Wars, crisis instability, and verification procedures. Most of their logically derived recommendations reinforce common sense, but their methodology also produces some creative insights, such as those concerning the possible effects of a transition from deterrence

to defence in the 'Star Wars' game and the problems of incorporating some prospect of escape into the 'Winding Down' game without undermining the deterrence equilibrium. Thus, although the authors cover a wide range of issues, their overall methodological framework forms a coherent whole, and the book itself serves as a convenient compendium of some of the most inventive and creative work on game theory to date.

Brams and Kilgour present their results using numerous figures and with explanations in relatively non-technical language supplemented by detailed appendices. They have developed an excellent glossary of game-theoretic concepts, and the book includes a detailed bibliography useful for avid followers of recent developments in the literature. But the authors themselves admit that it will be a struggle for readers with little mathematical training or acquaintance with the models of 'Prisoners' Dilemma' and 'Chicken' games to follow all the steps of their argument. It is, nevertheless, easy to appreciate, for instance, the logical implications of their calculations for ensuring stability, given verification methods with high detection thresholds and given the probability of eventual nuclear war. Still, questions about whether defence experts will make the effort required to understand the amendments and embellishments of their 2 x 2 matrices are of some significance, while doubts about whether defence strategy should, indeed, be partly derived from games based on their underlying assumptions must be an even greater concern. For the sake of parsimony, Brams and Kilgour assume that choices are made on both sides by rational unitary actors. But while their assumption that most national leaders will be rational enough to calculate crudely the horrific costs and negligible benefits of a nuclear exchange may be a sensible one for the sake of calculating moves in a game, it is the real-life interplay of the rationality assumption with the authors' prescription that leaders escalate their commitment to threat in order to signal deterrence credibility which may fuel apprehension. Will decision-makers necessarily act rationally if an adversary threatens them with probabilistic commitments to retaliate, even if retaliation leads to a worse outcome such as a nuclear holocaust? A safer prescription for all concerned might be to recommend ways leaders can learn to signal

credibly their desire for a stable outcome by de-emphasizing their willingness to resort to threats of pre-emption and retaliation. Formulating such lessons in game-theoretical parlance would pose difficult dilemmas for Brams and Kilgour, but lessons for leaders on how to ensure human survival, and not prescriptions for the fainthearted, are what is needed so as to avert catastrophe.

Erika Simpson/Toronto

THE ONSET OF WORLD WAR
Manus I. Midlarsky
Winchester MA: Unwin Hyman, 1988, xvi, 268pp, US$39.95

Manus Midlarsky seeks to explain eight incidents of world war in terms of the absence of a hierarchical equilibrium. A system of states is hierarchical if there are two or more groups composed of great powers and weaker states as well as a relatively large number of independent weak states. Crucial to this notion of hierarchy are power differences within each camp, not differences in power between camps. There is an equilibrium when there is an 'average equality in the beginnings and endings' (p 21) of serious interstate disputes. When conflicts accumulate over time, and when conflicts from one arena (great power versus great power) are tied to conflicts in another arena (great power versus weaker states), there is disequilibrium.

While Midlarsky discusses eight world wars from the Peloponnesian War through World War II, statistical analyses are possible only with the world wars of our century. During the 1815-99 period, there was an average equality in the beginnings and endings of disputes; after the formation of the alliance between France and Russia in 1893, disputes tended to accumulate and to overlap conflict arenas. The statistical demonstration of these tendencies, particularly the analysis of conflict dynamics shortly before the 1908 Bosnian crisis and before the guns of August, is impressive. The dynamics of the twenty-year crisis differed, and Midlarsky argues that the difference is one between a structural war (World War I) and a mobilization war (World War II). Mobilization wars are caused by the mobilization of power by an

aggressive state, and Midlarsky sees an alternation of structural and mobilization world wars throughout history.

Turning to the balance of power between opponents, Midlarsky concludes that 'changes in balance very close to parity' precede world wars (p 125). The first evidence presented appears to be supportive: figure 6.1 describes the ratios of opponents in war and frequency of war between 1865 and 1965, rising sharply from eight instances where there was rough parity to eighteen instances where there was not, and then falling to six instances where the ratios were higher than 10:1. The sharpness of the rise and fall depends upon the arbitrarily uneven intervals used. If all the intervals were the width of the initial one, as they should be here, the evidence would not support the argument. Furthermore, there is no explanation why ratios from 2:1 to 4:1 are deemed to be small when Wayne Ferris, in *The Power Capabilities of Nation-States* (the source of the numbers), defines all ratios higher than 2:1 as large. The next evidence, again from Ferris, also requires further explanation. Midlarsky reports that Ferris found six to eight of the large wars broke out after a small change in the power ratios within three years of the war; but he does not note that one of two world wars to be explained was not among the majority. The final evidence on the balance of power between world war opponents is from a complicated re-analysis of the concentration of power capabilities values reported in the well-known Correlates of War study of the concentration of power among major powers and the onset of major power war from 1816 to 1965. The concentration scores calculated by J. David Singer and his colleagues are irrelevant to the argument at hand because they capture a feature of the group of states, not any balance of power between opponents in war within the group.

Throughout the book, Midlarsky notes applications of his hierarchical equilibrium to domestic politics as well as to politics between states. The dangers of fitting one argument to very different circumstances are plain in the chapter, 'Normative Implications.' There Midlarsky argues that hierarchical equilibrium satisfies the criteria of liberal justice presented by John Rawls. Basic to Rawls's theory is a 'veil of ignorance' between individuals and the position of those people in the political order they agree to be fair. Midlarsky claims that states at

international conferences present a close analogue to this 'original position.' The conditions Rawls specifies (*A Theory of Justice*, p 378) when extending the original position to negotiations among representatives of communities do not correspond to the conditions at a conference of states. Presuming justice within communities, Rawls supposes that the representatives 'know nothing about the particular circumstances of their own society, its power and strength in comparison with other nations, nor do they know their place in their own society.' Negotiations to partition Poland and divide Africa – examples of liberal justice, according to Midlarsky – were not conducted behind a veil of ignorance and did not accord with the criterion of justice as fairness. The bigger the dog, the bigger the bone – not justice – would be an apt description. The fact that each dog received a bone does not accord with the liberal principle that the least advantaged benefit, because of the elementary point that those people made spoils by the powerful had no say. Midlarsky knows this (for example, chapter 9, note 6), but writes as if it and the substitution of states for people were of little consequence.

The heavy-handed normative discussion and the questionable balance-of-power analysis, following as they do an impressive empirical analysis of instability prior to World War I, make *The Onset of World War* a disappointing book.

William B. Moul/University of Waterloo

POWER AND TACTICS IN INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATION
How weak nations bargain with strong nations
William Mark Habeeb
Baltimore MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988, xii, 168pp, US$25.00

This short book by a young academic takes on a subject that has not been studied as extensively as it deserves to be. Habeeb's work is an important contribution to the study of international relations and in many ways a pioneer effort at analysing and unmasking the intricacies of interstate negotiations. As he points out, the study is aimed at

explaining asymmetrical negotiations between actors whose resources and capabilities are unequal. Most studies of negotiations in bilateral or multilateral settings have focussed upon the major powers and their performances, and the results have been viewed as a measure of their competence or lack of it. This traditional approach that dominates the literature is in keeping with the assumption that stronger states will generally achieve their objectives in any negotiating encounter with weaker states.

Habeeb uses the case-study approach to shed light on the tactics and process of negotiations in an international setting wherein outcomes have often been contrary to expectations. The three cases examined are the Panama Canal negotiations, the bases negotiations between the United States and Spain, and the Anglo-Icelandic cod wars. In all these instances, the outcomes were not predetermined by the position of the stronger party, the United States or Britain. What Habeeb demonstrates is the relationship between the context of the negotiations, taken to mean the 'issue power balance,' and the outcome in which the parties are satisfied that the costs of settlement are less than the costs of striving for a further alteration in the issue power balance. The concept of 'issue power balance' is analytical. It suggests that negotiations occur by establishing an issue-specific relationship between the parties, and the 'issue power balance' reflects respective capabilities and resources of the parties in negotiation. The objective of a party in any negotiation is to alter the issue power balance in its favour.

Habeeb shows the issue power balance and not the aggregate power balance of the parties to be critical in determining negotiating outcomes. In this framework of analysis, issue power is composed of alternatives, commitment, and control; negotiating tactics are the means used to affect these components favourably and to achieve the most desired outcome. The study suggests that to predict, assess, or monitor any negotiation, it is essential to analyse the alternatives available to actors, the degree of commitment to and control of the issue, and the tactics employed to affect these components of the issue power balance. Habeeb has extended the notion of power as contextual in

the theory of international politics to power as issue specific in international negotiations. In the process he has removed the mystery of why weaker actors often emerge from negotiations with outcomes favouring them, or why stronger actors frequently have been unable to translate their aggregate power into results in keeping with their interests.

This is a valuable work; its organization is clear and the arguments are stated simply. It is a comparative study of the nature and process of negotiation in a increasingly interdependent world, wherein the traditional notion of power no longer holds unambiguously and the strong state does not always come out the winner. Specialists in the study of international relations will clearly benefit from this book, while those interested in some aspects of international politics or negotiations in general will find valuable and interesting insights in this deceptively slender offering.

Salim Mansur/University of Western Ontario

UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHTS IN THEORY AND PRACTICE
Jack Donnelly
Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1989, xii, 295pp, US$36.50 cloth, US$12.95

Jack Donnelly has produced a very useful book. Although much of it will not be new to many readers, because Donnelly draws heavily on previous journal articles, this volume provides a handy compilation which can serve as a valuable text for classes that examine human rights in any depth.

In part I Donnelly briefly outlines some of the debate surrounding the concept of human rights. In part II he tries to establish a necessary connection between liberalism and human rights; this section includes a chapter based on the article he and Rhoda Howard wrote previously on the distinction between human rights and the many conceptions of human dignity under various political régimes. Part III, on human rights and cultural relativism, develops themes from the previous

section in discussing the difficulty of applying universal standards in different cultural contexts. Perhaps the least successful section of the book is part IV, on human rights and development, in that the potential for discussing human rights in developing nations is lost among too much emphasis on social and economic disparities. The closing section of the volume is devoted to some of the international efforts to ensure respect for human rights.

While this book will serve as a good class text, its usefulness will come as much from provoking discussion about its weaknesses as from its strengths. Donnelly hopes to demonstrate that there is a 'moral universality of human rights' (p 1) that is evident in both their conception and in the near universal acceptance of substantive lists of human rights found in numerous international covenants. However, the universality of Donnelly's particular vision of human rights will be difficult for many readers to accept. First of all, human rights are viewed uniquely as claim rights, where individuals possess rights which are matched by correlative duties. So Donnelly rules out the application of human rights to several non-Western cultures where the dignity of humans is effected by simple duties upon the rulers. Secondly, Donnelly is inconsistent in his view of the basis for human rights. In his first chapter, he rules out human needs as too ambiguous and settles for humankind's moral nature as the source of human rights: 'We have human rights not to the requisites for health but to those things "needed" for a life of dignity, for a life worthy of a human being' (p 17). Unfortunately, Donnelly is caught in later discussions vehemently dismissing human dignity as too culturally relative to be the source of human rights (pp 49, 67). Finally, many readers will have grave difficulty with Donnelly and Howard's assertion that 'internationally recognized human rights require a liberal regime' (p 67). This liberal-centric conception of human rights pervades the discussions in the book and seriously undermines the influence of Donnelly's assertion that human rights are universal in theory and practice. For human rights to be universal, a more supra-dogmatic view is needed.

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