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Introduction by **Thomas Maddux**

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Introduction by Thomas Maddux, California State University Northridge

In the aftermath of the end of the Cold War, one of the first challenges to the illusion that the “end of history” had arrived was the breakup of Yugoslavia, as various republics—Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, and Kosovo—seceded or attempted to secede from the Socialist Federation of Yugoslavia. Conflict over secession from existing states was not a new issue since secession had plagued a number of new African nations such as Katanga’s attempted secession from the Congo and Biafra from Nigeria in the 1960s as well as the prolonged struggle of Eritrea to break away from Ethiopia since the 1950s. The Cold War, however, had significantly influenced the response of the major powers to secession, as Jonathan Paquin notes, with the United States opposing territorial changes as part of its containment strategy. In *A Stability-Seeking Power: U.S. Foreign Policy and Secessionist Conflicts*, Paquin focuses on six cases: the four provinces of Yugoslavia, Eritrea and Somaliland, the northwest region of Somalia, that seceded in 1991.

Paquin’s thesis is included in the title of his book, *A Stability-Seeking Power*. Using what he defines as a “defensive version of the realist paradigm of foreign policy,” Paquin “argues that the United States is a ‘defensive positionalist’ state that stresses the importance of regional stability in the management of secessionist struggles.” In order to account for the differences in the U.S. response to secession, Paquin gives priority to a search for stability as the “paramount interest” of the U.S., surpassing other considerations such as the influence of domestic interests of ethnic groups, business lobbying or humanitarian concerns (6). According to Paquin, stability “is defined as a state of peace existing between sovereign states in a region [with] ... respect for international borders (including no refugees flowing across international borders) and non-intervention in states’ internal affairs” (9).

The reviewers welcome Paquin’s study and thesis and find aspects of it to be persuasive as well as some areas that need clarification and further development. Paquin’s “model is persuasive in many ways,” notes David Webster, as “it avoids the temptation to be overly deterministic, and also steps nimbly out of the trap of ‘American exceptionalism’ by always considering the possible influence of other powers.” Webster suggests that the case studies on the secessions from Yugoslavia work well but he raises questions about the African examples, noting that on Eritrea both the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front and the Tigrayan Peoples Liberation Front entered the capital, Addis Ababa, together, which in effect took options away from Washington. Furthermore, Webster and David Haglund point to Paquin’s suggestion that U.S. support for a referendum on independence Eritrea “was the freelance decision” of Herman Cohen, the Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, (142) raising the question as to whether “any general conclusions” can be reached on Paquin’s thesis in this case. In applying Paquin’s thesis to attempted secessions from Indonesia by Timor-Leste (East Timor), West Papua and Aceh, Webster concludes that the “model seems useful and convincing.”

Haglund and Stéfanie von Hlatky welcome Paquin’s attempt to down-play the influence of ethnic interest groups and business groups on policy-making. Haglund thinks it is a

“supportable thesis” but questions whether Paquin’s emphasis on the U.S. pursuing defensive realism to eliminate stability gaps (29) could support, using the same logic, “‘offensive realism’ with its emphasis upon *power* maximization, as it does defensive realism with its stress upon *security* maximization.” Von Hlatky writes that Paquin’s “empirical test clearly discounts the explanatory power of prominent domestic-level explanations” such as ethnic politics and business interests. Von Hlatky also suggests other considerations that merit further research, such as the impact of “precedents within the same region” similar to Croatia and Slovenia in Yugoslavia and Liberia and Somalia in Africa, and the influence of democratic values on U.S. involvement and extension of diplomatic recognition. “There indeed seems to be a strong correlation between the side that the U.S. ultimately supports,” von Hlatak proposes, “and a state’s (or aspiring state’s) adherence to democratic values and procedures.” Webster also supports Paquin’s de-emphasis of the influence of internal pressures versus external influences and suggests that external considerations such as the decision of Germany to recognize Croatia and European recognition of Bosnia, or the Greek opposition to recognition of Macedonia, and the position of the African Union on non-recognition of changes in borders may “have altered the circumstances to which American policy reacted.” Webster, however, suspects that the Wilsonian legacy of self-determination had some influence on U.S. policymakers, and that given Washington’s desire to make the “world safe for capitalism,” a secessionist area seeking recognition “was more likely to win U.S. sympathy if it promised free markets and rejected economic nationalism.”

Von Hlatky also questions Paquin’s emphasis on “the power to grant, to withhold, and to oppose diplomatic recognition as a powerful tool to manage secessionist crises” (174). Although admitting the importance of obtaining U.S. recognition for a new state in the long run, von Hlatky suggests that Paquin exaggerates the power of recognition as “it seems that the U.S. does not control anything at all: it often supports the winning side of the conflict hedging its bets until the very last moment. If secession becomes inevitable, diplomatic recognition becomes appealing as a solution of last resort.”

Recognizing that South Sudan’s separation from Sudan came after publication of *A Stability-Seeking Power*, the reviewers would welcome Paquin’s assessment of how his model would fit this most recent secession. Would humanitarian concerns advanced by internal interest groups have more influence on Washington policy-makers than on Paquin’s case studies? Would the position taken by the African Union states and UN be more influential in this case than U.S. leaders attempting to maintain through stability their interests and standing with respect to other powers?

In his thorough response to the reviews, Paquin comments on the Sudan situation and the other issues raised by the reviewers, including Haglund’s use of the Russian fable of the peasant, God and a cow.

Participants:

Jonathan Paquin is Associate Professor of Political Science at Université Laval in Québec City. He is the co-editor of *Shifting Current: North American Security Relations in a New*

Security Environment (forthcoming), and the author of *A Stability-Seeking Power: US Foreign Policy and Secessionist Conflicts* (McGill-Queen's, 2010). He has also published articles among other things in *Foreign Policy Analysis*, the *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, and *Canadian Foreign Policy*. Professor Paquin received a Ph.D. in Political Science from McGill University in 2007.

David Haglund is a Professor of Political Studies at Queen's University (Kingston, Ontario). He received his Ph.D. in International Relations in 1978 from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. From 1985 to 1995, and again from 1996 to 2002, he served as Director of the Queen's Centre for International Relations. From 1992 to 1996 he also served as Head of Queen's Department of Political Studies. Since 2003 he has been co-editor of the *International Journal*. His research focuses on transatlantic security, and on Canadian and American international security policy. Among his books are *Latin America and the Transformation of U.S. Strategic Thought, 1936-1940* (1984); *Alliance within the Alliance? Franco-German Military Cooperation and the European Pillar of Defense* (1991); *Will NATO Go East? The Debate Over Enlarging the Atlantic Alliance* (1996); *The North Atlantic Triangle Revisited: Canadian Grand Strategy at Century's End* (2000); and *Over Here and Over There: Canada-US Defence Cooperation in an Era of Interoperability* (2001). His current research project is on ethnic diasporas in North America and their impact upon security relations between the United States and Canada.

Stéphanie von Hlatky is an assistant professor of Political Studies at Queen's University. Prior to her appointment at Queen's, von Hlatky was a postdoctoral fellow at Georgetown University and public policy scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C. In 2011, she was a Visiting Professor at Dartmouth College and senior researcher at the Center for Security Studies, ETH Zurich. She obtained her PhD in Political Science from Université de Montréal where she was also Executive Director for the Centre for International Peace and Security Studies and Women in International Security - Canada. Her research interests focus on military alliances, Canada-US relations and nuclear weapons policy. Her most recent publications include: "Sharing the Burden of the Border: Layered Security Cooperation and the Canada-U.S. Frontier," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (2012): 63-88 (with Jessica Trisko); "The Rhetoric and Reality of Border Policy Coordination between Canada and the US," *International Journal*, Vol. 67, No. 2 (Spring 2012): 437-443; and "Strategies and Mechanisms of Regional Change," in T.V. Paul (ed), *International Relations Theory and Regional Transformation* (Cambridge University Press: 2012). Her first book, *American Allies in Times of War: The Great Asymmetry*, will be published by Oxford University Press in 2013.

David Webster is assistant professor of History at Bishop's University, located in Sherbrooke, Québec, and holds a Ph.D. from the University of British Columbia. His first book was *Fire and the Full Moon: Canada and Indonesia in a Decolonizing World* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2009). He has published several articles on secession in Indonesia, and is starting a research project on the diplomacy of non-state independence movements in the Pacific region.

There is an old Russian fable that offers sardonic insight about human nature. It concerns an appeal for assistance launched by an aggrieved peasant to God. "My neighbour has been given a cow," complains the peasant, "but I have no cow!" To this plaint, God asks how he might be of assistance. The peasant responds, "Kill the cow!"

I introduce this story because it says something of importance to international relations (IR) theory, with direct applicability, as I will explain at the end of this review, to the powerful propositions Jonathan Paquin advances in this impressive study of American foreign policy toward secessionist conflicts. Paquin's book spans three administrations, those of George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush, and covers Washington's policies towards secessionist conflicts in the Balkans and the Horn of Africa. Paquin examines six cases (Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia, Kosovo, Eritrea, and Somaliland) in a bid to answer this question: why did the United States decide to grant recognition to secession movements in all but one of these cases (Somaliland), in light of what had been a fairly strong pattern during the Cold War for Washington to refrain from encouraging, much less recognizing, such movements?

Drawing upon a variant of IR theory associated with 'structural realism,' Paquin concludes in no uncertain manner that the policy shift was a) a function of changes in the international system, and b) very much in tune with America's 'national interest' as deduced and defended by sentient elites acting rationally. In other words, he denies that policy was in any appreciable degree influenced by society-level variables, such as the impact of ethnic lobbies or economic pressure groups. The variant of structural realism on offer in this book is 'defensive realism,' which Paquin takes to be reflective of a policy orientation associated with both 'defensive positionalism' and 'relative gains' logic. I will have more to say about these logics later.

First, though, it has to be remarked that, by and large, Paquin makes a very persuasive case. It is not a flawless one, but then what is? There are some small errors or other inconsistencies, but these are, refreshingly, extremely few in number. On p. 131, for instance, the post-Second World War secretary of state, George C. Marshall, is referred to as John Marshall (who, it may be recalled, was the fourth chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court).

Another inconsistency, or at least an idiosyncrasy, crops up when Paquin busies himself elaborating upon the reasons why the U.S. has refrained from supporting secessionist movements on the territory of those fellow great powers that constitute the remaining four of the UN Security Council's five permanent members, doing so because for America to support breakaway movements in such cases as, to take the examples he himself provides, Chechnya, Corsica, Northern Ireland, and Tibet, "would be extremely harmful to its stability and security interests." How so? Washington might find itself facing "economic reprisals, military escalation, and perhaps even nuclear threats" from those states (41-42). Since two of the four states, Britain and France, are U.S. allies, it really does strain credulity to

imagine military, much less nuclear, reprisals as being among the possible costs Washington assesses when making policy regarding their secessionist problems. There are other, more plausible, reasons than fear of reprisals for America's not butting into the domestic affairs of, at least, Britain and France. The same might even be said to apply to secessionism in the other two states, Russia and China.

On a more important scale is the perplexity that arises with respect to the U.S. recognition of Eritrea (134ff), where two claims are made, each of which could be said to go against the grain of the book, with its focus upon rational (executive branch) decisionmaking and the relative unimportance of ethnicity. Here we find Paquin telling us two things about the developments of the late 1980s and early 1990s in this breakaway Ethiopian region. First, he tells us that policy was being fashioned single-handedly by a lone individual, rather than by higher executive-branch entities; in the event, by Assistant Secretary of State for Africa Herman J. Cohen, whose decision to "support Eritrea's right to secede was made without prior approval by the State Department or the National Security Council" (142). Secondly, Paquin tells us that ethnic interests apparently *did* play a role in this decision, for what else are we to deduce when informed that "[i]n Washington, the issue of Falashas became central" (137), and that the fate of these 20,000 or so Ethiopian Jews who wanted to emigrate to Israel loomed as a "major concern" for the administration of George H. W. Bush, in no small measure because "[m]embers of the U.S. Congress who represented Jewish constituents ... raised their concerns and pressed the Bush administration to take concrete actions to facilitate the departure of the Jewish Ethiopians" (134)? Paquin seems to want to have things both ways, to deny that ethnic groups are particularly influential in shaping policy towards secessionism, yet to insist on their importance in having alerted American elites to the Ethiopian problem in the first place, leading this reviewer, at least, to wonder whether in the absence of this attention, there would have been *any* policy on Eritrea's secession that needed to be made.

Still, it has to be said that Paquin's approach to the 'ethnic-lobby' argument is a bold one, worthy of applause for its derring-do, given the way it flies in the face of so much of the conventional wisdom regarding foreign policymaking in the 'threatless' era that was the 'post-Cold War decade.' In those years, Samuel Huntington and many others were complaining that societal actors, among whom the leading miscreants were ethnic pressure groups and big business, had hijacked America's national interest, replacing it with various parochial interests. Not so, says Paquin, for the rationality of value-maximizing – i.e., the process by which a national interest gets both identified and advanced – continued to pervade the policy arena even after the erstwhile (Cold War) threat had disappeared, only this time the goal to be maximized was "stability" (9) itself, interpreted as a key means of preserving America's place at the top of the international pecking order. Thus to those, including Michael Mandelbaum and Walter McDougall, who lamented during the Clinton years that America had abandoned the national interest in feckless pursuit of do-goodism (a "Mother Theresa" foreign policy to Mandelbaum, "global meliorism" to McDougall),¹

¹ Michael Mandelbaum, "Foreign Policy as Social Work," *Foreign Affairs* 75 (January/February 1996): 16-32; Walter A. McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World Since 1776* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), chap. 8: "Global Meliorism."

Paquin responds by asserting that policy remained as attuned to the national bottom line as it ever had been.

This may be a supportable thesis, and I for one think it is. Certainly, Paquin presents a compelling case that it is. Still, and now this gets us back to the peasant, God, and the cow, there is a legitimate reason to wonder whether Paquin burdens 'relative-gains' logic with more weight that it can carry. To reiterate, he employs defensive positionalism as the theoretical basis for arguing that America pursues stability, the logic of this claim being that for the ranking power in the system, "stability gaps" are always to be avoided – on the assumption that instability must be corrosive to America's position, never supportive of it. This is not a bad argument, but I wonder whether his conscription of 'relative-gains' logic really does provide the required buttress to Paquin's theory-driven assertion of why the US acts as it does. "I assert," he declares, "that minimizing stability gaps, that is reducing or eliminating relative gains (whether economic, military, or political ones) that could favour rival states or enemies, defines U.S. interests" (29). The problem I have with his invocation of relative gains is that the logic subsumed thereunder can actually cut both ways, and might as easily support 'offensive realism' with its emphasis upon *power* maximization, as it does defensive realism with its stress upon *security* maximization. If this is so, then relative gains becomes a 'spigot variable,' which, depending upon the twist one applies, can deliver either one outcome, or that outcome's opposite.

It bears recalling that the early work of defensive positionals such as Joseph Grieco and Michael Mastanduno (both cited by Paquin),² who *did* emphasize the logic of relative gains, was embedded in international political economy debates associated with a previous round of 'declinism' about U.S. power and position in the world, save that in that former debate it was Japan that was standing out as the problem, because it seemed to be pulling even with, possibly ahead of, the U.S., as a result of differential rates of growth in the two economies. Relative gains loomed in importance to those who were worried about 'power transition' as a source of conflict, and for that matter it still does (*viz.*, the current debates about China's 'rise'). Unlike liberal theorists who put a premium on absolute gains, those who stressed relative gains were interested in 'position,' to be sure. But sometimes fairly aggressive, and on the face of things even 'de-stabilizing,' steps needed to be taken in a bid to defend position. Let us take the case cited by Paquin (also on page 29) of the export controls that were employed by the U.S. during the Cold War, so as to weaken the position of its Soviet adversary; America would and did harm its own exporters if it meant causing even greater hurt to its Cold War foe. In other words, power-maximizing behaviour propelled by relative-gains logic can be also associated with 'stability,' if that is what one desires to do. All, of course, depends upon how one defines stability.

So to conclude, Paquin has provided a useful corrective to those who have argued that America's foreign policy was cast adrift once the country lost its Soviet foe. He has shown

² Joseph M. Grieco, *Cooperation among Nations: Europe, America, and Non-Tariff Barriers to Trade* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990); Michael Mastanduno, *Economic Containment: CoCom and the Politics of East-West Trade* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992).

that 'stability seeking' served as the sheet anchor of policy making, at least with respect to the issue of secessionism. It would be interesting to see whether, or how, one might attempt to extend this stability-seeking argument to other aspects of foreign policy. And, it would be nice were the author to expand upon another, more philosophical, matter, relating to the very *meaning* of stability, and its relation to defensive positionalism. After all, if God were to kill the cow, it would surely be consistent with defensive-positional expectations. But would it enhance stability?

U.S. Support of Secessionist States: A Policy of Last Resort?

Jonathan Paquin's new book, *A Stability-Seeking Power: U.S. Foreign Policy and Secessionist Conflicts*, tackles an interesting theoretical and empirical question, namely how the U.S. deals with secessionist conflicts. Pointing to the historical record, Paquin explains that the U.S. has progressively abandoned its "anti-secession bias" (5) since the end of the Cold War. The post-Cold War era, therefore, provides us with intriguing variation across cases of secessionist conflicts that was not present in the previous era. Building on the works of Joseph Grieco and Michael Mastanduno,¹ Paquin develops an elegant theoretical model based on defensive realism to explain these consequential foreign policy decisions. The central research puzzle featured in *A Stability-Seeking Power* focuses on the conditions under which the United States will offer diplomatic recognition to a secessionist state. The theoretical framework not only aims to explain why the US chooses to support secessionist states and not others, but also informs us about the timing of those decisions. Even if the U.S. has abandoned its anti-secession bias, it seems that conferring diplomatic recognition onto secessionist states is a policy of last resort in most cases.

Secessionist movements can be disruptive for regional and international stability, a fact that is not lost on state leaders in the U.S. Indeed, the consequences of state secession for the international system can be worrying, as expressed by former U.S. President Bill Clinton: "we might have 800 countries in the world and have a very difficult time having a functioning economy or a functioning global polity" (cited in Paquin, 4-5). A new world map consisting of 800 independent states would be arguably harder for the dominant power to manage. Therein lays the crux of Paquin's argument: the U.S. is a stability-seeking power and is constrained as such when choosing whether or not to support secessionist states. We should therefore expect it to support the side that is most likely to deliver regional stability. Through this demonstration, Paquin argues that the United States has been mischaracterized as a status quo state, while it should instead be understood as a stability-seeking power.

The cases selected, Croatia, Eritrea, Kosovo, Macedonia, Slovenia, and Somaliland, offer ripe testing ground for his predictions and allow for multiple observations in two regional settings. After discounting rival theories from offensive realism, institutional liberalism and culturalism, Paquin provides an empirical test to his stability-seeking argument, as well as two competing theories that focus on domestic-level variables: the political power of ethnic lobbies and business interests. While the case studies reveal that ethnic lobbies and business interests do mobilize when a secessionist conflict flares up, Paquin finds no conclusive empirical evidence to suggest that they play an important part in the causal story leading to diplomatic recognition of a state by the United States.

¹ Joseph M. Grieco, *Cooperation among Nations: Europe, America, and Non-Tariff Barriers to Trade* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990); Michael Mastanduno, *Economic Containment: CoCom and the Politics of East-West Trade* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992).

Interestingly, Paquin focuses on *political*, rather than *material* support, as a dependent variable, namely whether or not the U.S. grants diplomatic recognition to secessionist states. He argues that diplomatic recognition by the U.S. is a sufficiently attractive reward for newly-formed states to be an effective bargaining chip in international negotiations. I was immediately intrigued by this claim and did not find the justification provided in support of it to be entirely convincing: “the power to grant, to withhold, and to oppose diplomatic recognition is a powerful tool to manage secessionist crises” (174). It seems too good to be true that such a low-cost diplomatic strategy, from the American point of view, would yield so much political leverage internationally. Sure, American diplomatic recognition is important for any newly-formed state in the long run, but the case studies show that states can survive without the explicit blessing of the United States. To a skeptical observer, it seems that the U.S. does not control anything at all: it often supports the winning side of the conflict, hedging its bets until the very last moment. If secession becomes inevitable, diplomatic recognition becomes appealing as a solution of last resort.

The distinction can quickly become murky, however, since the U.S. sometimes deploys a strategy of active support prior to granting diplomatic recognition. In fact, the distinction between support and recognition would benefit from further articulation, rather than being discussed as a package (as it is done on page 33). They would seem to have different implications for the causal model proposed: is it desirable to recognize a state in order to promote stability or wait for the country to stabilize before giving diplomatic recognition? In several cases discussed in the book, promoting stability was a core objective of Washington’s recognition policy. How can promoting stability be both the cause and outcome of conferring diplomatic recognition onto a state?

One of the central contributions of the book is its attention to the timing of the foreign policy decisions under study. This aspect is well-accounted for in the case study analysis but remains undertheorized when diplomatic recognition is delayed. How is delayed recognition different from immediate or no recognition in the causal story? It seems the exact mechanism is a little harder to pin down in those intermediate cases, when recognition takes longer. While the explanation provided demonstrates that U.S. recognition comes in support of regional stability, which factors account for delayed recognition specifically? Can we determine this *ex ante*? In addition, it would seem plausible that opting for a more ambiguous stance would also weaken recognition as a diplomatic tool.

Similarly, the case of Macedonia (especially on page 94) is a particularly intriguing account when it comes to untangling American motives of stability and their impact on timing. When internal stability goals compete with external stability goals, how can we predict which considerations will be prioritized in the eyes of American decision-makers without making an ex-post rationalization? The case of Eritrea, on the other hand, highlights the importance of unambiguous signals of external stability in order to obtain recognition. How important are decisive victories to obtain international diplomatic recognition? In this case, Paquin points out that the U.S. only switched sides when Ethiopia was decisively defeated.

Paquin acknowledges that sometimes the cases are not clear-cut, which is both reassuring and a sign of sound empirical judgment. To his credit, his detailed case studies reveal complementary explanations that enrich the story. For instance, the role of individual policymakers can sometimes have a determinant impact on the decision-making process, as demonstrated in the case of Ethiopia when Assistant Secretary of State for Africa Herman Cohen reversed policy without specific instructions to do so by the White House (143). Paquin's access to decision-makers and his careful analysis of declassified documents are noteworthy and do justice to some of the unique features of each case.

The book also unveils a number of counterintuitive findings through the case study analysis. For instance, the empirical test clearly discounts the explanatory power of prominent domestic-level explanations (ethnic-politics and business interests). The influence of diasporas on foreign policy decision-making is often overstated in the mainstream media and these types of explanations deserve to be submitted to close empirical scrutiny. Another surprising finding relates to the limited influence of regional powers on U.S. actions toward secessionist conflicts. While the United States generally appears to be unswayed by outside attempts to influence its stability-seeking policy toward secessionist conflicts, this might not be the case under a different distribution of power, whether bipolar or multipolar.

The testament to a well-crafted research question is that the resulting findings generate new and interesting puzzles. On that front too, *A Stability-Seeking Power* does not disappoint. There are several innovative research paths that Paquin could pursue. The first suggestion relates to the sometimes long and drawn-out process of secessionist struggles in a given region, with noticeable dynamics of diffusion. Therefore, an interesting research puzzle could focus on the importance of precedents within the same region. Does the first secessionist conflict influence the ones that follow? For example, the cases of Croatia and Slovenia in the Former Yugoslavia, as well as the cases of Liberia and Somalia in Africa, had a noticeable impact on American involvement in those regions. How are those linkages made by policymakers?

Another interesting area of investigation is the role of democratic values as a motive for American involvement in a given region. Paquin acknowledges that, while the U.S. is primarily motivated by stability considerations, other policy priorities can naturally intersect. It seems that the U.S. also furthers its agenda of democracy promotion through the practice of diplomatic recognition: "The U.S. guidelines for state recognition reflected U.S. democratic values and its strong interest in regional stability" (60). There indeed seems to be a strong correlation between the side that the U.S. ultimately supports and a state's (or aspiring state's) adherence to democratic values and procedures. This correlation deserves further investigation.

A Stability-Seeking Power offers a well-researched account of American foreign policy decisions in the context of secessionist conflicts. It is based on solid empirical evidence, drawn from high-level interviews and declassified documents. The theoretical argument, which predicts that the U.S. will be driven by stability concerns when deciding whether or not to grant diplomatic recognition onto a secessionist state, is given a rigorous test and

proves compelling as an explanation of U.S. foreign policy. *A Stability-Seeking Power* is also a timely contribution to International Relations as it is directly relevant for a case like South Sudan, where international diplomatic recognition was immediate but where instability continues to threaten the region. How would the theory explain this particular case? Would Paquin view this case as confirming or disconfirming his main theoretical predictions?

While the theoretical and empirical contributions of this book are compelling, the policy implications are somewhat disheartening. It seems that peaceful secessionist movements are doomed to fail when met with resistance from the central government: “Central state leaders clearly have an advantage over secessionist elites” (183). What emerges as a lesson from the Kosovo case is that the secessionist movement there was too peaceful to succeed and so it failed to rally the U.S. to its cause given that internal and external stability concerns appeared to be manageable. The takeaway lesson here, from the perspective of future leaders of secessionist movements, is to be as disruptive as possible, potentially engaging in violent activity that can threaten the internal or external stability of the state.

There are also unforeseen consequences to the U.S. policy of diplomatic recognition in secessionist conflicts. While the concept of ‘defensive positionalism’ suggests that the U.S. is a stability-seeking power rather than a status quo state, the U.S. intervenes in ways that can be highly destabilizing for regional sub-systems. U.S. actions can radicalize peaceful secessionist movements, as was the case in Kosovo with the Dayton peace agreements, which excluded the Kosovo representatives from the negotiating table for the sake of achieving progress on the negotiations with Serbia. One is left to wonder whether or not U.S. intentions translate into successful policy, if the measure of success is regional stability. Regardless of the motives at play, is defensive positionalism really *working* for the U.S.?

Considerate authors sometimes put their thesis right in a book's title. In *A Stability-Seeking Power*, Jonathan Paquin has done just that. He argues that the United States seeks stability above all, and that this is evident from its responses to attempts at secession since the end of the Cold War. He posits – and demonstrates fairly convincingly – that the U.S. government tends to oppose secessions from existing states, seeing the status quo in most cases as the best way to ensure stability. Only when an existing state's government fails to guarantee stability does the United States reconsider its position. Only if American recognition of the potential secession seems likely to lead to enhanced stability, will Washington confer its blessing on a new state. Based on this thesis, Paquin constructs a model that aims to describe why the U.S. government confers recognition on new states.

This is not a model that aims to tear down prevailing conceptions. Instead, Paquin writes, it “decodes, operationalizes, and validates a common intuition about U.S. foreign policy” (176). It is limited to the post-Cold War period, but he argues it will hold in the post-Cold War future as a way to predict U.S. responses to future attempted secessions. In other words, in a world often assumed to be fragmenting, this is an important topic. Paquin rightly argues that secession can't be subsumed under the vast literature on ‘intrastate conflict.’ It speaks to the birth and death of states. It also speaks to their possible dismemberment and survival in shriveled – or streamlined – form.

In seeking stability, the argument runs, Washington has not simply asserted the status quo. It was not seeking respect for international law. It has not acted to defend “Western civilization” against its rivals. It has not, as other powers might have been, operated from fear of internal vulnerability to secessionist movements within. It has not made decisions based on domestic factors, whether economic interest or pressure from ethnic lobbies within. Implicitly, too, it has not sought to build an empire. Paquin devotes most of his debunking energy to liberal claims that domestic factors have been in the driver's seat. He does not engage the argument that the U.S. is, perhaps, a hegemony-seeking rather than stability-seeking power; in other words, that the ‘stability’ sought is the stable continuation of American strategic or economic dominance.

The model is persuasive in many ways. It avoids the temptation to be overly deterministic, and also steps nimbly out of the trap of ‘American exceptionalism’ by always considering the possible influence of other powers. The book is logically structured and its argument set out with admirable clarity. Perhaps this is merely the quibble of a historian reading the work of a political scientist, but the book also frustrates in its narrow focus on a very limited selection of cases and its exclusion of other factors that might explain and complicate U.S. government decisions.

Paquin has selected five case studies. Three of them are successive secessions from Yugoslavia: first of Croatia and Slovenia, then of Macedonia, and finally of Kosovo. These three, then, are in some ways multiple aspects of one larger case of state dissolution. The other two cases are two ambiguous and messy African examples of colonial borders being

redrawn: the successful secession of Eritrea from Ethiopia, and the unsuccessful (to date) secession of Somaliland from Somalia. (South Sudan's separation from Sudan, a case with substantial U.S. involvement, came after publication. It would be churlish to wish that Paquin had selected this case instead of Somaliland, but fascinating to know how he sees his model operating in the world's most recent secession.)

On the linked ex-Yugoslav case studies, Paquin displays solid historical understanding, noting that American policymakers had endorsed the unity of Yugoslavia as a Balkan buffer state but that this strategic importance was lost after the Cold War. An American policy shift then became possible but not necessary: the United States continued to prefer the stability offered by a united Yugoslavia until the Belgrade government (under the name of Yugoslavia, and later Serbia) of Slobodan Milosevic lost the mantle of stability-provider. American policy shifted from defending the borders of the Yugoslav state to endorsing the internal borders between its former constituent republics. Why not allow partition of Croatia as it left Yugoslavia? Stability, Paquin argues, required maintaining whatever recognized borders could be maintained, and the Croatia-Serbia border was one of these. War in the former Yugoslavia prompted Washington to issue a list of benchmarks that new states would have to meet in order to obtain U.S. recognition. This, obviously, marked a change in U.S. policy on secessionism. Left unexplored is to what extent this important shift applied outside eastern Europe, if at all.

The African case studies work less well. Was Eritrea really the first successful post-colonial secession, or should that prize be awarded to Namibia? Was it even possible to prevent Eritrean secession from Ethiopia, since the Eritrean People's Liberation Front had trained and was allied with the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front, which entered Addis Ababa alongside EPLF forces? (The ELPF-TPLF dynamic would be worth further exploration, given that the former allies are now at each others' throats.) If, as Paquin shows, American support for an independence referendum in Eritrea was the freelance decision of the Assistant Secretary for State for Africa, Herman J. Cohen, can any general conclusions really be drawn?

The counter-case of Somaliland also fails to persuade. Paquin deserves credit for taking it on, since his model would predict that the U.S. should recognize the independence of stable Somaliland (the former British colony that merged into former Italian colony Somalia in 1960, then reclaimed independence when Somalia collapsed). All the more so since Somaliland in the 1990s had high legitimacy under Prime Minister Egal, the first and last democratic Prime Minister of united Somalia in the 1960s. Paquin argues that his model's failure to explain this case can be put down to "Somalia aversion" brought on by the high-profile killing of U.S. forces in Mogadishu. Perhaps, but there is little evidence in the text to back up this claim. The counter-case, in other words, relies unconvincingly on a *deus ex Mogadishu*.

The consideration of external actors is interesting. Clearly, the European Union's (then Community's) stance on secessions in Europe would matter – but how much? To Paquin, it was not decisive. Yet he concedes that the U.S. moved towards the European policy when it granted recognition to Bosnia. If Germany and other European powers did not determine

U.S. policy, surely they changed the circumstances that U.S. policy then tacked to meet? In other words, German recognition of Croatia, and European recognition of Bosnia, may have been the determining variable that prompted a U.S. determination that the new states were better guarantors of stability than continued support for Yugoslavian sovereignty. When Greece blocked European recognition of Macedonia under its chosen name, this delayed U.S. recognition, with Greek government attitudes an important influence in delaying U.S. recognition to a new state that otherwise looked stable. Similarly, the African Union and its fore-runners were not able to determine US policy on Eritrea, but it was African government consensus that borders should not shift that established a global norm to which Washington adhered. External actors did not determine U.S. policy, but they appear to have altered the circumstances to which American policy reacted. From the close-up vantage point external actors did not determine U.S. policy. But take one step back, and perhaps they did.

A similar point can be made with Paquin's implicit debunking of claims that the United States aimed to destabilize the Belgrade government in order to divide and rule a region emerging from communism. In his argument, Paquin takes seriously the argument that U.S. economic interests can determine U.S. government policy, and takes time in each case study to consider how well that thesis applies, before discarding it as less persuasive than his own model. But the larger argument he does not confront is that Washington works to make the world safe for capitalism. It appears that a new state was more likely to win U.S. sympathy if it promised free markets and rejected economic nationalism, as the former Marxists running Eritrea were willing to promise in 1991. Did this affect U.S. policy on recognition? Take a step back, again, and perhaps economics mattered after all.

Paquin, like the advocates of the 'imperialist America' argument, rejects any notion that American bombing of Serbia over the Kosovo case was humanitarian. Instead, he argues, it was a realist calculation: U.S. opposition to Kosovo's secession evaporated when the Belgrade government rejected a U.S.-European call for foreign troops to guarantee stability on the ground. Yet bombing Serbia was in some ways destabilizing – locally to the Belgrade government and within Kosovo, and internationally in the sense that it ended hopes for U.S.-Russian cooperation through a revitalized United Nations. What operated, perhaps, was not stability as such, but American perceptions of what 'stability' meant – and this meant that the sooner an anti-American government could be toppled by liberal forces from within, the better.

The argument that Washington acts from external rather than internal factors when it comes to secession appears strong. The large Greek-American and Croatian-American lobbies did not determine U.S. policy, Paquin shows. To really disprove the claim that domestic lobbies shape U.S. foreign policy with respect to their homelands, he might have had to take on the case of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), which has

been cited as one of the most influential domestic lobby groups.¹ But perhaps the Israel-Palestine case is the exception that proves the rule. Even the secessionist movements to which the United States must respond at times are probably shaped by eternal factors, as keen to frame their claims in terms acceptable to Washington as their predecessor independence movements were during the 1919 “Wilsonian moment.”²

Historian hat back on: surely it is difficult to discuss U.S. policy on secession without reference to Woodrow Wilson, whose conception of self-determination has shaped U.S. foreign-policy discourses for a century. Wilsonian idealism may well not be the driving factor in a realist Washington, but it is impossible for American government leaders to ignore this tradition and the way it resounded in the decolonization of the middle years of the twentieth century. It would perhaps be unfair to complain about such statements as Paquin’s claim that there is no evidence U.S. officials considered the stance of Albanians in Macedonia on one issue, when he only had access to one U.S. government document, or about inaccuracies with respect to Aceh (Indonesia) and a questionable gloss on India’s intervention in Sri Lanka. Such historical details, ultimately, may not dent the theoretical model that Paquin is mostly interested in promoting.

Within its own terms, the model seems useful and convincing. I have been trying to apply it to attempted secessions from Indonesia, where it seems to fit acceptably well. Timor-Leste (East Timor), West Papua and Aceh all attempted to secede from Indonesia. Timor-Leste is the only one to have succeeded. American policy in all cases supported Indonesian territorial integrity until Indonesia seemed in danger of collapse in 1999, then moved to support a referendum on independence in tandem with Australia, which is “deputy sheriff” to Washington in the region. Both governments then opposed a last-ditch Indonesian-driven effort to partition Timor-Leste, sticking instead to the Timorese-Indonesian border, now an international frontier. On the other hand, stability in West Papua and Aceh seemed better guaranteed by Indonesian rule – ideally democratic and liberal, but if necessary by a repressive Indonesian regime able to maintain external stability. The Timorese success, then, was to show that Timor-Leste and not the Indonesian central government could best deliver stability in ways acceptable to U.S. national interests. If a theoretical model holds up in a case not explored by its author, then who can deny its value?

¹Without endorsing their argument, the case for AIPAC influence is laid out in John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, “The Israel Lobby,” *London Review of Books* 28 no. 6 (23 March 2006), <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v28/n06/john-mearsheimer/the-israel-lobby>

² Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford University Press, 2007).

I would like to extend my deep appreciation to David Haglund, Stéfanie von Hlatky and David Webster for having thoroughly read my book and for having produced such relevant reviews. It is often said that academics no longer have time to read the work of their colleagues because they are too busy writing their own. Well, this certainly cannot be said of H-Diplo and the three reviewers, who provided a great opportunity to discuss my work. The reviewers' comments and criticisms have forced me to rethink some elements of my analysis and for this I would like to thank H-Diplo for this initiative.

One of the main objectives of *A Stability-Seeking Power* is to connect U.S. foreign policy decision making to an under-studied, yet crucial, topic: state creation and disintegration through secessionism. The book provides a theoretical explanation for the following research puzzle: what explains the variation in the U.S. diplomatic response to secessionist crises since the end of the Cold War? Although no theory is, by nature, perfect, and although there is always room for deeper empirical analysis, I was pleased to read that, overall, the reviewers found my theoretical argument and empirical treatment convincing. That being said, this did not prevent Haglund, von Hlatky and Webster from raising excellent questions and expressing some reservations, which I address below.

Some Theoretical Precisions

Webster makes an excellent point when he states that the stability-seeking argument that I develop in my book may actually be about U.S. hegemony-seeking rather than stability-seeking since stability helps the U.S. to maintain its strategic and economic dominance. This is an interesting take on my work and I concur with Webster. The liberal order that the U.S. has been fighting for, especially since the Second World War, can be strengthened and perpetuated by a stable world order. And my book shows that when instability emerges due to secessionist tensions, Washington tries to fix the situation by using liberal and democratic standards to achieve the ultimate objective of, as Webster rightly puts it, the "stable continuation of American strategic and economic dominance." This is precisely what "defensive positionalism" implies.

With the precision of a surgeon, Haglund addresses the logic of relative gains, which underpins my defensive positionalist argument. He wonders whether relative gains are a "spigot variable" in the context of the stability-seeking theory. His main concern is that by looking through the lens of relative gains when dealing with secessionist crises abroad, the main motivation of the U.S. may appear to be as much about maximizing its power as about maximizing its security. In other words, according to Haglund, the use of relative gains may validate either offensive realism or defensive realism "depending upon the twist one applies." This is an excellent point that would undermine my argument if it were not for the empirical analysis, which confirms my initial assumptions. Indeed, my careful and systematic analysis of the documents, cables and semi-structured interviews clearly supports the thesis of security maximization through avoidance of "stability gaps" rather than power maximization in the sense of offensive realists. In each of the cases studied, the

U.S. government was careful not to encourage secessionism, was worried about creating political and legal precedents, and agreed to make policy shifts if, and only if, secession was the only remaining option on the table that could potentially re-establish regional stability. If offensive realism (i.e., power maximization) had guided the U.S. relative gain calculation, Washington would probably have recognized Kosovo's independence long before 2008 in order to reduce Serbia's, and by extension Russia's, relative power in the Balkans. But U.S. officials were focused on the best policy option to minimize short- and long-term instability in the region. Hence, my empirical analysis confirms the initial rejection of offensive realism, which is presented on p. 17.

An excellent point is also raised by von Hlatky on the logical process of my theoretical model. She points out that it is not always clear in the book whether recognition is a precondition of promoting stability or, conversely, stability is a precondition for recognition. As she puts it, "How can stability be both the cause and outcome of conferring diplomatic recognition onto a state?" Indeed, I did at times struggle with this problem in doing the empirical analysis. But overall, my analysis shows that, most of the time, stability had to occur prior to recognition, which concurs with my theoretical argument. However, in a few instances, namely Croatia and Kosovo, despite the fact that stability was still shaky, a decision was made to extend recognition because withholding it any further could have created more trouble in the region. Thus, Washington was targeting the security of these states and attempting to discourage Serbia's aggressive behavior. In sum, I would argue that the stability-seeking logic of my argument remains consistent through all the cases.

Haglund's extension of the Russian fable of the peasant, God and the cow to illustrate the logic of my argument is clever and amusing. As Haglund put it: the fable concerns an aggrieved peasant's appeal to God for assistance. "My neighbour has been given a cow," complains the peasant, "but I have no cow." In response, God asks how he might be of assistance. The peasant responds, "Kill the cow!" Then Haglund adds, "After all, if God were to kill the cow, it would surely be consistent with defensive-positional expectations. But would it enhance stability?" My answer is yes. But the fable should be adjusted so that it better reflects the logic of the argument that I am making throughout the book. I argue that the U.S. already has more "cows" than its neighbours and doesn't want "God" to take away one of its numerous "cows" for the benefit of one of its neighbors (i.e., potential rivals). By having more "cows" than its fellow "peasants," the United States is more powerful and can regulate world order, and thus stability. The problem with the outcome of secessionist crises is that the U.S. is concerned with the possibility of losing some of its "cows" to other "peasants" since these crises have the potential to redefine regional power structures. Hence, in some instances, the U.S. chooses to support central states struggling with secessionist movements and, in other instances, it supports secessionist states to avoid a redistribution of power that would be, from its perspective, a disadvantage. One thing is certain: Haglund is right when he points out that my basic argument is that a U.S. policy shift is a function of changes (or actually expected changes) in the international system.

Discussion over the Importance of U.S. Diplomatic Recognition

Von Hlatky cleverly raises doubts about the importance of U.S. diplomatic recognition as a political tool for impacting the course of a secessionist crisis. She asserts that “it seems too good to be true that such a low-cost diplomatic strategy (...) would yield so much political leverage.” She also points out that secessionist states can survive without U.S. recognition, which according to her, minimizes the importance of the U.S. role. These are fair points. Of course, ‘talk is cheap,’ and the strategy of diplomatic recognition may seem benign if we limit our understanding of it to the simple action of recognizing a state. However, such an assessment underestimates the political impact and material consequences of this decision. Recognition by this superpower can facilitate economic support to fledgling states through the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund as well as through U.S. investment channels. Macedonia, under the name FYROM, reaped the benefits of Washington’s recognition, but Somaliland has experienced the negative effects of the lack of recognition by the U.S. and other great powers for over twenty years. Moreover, U.S. diplomatic recognition can render contested secessions irreversible as has been the case with Kosovo since 2008. To sum up, the fact that I need to clarify this indicates that I should have put more emphasis on the distinction between support and recognition, as von Hlatky pointed out.

Von Hlatky also implies that through diplomatic recognition, Washington sought to show some control over secessionist crises, while in fact it did not have much control over the situations. I tend to agree with this point to the extent that it would be presumptuous to claim that Washington dictates the course of foreign (and often complex) secessionist crises. However, Washington has always been in control of its decisions to extend recognition and has always been aware of the political leverage that such recognition confers. The White House refrained from granting recognition to Eritrea from 1991 to 1993, to Macedonia from 1991 to 1994, and to Kosovo from 1991 to 2008. Moreover, in each of these cases, it was able to maintain a certain level of influence on these crises by imposing its own set of necessary conditions for recognition. This strategy was notably echoed by former Secretary of State James Baker in his memoirs. While writing about the Yugoslav republics, Baker indicated that “Each of the republics craved legitimacy in the West, and withholding recognition (or conferring it) was the most powerful diplomatic tool available. ‘Earned recognition’ was one of our key points of leverage over the combatants.”¹ My book reveals the effects of this political leverage. Washington influenced several transitional processes toward secession by pushing, among other things, for minority rights, border settlement and economic reforms. Hence, even when secession became inevitable, U.S. recognition was not conferred, and Washington never hesitated about its decision.

Haglund expresses doubts about my assertion that U.S. support for secessionist movements within other great power countries (i.e., the permanent and nuclear members of the United Nations Security Council) would be highly detrimental to U.S. interests because it could lead to “economic reprisals, military escalation, and perhaps even nuclear threats.” Haglund is right to point out that transatlantic relations make reprisals and nuclear threats over the handling of secessionist crises highly unlikely between the United States, France

¹ James A. Baker, III, *The Politics of Diplomacy*, New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1995, 638.

and Britain; however, at least when it concerns China, my argument should not be entirely dismissed. The Chinese government adopted a harsh anti-secession law in 2005 to prevent Taiwan from achieving independence, and a senior Chinese general went as far as to warn Washington that Beijing could attack the U.S. with nuclear weapons if it “attacked his country over Taiwan.”² While such a scenario may seem unthinkable, it is not, in fact, impossible.

Von Hlatky raised the question as to how delayed recognition is different from recognition, or the absence of recognition, in the causal process. This is tricky. A delay of recognition occurs when Washington adopts a ‘wait and see’ approach and does not categorically exclude the possibility of granting recognition. Washington will usually leave open the possibility of recognizing the state, but first asks that certain issues be resolved. This happened in the case of Macedonia in 1991, which the White House had originally decided to recognize before tensions emerged between Greece and Macedonia, and in the case of Kosovo following the 1999 NATO-led intervention against Serbia. In these two cases, it was well known that U.S. recognition was a likely prospect—and for some just a matter of time—but the political context had to change first. Non-recognition, however, is different in the sense that Washington announces unequivocally that it will not recognize independence. This happened with Somaliland. This point also gives me the opportunity to stress the importance of the internal and external stability indicators of my model. On pages 37-38 of the book, I explain that a secessionist state must meet both the requirements of internal and external stability to qualify for recognition, which leads me to address two other of von Hlatky’s points. Von Hlatky wonders, “how can we predict which considerations” (i.e., internal or external stability) “will be prioritized in the eyes of American decision-makers?” In fact, the model does not imply that there is an ordering between internal and external stability indicators. These indicators do not compete with one another, and rather are taken together in the rational calculation process. Moreover, based on her reading of the chapter on Eritrea, where the secessionists defeated Ethiopia’s army, von Hlatky asks, “How important are decisive victories to obtain international diplomatic recognition?” This question is also implied in some of Webster’s comments. While military victory definitely helps to achieve and maintain independence, it does not guarantee U.S. recognition. Washington waited for two years before extending recognition to Eritrea in 1993; and although Somaliland has been in the control of Somalilanders for more than fifteen years, which can be viewed as a victory over Somalia, it is still unrecognized today.

Empirical Issues

With regard to the case of Eritrea, Haglund argues that it contradicts my theoretical claims on two accounts: (1) The U.S. decision to allow for a referendum on Eritrea’s independence was made by a single individual rather than by a group of high officials working for the

² BBC News, “Text of China’s Anti-Secession Law”, March 14, 2005. This law stipulates that in the event of Taiwan’s secession, China “shall employ non-peaceful means and other necessary measures to protect China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity.” See also BBC News, “China General Warns US on Taiwan,” July 15, 2005.

executive branch of the U.S. government (a point also made by Webster); and (2) ethnic lobby interests played a role in this decision. As I indicated in the book, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Herman Cohen did mention that “he was in favor of a referendum on Eritrea’s independence, while stating that he hoped that Eritreans would choose to remain in Ethiopia” (139.). Even if this decision was made with no prior consultation with Washington, Cohen did make a rational calculation that was based entirely on stability considerations. As I explain on page 140, Ethiopia’s government was collapsing, which created great instability, and for years the Ethiopian regime of Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam had been the main obstacle to conflict resolution. In addition, the Eritrean secessionist army had beaten the Ethiopian forces and was in control of the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa. In this context, Cohen chose to adopt a strategy of “soft landing” which consisted in (1) supporting a referendum, so that the Eritrean army would agree to retreat from Addis Ababa, and (2) eventually imposing conditions for U.S. recognition of Eritrea. It is true that this decision angered some high officials in the State Department and in the National Security Council, but Cohen’s rational calculation followed perfectly the logical steps of the Stability-Seeking argument. The process was quite peculiar in this case but the logic is consistent with the argument. In addition, Cohen never paid attention to U.S. ethnic groups lobbying for or against Eritrea’s independence, and private business interests were not an issue.

Haglund also suggests that I contradict my own theoretical argument when I address the issue of the thousands of Jewish Ethiopians (the Falashas), who wanted to emigrate to Israel during the Ethiopian war. He perceives the following contradiction: my argument is supposed to “deny” the influence of U.S. ethnic lobbies in shaping policy on secessionist crises, while my analysis of Ethiopia’s civil war acknowledges that Jewish lobbies did pressure Congress members; this, in turn, put pressure on the administration of then President George H.W. Bush to get involved in the Ethiopian crisis to help the Falashas to move to Israel. My book does not entirely “deny” but rather downplays the impact of ethnic lobbies on the formulation of Washington’s response to secessionism. On page 134, I explain that the role of Jewish lobbies with regard to the Falasha issue was one among several factors that led the Bush administration to get involved in the civil war. Other reasons were the humanitarian crisis in Ethiopia and the will to work closely with the Soviet Union on this issue in order to increase cooperation with Moscow. As I explain in the book, the issue of the Falashas was entirely different from the issue of Eritrea’s secession and did not affect Washington’s management of the secessionist crisis: “it just happened that the Falashas and the hunger issues were intimately linked to the tough secessionist war in Eritrea” (134). Hence, there is a difference between getting involved in a civil war for domestic considerations (i.e., ethnic lobbies), among other things, and deciding to recognize the independence of Eritrea’s breakaway state. I am grateful for Haglund’s point, which forces me to clarify this aspect of the research, but I still think that there is no contradiction between my theoretical argument and this empirical case.

I maintain that external actors (such as European countries) did not have a significant influence on Washington’s position on secessionist crises. Webster suggests, however, that by considering the broader picture, I may have seen that other actors probably “altered the circumstances to which American policy reacted.” Of course, Washington never makes

decisions in a vacuum and must deal with pre-existing political, social and institutional constraints that are shaped by other actors. However, the book clearly shows that at no point did the White House submit to the pressure of other involved actors, such as EU members, to make a decision on recognition. Webster also makes the point that if I had taken one step back, I would have probably seen that a secessionist state was “more likely to win U.S. sympathy if it promised free markets and rejected economic nationalism.” I absolutely agree with him. The analysis of the political transition toward Eritrea’s independence implicitly suggests this (145), and the reason why Washington supported Yugoslav Prime Minister Ante Markovic until Yugoslavia formally disintegrated was partly because it favored a free-market economy and democratic reforms (56-57). Thus, it is clear that whether a country is in favor of capitalism and democratic reforms affects U.S. policy on recognition.

David Webster concludes that the external validity of my model is confirmed while looking at other secessionist cases, notably those emerging from the Indonesian context. However, von Hlatky and Webster wonder how my theory would explain South Sudan’s secession from the North in 2011. The particular case of South Sudan is different since the Sudanese government allowed a constitutional secession to take place following an overwhelming result in favor of South Sudan’s independence.³ Moreover, if U.S. recognition comes after a certain level of stability, it cannot guarantee that peace will last. This was demonstrated by the war between South and North Sudan following South Sudan’s independence, and by the war between Eritrea and Ethiopia five years after Eritrea’s secession.

Finally, Webster rightly finds that I give little evidence to back up my claim that Washington did not behave according to my model in the case of Somaliland because of the so-called “Somalia aversion.” It is generally easier to explain things that happen as opposed to things that do not. That being said, all my sources (academic publications, policy-oriented papers, and interviews) pointed in the same direction—that of a U.S. aversion. This was the only ad hoc variable that I was able to isolate to explain the gap between theory and facts in this case.

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³ Josh Kron, “Sudan Leader to Accept Secession of South”, *The New York Times*, February 7, 2011.