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## Review Essay 68

Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson and Pamela Aall, eds. *Diplomacy and the Future of World Order*. Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2021. ISBN: 9781647120931 (hardcover \$110.95), 9781647120948 (paperback \$36.95).

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In *Diplomacy and the Future of World Order* editors Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall confront timely questions about the role of diplomacy in a turbulent time and discuss its uncertain future. In the past decades, the global political landscape has become increasingly interconnected, resulting in a wide range of issues that require cooperation and negotiation between countries. Diplomacy, as the management of change and facilitation of peaceful relations through multilateral cooperation, is seemingly needed more than ever. At the same time, the reemergence of strong states and the state of contestation in the UN Security Council keep presenting new obstacles for diplomacy. As tensions between nations remain high in areas such as trade, immigration, and security, scholars continue to debate the future of the liberal world order and the decline of US hegemony.<sup>1</sup> In gloomy times of global despair, this book provides a more optimistic vision for the survival of the international system, alas if the necessary adaptations and transformations of the system are realized.

Editors Crocker, Hampson and Aall advance “peace and conflict diplomacy” as the point of departure in assessing the role of diplomacy in the future world order.<sup>2</sup> Peace and conflict diplomacy is defined as the effort to manage conflicts, cope with great power competition, and deal with threats to the state system itself by a range of different actors including non-state and civil society actors (4). The broad understanding of diplomacy as primarily concerned with dealing with new global challenges is contrasted with the traditional occupation of diplomats with regulating the state system. In conversations between an impressive community of politicians, experts and scholars with extensive experience in the field, the book ambitiously sets out to advance analyses through three familiar scenarios framing the future—a return to realist geopolitics, liberal internationalism, and pragmatic cooperation.

The first part of the book presents a set of questions which are framed within the boundaries of peace and conflict diplomacy in order to guide the analyses that range across regional and functional perspectives. The second chapter introduces three scenarios to “tease out what each set of predictions would mean for the

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<sup>1</sup> Constance Duncombe and Tim Dunne, “After Liberal World Order,” *International Affairs*, 94:1 (2018): 25-42; G. John Ikenberry, “Why the Liberal World Order Will Survive,” *Ethics & International Affairs*, 32:1 (2018), 17-29.

<sup>2</sup> Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall, eds., “A Challenging Time for Peace and Conflict Diplomacy,” *Diplomacy and the Future of World Order* (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2021), 3-16.

future and for the practice of peace and conflict diplomacy” (17).<sup>3</sup> The three scenarios that serves as the baseline of the analyses throughout the book are loyal to textbook understandings of the original contending views in International Relations (IR) scholarship, the realist view, the liberal internationalist view, and the alternative, third pragmatic view.<sup>4</sup> The realist view encompasses the prognosis of both defensive and offensive realism in their respective emphasis on deterring the other and protecting the self. The liberal internationalist view envisions continuity through evolution, either in the form of a strengthened multilateral system or through minilateral coalitions of states and partners that can secure the survival of a liberal values-based order. The middle way is advanced as a future dominated by pragmatic cooperation between different coalitions of actors collaborating to solve shared problems. Jean-Marie Guéhenno’s chapter, which assesses the state of international organizations (IOs), concludes the first part of the book.<sup>5</sup> The chapter’s subtitle effectively summarizes its argument, IOs are “down but not out.” Guéhenno argues for the continued relevance of multilateral cooperation under the leadership of the United States and its allies but depending on the “recalibration of ambitions” and “more modest, less visible success” (45). The call for adaptation and transformation of the system set the tone for the rest of the book.

In the second part of the book (chapters 4-12), regional analyses provide geographically grounded perspectives of global challenges. The three scenarios guide the chapters’ discussions to a varying degree, reflecting some variation in the fit of the scenario lenses. The first chapter, by Hans Binnendijk (chapter 4), assesses US peace and conflict diplomacy in a future more state-centric world.<sup>6</sup> The chapter reflects on the return to national sovereignty and distrust of international organizations and agreements in US foreign policy, accelerated but not caused by the Trump administration (75). Irrespective of the Biden administration’s reconfirmed support for multilateralism, Binnendijk predicts a world with increasing state-versus-state conflict and greater discord where continued US leadership will depend on a greater demand on global burden-sharing. Ana Palacio, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Spain (2002-2004) and member of the European Parliament (1994-2002), represents the voice of Europe (in chapter 5), which is equated here with the European Union (EU) and its member states.<sup>7</sup> To little surprise, the prism of pragmatic cooperation aligns well with recent developments in EU foreign policy that have caused it to move away from rhetorical idealism to embrace “a realistic vision for strategic autonomy” (92).

The subsequent chapter (6) advances Russia’s preference for power politics and a renewed order in which it is recognized as a major power.<sup>8</sup> Authored by Dmitri Trenin, a member Russia’s Foreign and Defence Policy Council and former director of the Carnegie Moscow Center,<sup>9</sup> the chapter, when read after the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, signals several warnings of Russia’s active balancing between defensive and offensive realist strategies. Trenin suggests that “psychologically, the Russian elites are prepared by the collective historical experience for standing up to formidable rivals” (95) and that the “state of confrontation with or alienation from the West will likely persist for many years” (99). The vision for Latin America

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<sup>3</sup> Crocker, Hampson, and Aall, “Grasping Global Problems by Root or by Branch,” *Diplomacy and the Future of World Order*. 17-30.

<sup>4</sup> Dunne, Milja Kurki, and Steve Smith, eds. *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021); Joyce P. Kaufman, *Introduction to International Relations: Theory and Practice* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2022).

<sup>5</sup> Jean-Marie Guéhenno, “International Organizations – Down but Not Out,” *Diplomacy and the Future of World Order*. 31-45.

<sup>6</sup> Hans Binnendijk, “US Peace and Conflict Diplomacy in a State-Centric World,” *Diplomacy and the Future of World Order*. 49-77.

<sup>7</sup> Ana Palacio, “Europe’s Persistent Gap between Rhetoric and Reality,” *Diplomacy and the Future of World Order*. 78-92.

<sup>8</sup> Dmitri Trenin, “A View From Russia on Diplomacy and Conflict Management,” *Diplomacy and the Future of World Order*. 93-108.

<sup>9</sup> The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace ended its affiliation with Dmitri Trenin in early 2022.

(chapter 7) is less anchored in ideological power projection and hence offers a less clear scenario alignment.<sup>10</sup> The chapter, by Marcos Tourinho, discusses how and why a complex system of regionalism in Latin America has reduced the influence of the United States in the region. The series of crises over recent decades have, however, exposed deep institutional instability, leaving the region vulnerable to “spillover effects” from multiple fronts of global discord resulting in “no clear path for peace and conflict diplomacy” in Latin America (122).

Chapter 8, by Solomon Ayele Dersso, focuses on Africa’s approach to peace and conflict diplomacy in uncertain times.<sup>11</sup> The chapter discusses the implications of the weakened liberal peace framework (resulting from both political change and funding gaps), replaced by a heightened emphasis on sovereignty and national interest. Recent developments, paired with future uncertainties, have left the future for peace and conflict diplomacy with a less ambitious outlook. In chapter 9, Shadi Hamid, author of *Islamic Exceptionalism*, discusses how US emphasis on defensive counter-terrorism policy in the Middle East has been accompanied by disengagement in supporting governance in the region.<sup>12</sup> Hamid sees no signs for a renewed US political commitment to address the sources of conflict in the Middle East in the near future and suggests that continued inconsistency in its engagement will continue to fuel regional polarization. In chapter 10, Kanti Bajpai envisions a future that is “more realist than either liberal or intermittently functional” (177) for South Asia but that could coexist with different types of diplomatic arrangement on the world stage.<sup>13</sup> Chapter 11 zooms in on the conditions for preventive diplomacy by ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations), which are challenged by tensions between the US and China and is authored by See Seng Tan.<sup>14</sup> In the final regional analysis, Chas W. Freeman Jr. delves deeper into the complex subject of Sino-US interactions that he describes to be on a deteriorating path and in need of innovative strategic vision.<sup>15</sup>

The third part of the book (chapters 13-16) advances analyses of topical global challenges. In chapter 13, Lise Morjé Howard discusses the future of UN peacekeeping challenged by the rise of authoritarian China.<sup>16</sup> China’s increasing engagement in peacekeeping, paired with a stern commitment to sovereignty and stability, will likely change the role of UN peacekeeping missions in the future. In the subsequent analysis (chapter 14) author Toby Dalton argues that nuclear nonproliferation is at a crossroads.<sup>17</sup> The future for nonproliferation diplomacy is uncertain regardless of the future scenarios envisioned. Dalton suggests that this future can be managed by institutional innovation in the governance of disarmament, more inclusion of nongovernmental actors to strengthen norms and stabilize forms for collaboration, and by states abandoning economic sanctions as the default measure for deterrence. Chapter 15 moves to a more recent security concern, namely, the great power rivalries in 5G technology markets. The chapter, by Stacie Hoffmann, Samantha Bradshaw and Emily Taylor, reflects on 5G technology as the frontier in US-Chinese competition and the Internet as an unruly political space which is likely to cause further disruptions in the future.<sup>18</sup> The final functional

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<sup>10</sup> Marcos Tourinho, “Peace and Conflict Diplomacy in Latin America,” *Diplomacy and the Future of World Order*: 109-123.

<sup>11</sup> Ayele Dersso, “African Peace and Conflict Diplomacy in Uncertain Times,” *Diplomacy and the Future of World Order*: 124-144.

<sup>12</sup> Shadi Hamid, “Resilient Statism in a Changing Middle East,” *Diplomacy and the Future of World Order*: 145-155; *Islamic Exceptionalism: How the Struggle over Islam Is Reshaping the World*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2016)

<sup>13</sup> Kanti Bajpai, “Southern Asia’s Realist Future,” *Diplomacy and the Future of World Order*: 156-178.

<sup>14</sup> Seng Tan, “Can ASEAN’s Institutions Do Preventive Diplomacy,” *Diplomacy and the Future of World Order*: 179-191.

<sup>15</sup> Chas W. Freeman Jr., “Sino-US Interactions, Past and Future,” *Diplomacy and the Future of World Order*: 192-207.

<sup>16</sup> Lise Morjé Howard, “The Future of UN Peacekeeping and the Rise of China,” *Diplomacy and the Future of World Order*: 211-223.

<sup>17</sup> Toby Dalton, “Nuclear Nonproliferation at a Crossroads,” *Diplomacy and the Future of World Order*: 224-240.

<sup>18</sup> Stacie Hoffmann, Samantha Bradshaw, and Emily Taylor, “Great Power Rivalries in 5G Technology Markets,” *Diplomacy and the Future of World Order*: 241-271.

perspective focuses on terrorism (chapter 16), by Daniel Benjamin.<sup>19</sup> Benjamin reflects on the changing nature of terrorism and predicts growing extremism as a consequence of increased nationalism and the retreat of multilateralism (283).

In the final chapter of the book, editors Crocker, Hampson, and Aall revisit the scenarios and take stock of the varied visions for future world order that the authors advance.<sup>20</sup> They identify three basic types of diplomatic engagement at work in the space of “peace and conflict diplomacy”—competitive and instrumentalist diplomacy, stabilisation diplomacy and governance diplomacy. They do not argue that the three types are mutually exclusive, but that they co-exist (albeit to different degrees), within all three future scenarios.

The book certainly delivers an exploration of the multiple avenues in the future of diplomacy and world order. Rather than producing a coherent view of the future to come, the chapters reflect the multiplicity of challenges facing the various actors on the global scene. A narrower scope or more focused analyses of the implications for future US foreign policy (which many of the contributions implicitly deliver) might have offered more coherent conclusions. The merits of the definition of peace and conflict diplomacy, which the editors assert is to be contrasted with traditional “government to government diplomacy” (4), are also left somewhat unclear. Instead of providing a convincing argument of the new role of diplomacy, the resulting scope of the volume leads to questions about what it leaves out. Two welcome additions would have been more active addressing of the question of US foreign policy retrenchment and a more thorough engagement with challenges of climate governance, both of which are discussed in passing in a number of the chapters. The former challenge is evident in all the US-focused chapters, especially those dealing with the future relationship between the US and China, and would have benefitted from a more foregrounded analytical ambition.

While the broad engagement with future scenarios produces interesting reflections in some of the chapters, it is evident that the scenario lenses are more suitable for explaining the reemergence of known patterns of state behavior than for tackling the state of complexity in new issue areas such as technology and cyberspace. In many ways, the book feels like an updated classic textbook with expert interventions in an introduction to IR. It does not offer a fresh perspective; it provides a repolished adaptation of conventional wisdom in diplomacy, discussed by (partly) new voices and applied to a (partly) new set of political problems. This is by no means a weakness of the collection.

For students and practitioners in diplomacy and international relations, the book serves as valuable bridge between post-Cold War thinking and the realities, they find themselves in. The regional perspectives provide valuable empirical evidence of when and how future visions matter in shaping and assessing policy and state behavior on the global arena. The functional perspectives demonstrate how both traditional and new concerns are challenging the diplomatic relations between major powers. As a reflection of its time of publication, the book also testifies that the future of diplomacy will continue to unfold in a state of uncertainty. Since the book’s publication, Russia invaded Ukraine, bringing war back to Europe and creating an energy crisis, and producing new alliances and new diplomatic challenges. In difficult times of perpetual crises, the ambition of the book and its resulting range of possibilities for the future, serve as an optimistic read, suggesting that the world order may be changing but diplomatic efforts are not likely to go away any time soon.

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<sup>19</sup> Daniel Benjamin, “Terrorism and the Decay of the Liberal Order,” *Diplomacy and the Future of World Order*. 272-283.

<sup>20</sup> Crocker, Fen Hampson and Aall, “Diplomacy and World Order,” *Diplomacy and the Future of World Order*. 287-296.

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