

Relationship-Building as a Basis for Security

by

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We may be living in the most remarkable period of world history in the past 500 years, witnessing a shift - at least temporarily - in the logic of nation-state behavior. Because of the surprising and rapid end of Cold War rivalry, and the dissolving of Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe, there may be a window of opportunity, during the next few years, to initiate and nurture new patterns.¹ We also may be able to invent a vision to serve goals of security, and - as part of the package - qualities of mutual respect, and mechanisms for international cooperation that serve many other values.

To define what to do next in foreign policy, I propose the idea that *relationship-building* can be a basis for security and this better future.² I suggest the relationship-building framework as both a scientific theory of international political behavior and a strategic idea -- i.e., a way to name the structure and defining elements of the situation we face - and, in relation to them, to call forth vision, thought, and commitment that can make modest, but potentially consequential changes in the evolving psychology of international relations.³

¹ Cleveland, 1990/1991, p. 6 refers to the opportunity for postwar planning without having the war first. See also Appendix A and the work of Saunders, 1990 who has helped to stimulate my own thinking.

² For a comprehensive framework to clarify trends toward a world commonwealth of human dignity - the Lasswell and McDougal vision of a world that works well for everyone - see McDougal et al., 1988. I leave to our discussion the comprehensive forecast of trends, including the military and other threats the United States and other countries may face.

³ I believe the metaphor of relationship-building will also work well for public discussion. It is a constructive metaphor. People understand the analogy. The concept fits American conceptions of fair-play, human rights, and tolerance. The emphasis upon the

Now, I want to outline two independent discussions to define international relationship-building. The first discussion creates nation-states as unitary actors with relationships sufficiently analogous to interpersonal relations that normative and pragmatic instincts can be translated from the interpersonal arena. Three examples of relationship-building implied by this discussion are:

I. Relationship-building Between States

A. Good International and Interpersonal Relationships: Common Themes

A critical and independent intelligence is the first requirement to build a better future. (Michael Howard once observed that one lesson from the diplomatic and military history of Europe was how little of it one would care to repeat.)⁴ Relationship-building offers a sharp, skeptical perspective upon the baseline of past behavior (see Appendix A below).

Specifically: to the extent good relations between people are built upon realistic trust, respect and goodwill, ethical restraint, (etc.), we have a serviceable guide, in public discussion of relationship-building, to build a good international political future.

B. Ethnocentric Bias in American Foreign Policy?

Relationship-building in personal relationships also implies a degree of identification, linked to empathy, knowledge, and respect. This suggests the task at American colleges and universities to develop curricula and research to engage students in the question of whether American foreign policy is ethnocentric, and the question of whether Americans misperceive external reality by reliance upon American news media.

strategic design of discourse derives from Geertz, 1973 (especially the application of Kenneth Burke's thinking, p. 230 et passim.; Hurwitz, 1988; and Alker et al., 1988.

⁴ Howard, 1984.

It is not obvious to many American political scientists that ethnocentric biases adversely affect American perceptions of the world. De facto, most [American] international relations theory assumes - and tells students - that culturally-based perceptions are irrelevant to the analysis of international relations. An American can readily analyze the international behavior of country A or country B, or a hegemon, or a client state, without much regard to the name of the country, its history, languages, customs, or culture. As economists tell us that profit maximization behavior is universal, and use models with the (alleged) power to transcend time, place, and circumstance, so an international systems theorist would tell us that power-maximization behavior (subject to security dilemma constraints) embodies a universal grammar. One can tell - and understand, with sophistication - the story of power and politics, in the same terms, regardless of century or culture.⁵

Thus, there is need to ask the question: although they may disagree profoundly, area studies specialists and international relations theorists seldom talk to one another.

C. Human Rights and Humanitarian Concerns

The third implication is an agenda to build better relationships between foreign governments and their people, a respect for human rights.⁶

Human rights advocacy looks to be a very good, hard-headed, way to serve national security. A colleague (Erik Willenz) and I are at an early stage in a project to understand

⁵ The curriculum initiatives could be based upon cases from post World War II diplomatic history. The project is also a general framework, as other nations' students and future decision-makers could usefully engage the question of whether their countries, and their news media, give them ethnocentric and erroneous images of the world.

⁶ Questions of universalism and relativism still need to be addressed rigorously: see Rentein, 1990; An-Na'im, 1990; Kashima et al., 1988.

the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe; the Helsinki Accords apparently played a far greater role to delegitimize indigenous communist governments in Eastern Europe, and to replace hostile images of the West with benign images, than many of its original, hard-headed critics predicted.⁷

In the world's evolving political psychology, I also suggest the hypothesis that building public increase in humanitarian concern, in any area, strengthens humanitarian commitments in other areas. (This process may already be observed by the contribution of ecological and environmental movements to themes of over-riding concerns for life, and self-presentations of the West, that helped to end the Cold War.) If we make and succeed, for example, in a public commitment to end the 14 million annual deaths by starvation and malnutrition on the planet, as a common goal and high priority, I suspect that we will find, in the process, we have strengthened all humanitarian values, and both the sanctity of life in the political arena and security --and far more than by talking about international security directly.

II. Interpersonal/Interorganizational International Relations

Now, I shift to a higher and less conventional level, from the defining image of national personae, to discuss states as specialized institutions, occurring within a wider range of other human activity. Thus, I will discuss relationship-building in international relations as occurring between individuals, and between many types of institutions.⁸ Two implications

⁷ It is not certain that democratic regimes do not start wars with other democratic regimes, but the historical evidence (so far) is strongly suggestive. For an early exploration see Singer & Small, 1976.

⁸ The concept of relationship, and the analogy of interpersonal relationships, may not translate fruitfully across cultures. Provisionally, then, my suggestion to redefine security in relationship-building terms is restricted to the American case.

for relationship-building that follow from this direction of thought are:

A. Relationship-Building and Personal Networks: the Washington DC Area

A former Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, Richard Cooper, was asked about lessons drawn from his experience with international economic cooperation. He said, "You need to know someone on the inside. (I.e., you need policy networks, with personal relationships and backgrounds of discussion among office holders and policy-influencing elites in different countries already established earlier in their careers, before they hold office.)"⁹

One implication of the personal-network approach to international relationship-building is that we should try to develop the universities in the Washington, DC area as a common meeting-ground for undergraduate and graduate students, from all countries, interested to work cooperatively and professionally on international problems. This would involve two dimensions: 1.) major (but selective) expansion in the number of foreign student slots in the region; 2.) selective upgrading of specific programs at specific institutions to assure first-rate graduate training for practitioners and researchers at institutions whose cultures support academic excellence and international civic commitments.^{10 11}

B. Relationship-Building and Telecommunication

⁹ More formal discussions of network theories of political influence include Kochen, 1989; Pool & Kochen, 1978; Hecllo, 1978.

¹⁰ Lessons from the British Commonwealth experience may prove useful.

¹¹ The rapid growth of new campuses and programs in the suburban areas, Centers operated by Stanford, the University of California campuses, Cornell, and other first-rate institutions, and quasi-academic institutions such as the Institute for international Economics, Brookings, Smithsonian, and the World Bank provide an unusually attractive range of options, including possibilities for mid-career programs.

By the end of this decade, we will witness greater changes in telecommunication technology than have occurred in all previous decades of this century. The routinely-available information flow to a home or office will increase by at least 10,000 times, and the costs of long-distance communication will decrease sharply.¹² This has the potential to produce extraordinary change in the psychology of international politics - for good or ill - during the decade. Global news networks (the BBC is about to join CNN).¹³ Full-motion international teleconferences can become routine and Inexpensive. When it becomes familiar and beneficial to have the rest of the world out there, universal allegiances may grow, and nation-state anachronisms recede to historical footnotes illustrating the quaint, transitional immaturity of an earlier era.

Specifically, it is possible to create new narrow-cast networks that allow scientists to exchange ideas at a much earlier stage in the creative process. Other teleconference networks can grow that foster cross-national policy discussion and build consensus for international cooperation.¹⁴

However, these new networks that provide such public goods will be under-funded if left to market forces alone. But the networks - with foresight, planning, and a bit of public-spirited money - could be developed quickly to widen identifications, lay track for governments in policy discussions across specialist and advocacy networks and attentive publics, and build the Interpersonal/inter-organizational International relationships that

¹² See Pool, 1990 for an overview.

¹³ See Bering-Jensen, 1991.

¹⁴ There are also risks that deserve discussion.

support workable interdependence and international problem solving.¹⁵ A new (modest) degree of organization among the world's research universities could be a useful catalyst and produce extraordinary benefits.

III. Concluding Concerns

I conclude these opening remarks with three concerns: the wisdom to let sleeping dogs lie; the wisdom to engage recycling ideological packages; and the need for a theory of American foreign policy that clarifies how to Institutionalize new conceptual frameworks and abilities.

A.) Sleeping Dogs and Public Dramas

It is an American tradition to use the symbolic umbrella of national security to achieve diverse goals. We built our inter-state highway system, and went to the moon, with the same symbolic canopy that built nuclear weapons. If the language of threats to national security or welfare helps to solve problems of equal opportunity, drugs, environmental protection, and other malaise, it may be a good idea to use it.

But security is an unusually deep and powerful motivation. Terrified people often behave badly - the McCarthy period in the 1950s being one example. If one wishes to scare hell out of the American people - as Senator Vandenberg advised President Truman, before Truman requested aid to Greece and Turkey in the bold rhetoric of the Truman Doctrine - it would be well to recall a bit of history (Truman's success) and to tread lightly.

This caution may be especially appropriate in the arena of international economic competition, as there are successes to preserve. The trend to decouple the nation-state from international economic competition has been a brilliant contribution to international

¹⁵ See Kindleberger, 1986. Concerning the importance of shared theories and intellectual maps to foster international cooperation see Cooper, 1987; Haas, 1990.

security. Until the early 20th century, states often sought national wealth by foreign conquest. It was common practice to use military force to secure foreign markets and access to foreign raw materials, cut-out competitors, and to defend these commercial advantages against the incursions of other nations who were similarly motivated.¹⁶ Now, with free trade in money and goods (in practice, with residual protectionism), these motives for military conflict no longer operate with their previous force and have diminished as a cause of war.¹⁷ So, for example, national competitiveness is one security-linked formula that might be used with caution: it is not clear how far (and securely) past jingoism and nationalism we have come.

B.) Integrating Traditional Instinctive Packages

My second caution concerns a theory of public discussion. For learning, one needs genuine dialogue, honoring the starting-point of listeners. In America, left-right templates continue to organize public discussion, and my caution is that any public redefinition of security must engage, more powerfully than in the past, the human (at least, American) tendency to think only in these simple, balanced, and primitive instinctive and ideological packages. As Bloomfield summarizes the current spectrum:

The liberal view can be summarized as follows: security for the US is now primarily defined by threats to the common biosphere;¹⁸ to meet that threat requires policies favoring sustainable development. The South is significant to the North on both economic and humanitarian grounds . . . Liberals believe that unilateral interventions have produced a dubious balance sheet, and that U. S. interests are positively disserved

¹⁶ For a discussion of the role of national economic competition in war, see Choucri and North, 1989.

¹⁷ Saddam Hussein's motives in the Persian Gulf war are an exception.

¹⁸ See also Mathews, 1989.

by a stronger U. S. military capacity to intervene... The extreme of this position deems national defense itself to be irrelevant.

At the other end of the spectrum: Residual Soviet-focusers dismiss the poor countries who, it is hoped, will, like the American urban underclass during the Reagan years, simply disappear off the official screen. Some conservative strategists do of course consider the U. S. interest to be engaged in regional conflict situations - but only when developing-country instability becomes a noticeable irritant, in which case the relevant policy seems to be the unilateral application of force.¹⁹

This continued ideological division - an example of what psychiatrists call splitting - calls for both dialogue and a higher-level integration before effective, long-term, and cognitively complex policies can be developed. There is something valuable, and something missing, in any ideology and the motivational engagement to it. The continuing simple themes of public discussion are important feedback to universities, a message to design a better next generation of curriculum.²⁰ A hard head and a caring heart both will be useful, and should be available for the work ahead.^{21 22}

C.) American Institutional Capacities

¹⁹ Bloomfield, 1991, p. 6.

²⁰ See the discussion of human rights, the Helsinki Accords, and the end of the Cold War, above.

²¹ Bloomfield's term is binocular vision.

²² De facto Bloomfield concludes (ibid., pp. 8 - 9) that it is still the American political style that humanitarian and fairness arguments lose most of the time; considerations based upon economic interdependence and human rights are of growing (but still modest) weight. Both, however, traditionally lose to the invocation of national security, however narrow, short term, or vague, and despite the private misgivings of some, including presidents themselves.

My third caution is that America not only needs good answers, but a good theory of how American political institutions can embody the answers - how to improve collective capacities for abstraction, foresight, follow-through, and learning based on experience.

The world has not been lacking in good answers, or guidelines to make the world work better. The Golden Rule and the Ten Commandments are examples. Even God has had implementation problems.

In the 1960s, the anthropologist Clifford Geertz observed the intense ferment in Asia, Africa, and some parts of Latin America: The search for a new symbolic framework in terms of which to formulate, think about, and react to political problems, whether in the form of nationalism, Marxism, liberalism, populism, racism, Caesarism, ecclesiasticism, or some variety of reconstructed traditionalism (or, most commonly, a confused melange of several of these ...) ²³

It is unlikely discussions for new directions for American foreign policy, including the problem of redefining security, will achieve such intensity. The greater danger in America is drift, the absence of any common conceptual framework and purpose. It is not clear, in either foreign or domestic policy, that politicians, the voters, attentive publics, or major institutions know what they wish to do and are prepared to have serious discussions.

I think the caution of institutional weakness is especially worth voicing as an era of fortuitous success in Western European policy has obscured the general historical weakness of American foreign policy learning concerning other areas of the world. America's insular political process has produced effective policy attentive to foreign realities when unofficial

²³ op. cit., p. 221.

mechanisms, and a match between political cultures, sustain reality. Historically, both conditions have been available only in one localized arena - American policy toward Western Europe since World War II. Here, decisions have more typically reflected the actions of men who were well-informed about the nations and situations they faced, who could generalize from American culture and values without great error. There has been a foreign policy Establishment, a network of influential men based in New York and affiliated with the Council on Foreign Relations, which created and sustain such policies, whose members could be regularly recruited to policy positions, and who supported one another while they served in office. Tied by cultural history and ideals, the prominence of European history and languages in schooling, the experiences of family vacations, the daily ties of international financial and business relationships, the members of this European-centered network (today, increasingly well-informed about Japan through the visionary leadership to create the Trilateral Commission, and the quiet and competent work of the Japanese themselves), have linked knowledge to political influence and policy.

The caution is that it was not the formal institutions of government that, by design, produced such sustained, visionary, long-term policy. The American system of government was never designed to learn, or to conduct foreign policy in a complex, interdependent world. It was designed to operate by agreement, by checks-and-balances. Even among individuals, the capacity to be well-grounded, and to work with perspective within long-term time frames, appears limited.²⁴ If security is redefined in a way to require greater collective and institutional capacities for abstraction and anticipation, we have a broader agenda to address.

²⁴ See, for example, Jaques, 1990.

Appendix A: Historical Baselines and New Opportunities

To discuss current, extraordinary changes in international relations it is helpful to establish a baseline -- the standard behavior of nation-states as this can be observed since their inception in the 16th century. One summary against which to assess change would be the narrative of world history told (below, in abbreviated and simplified form) by the Structural Realist tradition in political science-²⁵ I.e.,:

- The cast of actors -- states -- show behavior atypical of what we would find in a sample of ordinary, statistically average individuals. If we were to describe the baseline behavior of nation-states in human terms, they would be extraordinarily high in motivation for power, money, and status -- and single-minded about such pursuits. There would be no apparent affiliation motivation or love. They would be rational, self-interested actors -- a term that means, in practice, they are amoral and selfish. When in positions of dominance, and when they can get away with it, they would take the view that the strong take what they can, the weak suffer what they must. They also would be potentially treacherous, opportunistic, and highly Machiavellian, admitting (in the classic phrase) to permanent interests but no permanent allies.

- Being located in a world with other nation-states who are similarly motivated -- to get as much as they can get away with -- induces the realistic fear of becoming a victim of the predatory ambition of one's neighbors. Thus, calculation based upon the desire for security shapes foreign policy decision making alongside the triad of the competitive ambitions to maximize power, money, and status.

The unpleasant drama these competitive and insecure maximizers have created over the past 500 years can be summarized in three-and-a-half acts, outlined in Table A1:

²⁵ Table A1 and this discussion draw upon Goldstein, 1988.

Table A1: Hegemonic Wars: 1495 - 1991

	<u>War</u>		
	<u>Thirty Years</u>	<u>Napoleonic</u>	<u>WW I & II</u>
Loser	Hapsburgs	France	Germany
New Leader (economically strongest, win- ning coalition)	Netherlands	Britain	U. S.
Eventual challenger (winning coalition, but economically devastated by last war)	France	Germany	USSR

Act 1

In the first act, 1495 to 1648, the Hapsburg family, linking Vienna and Madrid, seeks to dominate the rest of Europe -- and everyone else maneuvers to prevent them from doing so. The conflict becomes especially fierce because of the Hapsburgs' Catholicism and the Protestantism of the European states opposed to them.

The final showdown with the Hapsburgs -- and their defeat -- is the exhausting series of wars, grouped as the Thirty Years War, ended by the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648.

Act 2

In a repeated pattern, the exhaustion and devastation of the Great Power hegemonic wars now creates the opportunity for the least exhausted member of the winning coalition (in this case, the Netherlands) to expand its influence. However, it lacks the natural endowments to become the new long-term hegemon. As they rebuild, France and England increasingly compete with one another for this position. The second act reaches its climax in Napoleon's bold effort to break-out of a normal framework of interstate relations and secure hegemony by conquering the rest of Europe. It ends with his defeat at Waterloo in 1815 and the Congress of Vienna.

Act 3

The third act is the rise of Britain -- the least exhausted member of the winning coalition against Napoleon -- to world leadership. The eventual challenger for hegemony is a unified, industrializing Germany. World Wars I and II are two phases of the same war -- i.e., a prolonged contest between Germany's hegemonic ambitions and the efforts of other nations to contain Germany.

Act 4

Act 4 opens with America (the least exhausted member of the winning alliance, producing 40% of the world's GNP) emerging as the new world leader.

In its new role America -- like Britain in the 19th century -- has been engaged almost continually in conflicts on the periphery of its spheres of influence. These brushfire and proxy wars, and covert operations, have been directed primarily against its emerging rival, the USSR and its allies. Like Britain (or, earlier, the Romans) America has also located many of its own troops in forward deployment along the frontiers (today, over 1,250,000 Including personnel in the Persian Gulf).

Such, at least, is a Structural Realist baseline story of world politics. By this story, the US and Soviet Union should be heading for a military showdown. And something very fundamental has shifted.

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