

Andrew Kydd, *Trust and Mistrust in International Relations*

Philip Arena

Volume 29, spring 2009

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/jcs29br06>

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Éditeur(s)

The University of New Brunswick

ISSN

1198-8614 (imprimé)

1715-5673 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce compte rendu

Arena, P. (2009). Compte rendu de [Andrew Kydd, *Trust and Mistrust in International Relations*]. *Journal of Conflict Studies*, 29, 0–0.

For the Islamic Republic, religion was used to foster the image of Iran as the leader of the *Ummah*, the greater Islamic community, and foment admiration amid the “Arab streets.” The United States, a foreign regional power, is left to contend with these supposed opposing forces as it seeks to maintain its hegemony in the Middle East.

A good example that unearths the primacy of geopolitical rivalry in this triangular relationship is the arms-for-hostages/Iran-Contra affair, which Parsi examines in great detail. Following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the Reagan administration dispatched a “peacekeeping” mission to Lebanon. In retaliation for the United States’ endless support of Israeli aggression, *Hezbollah*, an Iranian-supported political-military group in Lebanon, kidnapped a number of US civilians. Consequently, secret negotiations between the United States and Iran over hostages were facilitated ironically enough by the latter’s regional “nemesis,” Israel, who was growing fearful of Iraq’s increasing regional power. At this time, Washington and Tehran negotiated the release of US hostages in exchange for sophisticated US armament — needed by Iran to defeat Saddam Hussein’s forces — which would be delivered by Tel Aviv. Once the international community discovered these secret talks, US President Ronald Reagan was obliged to publicly confess “that despite the United States’ own arms embargo and its effort to stop other countries from selling arms to Iran, America had sold arms to Iran and transferred the money to the Contra guerilla army that was fighting the Sandinista government of Nicaragua. (p. 124) During this affair, Parsi argues, Iran used Israel to foment a rapprochement with the United States. “To Tehran, Israel wasn’t an asset of itself, it was a consumable good, a short-lived tactical relationship that could reduce the threat to Iran while safeguarding Iran’s real strategic goal, regional leadership.” (p. 129)

A noticeable shortcoming of *Treacherous Alliance* is its large scope. Despite displaying the continuity of geopolitical strategy in US-Iran-Israel relations, many fascinating sub-topics are underdeveloped. Some very important questions, in the process, are left unanswered: What is the role of religion? What role did the United States play in cultivating Iran-Israel relations before the Iranian Revolution? How did the Jewish Diaspora in Iran influence this triangular relationship? What are the links between Iranian anti-US and anti-Israeli sentiments? What was the influence of the US Israel lobby?

Nevertheless, Parsi’s book is surely a great resource for prospective graduate students and faculty members alike. It is, after all, the first comprehensive work to examine the triangular relationship between Washington, Tehran, and Tel Aviv and will serve as the launching pad for further research in this domain. But perhaps most importantly, *Treacherous Alliance* presents a refreshing and nuanced outlook that contests the notion of a predestined clash between Muslim Iran and the Judeo-Christian US-Israeli alliance.

Maurice Labelle is a Graduate Assistant with the Department of History at the University of Akron.

Kydd, Andrew. *Trust and Mistrust in International Relations*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005.

As important as trust has been in realist theories, it is perhaps surprising that this is in many ways the first book to rigorously analyze the role of trust in international relations. Andrew Kydd provides a welcome explanation for how tragic spirals may occur that do not rest on cognitive errors, in contrast with previous analyses of the security dilemma. He also illustrates nicely how, despite the possibility of tragic spirals, most spiral behavior is likely to be non-tragic in nature. Many concepts central to realist arguments about conflict are clarified by this analysis.

The book essentially consists of three parts. After setting up the basic framework he uses in subsequent analyses, Kydd develops formal models to analyze the foundations of trust, the impact of trust on multilateral cooperation, and the relationship between previous interactions on current attempts at cooperation. He then applies the insights of each model to the Cold War.

The formal models provide much-needed clarity and precision to longstanding debates in international relations. The relationship between the models and previous approaches is clear. The results are explained in straightforward language, and Kydd takes care to provide strong intuition behind the impact of almost every parameter on equilibrium behavior. The key results are well illustrated with lucid graphs. However, in some respects the interpretation of the models does create some unnecessary confusion. For example, Kydd’s characterization of the argument represented in the models as comprising a new variant of realism, which he terms Bayesian realism, strikes this reviewer as unproductive. While defensive realists have historically asserted that all

states are security seeking, they have for some reason insisted that these states do not trust that other states are security seeking. Kydd might instead have simply argued that this is a rather strange assumption and that defensive realism would benefit greatly from positing that some states may in fact be expansionist, and therefore states' fears that their rivals may be expansionist are well-founded. Had he done so, he could easily argue that his analysis provides a logically consistent reformulation of defensive realism rather than adding Bayesian realism to the already crowded realist camp.

Kydd also uses the term "costly signaling" in a rather different manner than most of the formal literature. In Kydd's setup, cooperation provides a signal of a state's trustworthiness. The relative value of that signal is a function of the degree to which states value payoffs from the first round of a game with two stages. Yet Kydd often refers to the parameter that measures the degree to which states value first-round payoffs as if this parameter is itself a costly signal. Typically, costly signals are actions taken by states primarily in order to change the beliefs of the opponent. In Kydd's model, cooperating in the first round serves to reassure the other player that one is trustworthy, but it also carries a very real prospect of delivering a non-trivial reward in the short run should the other state cooperate. Indeed, states are more likely to cooperate in the first round when they expect that this cooperation will be reciprocated. True, cooperation is possible at lower levels of trust than would be true if the game was only played once, and the desire to change the other states' beliefs about one's type drives this. Yet, it is nonetheless possible that the action Kydd labels a costly signal will not impose any cost at all. Cooperation is more of a risky action than a costly action. The difference may be subtle but the value of formal models is the ability to make such fine distinctions transparent. There are certainly many obvious parallels between the logic of costly signaling as it is conventionally understood and the behavior Kydd describes. But there are dissimilarities as well, and it is left to the reader to realize this.

At times, the links between the formal models and historical applications are a bit loose. Trust is a dyadic characteristic in two of the three models. A state that behaves aggressively toward one state but cooperatively toward another would presumably engender very different beliefs in those two states. Yet Kydd often speaks of the United States as being understood to be trustworthy in some generic sense, rarely discussing the possibility that the UK and the USSR might have had good reason to have very different views of whether the US could be trusted. Likewise, Russian actions toward other states are often interpreted as indications that the US could not trust Russia to cooperate with the US elsewhere. This may be reasonable and may in fact accurately describe the way US policy makers actually interpreted Russian actions. But it is difficult to say this is consistent with the models, which are incapable of speaking to such dynamics. In some ways the models provide a strange reading of the cases. Stronger states are more likely to be expansionist, irrespective of their actual value for taking advantage of a cooperative rival. Given the unprecedented advantage in military capabilities enjoyed by the US in the immediate aftermath of World War II, the model would seem to be likely to predict that the US would be expansionist. States are more likely to have accurate perceptions of their rivals when those states are relatively transparent. Kydd presents some evidence that the USSR did not believe the US to be security seeking at the dawn of the Cold War. It is therefore surprising that Kydd argues that the historical record suggests the US was trustworthy and the USSR was not, and that this is explained by his model. Further, because Kydd presents the expectations of his models as being essentially the same as those of the well-developed traditionalist interpretation of the Cold War, it is not clear that the historical analysis presented would have suffered much if the formal models were removed from the book. That is not to suggest that the formal models are not valuable for other reasons. They certainly are. Nor is this to suggest that Kydd's analysis of the Cold War is not a valuable contribution to that literature. Rather, this reviewer found that the combination of the two methodological approaches failed to improve one another the way they often do in the best multi-method research.

All things considered, *Trust and Mistrust in International Relations* provides an important contribution both to the analysis of the security dilemma and to the interpretation of the origins and resolution of the Cold War. One might wish the two halves fit together more seamlessly, and one might at times question the interpretations of the models and of the historical evidence. Yet, both approaches provide strong challenges to existing arguments. The relative plausibility of tragic versus non-tragic spirals, the role of trustworthiness in mitigating the relationship between hegemony and multilateral cooperation, and the conditions under which reassuring gestures are likely to facilitate future cooperation are spelled out much more precisely than in the past. The formal analysis is also quite accessible relative to many other recent works in international relations. Kydd's strong defense of the traditionalist interpretation of the origins of the Cold War may also reinvigorate that debate. This book is likely to inform future research in many ways.

Philip Arena is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science at the State University of New York at Buffalo.

Narizny, Kevin. *The Political Economy of Grand Strategy*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007.

Despite its waning influence over much of international relations, the realist paradigm continues to dominate studies of international security. In *The Political Economy of Grand Strategy*, Kevin Narizny directly challenges realist explanations of foreign policy with the compelling claim that a nation's grand strategy originates with the economic interests of the influential constituents in a government's coalition.

Narizny begins by introducing a novel three-dimensional typology of grand strategy, i.e., "the general principles by which an executive decision-maker or decision-making body pursues its international political goals." (p. 8) The first dimension is a state's assertiveness or its willingness to pay the costs (for example, military spending, diplomatic capital) of pursuing its foreign policy interests. States unwilling to actively compete in the international arena are identified as having an isolationist grand strategy. The second characteristic of a nation's grand strategy is the "geographic locus" of its foreign policy goals; that is, whether the majority of a state's foreign policy interests are in countries located at the core or periphery of the international system. The final dimension of a state's grand strategy is its willingness to use military force. A state that pursues its goals through cooperative means has an internationalist grand strategy. Coercive diplomacy is the hallmark of both *realpolitik* and interventionist grand strategies, with the distinction being a function of whether a state's policies are directed toward core or periphery countries, respectively. Finally, Narizny classifies those states that seek their foreign policy ends through the means of military conquest as following either a supremacist (core) or an imperialist (periphery) grand strategy. On its own, Narizny's typology represents a significant departure from the realist conception of grand strategy as simply those policies a state implements in pursuit of security. His biggest challenge to the realist paradigm, though, lies in the process by which a government determines its location on each of the three dimensions. Drawing on insights from political economy and liberal theory, Narizny argues that a state's foreign policy goals originate in the sectoral interests of its government's ruling coalition. Specifically, the relative influence of domestic, core, periphery, and military-colonial interests within a government determines its preferences over the assertiveness, geographic locus, and role of the military in its foreign policy. Narizny argues that the greater the influence of a given sector, the greater the degree to which a state's foreign policies will be consistent with the economic interests of that sector. Domestic and international factors exogenous to the argument condition a state's grand strategy by influencing the relative costs associated with various foreign policy options; for example, a high national debt or global economic depression might alter the relative attractiveness of imperialist and internationalist grand strategies.

Narizny's argument is tested using in-depth case studies of the domestic politics and foreign policies of the United States and Great Britain from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century. The US and British experiences during this period represent something of a critical test between the political economy and realist explanations of grand strategy. Realism predicts that the grand strategies of the United States and Great Britain should have become consistently more and less aggressive, respectively, over this period due to changes in the material capabilities available to each country. Alternatively, Narizny's argument expects substantial variation in US and British foreign policy across all three dimensions of grand strategy as a function of the party in control of government. Save for a few exceptions (for example, the internationalist records of both President Taft and Lord Salisbury), the empirical record strongly supports the political-economy approach to grand strategy. In arguably the most impressive display of its explanatory power, Narizny's argument accurately predicts that, despite declines in Great Britain's economic and military power, the increased importance of periphery markets for manufactures would lead to a shift in Liberal preferences for greater imperialism and, therefore, the robust defense and expansion of the British Empire beginning in the early 1880s.

The Political Economy of Grand Strategy is an impressive piece of scholarship and a significant contribution to the international security literature. Narizny makes a convincing case that the refrain about the terrestrial nature of politics falls flat even in the realm of grand strategy. As such, this book is highly recommended to anyone interested in understanding the nature and origins of any nation's foreign policy.

Jeff Carter is a PhD candidate in the Department of Political Science at The Pennsylvania State University