

tions of previous volumes. But my guess is that it is time for the authors to re-examine some of the premises of the arguments they have developed, including the quality of the evidence on which some of their inferences about the effects of institutions rest.

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### **The State, War, and the State of War**

Kalevi J. Holsti

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. xiv, 254

K. J. Holsti has followed his comprehensive 1991 work, *Peace and War: Armed Conflict and International Order, 1648-1989* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), with another strong contribution to the causes of war literature. But *The State, War, and the State of War* can be read in two ways. The first is as a clear and compelling synthesis of recent work on “wars of the third kind” that departs dramatically (for a mainstream International Relations scholar) from orthodox accounts in security studies. The second is as a strong (and somewhat unintentional) indictment of International Relations (IR) as a myopic discipline still caught in intellectual webs spun by Cold War/great power scholarship.

The book’s central theme is that “wars of the third kind” (often called peoples’ wars, revolutionary wars, wars of national liberation) are the most common contemporary conflicts, and that these are principally “caused” by the “state-strength dilemma” (116). Drawing on the work of scholars such as Barry Buzan and Mohammed Ayoob, Holsti argues that the state-making process in the Third World has been radically different (that state-making was not a goal of colonial policy), and that it has given rise to weak states whose illegitimate governance structure (corruption-ridden, unrepresentative, exclusionary, despotic and so forth) has catalyzed resistance. Unfortunately, as Holsti points out, “many of the steps governments take to strengthen the state and to enhance . . . legitimacy bring about unintended consequences that actually undermine the coherence of the state” (183), with the result that “regions of the world populated by weak and failing states are zones of war” (141).

The book goes on to present a spectrum of conflict—ranging from zones of war, to no-war zones, zones of peace and pluralistic security communities—that Holsti uses to connect his theses about state weakness with the incidence and nature of conflict. He also discusses in detail the anomalous case of South America (no major war since 1941, yet major domestic conflicts), which nicely challenges the democracy and war literature. Finally, he critically surveys the role of the United Nations (and the international community) in dealing with wars of the third kind and concludes that perhaps it is time both to rethink the state and the value of the Westphalian concepts that underpin the UN and the contemporary international order.

In the introduction and conclusion Holsti presents the moderate critique of IR that flows from this. He argues that IR was (and remains) Euro- and Cold War-centric. In chapter 2 he documents the progression from institutionalized war, through total war, to the decline of interstate war and the emergence of wars of the third kind, and notes that “these trends and patterns cannot be explained by the standard theoretical devices of international politics, particularly by neo-realist analysis” (25). He concludes with a call for the comparative study of “how states are formed, how they develop legitimacy and strength, and how they persist or fail” (207).

It is hard not to push these points to a stronger critique, yet Holsti backs away from this. For example, he maintains that Rousseau's realist "stag hunt" metaphor "is a powerful theoretical explanation for the persistence of wars between states" (9). But if one takes the central role of state formation seriously, the same dynamic of internal and external "causes of war" has been at work throughout the several centuries of European state formation, even if Third World and European processes of state formation followed different trajectories. Such is the thrust of comparativists such as Charles Tilly (who Holsti cites with approval). Likewise, he treats political economy approaches to contemporary conflicts in five pages (with two references, both pre-dating 1974) and dismisses recent political economy literature on "the articulation of social and political power in state formation" as "only tangentially related to the phenomenon of wars of the third kind" (139-40). But if a "comprehensive analysis must... acknowledge the complex interweaving of domestic and external factors" (129) and if "the place to pursue explanations is not in the character of relations between states, but in the character of the states themselves" (26), then political economy analyses of domestic social formations are absolutely crucial.

Finally, when Holsti notes that "the war in ex-Yugoslavia brought to academic consciousness the factor of ethnicity in international relations" (123), he seems to forget that major work by scholars such as Ted Robert Gurr and Donald Horowitz well predate this conflict. They were, however, treated as marginal to the central concerns of East-West strategic studies, and dismissed as "comparative politics not IR" by many. The problem was not lack of academic consciousness, but the construction of International Relations and strategic studies so as to exclude any analysis of what went on inside the state.

Overall, the book provides a nice bridge between "old realism" and new currents of thinking about war and peace. One must also admire the (rare) willingness of senior scholars such as Holsti, who have set the tone for generations of IR teaching and have persistently argued for the durability of realist accounts, to jettison their verities. One hopes that the doors he opens, but does not walk through, will be traversed by others.

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### **Post-Realism: The Rhetorical Turn in International Relations**

Francis A. Beer and Robert Hariman, eds.

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Despite the fact that the conduct of world politics has always depended on rhetorical skill, rhetoric—that is, the "forms and effects of conversations, speeches, debates, narratives, or discourses in political practice" (1)—has traditionally received little attention. Remediating this neglect is the objective of the thought-provoking volume at hand. In order to engage the theme of discourse in international relations, moreover, the book's contributors are forced to confront the hegemony of the dominant discourse within the discipline of International Relations (IR)—that of realism. They do this through a critical and creative rereading of key realist figures, including Kissinger, Kennan, Carr, Wight and Morgenthau, and through an equally critical and creative rethinking of key realist concepts, including sovereignty, security, prestige, nationalism, foreign policy and strategy (often with the aid of decidedly non-realist frameworks such as gender and genealogy).

Among the most noteworthy of the contributions to the book is Roger Epp's stimulating treatment of the work of the British realist, Martin Wight.