

Summaries

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Deal or No Deal? The End of the Cold War and the U.S. Offer to Limit NATO Expansion

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Did the United States promise the Soviet Union during the 1990 negotiations on German reunification that NATO would not expand into Eastern Europe? Since the end of the Cold War, an array of Soviet/Russian policymakers have charged that NATO expansion violates a U.S. pledge advanced in 1990; in contrast, Western scholars and political leaders dispute that the United States made any such commitment. Recently declassified U.S. government documents provide evidence supporting the Soviet/Russian position. Although no non-expansion pledge was ever codified, U.S. policymakers presented their Soviet counterparts with implicit and informal assurances in 1990 strongly suggesting that NATO would not expand in post-Cold War Europe if the Soviet Union consented to German reunification. The documents also show, however, that the United States used the reunification negotiations to exploit Soviet weaknesses by depicting a mutually acceptable post-Cold War security environment, while actually seeking a system dominated by the United States and opening the door to NATO's eastward expansion. The results of this analysis carry implications for international relations theory, diplomatic history, and current U.S.-Russian relations.

45–88

The Pivot before the Pivot: U.S. Strategy to Preserve the Power Balance in Asia

Nina Silove, Stanford University

American critics of the Barack Obama administration's 2011 "pivot to Asia" policy claim that, despite the lofty rhetoric, the United States has pursued an anemic strategy in Asia. Chinese critics of the pivot to Asia assert that it is a bellicose strategy aimed at containing China's rise. These two conflicting criticisms are addressed in a detailed historical narrative that traces the development and implementation of U.S. strategy, based on declassified documents, some of which have never before been made public, and extensive in-depth interviews with senior policymakers. Neither American nor Chinese critics of

the pivot to Asia are correct. If this policy is properly dated and measured, the United States undertook a substantive military, diplomatic, and later economic reorientation toward Asia. That reorientation started in the mid-2000s, well before the pivot announcement. The aim of the reorientation was not to contain China's rise. Rather, the United States sought to manage China's growth through a blend of internal and external balancing combined with expanded engagement with China. These means were intended to work symbiotically to expand the combined power of the United States and its allies and partners in Asia, and to dissuade China from bidding for hegemony. The ultimate effect of the reorientation strategy—if successful—would be to preserve the existing power balance in the region, in which the United States has held the superior position.

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Rebel Diplomacy in Civil War

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In the midst of civil war, rebel groups often expend significant resources opening offices in foreign capitals, meeting with heads of state, expanding their overseas networks, appealing to international organizations, and contacting foreign media. Existing scholarship has generally neglected international diplomacy as an aspect of violent rebellion, focusing instead on rebel efforts at domestic organization. A systematic documentation of rebel diplomacy in post-1950 civil wars using new quantitative and qualitative data shows that rebel diplomacy is commonplace and that many groups demonstrate as much concern for overseas political campaigns as they do for domestic and local mobilization. Diplomacy, furthermore, is not a weapon of the militarily weak, but a tactical choice for rebel groups seeking political capital within an international system that places formidable barriers to entry on nonstate entities. An original analysis of the diplomacy of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola in the Angolan civil war using archival sources further demonstrates why rebels may become active diplomats in one phase of a conflict but eschew diplomacy in another. More broadly, the international relations of rebel groups promise to be an important new research agenda in understanding violent politics.

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Understanding the Islamic State—A Review Essay

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This article reviews several recent books on the Islamic State in order to understand its goals, motivations, strategy, and vulnerabilities. It argues that the Islamic State's ideology is powerful but also highly instrumental, offering the group legitimacy and recruiting appeal. *Raison d'état* often dominates its decisionmaking. The Islamic State's strength is largely a consequence of the policies and weaknesses of its state adversaries. In addition, the group has many weaknesses of its own, notably its brutality, reliance on foreign fighters, and investment in a state as well as its tendency to seek out new enemies. The threat the Islamic State poses is most severe at the local and regional levels. The danger of terrorism to the West is real but mitigated by the Islamic State's continued prioritization of the Muslim world and the heightened focus of Western security forces on the terrorist threat. A high-quality military force could easily defeat Islamic State fighters, but there is no desire to deploy large numbers of Western ground troops, and local forces have repeatedly shown many weaknesses. In the end, containing the Islamic State and making modest rollback efforts may be the best local outcomes.

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