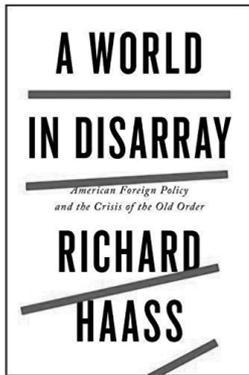


Book Review



A World in Disarray: American Foreign Policy and the Crisis of the Old Order

Richard Haass

Penguin Books, New York, NY, 2018, 359 pp..

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The author, a distinguished public servant in the President George H.W. Bush administration, an academic, writer/scholar, and now president of the Council on Foreign Relations writes a noteworthy book on the evolution of international order from the 17th century to the present. He emphasizes the current hegemonic challenges of U.S. foreign policy in a globally interconnected, complex, and turbulent environment. A world Haass sees as progressively lacking order beyond state sovereignty, pushing back on globalization, and detaching from international community affairs. Haass asserts that the U.S. needs to adapt its foreign policy to be more inclusive and collaborative with other states, and rely more on the mechanisms established in international institutions such as the World Bank (WB), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the United Nations (UN), International Monetary Fund (IMF), etc. to ensure its accustomed influence in international affairs. He concludes by proposing a new World Order 2.0 led by the U.S. that is conducive to peaceful cooperation.

He divides his book into three parts. First, Haass scans the history of international relations from the seventeenth century thru the end of the Cold War in what he calls World Order 1.0. Here he emphasizes the world order of “continuity” that existed even though there were huge differences in the scope and scale of historical events shaping and challenging it, both good and bad. He begins his survey with the Treaty of Westphalia, a seminal agreement which established an understanding among states protecting their internal affairs from interference by other states.

Haass explains that arrangements to balance power and nurture economic interdependence were not always effectively enduring during this period. When order broke down through the purposeful imbalance of power created by the likes of Napoleon and Hitler, order was later restored by agreements such as the Congress of Vienna, the Treaty of Versailles, the creation and empowerment of the United Nations, and other peace promoting international institutions. When there was the inevitable denial of the legitimacy of such arrangements, diplomats eventually restored order with

another established pact, brokered to ensure balanced and peaceful coexistence among states.

The Cold War was conspicuously characterized by geopolitical restraint among rival powers (the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.) with opposing governing and economic philosophies, along with enough nuclear weapons to blow up the world many times over. It was also the era of “liberal democratic order,” when newly established international institutions came into being to broker peace, human rights, promote economic growth and development, protect the environment, and resolve conflict/friction among states.

In the second part of the book Haass reflects upon the regional and global transformation of the past twenty-five years. He highlights U.S. global primacy and its role in shaping U.S. foreign policy. He notes the high and onerous expectations that other states and international institutions have had of the U.S. as the premier global.

With the rise of China, he emphasizes the growing importance of a harmonious China/U.S. relationship – from trade/economic and environmental protection, to human rights and statecraft. The trend toward nationalism and internal focus among states, particularly regarding economics and national security matters, Haass underscores as concerning and detrimental to world order. He offers that this phenomenon has undermined the effectiveness of nearly all international institutions and the neighborly rapport among states.

He offers the WTO Doha round of trade talks as one of many notable examples of how world order is breaking down. Because of the lack of consensus on how to resolve numerous trade issues, the Doha round has yet to conclude, even after 17 years of trade negotiations. The U.S. threat/withdrawal from other multilateral trade pacts such as the North American Free Trade Agreement and the Trans Pacific Partnership are others referenced.

The author conducts a cursory yet insightful regional survey of the multitude of diverse diplomatic challenges, conflicts, and issues facing states and therefore, interstate relations. They range from proxy wars such as Iran’s support of Hezbollah against Israel and Russia’s support of ethnic Russians in Eastern Ukraine, NATO/Russia friction, climate change, cybersecurity, India/Pakistan strife, immigration policy, government corruption, terrorism, nuclear weapons proliferation, and poor governance in the developing world. Ultimately the resistance of globally influential states to cooperate, largely due to their diverging interests has exacerbated the situation. Haass astutely points out that legitimacy and effectiveness are not automatically tantamount to success.

In the third and final part of the book the author proposes a way ahead in implementing a much needed rewrite of international order – a change that is more inclusive and ready to meet the global challenges of today and well into the future (World Order 2.0). He believes it requires every state to do away with manipulative practices that create unfair advantages in such areas as trade whereby countries artificially lower the value of their currency or subsidize production, therefore creating a deceitfully derived cost advantage. In essence, he makes an appeal for all states to put their mutual interests in front of their sovereign interests. He describes it as a “sovereign obligation,” a decree to set aside major-power rivalries (e.g., the U.S., Russia, and China), economic competition, and conflict, for cooperation and consensus building for the greater collective good of the global community.

He calls for the full integration of China in the international affairs and a renaissance in empowerment of international institutions that is rules based, power balancing, and striving for economic interdependency among states. He reiterates that World Order 2.0 requires the U.S. to be a leader of conscience and to use restraint in expanding upon its strategic interests (e.g., not

extending an invitation for NATO membership to Georgia and Ukraine, considered a provocative act by Russia) for the greater good.

Haass recognizes a need to maintain a strong and capable U.S. military, but stresses the necessity and urgency for the U.S. to properly address its growing government debt. He sees a requirement to reform the Medicare, Medicaid, disability, and welfare programs. Finally, he emphasizes the importance of tackling chronic U.S. balance of trade issues, the U.S. loss of business competitiveness, the widening income gap among Americans, an undereducated labor force, and retraining a displaced labor force. All of these issues in combination with the U.S. debt issue weigh down or weaken U.S. global leadership.

This book is written by a visionary in the international relations/affairs field. It is rich in historical insight and is seamlessly woven together in support of his thesis. His analysis is judiciously informed, and ideas are substantive, compelling and persuasive. He purposefully cites critical works in the field that further heighten and enlighten the reader's experience in understanding this broad, sophisticated subject. His friendly, conversational style of communicating often complex topics will have universal appeal to readers. The book is a must read for those working at the highest levels of the U.S. government, military leaders, academics, students, and practitioners alike. It will also be of value to those looking to be smartly informed on the important issues shaping the world and U.S. foreign policy. **IAJ**