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Charles A. Kupchan's
How Enemies Become Friends –The Sources of Stable Peace

Reviewed by Arthur I. Cyr

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This book employs traditional balance of power approaches to world politics, to further understanding of making effective peace. Not surprisingly, therefore, Henry Kissinger is quoted at the top of the list of notables on the back jacket endorsing the book. He pithily describes the work as "...fascinating, thought provoking and consequential."

Kissinger's Harvard Ph.D. dissertation, later published as "A World Restored – Metternich, Castlereagh and the Problems of Peace, 1812-1822," dealt with forging the comprehensive peace settlement at the Congress of Vienna, after the final defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo. Charles Kupchan devotes extensive space to the Concert of Europe, including in particular the radical popular revolts of 1848. The contrast between social and political reforms in Britain and France, and the more reactionary sentiments holding sway in the rest of continental Europe, is rightly highlighted.

Kupchan places the Concert of Europe not directly in the longer flow of European history, but rather in his fresh analytic context. At the start of the book, he compares the Concert with the Iroquois Confederation of North America. Later in the text, he provides immediate comparison with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the European Community and the less successful Persian Gulf Cooperation Council.

Many historians, as well as more conventional political scientists, may complain that certain subtleties are glossed over or overlooked. For instance, Kupchan sees the Concert of Europe as ultimately a failure, given the extremely disruptive nature of the events of 1848. A contrary point of view is that the Concert, and the follow-on Congress of Europe, were fundamentally successful since general war was averted for a century after Waterloo. Regarding recent developments, more detailed discussion of the degree to which European and wider world history has influenced the European Union, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and other organizations cited would have added a useful related dimension.

Integration of the extensive, and somewhat diffuse, historical examples and information assembled by the author is achieved by a consistent conceptual framework. He describes a four-phase process of basic elements necessary for achieving stable peaceful environments. First, a state breaks out of a conflicted diplomatic and security environment by taking an initiative toward peace, described as a unilateral accommodation. Second, the adversary so contacted reacts with indication of reciprocal restraint.

An important third process, if these initial steps are to bear long-term results, is for societal integration to develop between the states which have initiated accommodation. This involves interchange among ordinary citizens as well as relatively influential professionals and leaders in government and the private sector.

The fourth factor is the most general and comprehensive, encompassing “the generation of new narratives and identities.” The author gives emphasis to such amorphous dimensions as popular culture as well as such political icons as “charters, flags, and anthems,” leading to a “new domestic discourse.” In fact, he is actually focusing on the transfer of nationalist and patriotic sentiments from one set of territorial arrangements to another.

Successful security communities for Kupchan include the Concert of Europe until 1853, the European Economic Community until 1963, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations right up to the present. Just as he is too harsh in judging the Concert, the same applies to discussion of the European Community, given the challenged and troubled but still successful expansion into the more substantial European Union, which has a single currency as well as a truly common market.

As for achieving national union, Kupchan cites as success stories the unification of Germany and Italy as well as the United States. Less nationalistic examples provided are the Swiss Confederation from 1291 to 1848, the Iroquois Confederation cited above, which lasted from 1450 to 1777, and the United Arab Emirates from 1971.

The author is particularly impressed by Anglo-American rapprochement, though he mentions the very extensive examination of this relationship by historians may give this example too much weight. He might just as easily argue that his emphasis is confirmed by earlier students, over a very long period of time.

Given the significance of anti-British sentiment in American politics and popular discussion before the Second World War, his emphasis is further justified. The importance of Theodore Roosevelt in evolution of sentiment in the direction of support for British power and influence is highlighted, along with the closely related influence of Alfred Thayer Mahan and his maritime perspective on great power influence.

Kupchan’s splendid thought-provoking analysis is implicitly congruent with a wider evolution of American political science toward greater emphasis on economics. The return to political economy, which British scholars never really abandoned, has been in part a reaction to the rise of the multinational corporation in the 1960s, as well as the end of U.S. international economic

dominance seen in President Richard Nixon's termination of Bretton Woods fixed exchange rates in 1971.

Meanwhile, U.S. economists, if chastened since those years regarding predictable management of the economy, continue generally to ignore political scientists. Books such as this one may encourage wider dialogue, not least because of persuasive use of history, and a fine polished prose style.

Arthur I. Cyr is Clausen Distinguished Professor at Carthage College in Wisconsin and the author of "After the Cold War – American Foreign Policy, Europe and Asia" (Macmillan and NYU Press). Contact him at: acyr@carthage.edu.