

**Military Threats: The Costs of Coercion and the Price of Peace** by **Branislav L. Slantchev**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. 313pp., £55.00, ISBN 9780521763189

Branislav Slantchev's *Military Threats* makes an impressive contribution to the crisis escalation literature. Motivated by the puzzle of how states credibly demonstrate their resolve during a crisis, the author focuses on how physical military moves affect state behaviour. These moves have informational consequences, as they can signal the credible resolve of a particular state. In addition, these moves have functional consequences, as they affect the probability of victory in a potential war. By endogenising the war pay-off, Slantchev reveals potent mechanisms that can explicitly or implicitly compel state behaviour. While there are several important theoretical results derived from the formal analysis, a major finding is that military moves can demonstrate credible commitments, but not on the cheap. This is especially troubling for militarily powerful states, who find that reputation can be a 'curse for the strong' (p. 93). If states can engage in costly mobilisation actions to demonstrate their resolve credibly, this can decrease the probability of war. However, military moves can also lead to increased situational instability of the crisis. In other words, physical military moves may escalate a crisis to a war, even when the states' preferences favour peace.

Although largely a game-theoretic argument, Slantchev effectively makes his theory accessible to those less comfortable with formal methods. In addition, the author uses a host of illustrative examples and a longer case study to complement his theoretical assertions. His case analysis of the Korean War explains how China and the United States found themselves at war, although their preferences would have suggested otherwise. The author's conclusion that China did not do enough in terms of military moves to deter the United States from crossing the 38th parallel challenges existing signalling explanations of this conflict.

One limitation of this study is that the implications for the author's arguments are understated. Slantchev begins this analysis with a careful review of the existing crisis literature, and finds that these models do not fully account for credible signalling. This is especially true for audience cost models, which underpin a significant portion of the formal democratic peace literature. As a result, the reader is left wondering how Slantchev's

theory affects these predictions, or how military moves affect different regime types in general. Despite this omission, this work offers a rich theoretical foundation for future empirical research on the effectiveness of military moves in crisis bargaining.

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**Power and Progress: International Politics in Transition** by **Jack Snyder (ed.)**. Abingdon: Routledge, 2012. 316pp., £25.99, ISBN 9780415575737

This book brings together a collection of essays written primarily by the leading American international relations theorist Jack Snyder. Featuring contributions from other eminent scholars such as Robert Jervis and Thomas J. Christensen, the book focuses on collecting liberal ideas of democratisation and realist ideas of anarchy and power politics. Like much of Snyder's previous work, these essays seek to explore the relationship between the realist views of domination and security, with the liberal logic of progress and political development.

This collection therefore brings together much of Snyder's contribution to IR since the early 1990s. While on the one hand these essays show Snyder's outstanding contribution to political science, it is difficult to see the relevance of all of the essays to contemporary debates. As they have been published over a twenty-year time period, they are not all relevant to contemporary issues and a couple would perhaps have best been left out. However, most of them provide useful context and show the development of Snyder's thought regarding the progress of democratisation and its impact on international power struggles.

Although Snyder is not the first scholar to try to bring together liberal and realist ideas, his focus on democratisation and power struggles could be particularly useful in regard to recent developments in Russia and the Middle East. The timely release of this book demonstrates how much of Snyder's research will continue to be relevant for the foreseeable future, especially at a time when there are power transitions in many democratic and non-democratic nations.

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