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# Great Power Competition for Overseas Bases

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the financial constraints imposed by increasing debt burdens.

*Arms Transfers under Nixon* does contain some weaknesses. Sorley displays the annoying habit of dismissing certain issues after devoting insufficient attention to them. Surely the Angola case study deserves more than five paragraphs? Iran, where the Nixon policy of unrestrained arms transfers attracted much criticism, is not treated adequately. Possible limitations on the utility of arms transfers, as President Carter discovered with South Korea, are not discussed. The problem of reverse linkage between clients and suppliers is not mentioned.

What *Arms Transfers under Nixon* does do well, however, is make the useful point that leverage in controlling arms races and limiting conflicts can only come from a policy of selling arms. And, at a higher conceptual level, it reminds us that all defense decisions rightfully belong within the larger framework of foreign policy formulations.

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Harkavy, Robert E. *Great Power Competition for Overseas Bases: The Geopolitics of Access Diplomacy*. New York: Pergamon Press, 1982. 368pp. \$34.50

Robert Harkavy, a political scientist at Pennsylvania State University, has produced an ambitious work about the struggle among the great powers for access to overseas bases. This important subject did not receive adequate attention during

the 1950s and 1960s. The "behavioral revolution" consumed the energies of scholars treating international relations while strategic thinkers concentrated on subjects such as deterrence, limited warfare, and counterinsurgency. More recently crises such as those in Iran, Afghanistan, and the Horn of Africa have revived interest in access to overseas bases. Harkavy believes that a study of this subject is one way of understanding "the broader contours of contemporary strategy and the long-range evolution of the major powers' global power balance," a means of coping with what he calls the "current malaise" in American strategic thought.

Chapters 3-5, the heart of this book, provide a grand compendium of highly useful information about the basing policies of all the great powers since the First World War. Harkavy treats the interwar period (1919-1939), the early post-World War II years to the 1960s, and finally the "modern era." The fruit of this historical survey is a "secular trend" that is summarized neatly: "the basis of access first shifted from colonial control to military alliances, and then somewhat from the latter to various forms of quid pro quo, often in the absence of formal alliances. Though it is by no means the entire story, the evolving nexus between arms transfers and access to facilities has been central to the more recent changes."

Harkavy makes explicit use of "systems theory" as derived from Morton Kaplan and Richard Rose-

crance. This approach, he writes, "involves the division of diplomatic history into more or less discrete eras . . . demarcated by major wars or by other significant watershed events." So far, so good. Historians do this sort of thing all the time. But further, "bracketed by such watersheds, historical epochs can then be compared according to a variety of general characteristics . . . which in one way or another would be applicable or germane to any period." Even better! Many comparative historians approach their subjects in this fashion, although not always as rigorously as Harkavy, Rosecrance, and Kaplan. The author sensibly concludes that he has in mind "a very flexible framework for comparative history with a long-term historical dimension," a statement that all should welcome.

Running through this book is a discussion of geopolitics as a mode of analysis along with comment on the status of geopolitical relations at various times in the past. This emphasis is entirely appropriate. The study of access to overseas bases instantly leads to geopolitics, construed generally as the relationship between international power and geography, as the field is described by the geographer Saul Cohen. Harkavy comments extensively on the views of geopolitical pioneers such as Mahan, Mackinder, and Haushofer, and he also summarizes the ideas advanced by contemporary practitioners such as Robert Walters, Colin Gray, and Geoffrey Kemp. He believes that

contemporary changes in the environment require significant revisions of traditional geopolitical views. The old analyses, he suggests, assumed a clearly defined line separating the traditional contestants in geopolitical struggles—the heartland powers and the rimland and/or insular powers. In our time the pattern is "much more dispersed and diffused." The principal heartland power, the USSR, has overflowed the traditional line by establishing bases around the world and seeking to develop a blue-water navy.

What judgment can be made of this work? The subject matter is of great importance; those who neglect the relations between power and geography are largely precluded from making useful contributions to the study of international power relations. Welcome also is the sensitivity to historical analysis inherent in Harkavy's version of the "systems approach." Only two quibbles need be noted here.

One has to do with the tendency for black despair that so often colors geopolitical analyses. Harkavy escapes this vice to a degree—much more so than dour practitioners such as Colin Gray. It is entirely possible to derive a certain optimism about the future from geopolitical analysis rather than the prevailing alarmism and pessimism. Most geopoliticians, including Harkavy, discern a disadvantageous alteration in the "correlation of forces" that bodes ill for the future of the rimland and insular powers. Those who entertain this view fail to take into account a body

of evidence pointing to the return of a rough balance of power in Eurasia. In a word, the evolving relation between power and geography may be viewed as potentially more and more constraining to potential hegemomizers in Eurasia and more and more favorable to antihegemonic powers. If this outlook should prevail, then the grand strategy of the United States might contain very different prescriptions for the exercise of various elements of national power than are generally entertained in the present school of geopoliticians.

A second reservation has to do with the presentation of this book—it is most difficult to read and absorb. A simple, clear prose style would have helped greatly. Equally useful would have been a more effective effort to subordinate information for greater ease of interpretation. The reader is so inundated with data that its meaning is often missed, especially when presented in complicated sentences loaded with clutter.

Despite these problems it behooves serious students of the field to stay with this book. It is an impressive contribution to almost any person interested in national security policy. Its careful, responsible theoretical basis should force serious thinking of geopolitical approaches to international relations.

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N.Y.: Sheridan House, 1982. 2nd ed. 340pp. \$26.50

For many years (and through many editions) J.L. Brierly's *The Law of Nations* was almost the standard text to be recommended to the newcomer to the study of international law, including the layman motivated only by an academic interest in the subject. The sixth and last edition of that work, edited by Sir Humphrey Waldock after Brierly's death, was published in 1963. Needless to say, there have been many important developments in international law during the two decades which have elapsed since that date. In 1970 Michael Akehurst's *A Modern Introduction to International Law* made its appearance; and its fourth edition was published in 1982. Continuing the English tradition, in 1973 the first edition of the book under review appeared; and now we have its second edition. All of which indicates that there is a specific need for well-written, lucid, and fairly easily understood, texts on international law. Maryan Green's *International Law: Law of Peace* definitely comes within that category.

The format adopted by the author includes the use of catchwords and rubrics followed by definitions or short explanatory statements. While this process can result in misleading oversimplification, Mr. Green has successfully avoided this pitfall with the result that the layman or the neophyte in the field of international law (a class which includes the vast majority of lawyers) will have little difficulty in locating and in under-