

1970

The Conflict of Generations

E. H. Steentofte
U.S. Navy

Lewis S. Feuer

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

Recommended Citation

Steentofte, E. H. and Feuer, Lewis S. (1970) "The Conflict of Generations," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 23 : No. 1 , Article 13.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol23/iss1/13>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu.

between U.S. foreign policy and that body of jurisprudence that is recognized as international law. A brief historical introduction to the development of international law in the first chapter is followed by analysis of the consistencies and inconsistencies of major U.S. foreign policy decisions in relation to the points of international law then prevailing. It is clear from this analysis that in her pursuit of national objectives through her foreign policy, the United States has, for the most part, been in consonance with the accepted law, and where she has deviated she has given due notice of her intentions and reasons therefor. The book also points out the constraints on foreign policy which operate as a result of attempting to follow the law consistently and the consequences that may ensue from deviating from international standards of legality.

Professor Fenwick is the unusual writer on international law who is capable of translating the concepts of that law into prose understandable by the layman. His style is lucid, and his discussions are much to the point, with a notable absence of jargon. This book is consistent with those characteristics. It falters in only two respects. Firstly, the book presupposes a considerably greater storehouse of knowledge of the history of U.S. foreign policy than one would normally expect the man in the street to possess. Secondly, it is dangerous to isolate incidents of foreign policy out of historical context in that it necessitates oversimplifications which are not conducive to an understanding of the issues involved. Thus, to say that the Foreign Ministers of the Organization of American States decided to intervene in the Dominican Republic in 1965 (p. 59) would seem to be an oversimplification of a complicated series of events more political in nature than a look at the law would reveal. The questions posed at the end of each section of the book, particularly those

asking for justification of certain acts, reflect this lack of historical background, since the answers in most cases may be found in the diplomatic history of the event itself. Despite these shortcomings, this book is highly recommended reading for those interested in perceiving international law in its proper perspective, i.e., in relation to the international diplomacy from which it derives many of its salient features.

J.E. WESSEL
Commander, U.S. Navy

Feuer, Lewis S. *The Conflict of Generations*. New York: Basic Books, 1969. 543p.

As Professor of Philosophy and Social Science at the University of California, Berkeley, Lewis Feuer had an unusual opportunity to observe the Berkeley student uprising. These observations reinforced his belief that all student movements follow the same pattern and led to his writing *The Conflict of Generations* in which he analyzes past student movements to show the recurring traits. The emphasis of his analysis is on the psychological factors that determine lines of thought and action. Although students feel that their focus of attention is on society, Professor Feuer believes that human nature in the form of generational conflict is the real source of student unrest. In his view, if "exploitation" is the master term for defining class conflict, "alienation" is the term for the conflict of generations. Reviewing the characteristics of student movements during the past 150 years, and particularly those of the sixties in the United States, he presents a strong case for his thesis that every student movement is the outcome of a "de-authorization" of the elder generation, presumably through some historical failure. "They arise wherever social and historical circumstances combine to cause a crisis in loss of generational confidence, which impels the young to resentment and uprising." The

student desire to identify with a social issue, such as civil rights, is a secondary component and results from feelings of guilt combined with altruistic emotions. These conflicts have repeatedly resulted in the most idealistic student movement converting itself into a blind, irrational power hostile to liberal democratic values and have led to eventual self-destruction. It is Professor Feuer's hope that, through exposure, the self-destructiveness and guilts of generational revolt can be reduced in order to gain the benefits of the students' idealism. Fortunately, considering its length, *The Conflict of Generations* is really two books in one. For the scholar there is detailed analysis of numerous student movements and up to nine pages of footnotes and source material at the end of each chapter. For the reader whose interest is confined to concern over the social unrest in the United States, the chapters of the book relating to foreign student movements can be skipped with little loss of understanding.

The Conflict of Generations is interesting, easy to read, and affords the over-30 generation a much needed insight into the motivations that drive the more radical elements of the young.

E.H. STEENTOFTE
Commander, U.S. Navy

Kissinger, Henry A. *American Foreign Policy*. New York: Norton, 1969. 143p.

The three essays which comprise this compact volume were written by Dr. Kissinger before he assumed his present position as President Nixon's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs. For all its compactness this book has a great deal to offer to anyone desiring a better perspective and understanding, not only of American Foreign policy, but of the structure and nature of the international system as well. The first essay, "Domestic Structure and Foreign Policy," looks at the widely differing

social and political systems in the world and outlines the problems that they pose for international relations. For the purposes of this essay, the author concentrates on the administrative systems and the backgrounds of national leadership groups in order to analyze how these affect the conduct of international affairs. One of the many incisive points made in this essay is that those who have succeeded in reaching the top in the Communist leadership have had to be "single-minded, unemotional, dedicated, and, above all, motivated by an enormous desire for power." This, says Kissinger, dictates against Soviet leaders' accepting declaration of good will at "face value." In his second essay, "Central Issues of American Foreign Policy," Kissinger stresses the "structural and conceptual problems rather than specific policy issues." The key root word is "concept," a word quite appropriate to the overall thesis that the author weaves in each of these essays. In this particular article the concern is that the United States must formulate clear conceptions of the kind of world order and structure she is looking for, and, at all times, the right questions must be asked about the whole essence of American foreign policy. The Nixon administration's intensive review of U.S. foreign policy is probably linked, at least in part, with Kissinger's ideas as here expressed. The last selection, "The Vietnam Negotiations," is the well-known article which first appeared in this year's January issue of *Foreign Affairs*. This essay—as well as the others for that matter—deserves careful reading, even if one has already read it or feels that he knows enough about it because of the amount of comment the article elicited.

As is customary with most of Kissinger's writing, these articles are not only perceptive and illuminating, but very well written indeed. This does not mean that one quick reading will give full value. A second or even third perusal will prove even more rewarding.