Religion and Security: The New Nexus in International Relations

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what the organization must commit in resources, capabilities, and management tools. For instance, incremental innovation reapplies existing technology and business practices. It can be delivered in a shorter time with less expense than radical or semiradical innovation, but it lacks the punch for competitive repositioning.

The authors’ working definition of innovation is capturing creativity and then adding value so it benefits the organization. Their innovation framework is a sequence of integrated management decisions and actions. The first and most important decision is determining whether the innovation project is aligned with the organization’s strategy and capabilities. There is extensive discussion about modifying an organization’s culture so that it can sustain innovation. Every organization has what the authors call “antibodies,” those rules, attitudes, procedures, and habits that insidiously suffocate new ideas. Leadership must provide management systems to support the innovation process, such as mechanisms to capture and evaluate creative ideas, ensure adequate resources, measure progress, and reward personnel. The authors repeatedly emphasize that the integrity of the innovation process and the results reflect leadership’s skill and commitment.

The audience for this book is business executives. However, military and national security leaders will find practical recommendations and management techniques applicable for their mission. The book contains an extensive bibliography and references.

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Those serving in the military and foreign service stereotypically show scant professional interest in religion. Presumably the security and interests of states hinge on secular concerns. Merging religion with politics only complicates matters, often inviting violence, as wars of religion or terrorist acts of militant Islamists remind us. Religion and Security innovatively complicates such Westphalian dispositions, urging readers to appreciate the religious complexities of today’s global security environment and to consider the possibilities that constructive religious engagement offers for citizens and states the world over. Yes, religion is part of the problem, we are reminded, but it is part of the solution as well.

“There is, quite simply,” the book argues in toto, “a positive nexus between religion and security, and the international community ignores it at its considerable peril.” Why we have been slow to come to this conclusion is hypothesized in the first chapter, by strategic-studies expert Pauletta Otis.

Editors Robert Seiple and Dennis Hoover have assembled a dynamic and diverse array of scholars, practitioners, and experts from many fields and political walks of life. Seiple, former U.S. ambassador at large for International Religious Freedom, and Hoover both belong to the Institute for Global Engagement, the “think tank with legs.” They have divided the book into four sections, examining religion’s relationship to violence and insecurity, pluralism
and political stability, military intervention and conflict resolution, and human freedoms and civil society. Collectively, the book’s fourteen chapters convey the point that theology, scripture, ethics, and religious studies contribute essential resources to global stability and a mature understanding of international affairs. Several overarching themes hold the book together; only a few underrunning concerns common to edited volumes impede its steep ambitions.

Foremost, the contributors caution readers about the inadequacies of traditional realist paradigms. An overdetermined realpolitik not only obstructs religious concerns from political view but depletes the ethical resources that often flow from religious ideas. See especially chapters by Robert Seiple and ethicist Jean Bethke Elshtain, who draw respectively from scripture and the just-war tradition to argue forcefully for responsible civic engagement on behalf of victims of atrocities. Several essays point up that it is hardly “realistic” to ignore so potent a force of human identity and motivation as religion. Kevin Hasson’s political-philosophical analysis powerfully drills home the notion that any sustainable political structure or system must presuppose a “moral anthropology” or account of human nature in which the “built-in thirst for the transcendent” can flourish and be protected. Historian Philip Jenkins’s essay also argues for protecting religious freedom: societies that repress or eliminate religious opposition often embolden those they persecute, driving them underground, militarizing them, sacralizing their persecution, and creating long-term animosities and insecurity. Where Jenkins offers a wide range of examples, an illuminating chapter by Chris Seiple and Joshua White casts a focused look at Uzbekistan, a latent hotspot below many people’s security radar screens. Together, these authors showcase a central motif: when religious freedom is jeopardized for some, political stability is imperiled for many—a worry that should consume any self-styled realist. Reciprocally, as chapters by Christopher Hall, Osman bin Bakar, and others reveal, when religious pluralism and tolerance are nurtured, political security is made more certain.

A shared vision in this volume is the need for a more comprehensive political outlook than political realism customarily affords. Various authors issue calls for a more “holistic,” inclusive, and robust political ethic that extends beyond a cramped view of states and their rulers and interests by engaging citizens, civic groups, and those who struggle—often in the shadows, sometimes through force—for a place in the political daylight. Given the era of globalization in which we dwell, an approach more attuned to dispersed power structures is more realistic than certain traditional forms that “hard” geopolitics offer. Thus does Harold Saunders (a twenty-year veteran of the National Security Council) appeal for an alternative paradigm of “relational realism,” one that takes stock of the “full complex of human interactions that contribute to (or subvert) security.” Thus does Hall argue for the cultivation of “religious diplomacy” and “diplomatic virtues,” echoing Douglas Johnston, whose foreword proposes the creation of religious attachés in the U.S. Foreign Service. (The U.S. military should follow suit.) Thus does Elshtain elevate low realist expectations with a tenable model of citizenship she labels...
“justice as equal regard”—the equal right of besieged victims to have force used on their behalf.

Those of us who serve or have served in the military often draw our battle lines starkly: black and white, good and evil, us and them. This crucial book offers a chastening reminder not only of the many shades of gray needed to nuance a view of religion as it relates to global security in a confusing new age but also of the richly colorful tapestry woven by religious ideas and approaches to political problems. If that doesn’t persuade, then simply recall the book’s thesis: nations that respect religion’s role in the world are far more secure than those that do not.

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Ralph Sawyer continues his work on Chinese political and military writings with The Tao of Spycraft. The title, however, may be somewhat misleading. Rather than compartmentalizing intelligence separate from other endeavors, Sawyer demonstrates how intelligence is an integral aspect of war, diplomacy, and politics.

A sampling of current war college articles shows a strong interest in “integrating all elements of national power,” for which the Defense Department uses the acronym DIME (diplomatic, informational, military, and economic). Sawyer demonstrates that this was a common concept thousands of years ago in China. Diplomatic maneuvers, economic inducements, propaganda, and whispering campaigns were all an essential element of statecraft. Most important, unlike our contemporary U.S. attitudes, intelligence was not isolated as some kind of supporting activity or a commodity accessed when needed but an integral part of all state activities.

The book is divided into six parts: Early History, Spycraft, Covert Activities, Theories of Evaluating and Intelligence, Military Intelligence, and Prognostication, Divination, and Nonhuman Factors. Each part contains several topical chapters, each rich with examples from Chinese history. For example, part 4 (Theories of Evaluating and Intelligence), chapter 10 (“Basic Theory and Issues”) provides a primer on critical thinking and evaluation as good as any contemporary U.S. intelligence text. It addresses analytic biases and prejudices, how to judge the reliability and credibility of sources, how to make assessments on limited information, and confidence levels of assessments—all issues the intelligence community must continually address.

Several common concepts run the length of the book. The first is the integration of intelligence into statecraft. Another is the view that intelligence is essentially a human endeavor. The statesman, the general, and the spymaster must understand both human nature in general and the personalities of their colleagues, allies, and enemies in particular.

This work is not without flaws. It cries out for maps, especially political maps of the “Spring and Autumn” and “Warring States” periods. The book assumes that the reader has a basic understanding of traditional Chinese history and