
International Relations since 1945: East, West, North, South

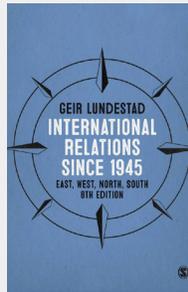
By Geir Lunderstad

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In *International Relations Since 1945: East, West, North, South*, Lunderstad traverses a vast historical timeline of International Relations (IR) that encompasses the Cold War (1945-1993) and the post-Cold War period up to 2017. In sixteen chapters, he criticizes the traditionalist-revisionist debate for “single-factor explanation” (p. x) while stressing the “mutual accountability of both the East and West” (p. 11) using a post-revisionist perspective. The author aims to give breath to East, West, North, and South relations by remedying the limitations of the already existent literature that he perceives as having shallow thematic analysis. His thesis focuses on U.S. and Soviet relations, not merely describing the history, but “reviewing the motivating forces, cause and effect” (p. xi) of the events and the recurring patterns in contemporary IR. Through subject analysis method, he frames IR in terms of the rise and fall of the East and West discourse and its impact on North and South politics. The author departs from the conventional historical method of interacting with Cold War and IR and demonstrates that the “past is bound to the East and West together.” Thus, the present IR owes its shape to the past (p. 14).

According to Lunderstad, the rise and fall of great powers is a permanent feature of IR. He suggests that the “Cold War was motivated by the need to fill the power vacuum;” there-



fore, neither the East nor the West can be solely blamed for it (p. 12). The rivalry can be explained with the help of two elements. The first element is the structure of the international system of anarchy in which the absence of central authority leads to state security maximization. The second is the ideological battle between capitalism and communism. Lunderstad focuses on periods of East-West competition and cooperation from the 1900s industrial revolution until the post-1945 which led to the emergence of the U.S. and the Soviet Union as preponderant powers in 1993. These two factors explain U.S.-Russia conflicts and alliance competition raging on in the 21st century.

In the book, Lunderstad demonstrates that trends in the U.S. and Russian foreign policy have remained constant, although the pursuit of goals is affected by changes in political personalities, ideological differences, and political and economic systems. American interests are global, and the U.S. pursues them by building defense capabilities, supra-national bodies, and alliances (both military and economic) and providing aid. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, supported communism and nationalist colonial resistance movements. Today's Russia similarly supports national autonomies of periphery states from the U.S. For the author, these endeavors account for the arms race from the year

1945 to 2016, which was largely determined by the geopolitics of the Cold War. The apparent fact is that “the quantitative question of armament was visible, but the qualitative question played a greater role” (p. 125). The West and East expected continued hostility, so they shifted to cheap nuclear weapons to attain Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) while cutting the cost of conventional armies. Overall, the motivating factors were national security and economic sustenance. Accordingly, the Cold War became global, albeit with different intensity in different regions, because both sides pushed for global hegemony.

Lundestad explains why the *Détente* (1962-1975) resulted in a reduced struggle despite the continuity of hostilities between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. It marked a period of openness between the East and the West, leading to negotiations resulting in SALT-I, SALT-II (Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty), and NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty). The *Détente* sought to avoid direct East-West confrontation and encourage acceptance of the status quo, reduce arms-related technological competition, to lower military spending, and buy time for U.S. economic recovery. During this period, the Soviet Union was indirectly accepted as a superpower due to “respect for each other’s virtual regions” (p. 76). Despite this, “gray zones were in the third world and these drew superpowers to hostility” (p. 79).

From Chapter 9 to Chapter 13, the author explores IR and East-West tensions in relation to the North and the South. The U.S. used expansion by invitation (the Marshall plan 1947, the EU, the NATO). From Truman’s presidency in 1947 to the Trump presidency in 2016, American interest in Europe decreased while American national interest

increased. On the other hand, Russia used effective control (East Germany, and North Vietnam, Crimea) and provided support to independence movements. However, after the fall of the Soviet Union, East-European states transitioned to democracy. Lundestad also demonstrates how and U.S.-Japan relations and the U.S.-Sino-Soviet triangle of 1972 helped China escaped dependency and to rise as a key actor in the new global world.

In Chapters 13 to 14, Lundestad demonstrates that while the East and West conflicted, decolonization became thematic. Lundestad shows that, this process was caused by a lack of willingness and capacity to maintain colonies and a weakening of the international positions of colonial powers. This explains post-colonial aid and trade relations which were used by the West 1950-1985 to deter former colonies from joining the Soviet Union. However, in the early 1990s, the failure of aid and the Washington consensus explain the current economic predicament of most of the third world. This brings the debate concerning the relevant development strategies to the fore.

In Chapter 15, the author claims that the globalization before 1945 was later replaced with fragmentation. Citing regionalism as an example of the impracticality of global co-operation, he argues that in the Cold War, East-West blocs existed; later China and North Korea fragmented from the Soviet Union and took a different path, as did the Non-aligned Movement. Separatism is soaring, and there are four levels of explanation: first, the political-cultural level, where exposure to the different political system results in “long distance nationalism” (p. 287); second, the ideological level, where one ideology infiltrates beyond the borders; third, technology exploited by small groups to push agendas;

and fourth the economic level, where “small states can break out and form its own country without suffering economic consequences” (p. 288). Clearly, state size no longer determines the pace of political and ideological transformation.

An apparent weakness in the author’s style of presentation is the repetition of the same cases or information relevant to different themes for instance the Cuban Missile crisis. Another notable downside of the book is the final, 16th chapter, in which the author seems to explore the future without ending with a solid thesis, and instead of a series of generalizations. In this chapter, Lundestad uses prosaic statements such as the following: “The fact that something did not happen in the past does not mean that it will not be happen-

ing in the future.” (p. 296). Based on this assertion, he bundles together issues of “asymmetric warfare and the U.S. lack of cooperation in the environmental field” and calls for reform of the system (p. 302). However, he does not clearly explain how these will shape IR. Thus, the book ends on a weak note. After discussing the IR elaborately, the book could have ended with a bold and clear prediction, which is not the case.

Despite these limitations, *International Relations Since 1945: East, West, North, South*, does offer insight into the extent to which the present IR system owes its existence to the past. For students and practitioners of IR seeking to understand why certain events and state relations continue to replicate in the 21st century, this is an ideal book.

Strategy and Strategic Discourse in Turkish Foreign Policy

By Hasan Yükselen

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Strategy has been a much-debated concept in the International Relations discipline. In his book, Hasan Yükselen, chooses not to simplify strategy as a prolongation of states’ military objectives. Instead, he comes up with theoretical evidence from Turkish foreign policy to show that strategy does not operate in a vacuum and that it evolves historically and sociologically. According to the author, in this process, the agent, who/which may be a leader or a group, depending on the state, pours its thought into action but beyond that, the agent represents strategy through



discourse. Yükselen puts forward the questions: how do discourses represent strategy? How did the discursive aspects of different strategies in Turkish foreign policy shift between 1919 and 2015? By taking the shifts in Turkish foreign policy into account, Yükselen lucidly demonstrates the relationship between different strategies and discourses in Turkey.

After introducing the concept of strategy in the first two chapters, the author scrutinizes revisionism as a leading strategy of Turkey

in 1919-1923, in chapter three. Yükselen begins this chapter by arguing that the strategic end was the transformation of the Ottoman Empire into a Turkish nation-state, whereas the means were force and diplomacy between 1919-1923. According to the author, the empire was compelled to employ a balance-of-power strategy as a survival tactic, yet structural factors such as its relative weakness and the rise of nationalism governed this period. These structural factors accelerated the dismantling of the empire. He illustrates that both late-Ottoman leaders and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk benefitted from a balance-of-power strategy to overcome relative weakness, but that Atatürk embraced this strategy to allocate means and ensure the end –independence–rather than to prolong the ongoing conflict. Hence, Yükselen’s vigilance in distinguishing between different balance-of-power strategies should be praised.

The author examines the challenging days of the new Republic in chapter four. The leitmotifs in this chapter are ‘reconstruction’ and ‘isolationism,’ which were the ways of ensuring the development of the country through diplomacy. The author’s articulation is remarkable since he argues that Turkey’s relative weakness continued to endure, but the decline of the European establishment relieved it in this period. Namely, following the emergence of internal crises in Europe, Turkey ended up possessing ‘relative autonomy.’

Although Turkey’s isolationism emanated from fear from the West, 1929 is a critical juncture, when rapprochement with the West replaced this fear. This fear, which is deeply rooted in Ottoman-Turkish history, simply refers to the perception of being surrounded by enemies, mostly Western, attempting to weaken and/or destroy the Turkish state. Nevertheless, in light of Turkey’s decades-old

Westernization experiences, Yükselen’s strict emphasis on it is questionable. ‘Fear from the West,’ which later evolved into ‘Sevresphobia,’ was not the primary concern of Turkish foreign policymakers. That is why they opted to cooperate with the West in order to prevent spillover effects from the instabilities in Europe in the 1930s.

“Turkey cannot assure its security through forging alliances” is the discourse of its strategy between 1939-1945. Chapter five, considering this era, revisits the increasing threat against Turkey’s territorial integrity during WWII. According to Yükselen, Turkey’s previously adopted policy of staying away from the frictions in the West had to change. Thus, Turkish policymakers opted for a cautious normalization between the warring parties. Non-belligerency was the formula to actualize the strategic end of avoiding destruction. Yükselen refers to the argument of Selim Deringil. Recalling Deringil’s conception of “active neutrality,”¹ Yükselen asserts that “commitments leaving no room for maneuver were refrained to allow more flexibility” (p. 125).

Chapter six provides a persuasive explanation of how undertaking commitments can be detrimental to the interests of a middle power, such as Turkey, involved in post-war dynamics. In consideration of the bipolarity of the era, Yükselen argues that the threat of a resurgent Soviet Russia challenged Turkey’s prior strategic ends, with the result that ‘assertive integration’ replaced Turkey’s strategy of balancing power. Under its new policy, Turkey promptly took steps to undertake commitments to be embedded in the Western alliance. Here Yükselen’s reference to Huseyin Bağcı’s remarks² is significant, since Bağcı lucidly elaborates on prime minister Adnan Menderes’ choice to reject the strat-

egy of neutrality when Menderes “showed no elasticity in that consideration” (p. 149). Nevertheless, Yükselen finally demonstrates that Turkey had a reasonable rationale for initiating its estrangement from the West because U.S. President Johnson’s patronizing style toward Turkey in the infamous ‘Johnson Letter’ pushed Turkey to re-evaluate its accommodation with the West. This articulation, *prima facie*, offers a convincing explanation. However, Yükselen should have elaborated on the reasons behind Menderes’ choice of abandoning neutrality.

In chapter seven, Yükselen argues that Turkey once again gave up balancing with the great powers when Turgut Özal assumed the prime ministry. He argues that Özal staunchly intended to rebuild closer relations with the United States. One of the most striking differences between the strategy of the Özal leadership and that of prior administrations was Özal’s strategic end of creating a Turkish sphere of influence in Turkey’s neighboring regions. Although Özal’s active foreign policy was based on preventing any possible spillover of instabilities into Turkey, Yükselen should have explored whether there is a tie between Özal’s relatively tolerant stance regarding the assertive American military-political presence in the Middle East and Özal’s foreign policy priority to consolidate Turkey’s influence in post-Soviet Central Asia.

Finally, the eighth chapter covers the discursive aspects of the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AK Party). According to Yükselen, reminiscent of Özal’s regional mobilization, the strategic aim of

the AK Party was the reassertion of Turkey’s regional/global power. However, the author is insistent on the continuity between the AK Party’s ‘zero problems with neighbors’ policy and Atatürk’s ‘peace at home, peace in the world’ discourse. The author’s insistence on this continuity, in fact, is a convincing and an eloquent expression laying emphasis on the durability of Turkey’s relative weakness as a structural factor over years. Despite Turkey’s perennial constraints, Yükselen can demonstrate that a kind of pragmatism and activism can be perceived under a relatively pacified foreign policy, as in the case of the Arab Spring, in which Turkey assumed a significant role.

Hasan Yükselen’s *Strategy and Strategic Discourse in Turkish Foreign Policy* is a well-rounded source of analysis. The book provides a wealth of necessary theoretical and historical background for understanding the security strategies of Turkish foreign policy. Yükselen grounds its discussion on the question of how the discursive aspects of Turkey’s strategy were shaped between 1919 and 2015. Although it disregards some minor factors and connections among several political developments, Yükselen’s analysis should be praised for its well-rounded analysis, especially for academics and students researching Turkish foreign policy.

Endnotes

1. Selim Deringil, *Denge Oyunu: İkinci Dünya Savaşı’nda Türkiye’nin Dış Politikası*, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Publications, 2012), p. 32.
2. Hüseyin Bağcı, *Türk Dış Politikasında 1950’li Yıllar*, (Ankara: ODTÜ Publication, 2001), p. 134.