

## BOOK REVIEWS

Yunker, James A. 2007. *Political Globalization*. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America. 404 pages, ISBN-13: 978-0-7618-3845-6 Cloth (\$50.00). ISBN-10: 0-7618-3845-7 Paper (NPL).

James Yunker's *Political Globalization* is the outgrowth of over 40 years of work on the need for and implementation of a world government. According to Yunker one of the aims of this book is to show how resistance to democratic market socialism can be countered with his model for world government (the Federal Union of Democratic Arguments). He also presents a model to counter fears that there would be a massive redistribution of wealth from the First World to the Third World (though some may find these terms dated). The World Economic Equalization Program would transfer investment resources (not finished consumer products) to the Least Developed Countries. Although the book's ideas are directed primarily to the interests of economists and political scientists, sociologists will also find them valuable.

The book has three parts of three chapters each. "A New Approach to World Government" begin with "Federal World Government: Introduction and Overview" which focuses on the pros and cons of world government. Next "A Pragmatic Blueprint for World Government" focuses on Yunker's blueprint for World Government including three branches of the proposed world government as well their limitations and authorizations. Chapter three, "Some Historical Background on World Government," presents an historical background on world government which also includes postwar western designs for a world state.

The next part, "Overcoming the Economic Impediment," begin, with "World Economic Inequality" devoted to a discussion of the global economic gap and its impact on world peace. "World Economic Inequality" follows with a history of foreign development assistance and an evaluation of its effectiveness. Chapter six, "A World Economic Equalization Program," focuses on his model of the World Economic Equalization (WEEP) and includes model policy simulations as well as his evaluation of them.

In the last part; "Overcoming the Political Impediment," "The Issue of Nationalism," discusses nationalism and the failure of federations to govern effectively. Chapter eight "The Progress of Internationalism," gives a history of alliances, i.e. League of Nations, the United Nations, and the European Union. In "Taking the Next Step," Yunker offers the pros and cons of the risks of action and inaction.

Although Yunker touts *Political Globalization* as addressing the shortcomings of his earlier works, its arguments lack support, conflates history, makes assumptions without empirical evidence, uses some outdated terms, and repeats arguments. These weaknesses undermine the book's attempts to change opinions on the feasibility of a world government. The appendices for the chapters do elucidate the material to some extent but do not provide a link or support for what the author has proposed. For example, the Appendix to Chapter 1 (Table 2.A.1) gives the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita in 1995 US dollars and Gross Domestic Product for 207 nations in 2000 does provide potential voting weights for the proposed world government but does not examine why he chose these weights.

The construction of the book does not mesh well with its organization as it does not clarify or define all of its terminology. Yunker examines each argument, but his analysis lacks

continuity. While some of the chapters could stand by themselves, they do not contribute to his overall thesis. The book includes several tables, but it is not entirely clear why. There is a thorough bibliography after each chapter, but many sources date from the 1970's, 1980's, and 1990's. There are very few citations in the text.

Yunker's *Political Globalization* conforms to an academic curriculum. While the book adequately elucidates his vision of world government, it fails to offer a logically structured argument for his claims. Several claims are made that are not substantiated, i.e. p. 10... "the expected rate of future progress of human civilization will be higher if a world government along the lines of the Federal Union of Democratic Nations is established than if no such government is established". He also states on page 377 "now that ideological conflict within humanity is in sharp decline consequent upon the collapse and dissolution of the USSR...the economic gap between rich and poor nations...has taken over as the single most impediment to the long term...and stability of world government". Although Yunker does discuss terrorism (p.358), he also argues that if the Cold War had not ended, the consequences of 9/11 could have been far worse – that nuclear conflagration would have been more likely to occur. An emphasis on nuclear strikes ignores other forces that would benefit from a world government, in terms of environmental concerns. In another section, he compares the American Revolutionary War to the world government, stating that with a world government, there would have been no taxation without representation, thusly, it would not have occurred.

Yunker compares the United Nations to his proposed Federal Union of Democratic Nations, credits the UN for making an appreciable contribution to economic and social progress, but not an extraordinary contribution. He maintains that nations would have the right to secede and to maintain their own military, but he does not explain how the right to secede is different in its full effect from the fact that any nation can veto an action.

There is a distinct dearth of scholarship in *Political Globalization*. Yunker presents an economic model for WEEP, but does not defend it against the conventional viewpoint -- namely, that a "large scale economic development system would be an expensive failure." He does refute some of the objections to the numerical aspect of the WEEP system. Like his blueprint for a world government, he states that the WEEP system does not prove that the system would work, only that it could work. A consistent theme throughout the book is that world government is worth trying even though there is a lack of evidence supporting its benefits.

While this book might be useful to world-systems theorists in terms of bringing together an historical background of attempts to form a world government, the lack of empirical evidence limit its utility. Yunker states that this book is an attempt to bring his proposal from the abstract to the specific, and presents considerable historical and political detail. Still he presents little evidence to support why the Federal Union of Democratic Nations might work where other attempts to create an effective world government have failed.

*Political Globalization* could contribute more to the discussion of world government if much of the extraneous material had been omitted and if the author had used more of an academic tone rather than a colloquial form of presentation. More empirical evidence would have made his arguments more persuasive.

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Grygiel, Jakub J. 2006. *Great Powers and Geopolitical Change*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press. 258 pages, ISBN 10: 0-8018-8480-2 Cloth (\$47.00). ISBN 13: 978-0-8018-8480-1 Paper (NPL).

Bringing geopolitics back in to the study of international relations is a worthwhile goal. In many ways, Jakub Grygiel's *Great Powers and Geopolitical Change* does more than this, as Grygiel brings back not only geography, but world history as well. Grygiel's short but informative study serves as testament to the fact that today, no serious work of political theory can ignore the perspective of the *longue durée*, and even more specifically, the historical experience of non-Western regions and states. Relying on such writers as Fernand Braudel, William McNeill, Frederic Lane, and Owen Lattimore, Grygiel, Chair of International Relations at Johns Hopkins' Nitze School brings into the political science mainstream a knowledge base that has long formed the mainstay of world-systems analysis. Notwithstanding recent claims regarding the irrelevance of geography in a globalized world dominated by free markets and instantaneous communication, Grygiel argues that the experiences of Venice, the Ottoman Empire and Ming China in negotiating the sixteenth century geopolitical shift from the Eurasian continent to oceanic lanes are directly relevant to current US efforts to adjust to a similar geopolitical shift to the Pacific. However, Grygiel's overestimation of current US strength and possible misreading of history and of the nature of the ongoing systemic transition also point to significant weaknesses of the new geopolitical paradigm he outlines.

Significantly, Grygiel's analysis begins with a historical overview of geopolitics from a 'structures of knowledge' perspective. The decline of geopolitics in the study of international relations, he contends, was caused by a widening rift between the social and natural sciences. Given its emphasis on environmental factors, geography was increasingly forced out of the social sciences, which focused on the impact of human agency. A complicating factor was the geographic determinism of classical geopolitical theory, especially in its Nazi iteration. As a result, realist theories that have dominated the postwar period in the United States came to eschew geographic factors as largely irrelevant, as they became increasingly abstract and divorced from pragmatic formulations of foreign policy. Ultimately, Grygiel avers, the decline of geopolitics has much more to do with the paradigm change in the field of international relations in the 1930s and 40s than with any purported eclipse of geographic factors by new technologies (p. 3).

In calling for a return to geopolitical models, Grygiel wants to avoid the traditional "geography is destiny" approach of classical theorists such as Mahan, Mackinder, and Haushofer. To this end, he proposes a tripartite conceptual apparatus that distinguishes between *geography*, which includes geological and climatological features that, for the most part, remain unchanged on the scale of human activity; *geopolitics*, which constitutes the human factors in geography, including resource centers and trade networks; and finally, *geostrategy*, which is the geographic

direction of a state's foreign policy. Whereas geopolitical change occurs very slowly on the level of interstate systems and cannot be effected or predicted even by the strongest or best-informed actors within such systems, geostrategic change can and does take place in the short- and medium-term on the level of individual states and decision-makers. Thus, agency has a palpable impact on policy, and is not overdetermined by either geographic or geopolitical factors, but when a state's geostrategy is based on a misreading of the underlying geopolitical environment, that state begins to decline as a Great Power (p. 24). In this way, a state's geostrategy may be affected by the ossification of state bureaucracies, the temptations of short-term gains, or simply by disinterest in hegemony, but geopolitics remains the key variable in a state's successful pursuit of Great Power status.

The bulk of the book is devoted to demonstrating the accuracy of this contention through three historical examples of states that had become Great Powers by following a sound and balanced geostrategy, but failed to adjust to the sixteenth century geopolitical shift by becoming undisciplined, complacent, or fearful. In the case of Venice, the doges initially made good use of the city's favorable location between Latin Christendom and the Byzantine Empire to become the western terminus of Eurasian trade networks and the main supplier of Asian goods to the whole of Western Europe. By establishing control over a network of bases and harbors in the Adriatic and the Aegean in the eleventh century, Venice ensured its rise as the premier Great Power in the Mediterranean. But increased competition from the Genoese after the conquest of Byzantium in the Fourth Crusade put pressure on Venice to directly intervene in the power struggles on the Italian *terra firma*, and ultimately led to its attempted construction of an Italian territorial empire in the fifteenth century. This geostrategic reorientation was, according to Grygiel, also driven by an ideological penchant to support republican governance in Italy (p. 81), but it proved too costly, made too many enemies, and resulted in the neglect of Venice's eastern interests, and the failure to modernize its navy. As a result, Venice was outflanked when Iberian powers in possession of oceanic-going vessels gained direct access to Indian Ocean markets and New World mines, and lost its strategic primacy as the importance of the Mediterranean receded. However, despite his emphasis on misguided policy decisions, Grygiel admits that Venice's geographic position made it very difficult for it to adapt to the geopolitical reorientation of the late 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries (p. 86).

In the Ottoman case, Grygiel attempts to demonstrate that, no less than maritime powers, the geostrategy of territorial actors must also be guided by the underlying geopolitical situation. In contrast to traditional analyses, he maintains that the core of the Ottoman Empire was located in the Balkans, and the thrust of its geostrategy was directed toward accessing trade routes in Central Europe and defending its frontier on the Danube (pp. 88-89). Subsequent Ottoman expansion into the Mediterranean and toward the Persian Gulf was therefore conditional on having a stable land border and the absence of serious territorial contenders in the northwest. However, the failure to inflict a decisive defeat on the Portuguese at sea, or on the Safavids on land forced the sultans to reorient their geostrategy back toward Eastern Europe, where they now faced formidable enemies in the form of Poland, Russia, and especially, the Habsburg Empire. For Grygiel, the main reason for the onset of Ottoman decline was the failure to effectively colonize the Balkans by establishing a line of forts and a standing army to defend the Danubian frontier (p.119). This failure to safeguard its main land border doomed efforts to control maritime trade in the Arabian Sea, and the defeat on the outskirts of Vienna in 1683 consigned the Porte to its long-term status as the "Sick Man of Europe". Yet here, too, the early (and logical) choice to

build the Empire as a territorial power forced the Sultans to defend extensive land boundaries at a time when a maritime strategy in the East would have allowed them to check European expansion (pp. 121-122).

The predicament faced by Ming China was somewhat similar, although it possessed a greater structural capacity for maritime expansion than did the Ottomans. The expulsion of the Mongols in 1368 and the subsequent securing of the 'perilous frontier' enabled the Ming emperors to pursue maritime and commercial expansion in Southeast Asia. In this regard, the famed voyages of Cheng Ho in the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, which established control over the strategic entrepôt at Malacca and then pushed out to control the whole of the Indian Ocean trade were no anomaly, but the pinnacle of a long-term, geopolitically sound geostrategy geared toward the control of the spice trade (pp. 147-149). According to Grygiel, the subsequent Chinese abandonment of this maritime strategy had less to do with the ideological dictates of Neo-Confucianism than with the failure to attain a decisive victory over the Mongols in the north. The high cost of defending the new capital at Beijing, the primarily military strategy toward the steppe nomads, and the ineffective fortification constituted by the Great Wall could have been avoided by adopting a more commercial relationship with the Mongols (p. 136). Failure to do so resulted in the failure to pacify them, and the Mongol annihilation of the Ming army in 1449 proved so disheartening that China abandoned its previous geostrategy in favor of an overwhelmingly defensive posture on all fronts. This change initiated a two-centuries-long decline, as China proved unable to contain a rising threat from the new Jurchen state in Manchuria and the predations of European colonizers in the south (pp. 151-152; 159-160).

For Grygiel, these three historical cases underline the importance grounding of geostrategic decisions in geopolitical reality for today's policymakers in the US. In opposition to globalizationists, he contends that greater economic interdependence render control of key resources like oil more, not less, important (p. 165). US power continues to be limited by such geopolitical factors as dependence on maritime trade (40% of total US trade), and the need to protect vital sea-lanes by military power. Most importantly for Grygiel, the US is confronted by the recent geopolitical shift to the Pacific, and the accompanying rise of China. As the Chinese pursuit of energy security constitutes a potential threat to US maritime dominance, Grygiel calls on the US to respond by abandoning its Eurasian-oriented anti-Soviet territorialist strategy in favor of a maritime strategy based on smaller but more maneuverable naval and air power, control of the Middle East to threaten China's energy supply, and increased pressure on Chinese land frontiers through the formation of new regional alliances (pp. 169, 174-175). Though in Grygiel's view, such a reorientation would be difficult, the fact that the US already provides security to most of its trade partners in East Asia makes its position more analogous to that of the upstart Atlantic powers and not the established 15<sup>th</sup> century Great Powers (pp. 171-173).

Whatever the superiority of Grygiel's geopolitical approach over that of the realists and globalizationists, it is clear that his own historical analysis does not fully support his geostrategic recommendations. None of the three Great Powers he examines succeeded in coping with the geopolitical transition of the sixteenth century. The existing pressures and commitments, and the unfavorable geographic location in each case simply proved too overwhelming for Venice, the Ottoman Empire or Ming China to retain their dominant position in their respective regions, and the claim that a change in geostrategy could have led to qualitatively different results remains on the level of counterfactual history. Moreover, Grygiel's own evidence clearly demonstrates the degree to which the ideological and epistemological structures within each of the states in

question militated against a rapid geostrategic shift. Despite his initial emphasis on knowledge structures, he does not consider the long-term impact of abstract and ahistorical political theory on postwar US policies. Had he raised this question and examined US geostrategy in recent decades in more detail, he would likely have noticed the fundamental weakening of American positions during the Clinton and Bush administrations, which recognized no geopolitical limits on US power. As such, his appraisal of the favorability of the current US situation relative to that of declining Great Powers in the sixteenth century may have been considerably less sanguine. Compared to Grygiel's suggestions for the US, the Ming inward turn may have been a considerably more rational response to the geopolitical transition, because it preserved the dynasty for another two centuries, and because it maintained China's status as the premier global commercial center for an even longer period. An anti-China geostrategy, even if based on sound geopolitical principles, may simply be impracticable given the increasing financial and commercial dependence of the US on China. Furthermore, as recent readers of this journal will be aware, it is not yet clear whether the current geopolitical shift heralds a Pacific, an Asian, or a Eurasian age. Thus, Grygiel's reading of the underlying geopolitical situation may prove to be wrong or premature. The real choice before the US today (as before the Great Powers of the past), as some world-systemists have pointed out, may be between that of a graceful exit from hegemony, and a precipitous decline. In this regard, and in affording greater attention to financial and epistemological factors, the new geopolitics could considerably broaden its scope by fully engaging with world-systems analysis.

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