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Policy Insights - Governing Globalization

Order, Welfare, and Legitimacy: The Case for Adding OWL to the Strategist's Toolkit

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This article explores the implications of Edward A. Kolodziej's Order, Welfare, and Legitimacy (OWL) model for US national security and foreign policy in the era of the global society. The rise of populism in democratic and open societies comprising the global "society of societies" has led to the election of national leaders bent on withdrawing their nations from collective commitments to manage world order and welfare. In the week that the Governing Globalization Symposium met in Champaign, IL the United Kingdom signed its "divorce papers" with the European Union, and President Donald Trump signed an executive order rolling back the Obama administration's commitment to lowering emissions to mitigate the effects of climate change. Meanwhile, China reiterated its commitment to maintain its pledges made in the 2015 Paris Agreement. Score a "soft power" point for China, the defender, in this case, of the Welfare of the world's populations with respect to climate change.

In just two months the Trump administration has moved decidedly away from the responsibilities the United States has upheld since World War II to contribute to global governance. Will the revival of an "America First" (Elving 2017) policy in the 21st century, a shift the Trump campaign justified on national security grounds, on balance, make the United States and the rest of the world more or less secure? Kolodziej warned in his prescient new book, *Governing Globalization: Challenges for Democracy and Global Society*, that states which fail to recognize security interdependencies and which undermine norms of international cooperation will put at risk both their domestic and foreign policy goals (Kolodziej 2016). Such global retrenchment will make the global society and the individual societies that comprise it less secure.

Professor Kolodziej's OWL framework highlights the potential pathologies of an "America First" policy. I will extend his analysis in a moment to the emerging policy of the Trump administration. First, I will briefly analyze the degree to which the pre-Trump American national security enterprise had been in sync with the OWL approach to resolving inter-state preference conflicts and the pursuit of national interests in the global society.

* Disclaimer: The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the US Government or the Department of Defense.

Traditional Approaches to US National Security Strategy

American national security professionals at the nation's war colleges are mainly educated in the problem solving mode of the rational actor model. They are taught to assess the strategic environment, both domestically and internationally, in search of threats to the national interest. Specific security objectives are derived from the identified interests against which specific "ways and means" can be applied to achieve the desired security outcome. Meanwhile, civilians educated in top security studies programs immerse themselves in realist approaches, with a secondary, but significant, emphasis on the importance of liberal institutionalism. Neither group, however, pays sufficient attention to integrating the imperatives of Order, Welfare, and Legitimacy.

Kolodziej (2016) observed this tendency when he noted, "Political elites may well believe they are pulling on levers of power to effect desired results. Actual outcomes of policy initiatives reveal either that these levers are largely unconnected or insufficiently positively charged with power to achieve expected outcomes." Specifically, American national security professionals have also focused on applying the DIME framework to the national security challenge at hand. DIME is shorthand for Diplomatic, Information, Military, and Economic – the four traditional instruments of power. National security professionals are taught to survey the availability of the various instruments and to suggest strategic "ways and means" to apply them in an integrated and reinforcing manner in order to achieve the desired end state.

American policymakers have been criticized for the outsized emphasis they place on the M in the DIME, with military power dwarfing the other instruments both in terms of resources, and, their subsequent application. However, it is important to note that in recent years the military has pushed back, indicating some appreciation for the connection between Order and Welfare.

Admiral Michael Mullen (2010), while Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, stated that "[T]he most significant threat to our national security is our debt." He added, "That's why it's so important that the economy move in the right direction, because the strength and the support and the resources that our military uses are directly related to the health of our economy over time" (Mullen 2010). In 2014, now speaking from retirement, the \$17 trillion debt still topped Mullen's list of the greatest threats facing America, but the list also included Welfare and Legitimacy imperatives such as the K-12 education system and political paralysis in Washington (Mak 2014).

General James Mattis, while serving as the US Central Command (CENTCOM) Commander, remarked, "If you don't fully fund the State Department, then I need to buy more ammunition" (Lamothe 2017). When President Trump proposed his first budget calling for a 10 percent hike in defense spending funded by major cuts to non-defense agencies, more than 120 retired generals and admirals, to include several former service chiefs and combatant commanders, signed a letter to Congress urging it to preserve funding for the State Department. Such continued funding was needed, they argued, in order to "keep pace with the growing global threats and opportunities we face" (Lamothe 2017). They added that the military "needs strong partners to combat issues that drive extremism, including insecurity, injustice, hopelessness and lack of opportunity" (Lamothe 2017). These anecdotal accounts indicate that there are at least a few subscribers to the OWL theory of global governance within the top leadership of the U.S. military.

Military leaders in service to democracies merely advise the political leadership with the responsibility to make policy. They are not the "deciders." However, both the military and political leadership may overestimate the effect that states can have as they attempt to apply instruments of national power to achieve their policy aims. Indeed, Kolodziej predicted that the "deciders," which he defines as state actors with access to enormous material power, have been left behind in the

wake of globalization. He argued that the deciders' mistake has been to assume "a causal connection between deciding a course of action, the deployment of national power, and the guarantee of preferred outcomes" (Parlapiano and Aisch 2017). This is because "the deciders" fail to appreciate the effects of globalization with its ever-expanding web of interdependencies characterizing the expanding global society.

Enter "America First" 2.0

"America First" Collides with the Reality of the Global Society

Trump campaigned for the presidency on an "America First" strategy. He constantly derided NATO, the European Union, and other pillars of the postwar order. He promised to get the United States "better deals" than were possible in the major multilateral trade pacts, such as the North American Free Trade Act (NAFTA) and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). He promised to ban refugees and Muslims, build a wall to keep immigrants entering from Mexico out, and deport undocumented immigrants.

"America First" was the main theme of his inaugural address which painted a picture of an inward looking country,

From this day forward, it's going to be only America first — America first. Every decision on trade, on taxes, on immigration, on foreign affairs will be made to benefit American workers and American families. We must protect our borders from the ravages of other countries making our products, stealing our companies and destroying our jobs. Protection will lead to great prosperity and strength (Trump 2017).

This worldview opposes the trends that currently characterize the global environment. Kolodziej described many of these trends when he described the properties of the global society. Among these properties are the blurring of domestic and global politics and the general permeability and interpenetration of global issues (Kolodziej 2016). The OWL theory, then, suggests that the decisions previewed in the inaugural address will not be so "cut and dry." Curbing trade may protect some Americans' jobs, but simultaneously cause others reliant on trade to lose theirs. Cutting foreign aid and support to international and regional organizations will, as the retired generals recently predicted, undermine the collective capacity of global society to shore up weak states, combat transnational crime and terrorism, and address climate change.

Mike Mulvaney, the White House Budget Director, declared on the occasion of the roll out of the President's budget in February that, "It is not a soft-power budget. This is a hard-power budget, and that was done intentionally. The president very clearly wants to send a message to our allies and to our potential adversaries that this is a strong-power administration" (Berman 2017). Such a characterization of American power misses the nuances of blending hard and soft power in to what Harvard political scientist Joseph Nye dubbed "smart power."

Meanwhile China is embracing soft power. China has been pursuing a decade long effort to build soft power as a complement to its growing military and economic might. The \$10 billion a year investment is in addition to the vast sums China has been spending on building roads and other infrastructure in the developing world. These efforts promote the "China model," characterized by what China views to be its winning combination of "authoritarian politics and

somewhat liberal economics (with a big role for the state)” (*The Economist* 2017). Key to this cultural attraction campaign is the establishment of 500 “Confucius Institutes” in 140 countries, including in the US at the University of Delaware. Another component is its vast investment in foreign language media and its marketing campaign to promote itself and its policies. One example is the purchase of a billboard in Times Square to play a video 120 times a day for two weeks to defend its claims in the South China Sea (*The Economist* 2017).

Not unlike China’s other attempts to copy ideas, something is lacking in its attempt to hijack the networks of connectedness available in the global society for its own purposes. The Chinese missed Nye’s warning that soft power is not a capability that governments can manufacture. He argued that it must spring from civil society. *The Economist* (2017) noted that the Chinese approach is doomed to clash with the hard power of China’s illiberal politics.” How do these conflicting approaches bode for the collective management of the global society’s security? If, as Kolodziej (2016) contends, “Governance is the glue that holds society together and protects it from external threats,” then soft power, “the power to attract,” is a critical ingredient instrumental to foster that cooperation.

It is imperative to note that military leaders are trained to assess the strategic risk of the strategies they are asked to support. Arming military leaders with the OWL theory of global governance would equip them to take notice of the global society’s rapidly changing geopolitical, economic, and technologically innovative environment. Such leaders would observe that globalization has created conditions where no actor can impose its preferences on the rest or apply its material power to unilaterally solve the problems that beset global society today (Kolodziej 2016).

They may consequently advise that specific applications of the “America First” grand strategy are high risk, out of sync with the globalized strategic environment, and consequently unlikely to contribute to the increased prosperity and strength of the American people. An unconstrained pursuit of the “America First” strategy is likely to weaken the web of global governance and make the American people and the populations of the global society less secure. The OWL framework, with its emphasis on the interdependent nature of global Order, Welfare, and Legitimacy, should be standard issue in every strategist’s toolkit.

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