

A Roundtable on Robert Hutchings and Jeremi Suri, eds. *Foreign Policy Breakthroughs: Cases in Successful Diplomacy*

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Roundtable Introduction: Robert Hutchings and
Jeremi Suri, eds., *Foreign Policy Breakthroughs: Cases
in Successful Diplomacy*

Jeffrey A. Engel

Diplomacy, the humorist Will Rogers once quipped, is “the art of saying ‘nice doggie’ until you can find a rock.”

But really, why wait that long? Talking before striking seems a painfully misguided sequence to a growing segment of the American electorate, for whom hesitation in deployment of force when confronted by an international quandary reveals nothing less than abject weakness. Asked in February 2016 what three questions he would put to his national security team on his first day in office, Republican presidential candidate Donald J. Trump briskly replied: “what do we want to do, when do we want to do it, and how hard do we want to hit.”¹

He did not use the word persuade. He did not say convince. Nothing akin to negotiate, convey, or convert emanated from his mouth. Rather, American national security policy as Trump defined it in that clarion moment meant defining the nation’s strategic needs, and then choosing the moment to deploy force. Why talk when we can take?

And the crowd cheered. So too when fellow candidate Ben Carson vowed to take “take all that from them [the Islamic State],” referring to their oil fields in Iraq. “We could do that, I believe, fairly easily,” he said, forgetting just how “easy” occupation had been after 2003.² In a similar vein, Marco Rubio pledged “there would never be any discussion” over foreign affairs in his White House. Discussion merely lets our “enemies know we are weak.”³ Asked for his own three national security priorities, Jeb Bush found energy to list four: “I would restore the military, the sequester needs to be reversed. I would have a strategy to destroy ISIS, and I would immediately create a policy of containment as it relates to Iran’s ambitions.”⁴ The last at least would most likely require diplomacy of some sort, though given the tenor of the debate this seemed best left unmentioned, if not openly mocked. “Anyone who thinks you can negotiate [with] Konami,” the name he gave Iranian leader Ali Khamenei, “does not understand the nature of Konami,” Ted Cruz offered. Negotiations were for the ill-informed. Conviction mattered more.⁵

Robert Hutchings and Jeremi Suri’s new edited collection pleads the opposite. Diplomacy works, they argue, and rather than devalued in favor of a reflexive turn to force America’s diplomatic corps, “underfunded, minimally trained, and frequently overmatched,” should instead be

brought up to the standard set by its “sophisticated and ubiquitous military.”⁶ By highlighting nine moments of diplomatic success—*Foreign Policy Breakthroughs*, as the title of their volume suggests—the pair hope to reinvigorate Washington’s respect for the utility, and the potential, of talking...even with adversaries. “It is better to jaw jaw than to war war,” Winston Churchill once quipped. Hutchings’ and Suri’s new volume shows nine cases in which that was truly the case, in hope of generating more diplomatic breakthroughs in the future.

The reviews commissioned by *Passport* universally applaud their effort and goal. Like any roundtable they collectively and individually find places to critique and quibble with the editors’ choices, not only in their selection of times and topics but in the varied quality of the essays. But they unanimously endorse the editors’ call for more robust training, teaching, and deployment of the increasingly lost art of diplomacy. One doubts a Trump, Cruz, Carson, or Rubio will read this volume. But others may. They might even convert others to Churchill’s seemingly heretical notion that jawing, however difficult and time-consuming, bests any alternative. In this age when the American empire seems determined to do as so many empires in the past—to use force to retain what it can no longer sustain—their book might start a conversation long overdue. That would be worthwhile jaw-jawing indeed.

Notes:

1. “The CBS News Republican Debate Transcript, Annotated,” *Washington Post*, February 13, 2016.
2. Ishaan Tharoor, “Ben Carson’s Remarkable Gibberish on Syria and Iraq, Explained,” *Washington Post*, November 11, 2015.
3. NBC, *Meet the Press*, January 17, 2016.
4. “The CBS News Republican Debate Transcript, Annotated,” *Washington Post*, February 13, 2016.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Hutchings and Suri, p. 2.

Review of Robert Hutchings and Jeremi Suri, eds.,
*Foreign Policy Breakthroughs: Cases in Successful
Diplomacy* (Oxford University Press, 2015).

Robert K. Brigham

Thirty years after the publication of Ernest May and Richard Neustadt’s *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision-Makers* (1986), Robert Hutchings and Jeremi Suri, both of the University of Texas, have revisited the idea of a usable past for policymakers in *Foreign Policy Breakthroughs: Cases in Successful Diplomacy*. This edited volume is the result of an ongoing effort at the Lyndon B.

Johnson School of Public Affairs to “reinvent diplomacy.” Rather than focus on past failures, the project focuses on diplomatic success in the post-World War II world. The goal is to “provide a new body of scholarship, helping current leaders to understand the practice of diplomacy” (xiii). Using a big-tent definition of diplomacy that includes “a very broad set of activities by which political leaders, senior foreign policy officials, staff members of the foreign policy agencies, diplomats, and negotiators conceive of, develop, and implement foreign policy” (4), Hutchings and Suri have assembled nine scholarly case studies to help illuminate what successful diplomacy looks like. The result is a path-breaking book that has the potential to stimulate the kind of questioning that could help policymakers during the decision-making process.

The editors do not believe that history offers policymakers clear lessons or immutable truths to fashion current diplomacy. Instead, they argue that doing a million little things right in a diplomatic context can increase policy options, and that is ultimately the real purpose of statecraft. Even when faced with overwhelming odds, skillful diplomats can partner with others to change the course and nature of a problem by thinking and acting creatively. In short, today’s stubborn problem is tomorrow’s opportunity. Few studies have taken this approach to diplomacy, and the contributors to this volume should be commended for helping us take this journey.

The nine case studies in *Foreign Policy Breakthroughs* lead to specific and valuable conclusions. Stephen Porter’s essay on the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration’s (UNRRA) postwar humanitarian effort and Galia Golan’s piece on Camp David clearly show that successful diplomacy begins with the recognition of past failures. In richly told histories, Porter and Golan conclude that skilled policymakers turned early troubles into justification for additional creative initiatives. UNRRA had some trouble delivering postwar aid, but ultimately it played a major role in expanding global civil society and forging alliances responsible for future humanitarian relief efforts. Golan argues that the Camp David Accords did not solve all of the regional problems facing Israel and Egypt, but the agreement did provide the diplomatic architecture for ongoing negotiations between Israel and its adversaries. Sometimes providing long-term structures for future negotiations is a useful first step. What follows is not necessarily a reflection of the success of the initial agreement. In both cases, complex policy environments forced officials to make choices that played a major role in establishing new frameworks for potential success, even if the fundamental issues of the conflict were not settled completely.

One of the keys to diplomatic success, according to the case studies, is sound strategic planning and the willingness and ability to reconsider and re-evaluate long-held positions. Diplomacy is the art of compromise, and the goal of total victory on all points is neither helpful nor possible. Hutchings’s essay on the end of the Cold War clearly shows that the George H. W. Bush administration faced a serious challenge because the pace of events threatened to create rival paths forward within the national security bureaucracy. There was also considerable political pressure from Bush’s own party to dance on the grave of the Soviet Union and publicly cast Moscow into the dustbin of history. Instead of succumbing to these pressures, Bush used his then-considerable political clout to unite the military and

civilian sides of the Pentagon and other agencies in support of a coherent national security strategy that focused on revising Cold War policy toward the Soviet Union. Bush accepted the political risks necessary to move forward around a prudent strategy that emphasized patience and reform over hostility.

Bush’s ability to see a different future and his willingness to engage the process personally was absolutely essential to a peaceful transition from strained Cold War relations between Washington and Moscow. This kind of sustained leadership is often missing in diplomacy, according to Hutchings, and it is one of the essential elements of success. So too is empathy. Bush’s sensitivity to the needs of his Soviet counterpart, Mikhail Gorbachev, led to a peaceful transition from the Cold War. Most of the case studies conclude that empathy is an often-overlooked quality in a political leader and in negotiating teams. Bush’s prudence and caution ultimately played a role in his political defeat in 1992, but many scholars and policymakers still applaud his handling of the end of the Cold War.

Jonathan Hunt believes that the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is a “living testament to how multilateral diplomacy can yield common rules that buttress collective security by authorizing international institutions to enforce them through regulation, consultation, economic sanction, and legitimate compulsion” (92). The key to the success of the NPT was that those charged with the negotiations used incremental steps to build trust in the process and increase the size of the communities involved in the negotiations. Though the NPT had mixed results, it did keep the number of countries possessing nuclear weapons relatively constant and well below John F. Kennedy’s dire prediction of between twenty and

twenty-five nuclear states.

Increasing the circle of participants was also a key ingredient of success at the 1955 Bandung Conference of non-aligned nations, according to Christopher Lee. Key southern world delegates met to discuss their futures in an atmosphere of trust and mutual cooperation. The conference helped newly emerging postcolonial nations develop a vital means for generating and maintaining state sovereignty, even in difficult times. This socialization progression is often the work of mid-level diplomats empowered by leaders who know how to delegate responsibility and restrain the spoilers. Though the spirit of Bandung gave way under the weight of the Cold War, there was, according to Lee, much that was positive about the kind of diplomacy practiced during its sessions.

Hunt’s and Lee’s essays touch on another main theme in the volume: the need to play two-level games in negotiations. Serious negotiations often have multiple constituents and audiences. In the case of the NPT and Bandung, there was a domestic as well as an international component to the discussions. The negotiations over the North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and its counterpart in the Pacific, ably analyzed in the volume by Rafael Fernandez de Castro and Beatriz Leycegui, also involved key domestic and international players. The leadership of the Mexican government used skillful diplomacy to limit opportunities for bureaucratic battles that could have threatened NAFTA’s future by prioritizing reforms and building support around them. Key battles in the Mexican Senate were smoothed over by presidential outreach and by tying new economic reforms to other measures that preceded them. Sustained leadership was again the key to diplomatic success.

One of the important lessons from this valuable collection of case studies is that successful diplomacy “does not replace other foreign policy tools; it increases the constructive options for their use” (266). In other words, new and often successful diplomatic initiatives can come from intractable conflicts and seemingly impossible roadblocks. Mark Dawson’s essay on the European Union as a community of law describes such an unexpected success, as does Paula Newberg’s examination of development and humanitarianism in Taliban-era Afghanistan. In both essays, serious problems confronted policymakers as they struggled to find a way forward. The creation of the European Union was the unlikely triumph of a process that saw individuals defending short-term national interests and dreamers thinking and arguing about a long-term project of European unity. Painstaking negotiations produced elements of success. In Afghanistan, the rise of the Taliban was seen by many as a defeat for the West, but Newberg suggests that even in this poor diplomatic environment the international community did begin to “clarify the intersections of policy and process, and the close relationships between rights, aid, and, ultimately, diplomacy” (250). In some cases, the international community (if there is such a thing) can learn as much from failure as it can from success.

Ultimately, this volume concludes that creating options through skilled diplomacy is the real definition of success. Jeremi Suri’s excellent essay on rapprochement between the United States and China drives this point home. Suri argues that the Vietnam War and other southern world crises created a siege mentality in Washington and that Henry Kissinger’s diplomacy multiplied Nixon’s options, allowing the president to turn the tide of international conflict toward American interests. Kissinger accepted the reality of the difficult situation the United States faced in Vietnam, but he also used the unilateral U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam to secure major new partners abroad, thereby assuring continued American influence in the region. Furthermore, by reaching out to China, the Nixon administration reoriented U.S. power and solidified U.S. prestige, even after the withdrawal from Vietnam. Suri’s essay is especially poignant because it emphasizes the importance of changing the geometry when a conflict seems too intractable. Suri’s treatment of rapprochement is superb, illustrating perfectly how leadership, flexibility, and patience mattered.

Sadly, Kissinger and Nixon were not always as prudent, wise, and measured as they were in developing a new relationship with China. This volume underscores the idea that the effort to increase power and influence through innovative partnerships and strategies rather than unilateral acts of force are keys to successful diplomacy. The case studies in this splendid volume highlight policymakers who take action to increase options. For Kissinger and Nixon, however, action was often as important as the objective. It now seems clear that they often favored action over inaction to show resolve, toughness, credibility, and reliability. In some cases, as in China, action changed the fundamental nature of an important relationship and helped end U.S. participation in an unpopular war. However, some of Kissinger and Nixon’s other action-oriented policies—toward Laos, Cambodia, Bangladesh, and Chile, for example—did not fare as well. The gratuitous violence engendered by many of the administration’s actions limited future options, and as this excellent volume attests, no policymaker wants that.

Foreign Policy Breakthroughs is a unique collection of case studies that promises to change the nature of the conversation on successful diplomacy and perhaps even offer a path forward for those interested in using history to help formulate a more effective foreign policy. The LBJ School of Public Affairs and its long-term project to reinvent

diplomacy can serve as an incubator for these new ideas in much the same way that the congressionally funded and bipartisan U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP) has helped stimulate breakthrough ideas on ending deadly conflict. For years, USIP has supported the work of Christine Bell, Chester Crocker, William Dixon, Jacob Bercovitch, John Paul Lederach, Lee Feinstein, and a host of others interested in developing best practices for peace negotiations. USIP research clearly shows that when these best practices are followed in peace talks, the likelihood of a sustainable agreement increases dramatically.

What is most remarkable about USIP’s work is the strong partnerships it has developed and nurtured. Scholars, practitioners, grass roots organizations, and governmental agencies all participate in USIP activities. Perhaps the LBJ School can partner with scholars, the State Department, the Office of the Historian of the State Department, and other institutions to help develop a similar blueprint for success in other areas of diplomacy and foreign policy. This useful volume is a good step in that direction.

**Review of Robert Hutchings and Jeremi Suri, eds.,
*Foreign Policy Breakthroughs: Cases in Successful
Diplomacy***

William Michael Schmidli

What is diplomacy? What skills make a patent diplomat? And how should up-and-coming diplomats learn the craft? In this thought-provoking collection of essays, Robert Hutchings and Jeremi Suri bring an urgency to these questions, reflecting their sense that effective diplomacy is an increasingly rare commodity in the world. Indeed, the book begins with a gloomy assessment of diplomacy in the twenty-first century. Although we live in an age of unprecedented “political, economic, and social pressures,” the editors warn that “there seems to be a global deficit in strategic responses to these challenges—at the very time that such action is most urgently needed” (1).

The problem is particularly acute for the United States. It is in part an issue of prioritization and resource allocation: American diplomats get short shrift compared to their counterparts in uniform. Hutchings and Suri note that in 2008, for example, the Defense Department’s \$750 billion budget was more than twenty-four times as large as that of the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development combined. The result is a “deficient diplomatic corps—underfunded, minimally trained, and frequently overmatched by the breadth and scope of the problems the country faces throughout the world” (2).

But Hutchings and Suri also argue that the study of diplomacy itself needs a total overhaul. Defining diplomacy broadly as a “set of activities by which political leaders, senior foreign policy officials, staff members of the foreign policy agencies, diplomats, and negotiators conceive of, develop, and implement foreign policy,” the editors emphasize that the study of diplomacy is lacking in both the academic and professional arenas. In American universities, “diplomacy hardly exists as a serious field of inquiry or as an academic course of study.” Even in foreign service institutes and academies of diplomacy, language and area-studies training takes top billing, while diplomacy is “undervalued, underanalyzed, and undersourced” (4).

Hutchings and Suri envision *Foreign Policy Breakthroughs* as the first step in the process of “reinventing diplomacy”—an effort to make the field of “diplomacy, strategy, and statecraft . . . more comprehensive in scope, better informed by history, and more global in outlook” (5). The ten chapters in *Foreign Policy Breakthroughs*, written by a mix of scholars

and “practitioners,” analyze a disparate collection of diplomatic case studies since 1945. Underscoring the focus on statecraft, most chapters conclude with a discussion of what the case study teaches about successful diplomacy, which, in the final chapter, Hutchings and Suri distill into nine “common themes” of effective diplomacy.

Foreign Policy Breakthroughs contains numerous excellent essays. Stephen R. Porter’s analysis of the operations of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), for example, nicely advances the editors’ overarching goal of drawing contemporary lessons in diplomacy from historical case studies. Porter deftly blends an analysis of the multilateral diplomacy that led to UNRRA’s founding with specific points for future diplomats. The points are basic; one cites the importance of “learning from past relief operations” and “early planning,” for example. But Porter avoids being simplistic by embedding them in the historical contingencies of his case study. Similarly, Jonathan Hunt’s chapter on negotiating the treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and Galia Golan’s analysis of Sadat, Begin, and the Camp David process are well-crafted studies that extrapolate useful diplomatic lessons.

Perhaps the strongest essay in the collection is Robert Hutchings’s analysis of the George H. W. Bush administration’s policy toward Eastern Europe during the final months of the Cold War. Hutchings draws out the contingency that shaped American decision-making, emphasizing the difficult choices American policymakers faced at key junctures and how events on the ground repeatedly made carefully calibrated plans obsolete. Hutchings’s essay is a model for weaving together historical analysis and principles of statecraft for future diplomats. After assessing the Bush administration’s role in the creation of the “Two-Plus Four” forum for negotiating German unification, for example, Hutchings shifts to the diplomatic lesson. “For policymakers, the crucial test is how they react to unexpected events: whether the responses are haphazard or episodic, or take place within a larger strategic framework,” he writes. “Achieving the latter requires planning as a continual, ongoing process, with a disciplined willingness to discard plans in the face of new and unforeseen developments” (158).

If Hutchings’s essay shows the value of history for contemporary statecraft, other essays in *Foreign Policy Breakthroughs* reveal that drawing clear-cut diplomatic lessons from complex historical case studies is no easy task. Mark Dawson’s sweeping chapter, for example, argues that the European Union’s “ability to legally institutionalize diplomatic conflicts” played a key role in the success of European integration. “Through both the design of economic integration and the criteria for the EU’s enlargement, EU leaders have sought to embed core political projects in abstract rules and procedures, overseen by nonmajoritarian institutions,” Dawson writes. “These institutions have played a crucial role in moving processes of transnational integration forward in circumstances wherein political leadership has failed or political dialogue would likely increase rather than diffuse interstate conflict” (193). In terms of thinking about diplomacy, Dawson’s argument is provocatively inclusive. It illuminates the role of actors such as the Court of Justice that are not traditionally accorded a diplomatic role. But by the same token, the particularities of the EU case study make it difficult to draw upon for general principles of statecraft for future diplomats.

Similarly, in his examination of the 1955 Asian-African Conference, widely known as the Bandung conference, Christopher J. Lee argues that the gathering “achieved limited practical success in the short term, yet . . . great symbolic success in the long term” (49). Framing the conference as a bridge between early twentieth-century social movements and post-1945 global diplomacy,

Lee cogently argues that the Bandung conference “symbolizes a key transitional moment from populist forms of transnationalism to the mainstream international diplomacy of sovereign nation-states. Political communities in Asia and Africa that were once without representation quickly gained recognition during the era of decolonization, with Bandung highlighting this transformation” (54).

Focusing on the competing agendas of key participants, as well as the nascent non-aligned movement, Lee’s chapter will be of interest to students of Western imperialism, decolonization, and South-South relations. Yet the specific lessons he offers for contemporary diplomats, which focus on international conferences as an “indispensable aspect of international diplomacy,” seem rather thin. While it is no doubt accurate that conferences “must be understood as important occasions for networking and building social capital, thus helping to ensure successful diplomacy in the future,” one hopes that aspiring diplomats-in-training will find deeper lessons embedded in his chapter.

In some of the essays, the focus on statecraft comes at the expense of a broader historical analysis. Rafael Fernández de Castro and Beatriz Leycegui’s chapter, for example, examines the role of Mexican presidents Carlos Salinas and Felipe Calderón in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) negotiations and President Enrique Peña Nieto’s role in negotiating the Pacific Alliance, a new free trade pact including Chile, Colombia, Peru, and Mexico. The authors argue that NAFTA marked a “sea change” in U.S.-Mexico relations, and, taken together, the two trade pacts have enhanced Mexican trade and economic relations and burnished Mexico’s foreign policy and international prestige. In both cases, the authors argue convincingly that Mexican leaders skillfully played the domestic side of a two-level game, which is a concept coined by political scientist Robert Putnam to describe the imperative placed upon diplomats to simultaneously reconcile domestic and international constituencies. Regarding NAFTA, for example, the authors contend that “President Salinas transformed his negotiating weakness—that is, not having domestic constituencies that would limit his negotiation capacities—into a strength for his negotiations. Instead of ignoring the Mexican Congress and the private sector due to their relative lack of strength, President Salinas recruited them, especially the business sector, as an integral part of the negotiation team” (213).

Fernández and Leycegui’s chapter on two-level games underscores an axiomatic component of successful diplomacy. Yet as part of Hutchings and Suri’s effort to reinvent diplomacy, the chapter raises difficult questions regarding the curriculum that up-and-coming diplomats should undertake. Fernández and Leycegui present NAFTA and the Pacific Alliance as logical stepping stones in a globalization process that has proven highly beneficial to Mexico. A U.S. foreign relations historian, however, might take a more critical approach, situating the trade pact discussions within a deeper analysis of the ideology undergirding the emergence and dissemination of neoliberal economic ideas in the late twentieth century. Like Fernández and Leycegui, the historian might examine top-level Mexican policymakers, lobbying firms, think tanks, and business organizations, but rather than focusing on diplomacy as part of the globalization process, the historian might analyze these actors in the context of globalization as an elite-driven project, privileging profit maximization and corporate elitism and cutting across national, international, and transnational arenas. The two analyses would be markedly different. In terms of reinventing diplomacy, which of these approaches would be more useful to a future diplomat?

Similar questions arise in Paula R. Newberg’s analysis of the international assistance community’s engagement with the Taliban in 1990s Afghanistan. Illuminating

the challenges humanitarian actors faced in post-Cold War Afghanistan, Newberg skillfully addresses the international level ("How does a failed state formulate foreign policy?" she asks, for example) and the local level, where tense discussions over whether and in what capacity female aid workers could attend meetings with Taliban leaders, for example, created "maximum discomfort among external interlocutors who had worked alongside affected communities for years" (236). Newberg's chapter will no doubt prove useful for future diplomats working in post-conflict environments, where, as in Afghanistan, "every decision—where to de-mine, whom to feed, how and where to plant crops, when and where tribal migrants could graze, whom to bribe and how to negotiate, how to protect workers from imprisonment and villages from ransack—raised difficult questions that typified the intersections of relief and development, humanitarianism and human rights, and political convenience and political intractability" (237).

But does Newberg's chapter stand up to Hutchings and Suri's call for the study of diplomacy to be "better informed by history"? While her analysis expertly identifies the challenges of international aid to war-torn Afghanistan, she approaches the issue primarily as a technical one: how to assess the needs of "problematic places under conditions of complex humanitarian, development, political, and foreign policy threats; how to craft missions and mandates that can address those analyses; and how to analyze human rights in ways that could protect society and contribute to overall analysis" (249). This is different from the way in which the first wave of human rights historians approached the issue of human rights over the past decade or so. For historians, illuminating how human rights are rooted in political contestations—and dispelling teleological thinking and triumphalist narratives about human rights—has taken center stage. This blossoming historiography is less interested in making contemporary human rights advocacy or humanitarian aid more effective and more focused on understanding why human rights emerged, in the words of Stefan-Ludwig Hoffman, as the "doxa of our time, belonging among those convictions of our society that are tacitly presumed to be self-evident truths and that define the space of the conceivable and utterable."¹ While the questions these scholars raise are not incompatible with Newberg's analysis, they nonetheless underscore the challenge of integrating the diverse perspectives of practitioners and historians on issues like human rights into a coherent curriculum for future diplomats.

The emphasis in *Foreign Policy Breakthroughs* is on case studies that illustrate successful diplomacy. Jeremi Suri's tightly written chapter, for example, illuminates Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger's defining role in shifting relations with China "in less time than it takes most universities to launch a new academic program" (104). Suri highlights Nixon and Kissinger's careful signaling to Chinese leaders in the lead-up to Kissinger's visit in 1971 and their strategic flexibility in the face of a rapidly changing international environment. Nixon and Kissinger deserve credit, Suri argues, "for conceiving and implementing a major diplomatic breakthrough that contributed to the security and prosperity of the United States." Emphasizing that they forced this change onto a largely reluctant U.S. government, Suri concludes that, "strong leadership

matters for diplomatic effectiveness" (105).

Suri's argument is clear and convincing. But the chapter raises difficult questions regarding what the curriculum for up-and-coming diplomats should entail. I can imagine some of my SHAFR colleagues cringing, for example, at the implications for contemporary statecraft of Suri's observation that Nixon and Kissinger's diplomatic success stemmed in part from their emphasis on secrecy and centralization of power (115). More to the point, in isolation from other aspects of the Nixon administration's foreign policy, the China case study makes Nixon and Kissinger appear to be master statesmen. But drawing in the broader U.S. foreign policy landscape during the Nixon years—the muck and mire of American support for dictatorships throughout Latin America, the delayed American exit from Vietnam, support for Suharto of Indonesia, and so forth—makes an assessment of Nixon and Kissinger as statesmen much more challenging and would certainly complicate the lessons for future diplomats.

That reservation leads to a broader conceptual question that runs through the chapters in *Foreign Policy Breakthroughs*: in order to most effectively reinvent diplomacy, should the emphasis be solely on successful cases studies? Hutchings and Suri strike a dismissive tone regarding studies of unsuccessful diplomacy: "There are, of course, many assessments of diplomatic failure—every failure attracts critics, who, like vultures, peck away at the vulnerable

remains of human frailty." This is an odd statement. Wouldn't the lessons of diplomatic failures be useful for diplomats seeking to avoid similar mistakes? Perhaps part of the answer lies in Hutchings and Suri's narrow definition of success: "Political leaders set objectives for their diplomats (or other foreign policy officials); if those objectives are achieved, the diplomacy can be judged successful, quite apart from the ultimate consequences of the actions undertaken" (14). While this definition does avoid a confusing conflation of short-term diplomacy with long-term outcomes, most historians seeking to analyze causal connections would find it uncomfortably confining. According to this definition one could argue, for example, that the U.S.-backed overthrow of Guatemalan president Jacobo Arbenz in 1954 was a significant diplomatic success (in that the Eisenhower administration's objective of ousting Arbenz was achieved), eliding the long-term instability that the *coup d'état* set in motion.

To be sure, teaching future foreign policymakers how to perform day-to-day diplomacy is essential. Hutchings and Suri are correct to argue that expecting diplomats to "learn on the job" is inadequate, and the editors' principles of diplomacy in the conclusion of *Foreign Policy Breakthroughs*, such as "diplomacy requires a careful mix of secrecy and openness," and "statesmen need to see the objective of diplomacy not as victory, but as compromise," will no doubt prove useful to diplomats-in-training. But truly reinventing United States diplomacy in order to overcome the challenges of the twenty-first century will require a deep and sustained engagement with the contributions of foreign relations historians. Much of this rich body of scholarship eschews a focus on successes in order to engage the deeper complexities of America's engagement with the world. One can only hope that future generations of diplomats will study the principles of statecraft and

America's many contributions to the contemporary world but will also grapple with more troubled legacies, such as American imperialism, militarism, exceptionalism, market fetishism, and racialized and gendered thinking.

Note:

1. Stefan-Ludwig Hoffman, *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century* (New York, 2011), 1.

Reinventing Diplomacy?

William I. Hitchcock

In the introduction to this collection of case studies of "successful diplomacy," Robert Hutchings and Jeremi Suri argue that the art of diplomacy—an art that U.S. leaders of earlier generations once used with great skill to construct and sustain a stable international order—has withered. In our current epoch of global disorder, the editors believe, diplomats and national political leaders have revealed a glaring "deficit" (1) of creativity and imagination as they devise global solutions to the problems of world governance. Without adequate training and proper study of the past to act as a guide, policymakers have let the craft of compromise, deal-making, and relationship-building lapse. The book suggests that one way to brighten this dark age of diplomacy is to provide policymakers and students in policy schools with historical case studies of successful diplomacy. By examining moments when diplomacy triumphed, the editors hope to inspire students and educate contemporary leaders in how to "reinvent diplomacy" for our time (xiii).

Let us start by examining the premise. Is diplomacy dead? One occasionally hears that claim, and in the introduction to the book, the editors identify both climate change and nuclear proliferation as areas in which "diplomatic capability appears most lacking." Recent developments belie that argument, however. In December 2015, some 190 nations agreed on a plan to regulate the emissions of greenhouse gases. Yes, it was a long and painstaking process, and it was an incomplete one. But is that not the very nature of diplomacy? Similarly, in July 2015, six major nations and the European Union signed a deal with Iran to insure that Iran will not build or acquire nuclear weapons. The deal is controversial, and certainly its success remains in question. But in a political context in which many voices in the United States sought a military confrontation with Iran, the nuclear deal shows that the art of diplomacy is in fact alive and well.

In addition to these achievements, one might also point to the diplomacy that helped craft a global response to the financial meltdown of 2009; the 2010 START Treaty with Russia; the Trans-Pacific Partnership that joined twelve Pacific Rim nations in a deal to reduce trade barriers; and the 2015 diplomatic opening to Cuba, which was the result of eighteen months of secret U.S.-Cuban contacts brokered by the Vatican. We can debate the merits and demerits of such initiatives, but certainly they could not have happened without diplomacy. If, as the editors argue, the 9/11 attacks opened a period in which U.S. foreign policy was "underanalyzed and overmilitarized" (2), it would

seem that the art of the diplomatic deal has made a robust comeback.

If the editors somewhat overstate the death of the diplomatic arts, they are surely right to say that we do not teach "diplomacy" as such very well. Diplomatic historians train students to analyze the origins and sometimes the resolutions of international crises, as well as the conduct of grand strategy. But we probably focus too much on presidential and elite decision-making than on the actual work that diplomats do in crafting deals, stewarding relationships, and finding pathways to compromise. Much of that work is unglamorous and slow and tends to get sidelined in survey classes in favor of crisis management—or crisis *mis*-management. This book has identified an important blind spot in our vision. In the interest of improving our ability to teach diplomacy to students and future diplomats, the book provides ten historical case studies that illuminate examples of successful diplomacy.

The cases the editors have selected are presented in thoughtful and well-crafted individual essays by scholars who really know their material. Professors, policymakers and students alike will find much here to reward a careful reading. Even so, I came away feeling that the cases gathered here, as interesting as they are individually, did not have quite enough power to fulfill the ambitions of the editors to "reinvent diplomacy" for our current tumultuous age.

For example, the book opens with an essay on the diplomacy that launched the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) during the Second World War. No doubt UNRRA was a surprising success: in the midst of the world's most disruptive war, and before the UN and other postwar institutions had been established, UNRRA provided humanitarian aid to millions of displaced persons and refugees both in Europe and Asia. The story of UNRRA is not very well known, and this lucid chapter by Stephen R. Porter offers a concise history. But what is its direct relevance today? How can the UNRRA story help

diplomats facing humanitarian challenges now? The essay posits a few lessons, such as the need to plan ahead, to learn from previous examples, to work together with the great powers, and so on; but these sensible if somewhat obvious conclusions seem unlikely to surprise today's diplomats.

Likewise, the fascinating portrait of the 1955 Bandung Conference, composed of twenty-nine Asian and African nations, provides a welcome short history. Christopher J. Lee reminds us how significant Bandung was to contemporary observers because it placed Third World leaders on a global stage and heralded a new role for the nations of the emerging "global South." Lee argues that while the Bandung Conference did not accomplish a great deal by itself, its power was symbolic and ideological: it put the world on notice that the newly independent nations aimed to transform world affairs. Again, this is fresh and original work. But what lessons does the case carry for today's diplomats? Those appear rather commonsensical: that conferences are symbolic, that they lead to networking, and that they provide a global stage for leaders.

Jeremi Suri's own chapter is a brief, lucid summary of the Nixon-Kissinger diplomatic breakthrough with China in the early 1970s. Using his detailed knowledge of the period and of U.S. diplomacy, Suri makes a strong case that the overtures to China offer a classic case of successful,

leader-driven diplomacy. Nixon and Kissinger knew what they wanted, had the strategic vision to see an opportunity, and propelled a reluctant bureaucracy to adapt to the new policy, which marked a major shift in U.S. thinking. No doubt, the case should be carefully studied in policy schools for the light it sheds on the diplomatic process.

However, it is not clear what lessons would-be diplomats or students should draw from the case. Suri applauds the secrecy of the China overture; he admires the way Nixon and Kissinger "forced change on a resistant policy bureaucracy and a reluctant public" (104), and he accepts the need of leaders to deploy "secrecy, manipulation and prevarication" to achieve these sorts of breakthroughs. "Strong leadership," he writes, "matters for diplomatic effectiveness" (105). That is surely true, but are secrecy, manipulation, and bullying the bureaucracy the best methods to use when executing a diplomatic initiative? The earlier generation of diplomats that Suri cites as successful, from Kennan and Acheson to Marshall and Lovett, were able to inspire their colleagues and use the talent of the people around them rather than cut them out of the loop. Some discussion of the costs of such methods would have made this chapter even more useful.

This point—the need to use the bureaucracy rather than bulldoze it—is actually made most pointedly by Suri's co-editor, Robert Hutchings. In a very good summary of the diplomacy behind the end of the Cold War, Hutchings—who is himself an experienced practitioner of the diplomatic craft—argues that leaders must "condition and mobilize the foreign policy bureaucracy" in order to achieve success. "Foreign policy is conducted and implemented by hundreds if not thousands of officials, and effective diplomacy calls for coherence among the foreign policy agencies, consistency in diplomatic signaling, and careful consideration of policy options beginning well below the level of senior policymakers" (153). Hutchings makes the case for a process-centered, strategic and patient approach to major diplomatic initiatives. Hailing the team assembled by George H.W. Bush for its ability to adapt and improvise in the face of constantly changing events in Eastern Europe in 1989, he asserts that such nimbleness was only the result of a great deal of preliminary planning, debate, and strategic design that occurred across the administration from the moment Bush took office. Unlike Suri, Hutchings believes "it is a mistake to conceive of diplomacy as being defined by diplomatic virtuosity alone" (167). This tension between the co-editors' essays might make for a good classroom discussion about the appropriate strategies to adopt in diplomacy.

The Suri and Hutchings essays stand out because they focus on classic case studies that clearly demand our attention. Similarly, Galia Golan's excellent chapter on the diplomacy behind the Camp David Accords of 1978 between Israel and Egypt illuminates the high-stakes gamble that Anwar Sadat, Menachem Begin and Jimmy Carter took as they looked for a diplomatic breakthrough in the Middle East. Golan highlights the absolutely central role that personal diplomacy at the highest level played in this case, citing Carter's intensive preparation and personal commitment, Sadat's sensitivity to the need for reconciliation and public gestures, and Begin's willingness to compromise by giving up Sinai in pursuit of a separate peace with Egypt. All these factors paved the way to a breakthrough. Personal engagement and political will do not always lead to diplomatic success, but they are prerequisites nonetheless. An equally sensible chapter

on the diplomacy within the European Union adds an additional model for students and policymakers to discuss, while chapters on Mexico's NAFTA diplomacy and global humanitarian diplomacy in Afghanistan round out the collection.

This book is animated by a superb idea: to use the case study method to illuminate the inner workings of diplomacy, especially successful diplomacy, so students and policymakers can learn how to face complex global challenges more confidently. We need books like this, prepared by scholars and practitioners who have a sophisticated understanding of the practice of diplomacy.

My principal criticism is the one usually made of edited collections: the chapters, excellent as they are individually, do not align very well as a group. The introduction and conclusion by Suri and Hutchings provide excellent insights, but the chapters tend to describe the significance of a given outcome—UNRRA was important, Bandung mattered, the Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968 shaped international relations, etc.—without providing a consistent set of metrics across each case study. If this case method is to be useful in any applied sense, the cases must be joined by a common methodology, a common vocabulary, and some uniform system to evaluate each example. Had each chapter followed a similar organization from the start—addressing leadership, strategic planning, the ability to adapt to the unexpected, the place of individuals versus long-term structures, the stewardship of global networks, and so on—then we could actually begin to develop a typology of successful diplomacy and apply these insights to our own times.

**What the World Needs
Now . . . Is . . . Successful Diplomacy:
Review of Robert Hutchings and
Jeremy Suri, eds., *Foreign Policy
Breakthroughs—Cases in Successful
Diplomacy***

James F. Siekmeier

"Victory has a thousand fathers, but defeat is an orphan." Or so John Kennedy said when the U.S.-backed Bay of Pigs invasion failed, greatly embarrassing not only Kennedy but the United States. Analogously, as Robert Hutchings and Jeremy Suri note in the introduction to this insightful collection of essays, diplomatic failures are reported on much more extensively than diplomatic breakthroughs. And the twenty-four-hour news cycle, churning away on hundreds of cable TV channels, is a beast that demands more and more to report on, so diplomatic failures today are seized upon by the media and excruciatingly analyzed and re-analyzed. Even before the onset of this twenty-four-hour news cycle, during the Cold War, when two ideologically opposed and nuclear-armed blocs went at it around the world and a victory for one side would automatically spell doom for the other, diplomatic failures were high-stakes (and thus high-profile) affairs.

However, this obsessive concern with diplomatic failure has arguably caused observers to neglect the less sexy topic of diplomatic success (and its more interesting close cousin, successful diplomacy). Therefore, neither diplomats nor informed and concerned citizens know much about how diplomatic success comes about. Hence this book, and the importance of its contributions.

At once a how-to book for foreign policy officials and a guidebook for average citizens who want to understand

the diplomatic process better, the book has a lot to offer. The essays in it show breakthroughs that were achieved in a wide array of contexts, including crisis management, economic accords, the de-escalation of confrontations that could easily have turned bloody, and efforts to get the world community to focus on pressing but often ignored problems. Not only can we peek behind the curtain to understand how successful diplomacy comes to be; armed with this historical knowledge, we can better evaluate the successes and failures of our diplomats today. For example, Jonathan Hunt's essay on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty gives the reader a good sense of the historical context for the recent Iran nuclear negotiations, why they were so arduous, and how they could have easily broken down at a number of different points in the process. At the end of the day, an informed public needs to understand (especially in an election year) the winding, arduous, and messy process that produces diplomatic breakthroughs. Theoretically, the public can then elect leaders who are more likely to engage in successful diplomacy.

I do have a few reservations about the book. A key theme in the study of the diplomatic process is the important intersection between structure and the agency of diplomats. In their introduction the editors briefly note that "a focus on diplomats leads to an inflation of their agency and a downplaying of structural factors; a focus on systemic forces tends to encourage retrospective determinism, whereupon individual agency accounts for little more than 'residual variance'" (15). However, it is clear that the authors of the essays in the book are more interested in the agency of diplomats than structural factors. In nearly all of the case studies, the actions of diplomats are carefully analyzed, but structural factors remain in the background. Moreover, the intersection of agency and structure remains largely unanalyzed in the book.

One way the authors could have analyzed the intersection of structure and agency would have been to discuss what the *most significant barriers* are that diplomats must surmount or steer clear of in pursuing successful diplomacy. For example, are economic conflicts easier to resolve than ideological conflicts? Or is it the reverse? Directly addressing the issue of ideological conflict would also have been illuminating for readers. In the conclusion, for instance, Hutchings and Suri state that empathy was key to the opening to China. Specifically, Nixon and Kissinger realized that Western (and Japanese) imperialism had wreaked havoc on China in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; therefore they bent over backwards to assure the Chinese that the United States did not come with acquisitive, imperialistic motives. I agree with Hutchings and Suri, but there is a related point to be made about Nixon and Kissinger's successful diplomacy. It was essential for both sides to be ideologically flexible. Each had to accept that the other's ideology was antithetical to its own and then agree to put aside these differences, at least to a degree. One reason Nixon and Kissinger's diplomacy vis-à-vis China proved successful was that they made it clear to the Chinese that even though U.S. leaders had always feared and despised China's bottom-up peasant revolution, that viewpoint could be set aside as the two sides searched for commonalities of interest (i.e., limiting Soviet power and influence in the world).

The subject of clashing ideologies raises yet another question: why would such conflicts sometimes scuttle successful diplomacy and at other times not? It seems that

the conferees at the watershed Bandung Conference of 1955 were successful because they managed to artfully sidestep or downplay the possible ideological clashes that were always lurking in the various conference rooms. However, this very important aspect of the structural side of the story is not fully fleshed out in this book.

Another significant barrier to successful diplomacy is the ability of leaders and domestic groups with an interest in maintaining an antagonistic foreign policy to interfere in diplomatic efforts. They can manipulate antagonistic ideologies to keep nations engaged in tense confrontation. An analysis of this particular barrier to successful diplomacy would have been most interesting. Eisenhower famously warned of the military-industrial complex, and certainly some congressmen might have had incentives to try to derail diplomacy if there were lucrative defense industries in their districts. The question is, how much can powerful interests thwart efforts at successful diplomacy?

During the Cold War, the military-industrial complex in both the United States and the Soviet Union was very potent. Georgi Arbatov, who was a Soviet expert on the United States in the Gorbachev era, went a step further than Eisenhower, who only cautioned against the undue power of this complex. Arbatov placed the blame for extending the Cold War for two decades squarely on U.S. leaders who

exaggerated threats to the United States in order to keep themselves firmly in power. In 1989, as the Cold War was unraveling, Arbatov asserted that the Cold War was "a living corpse. It died some time in the 1960s and has been kept alive by political injections of myths and fantasies about the Soviet threat."¹ He could have added that until the Gorbachev era, Soviet leaders (and their military advisors) also kept the Cold War alive with "myths and fantasies" about the U.S. threat. Leaders have an incentive to sustain such "myths and fantasies" to rally their people behind them. And of course, powerful interest groups—

such as militaries—have an incentive to maintain "myths and fantasies" in order to preserve their large budgets and their prestige. Such interests can prevent successful diplomacy, year after year.

This is an enlightening and refreshing book. It aims high, attempting to analyze a complicated, multifaceted process by using case studies from around the world, and certainly it cannot address every question about the achievement of successful diplomatic policy in one volume. But analyzing the process of successful diplomacy is something that few observers try to do systematically, and these essays do a good job of it. The book is also a timely one, largely because U.S. foreign relations have been far too reliant on military force and development aid and less likely to turn to diplomacy—particularly since 9/11. Hutchings and Suri conclude that both the U.S. public and the world community have decided that subtlety and creativity is now more imperative than ever in the formulation of U.S. foreign relations. As they note in the introduction, if we fail to learn from successful diplomacy, we will have an increased rate of "creeping militarization" that will lead to a closing-off of diplomatic creativity, options, and actions, thus making military confrontation more likely (2). This book will prove insightful reading for experts and laypersons alike—for anyone, in short, who seeks to find ways of avoiding increased military confrontation.

Note:

1. "Soviet Reformer Georgi Arbatov Explains the 'New Thinking'"

in the Soviet Union, 1989," in Dennis Merrill and Thomas Paterson, eds., *Major Problems in American Foreign Relations*, vol. II: Since 1920, 7th ed. (Wadsworth/Cengage, 2009), p. 514.

Review of Robert Hutchings and Jeremi Suri, eds.,
*Foreign Policy Breakthroughs: Cases in Successful
Diplomacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015)

Charles N. Edel

Author's note: *The views expressed in this essay are the author's alone and not necessarily those of the U.S. government.*

Robert Hutchings and Jeremi Suri's edited volume *Foreign Policy Breakthroughs: Cases in Successful Diplomacy* makes the case for why diplomacy is so important. As the title suggests, it highlights diplomatic successes, but it also examines the conditions under which diplomacy can succeed and focuses on particular instances in which it broke through stasis and stalemate with a vision of a different future. In addition, Suri and Hutchings consider why diplomacy is very nearly a lost art, given short shrift in study and in practice; and they offer a plan for how to recover it and elevate it to a place of prominence both in the academy and in American statecraft. Their book is a self-consciously audacious endeavor. As they write in the introduction, their goal is nothing less than the reinvention of diplomacy.

Suri, a scholar, and Hutchings, a practitioner, are an ideal pair to undertake this endeavor. Suri holds the Mack Brown Distinguished Chair for Leadership in Global Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin and is one of the leading experts on American foreign policy and international history. Hutchings currently teaches national security at the University of Texas at Austin, where he also served as dean of the LBJ School of Public Affairs from 2010 to 2015. His diplomatic career included service as director for European affairs at the National Security Council, special advisor to the secretary of state with the rank of ambassador, and chairman of the U.S. National Intelligence Council. He and Suri jointly wrote the introduction and conclusion to this volume, which is shaped by their academic and real-world expertise.

Suri and Hutchings believe that in theory and in practice, contemporary diplomacy is a marginalized field. They argue that American foreign policy suffers from a Cold War legacy that privileges reflexive militarization over creative diplomacy. Further, they contend that this warping of the traditional tools of statecraft has coincided with, and perhaps been the cause of, a decline in the practice of diplomacy. Finally, they argue that the lack of robust, useful, and practical scholarship on diplomacy—particularly cases of successful diplomacy—contributes to the diminished focus on diplomacy in both the academy and in the real world of statecraft. Diplomacy is of singular importance, they conclude, but diplomats today need more and better training.

The need to reinvent diplomacy by first reinventing diplomatic training is one of the major themes of this book. Unlike economists, lawyers, military officers, and even academics, diplomats do not have to master an agreed-upon body of work prior to becoming diplomatic practitioners. As Suri and Hutchings observe, diplomatic training, even in formalized and accredited MA programs, is inconsistent.

"There is nothing that could be called a curriculum in this field," they write. Instruction "is mostly confined to foreign language and area studies training, with a thin veneer of 'how to' training for junior diplomats." As a result, most professional diplomats—or those policymakers tasked with conceiving and conducting foreign policy—are expected to learn 'on the job'" (4). While this might sound reasonable, the editors ask their readers to contrast it with the regular and career-long professional training the military receives. Suri and Hutchings are clearly not satisfied with this current state of affairs, and they note that this book is part of a larger project to develop a better way to equip future diplomats with the knowledge and skills to thrive in the broader world of statecraft.

The editors' intention is to make the study of diplomacy more serious and more thoughtful. By examining case studies of several different occasions on which diplomatic breakthroughs occurred, the authors are trying to encourage diplomats to think more broadly, be more creative, and gain a better understanding of the difference between diplomatic success and successful diplomacy. The case studies are all postwar. Some involve the United States, while others do not. The only criteria the editors used was diplomatic success. Every chapter asks what behaviors, what habits, and what frames of reference were more likely to produce desired outcomes.

Suri and Hutchings usefully pushed the authors of individual chapter to sum up the lessons for diplomacy that each particular case reveals. What emerges are lessons so obvious that they bear stating only because, as Suri and Hutchings assert, we might otherwise lose sight of them because of a winner-take-all political culture that denigrates compromise and an academy that promotes specialization over broad-ranging training.

The first lesson is that diplomatic success arises from ensuring that we do not separate things that should not be separated. For example, the editors argue that secrecy and openness both have their place in diplomacy, contending that while obsessive secrecy is counterproductive, so too is elevating to dogma the Wilsonian notion of open covenants arrived at openly. Leaders need venues to creatively test the limits of the possible. Often this testing

means going beyond where they, their bureaucracies, and the national mood are and moving to where they could be.

The editors also note that diplomacy and war are intertwined. Nearly all the work of the classical strategic theorists is grounded in the logic that diplomacy gains its leverage from the threat of violence and that strength works best when paired with and tempered by diplomacy. As the nineteenth-century Prussian strategist Carl von Clausewitz noted, "War is the continuation of politics with the addition of other means." Unfortunately, most modern observers incorrectly translate and therefore misunderstand this singular phrase, reducing war to the continuation of politics "by other means." Arguing over a preposition might seem petty, but as Naval War College professor James Holmes has pointed out, the implications of that preposition are large. He writes that "pursuing political objectives 'with' other means connotes adding a new implement—namely armed force—to a mix of diplomatic, economic, and informational implements rather than dropping them to pick up the sword. War operates under a distinctive martial grammar, in other words, but the logic of policy remains in charge even after combat is joined."¹

However, Clausewitzian mistranslations notwithstanding, in the modern era, war and diplomacy are of-

ten understood and conveyed as opposing impulses that inhabit separate realms. That is a mistaken and indeed dangerous conceptualization that removes coercive power from diplomacy in any circumstance short of war and delinks political objectives from military actions during hostilities. It also assumes that there is a clear line that separates war from peace. From eastern Ukraine to the South China Sea, reality has proven much more complicated. The mingling of the military and the political is especially problematic in competitive “grey zone” interactions defined by “ambiguity about the nature of conflict, opacity of the parties involved or uncertainty about the relevant policy and legal frameworks.”²

The other major lesson that Suri and Hutchings present is the need for all parties to win. Diplomacy, they write, is not premised on achieving unconditional surrender. For a negotiation to become a successful act of diplomacy, all parties concerned must have a stake in the outcome and must buy into the solution. Successful diplomacy requires antagonistic parties to agree that what they have negotiated is in their interests. Also reminiscent of Clausewitz, this principle is about perception as much as reality, because while one party can attempt to impose its will on an antagonist, the decision to submit or continue resistance resides with the antagonist. The odds of success are of course raised if one, both, or several parties to a dispute compromise. As the book suggests, this is a particularly hard lesson for Americans to learn. Specifically, victory, understood in the total sense, cannot become the goal of diplomacy. Rather, the objective is to achieve a deal in which all players feel as if their country or their cause has been well served.

The chapters in this book are broad-ranging, covering the diplomacy behind the creation of the European Union, the negotiation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, Nixon and Kissinger’s opening to China, and American efforts at the end of the Cold War. As with any edited volume, the quality, structure, and organization of the different chapters vary. But as several of the best essays make clear, successful diplomacy emerges when structure and agency combine in productive ways. That correlation can be seen especially clearly in Suri’s chapter, “From Isolation to Engagement: American Diplomacy and the Opening to China, 1969–1972.” Examining American and Chinese motivations, Suri finds that foreign policy breakthroughs occurred when the principal actors found new ways to communicate and meet and when diplomatic entrepreneurs were willing to begin by working in secret. In this study in particular, leadership also mattered enormously. Absent the driving vision and force of Nixon, Kissinger, Mao, and Zhou Enlai, stasis and the status quo would likely have continued.

This collection of essays raises a number of useful questions. First is one about selection. Overall, and true to its title, this edited volume focuses on positive and successful foreign policy, notably instances in which an impasse yielded to forward progress through the intervention of successful diplomacy. As the editors correctly note, so much ink has been spilled analyzing diplomatic failures that success demands an equal hearing at the very least. One scenario the book does not consider are foreign policy breakthroughs achieved in the negative, when leaders see that there is no convergence of interests, and they act on that. Surely that is a breakthrough too—albeit of a different nature.

The question of selection leads to a second, related issue. Suri and Hutchings write that diplomacy demands a common language. They point to the Congress System of nineteenth-century Europe as a model for states pursuing “their traditional ambitions” while still respecting “the legitimate interests of other states” and “preserv[ing] cooperative relations” (8). But how does successful

diplomacy take place when a revisionist state is one of the participants? As Henry Kissinger asked in his very first book—an intensive study of the diplomacy following the upheavals of the Napoleonic Wars that set the parameters for that Congress System of the nineteenth century—how can statesmen recognize the limits of diplomacy when dealing with a revolutionary power? “In such cases,” Kissinger wrote, “it is not the adjustment of differences within a given system which will be at issue, but the system itself.” Kissinger concluded that “diplomacy, the art of restraining the exercise of power, cannot function in such an environment. . . . Diplomats can still meet but they cannot persuade, for they have ceased to speak the same language.”³ The question of how a statesman comes to grips with revisionist powers is not discussed in this volume, but is well worth contemplating, and might perhaps usefully be taken up in the authors’ next book.

A third question this volume raises relates to the conduct of diplomacy for both an international and a domestic audience. For diplomacy to be successful, it clearly needs to succeed for different audiences, but does this need to happen simultaneously, or can it happen sequentially? And what happens when those messages contradict each other? Of course the answer varies, but I found myself wondering about these questions as I read.

Finally, Suri and Hutchings write that “successful diplomacy demands disciplined and coherent government, in which the various foreign policy departments and their ‘agents’ operate within a common strategic framework” (16). Such a statement sounds both practical and obvious, yet it also sounds almost impossibly rare in modern democratic government. If nothing else, this collection underscores the benefit of periodic policy reviews as a tool to embolden the bureaucracy to think new thoughts and to go beyond the operational aspects of diplomacy. Successful diplomacy requires imagining relationships that have not yet come into being. Whether that act of imagination requires vision or persistence in greater degree is an elusive yet quite important question.

Notes:

1. James Holmes, “Everything You Know About Clausewitz Is Wrong,” *The Diplomat*, November 12, 2014. <http://thediplomat.com/2014/11/everything-you-know-about-clausewitz-is-wrong/>.
2. Capt. Philip Kapusta, “The Grey Zone,” U.S. Special Operations Command White Paper, 9 September 2015, p. 2. <http://www.soc.mil/swcs/ProjectGray/Gray%20Zones%20-%20USSOCOM%20White%20Paper%209%20Sep%202015.pdf>.
3. Henry A. Kissinger, *A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh and the Problems of Peace, 1812–1822* (Boston, 1957), 2.

Response to Roundtable Reviewers of *Foreign Policy Breakthroughs: Cases in Successful Diplomacy*

Robert Hutchings and Jeremi Suri

The last year has witnessed a series of dramatic diplomatic breakthroughs, including a 190-nation agreement to limit global atmospheric pollution, a seven-party deal to curtail Iran’s nuclear weapons program, and, for the first time in more than fifty years, an opening of relations between the governments of Cuba and the United States. Even hawkish skeptics of diplomacy have found themselves caught up in the euphoria created by these breakthroughs. Texas Governor Greg Abbott—one of the most outspoken critics of President Barack Obama’s alleged “weakness” on immigration, national security, and American leadership—was one of the first officials to rush into Cuba and begin negotiating business deals for his constituents. When successfully pursued, diplomacy has a

magnetic quality, attracting the attention of the very people who most demean its potential in the abstract.

One of the main purposes of our book is to make the successful practice of diplomacy concrete for diverse readers, including scholars, practitioners, students, and other interested citizens. The chapters in our book address a series of interrelated questions: What does successful diplomacy look like? How have different kinds of diplomats pursued it? What can we learn for the unique foreign policy challenges of our own time?

Our book seeks to offer coherent but non-uniform answers to these questions by focusing on a collection of diverse and important cases. The goal is not to give diplomats a checklist but to offer them a series of insights, drawn from a close reading of history, to contemplate as they do their work. We do not seek to advocate one specific diplomatic project, or even one nation's interests, but instead hope to stimulate a renaissance of creative thinking about how powerful international actors can temper the frequent over-militarization of policy with more thoughtful and well-prepared diplomatic activities. Even in a period of new breakthroughs, the scholarly attention paid to diplomacy still falls far short of the attention devoted to military, economic, and cultural affairs; and the preparation our diplomats receive is confined mainly to episodic and unstructured on-the-job learning. Ironically, diplomatic and international historians often neglect the absolutely crucial day-to-day work of diplomats.

We are very pleased to see agreement on the need for more study of diplomacy, broadly defined, from the distinguished reviewers of our book. We are grateful for their insights, and we agree that this book is just a beginning. There are many other important cases to examine and many additional issues to interrogate—including the “structural” barriers that James Siekmeier discusses and the complex relationship between diplomacy and other less diplomatic activities, as emphasized in the case of Nixon and Kissinger by both Robert Brigham and William Schmidli. William Hitchcock is also correct to identify the tensions among the chapters in the conceptualization of various issues, including secrecy, bureaucracy, and planning.

Charles Edel raises the important question of how statesmen can deal successfully with revisionist powers, and he wonders whether modern democratic government has made disciplined and coherent policy nearly impossible. We believe that revisionist powers are still subject to diplomacy, and we continue to hope that democracies can generate policy coherence, but both domains require better-trained diplomatic leaders. At the very least, the successful diplomats of the twenty-first century will need a stronger historical background in their endeavor, and that is what we hope to provide, in part. Although our book is clearly not the last word, we are happy to see how it has already helped to deepen the discussion.

The reviewers raise questions about how we define “success.” Brigham and Hitchcock ask about larger negative patterns of diplomatic behavior, especially in the administration of Richard Nixon. Schmidli asks why we do not examine “failures,” and he implies a “triumphal” bias in our analyses. These questions highlight one of our key points: that assessing outcomes alone is insufficient for determining diplomatic success or failure. Our book seeks

to avoid simple retrospective judgments and examine how the men and women who worked between societies built new connections, planted new seeds of cooperation, and negotiated arrangements that tempered the use of other more coercive forms of power. Each of the book's chapters is about success, not because the outcomes were perfect, but because the diplomats expanded options and improved the possibilities for stability and peace.

Diplomacy is the art of compromise, and its ethics center on the willingness to reach out, negotiate, and create win-wins for key actors. That is the consistent narrative of every chapter, despite wide differences in the subjects. Some diplomats, (like Kissinger and Sadat) are flamboyant and secretive; others (including Begin and Baker) are understated and managerial. Success is not about a particular style or a specific program. The cases in our book show how different forms of diplomatic behavior have brought diverse groups together to widen the range of the possible and enhance the possibilities for multiple actors.

Success is rare because this work is so difficult. (Diplomatic agreements only look obvious or easy in retrospect.) Distrust and the presumption of the worst, in friends or adversaries, are the most common causes of failed diplomacy. International actors who are dissatisfied with the status quo, sometimes for legitimate reasons, also frequently oppose peaceful diplomacy. These are the “revisionist powers” Edel discusses so effectively in his review. In addition, our book's cases highlight how domestic audiences—political opponents, interested groups, and self-serving opinion-leaders—often penalize diplomats and pressure elected officials to favor ultimatums over compromise. Diplomacy is indeed a “two-level game.” Our current electoral season should remind us how hard it is to sell diplomacy at home, especially in the United States.

This latter point is the motivation not only for our book, but also for our warning against the all-too-common denigration of diplomatic “failures” when we do not get what we want. That attitude, found in politicians and sometimes in scholars, contributes to the discrediting of diplomacy itself. We agree that new research on diplomatic failures would be a welcome contribution to the debate, and we would hope that such analyses would distinguish between the inherent structure of the geopolitical situation on the one hand, and the actions of statesmen and diplomats on the other—as we have tried to do in our book. Examining diplomatic failures in the context of their time, while remaining mindful of the policy limits diplomats faced, may help us see the small successes achieved in negotiations, even when the larger political framework was flawed.

Diplomacy that makes both good and bad policy decisions better is a noble calling, even if the results do not always look better. We need more work to understand how diplomacy can reach its real potential in different circumstances. We also need to redouble our efforts to remind students and leaders that diplomacy has value and requires consistent nurturing. We sincerely thank the reviewers for their contributions to this worthy endeavor in “reinventing diplomacy.” We hope our book will inspire many future efforts at diplomatic reinvention, beginning, of course, with more serious histories.