

American Negotiating Behavior: Wheelers-Dealers, Legal Eagles, Bullies and Preachers. By Richard H. Solomon and Nigel Quinney. Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press 2010. 357 pages. \$40.00. **Reviewed by Captain James D. Heffernan, USN,** Director of Leader Development and Principal Faculty Coordinator and Instructor for the Negotiations Elective, Department of Command Leadership and Management, US Army War College.

American Negotiating Behavior will be the seminal book for conducting effective international negotiations in the future. Cross-cultural negotiating has been a consistent research theme of the United States Institute of Peace for years. Their comprehensive studies in the past, however, have viewed negotiations typically from the United States' perspective and within a bilateral framework. This book is different; it understands the dyadic process which is bilateral negotiations and looks at the US from the eyes of those who were on the receiving end of American negotiating behavior.

The most significant and perhaps most troubling revelation in the book was that high ranking and disparate negotiators from thirty countries and six continents easily developed a consensus opinion about how the US negotiates. If the American negotiating behavior can be that easily categorized, then effective strategies can just as easily be devised to counter these negotiating approaches. The book's concentration on "how" Americans negotiate and not "how well" they negotiate is refreshing.

Synthesizing the interviews with more than fifty seasoned international negotiators, Richard H. Solomon and Nigel Quinney develop and define four facets or professional orientations characterizing past American negotiating practice: a businesslike approach to ensure purposeful and productive activity, the legalist approach to ensure concrete details and abstract principles, the moralistic approach to ensure US values and ideals reign supreme, and the superpower approach to enforce "might makes right." In the book, the former Japanese deputy minister for foreign affairs sums up the typical American negotiator, "exhibiting high-handedness, self-centeredness, and impatience, American negotiators cite their own domestic constraints while ignoring the domestic difficulties of their negotiating counterparts." This is quite an indictment of the US negotiators and proof positive that this book is a critical reference for today's international negotiator.

A chapter by Dr. Robert D. Schulzinger, perhaps the foremost expert on diplomatic history, helps ground the study from the historical perspective of US presidents and diplomats. The chapter reveals the tension between presidents, Congress, and the people and the impact that these tensions have on American negotiations. The real attractiveness of this book comes from the eight different case studies. The authors have assembled these studies from the viewpoint of the foreign diplomats who were intimately involved in each of the cases opposite the US representative. These studies are illuminating as the reader begins to clearly understand the actual impact of American negotiating behavior on allies and rivals. One clearly sees that seemingly benign behavior, when viewed through a different cultural lens, can be interpreted as malevolent and undermine US interests.

America's "exceptionalism" may be an effective call to action for most Americans but increasingly is viewed as an attempt to impose US morals on other cultures

and peoples. As the book so effectively points out, in a globalized world, this ‘exceptionalism’ may foster resentment if not outright opposition to the US and its policies. To counter this resentment, the authors have proposed a fifth facet that should characterize future US negotiating practices. They term this the “political approach.” It is characterized by the ability to reach out to stakeholders, both internal and external, to understand their interests and to develop long-term relationships; an effort not always pursued by US negotiators. American negotiators, in essence, have to be more comfortable sitting at a round table rather than at the head of a rectangle table.

Ever since Cardinal Richelieu pioneered the “modern” approach to international relations, nation state personalities have always been a part of international negotiations. As the US comes to appreciate its future economic parity with other countries, the challenges associated with forming functioning governments in Afghanistan and Iraq, global pandemics, natural disasters, energy demands, and limited world resources; there is no better time than now for national security practitioners to assess the world’s perception of the American negotiating personality. Can the US continue to maintain its post World War II persona as it negotiates its future over an ever-expanding list of issues with friends and foes alike? This book provides the reader a solid foundation on which to answer that question.

The book begins with a quote from Sun Tzu, “Know your adversary, know yourself; in a hundred battles, a hundred victories.” It concludes with the impact this particular quote should have on the reader; heightened self-reflection. The contributors reaffirm that Americans are by their nature more outward looking than introspective, spend little time seeing themselves as others might. Strengths that, when viewed through cultural prisms, can, at times, become weaknesses. Understanding the foreign perception of American negotiating behavior is critical to survival in the interconnected and dependent global environment. This book goes a long way in assisting the reader in understanding this perception.

This book is, of course, essential reading for the experienced student of international negotiations. It does however, offer so much more to defense community writ large. Effective engagement is critical to securing America’s national interests. The only way to make US engagement more effective is to understand the impact of various engagement behaviors on those sitting around the table. *American Negotiating Behavior* clearly is the most up-to-date and authoritative voice to assist us in understanding the perception of US negotiating behavior and, as such, belongs in the library of every national security professional.