JOHN LEWIS GADDIS ON BUSH'S TRULY GRAND STRATEGY

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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2002 www.foreignpolicy.com

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By Robert Jervis

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Li's former colleagues are men of integrity and sympathetic to his reformist ideals, the majority of the local officials one encounters in the book are, at best, party hacks preoccupied solely with their careers and personal interests. A large number are corrupt, vindictive, duplicitous, petty characters for whom the current Chinese political system seems to provide a particularly hospitable environment.

Li's prescription for dislodging this local predatory state is simple: enfranchising and empowering the vast Chinese peasantry. He calls for the abolition of all types of restrictions on peasants so that they can become "free" and "genuine citizens of China." This veiled call for democracy may sound a bit naive or premature under current circumstances in China. But even this depressing book may shed a ray of hope: When a party insider like Li comes to this inescapable conclusion, publishes a book by an influential official press, and sells more than 40,000 copies, then real changes may soon be on the way. FP

Lingua Diplomatica

By Chas. W. Freeman Jr.

Language and Diplomacy
Edited by Jovan Kurbalija and Hannah Slavik
335 pages, Malta: Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies, 2001

"Diplomacy is primarily words that prevent us from reaching for our swords," observes Bosnian scholar-diplomat Drazen Pehar, one of a score of contributors to the two multinational conferences on which *Language and Diplomacy* is based. His insight pointedly reminds us that all civilized countries once viewed diplomacy backed by military power—and not the preemptive military strikes called for in U.S. President George W. Bush's new doctrine—as the appropriate way to deal with most international uncertainties and all but the most imminent threats to domestic tranquillity. Perhaps most civilized nations still do.

Language and Diplomacy covers many disparate aspects of the relationship between the results diplomats achieve and the words they choose when they speak, write, and send e-mail. What rhetoric and vocabulary do they use? When are they precise, ambiguous, silent? How do they record all these forms of communications, and how do they use them in training? The book's contributors include practitioners, scholars, and historians of diplomacy, as well as interpreters, linguists, literary critics, and cyberneticists. The book is evidence of the international effort currently under way to improve the practice of diplomacy and to make it a true profession, whose practitioners claim and are universally acknowledged to have knowledge and skills that enable them to accomplish things that laypeople, no matter how gifted, cannot.

Despite the pioneering role of Americans in creating the modern legal, medical, and military professions, most work on fostering diplomatic professionalism is happening outside the United States. This disinterestedness in diplomacy-as-profession predates the era of U.S. hegemony. As one of the 20th century's greatest diplomats, Abba Eban, put it: "The word 'ambassador' would normally have a professional connotation but for the American tradition of political appointees. The bizarre notion that any citizen, especially if he is rich, is fit for the representation of his country abroad has taken some hard blows through empirical evidence. But it has not been discarded."

These circumstances have produced an odd inversion of roles. Americans like to think of themselves as focused on the practical rather than the theoretical. Yet it is in the abstract substance of statecraft—comparative foreign policy—that U.S. academics dominate, not in the meat and potatoes of diplomatic craft. With two exceptions, as this book illustrates, non-Americans are the preeminent analysts and writers on diplomacy.

One exception is the growing literature on negotiation, most of it—like the pioneering work being done

Chas. W. Freeman Jr. was U.S. ambassador to Saudi Arabia during the Gulf War and assistant secretary of defense from 1993 to 1994. He is the author of Arts of Power: Statecraft and Diplomacy *and* The Diplomat's Dictionary, *rev. ed. (Washington: U.S. Institute of Peace Press, 1997).*

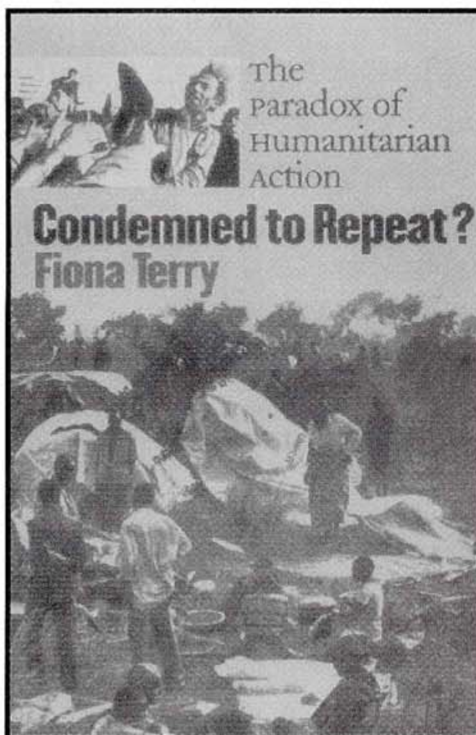
at the U.S. Institute of Peace—devoted to advising Americans about how to strike bargains with foreigners. (An American contributor to *Language and Diplomacy*, Paul Sharp, pointedly notes, however, that "for the diplomatic profession . . . how to talk to Americans is a much larger shared problem than how the Americans talk to everybody else.") The other, related exception is the study of cross-cultural communication, a special concern for Americans, who are monolingual participants in a homogeneous, continent-spanning culture. A recent poll suggested that three fifths of Americans lack interest in foreign news because they have little confidence that they know enough about other societies to be able to understand developments abroad.

The presence in this volume of a fine paper by Israeli political scientist Raymond Cohen on efforts to develop a Middle East negotiating lexicon reminds us that much pioneering work is being done outside the United States. Cohen dissects Arabic, English, and Hebrew to show how the parties lack even a common word, still less a concept, for the process of negotiation in which they are enmeshed. Arabic, for example, uses two words with quite different connotations for negotiation: *Mufawadat* denotes a dignified discussion of mutual interests that precludes overt expressions of anger; *musawama* means haggling over the price of goods, with all of the undignified posturing and huckstering expected in a bazaar. Arabs assert, says Cohen, that "while they engage in *mufawadat* ...the Israelis insist on *musawama*."

Similarly, Cohen notes, Arabic has two words for peace. *Sulh* evokes the harmony, tranquillity, and prosperity that accompany reconciliation. *Salam*, like the Hebrew shalom, connotes the security and well-being that follow the formal termination of a state of war, without implying that underlying tensions have necessarily been resolved. The diplomatic implications of these linguistically based cultural distinctions are vitally important and only very imperfectly captured in the English phrases "warm peace" and "cold peace."

The papers in the volume vary in purpose. Some give practical advice. Others state and attempt to test hypotheses about diplomatic behavior. Still others examine misunderstandings that have made history. For example, Aldo Matteucci looks at the "hidden baggage in diplomatic language—power, concepts and constructs, international and national law" and specifically at how the failure to decode the context behind the words engendered gross misunderstanding during negotiations between the British and Maori on the 19th-century Treaty of Waitangi. Scattered throughout the book are interesting examples of diplomatic bureaucracy at work. (Did you know that, when the newly independent United States established its legation in London, the British Foreign Office initially insisted that any written communication with it be in French, the diplomatic language of the age?)

Some papers look at particular modes of communication, as does a pathbreaking piece by Jovan Kurbalija that examines the uses of hypertext in diplomacy and international law, an option that few diplomats have yet considered. Kurbalija notes that "text is central to diplomacy," that "diplomatic developments are multi-



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causal," and that "diplomatic documents are the result of complex, multi-layered activities." Yet "[m]odern diplomacy is faced with an information glut," and "diplomatic documents are becoming unmanageable in size." For example, the 1994 Marrakech Final Act establishing the World Trade Organization contains 26,000 pages of agreements, promises, and commitments. "Hypertext tools cannot reduce complexity," Kurbalija says, "but they can help harness it."

The first chapter in *Language and Diplomacy* is the entertaining (and insightful) article by Peter Serracino-Inglott on the diplomatic use of jokes. As he points out, "when jokes work, they give rise to a feeling of complicity between the teller and the listener." And those of us who, like me, have surnames that invite the following question will forever be in his debt for this joke: At a recent party (as no doubt at many others before), one guest approached another. "Are you Jewish?" he asked in as polite a tone as he could manage. "No," the other replied, "I just look cunning." FP

Anxious in Argentina

By Santiago Real de Azúa

El atroz encanto de ser argentinos (The Awful Charm of Being Argentine)
By Marcos Aguinis
253 pages, Buenos Aires: Planeta, 2001 (in Spanish)

La realidad, el despertar del sueño argentino (Reality: Awakening From the Argentine Dream)
By Mariano Grondona
214 pages, Buenos Aires: Planeta, 2001 (in Spanish)

When one of the world's most prosperous, promising, and envied countries deteriorates into one of the most troubled in the space of a few years, its people naturally will want to know whom to blame. And so it is in Argentina, which during 2001 and early 2002 saw a record succession of presidents, the end of dollar parity, and the imposition of the infamous *corralito*—the freezing of millions of citizens' bank deposits.

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Two of the books that best capture Argentina's angst were actually published just before the dramatic worsening of the crisis in December 2001. Marcos Aguinis (author of *The Awful Charm of Being Argentine*) and Mariano Grondona (author of *Reality: Awakening From the Argentine Dream*) are both accomplished public intellectuals who also have held cabinet-level positions in previous governments. Their works are part of a vast genre by Argentines that explores their country's malaise and asks who is at fault for its well-chronicled failures. Indeed, some observers have joked that the curious abundance of these books is itself a symptom of Argentina's peculiar national neurosis. As their titles suggest, the authors look inward for explanations.

The Awful Charm of Being Argentine could be read as collective psychoanalysis (the author is a psychiatrist). It offers a vivid and, at times, impressionistic account of the different currents of Argentina's social pathology. Its premise is that Argentines both enjoy and are afflicted by a state of mind that can be described as alternating between resignation (witness the tango title "Cuesta abajo," or "Downhill"), euphoria (at soccer matches), and pride (over a cultural superiority that is known to be in decline). Aguinis argues that the Argentine stereotype, formed both from within and from without, has become as bankrupt as the economy. The formerly self-confident, somewhat arrogant, and narcissistic character—sure of himself and his country, his place in the world, and his capacity to understand and shape it—has given way to his opposite: insecure, defensive, unimaginative, and overwhelmed by the difficulties he confronts.

Yet it is to the darker side of the old stereotype that Aguinis traces the origins of today's crisis—notably, the breezy indifference to rules and responsibilities, the tendency to glamorize transgression and celebrate easy wealth, and the primacy of short-term success over long-term planning. Many of these tendencies are expressed in words that are difficult to translate and often incomprehensible to non-Argentines: the *chanta* (rascal or scoundrel), who is allergic to effort and indifferent to respect, and the *vivo* (opportunist),