

Coms
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By
Armed Class

Short remarks on John G. Galaty:

FORM AND INTENTION IN EAST AFRICAN STRATEGIES OF DOMINANCE
AND AGGRESSION

A main thesis put forward by Prof. Galaty in his paper says that there are useful analogies to be drawn between the subject matter of non-human primate dominance and aggression, conflict and warfare in small-scale pre-industrial societies, and the military strategies of highly mechanized armies in nation states. At the same time he makes clear that many of these analogies are more formal than substantive.

Since I am neither an ethologist nor an anthropologist I would like to confine myself to some cautious remarks on those analogies which have a more or less direct link with the problems of peace and war among states from the point of view of strategic analysis.

- p. 3: [Prof. Galaty] asks whether the establishment of a transnational military line across which the army of the opposing alliance must not cross can be considered as an example of 'territoriality'.

[I] think it can. But the comparison would probably be more accurate for communities (in the sense they are defined by Tönnies ¹) or Easton ²) resp. security communities (according to the terminology of K. Deutsch ³) and even more so nation states than for alliances.

Indeed, even if for example paragraph 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty provides that an armed attack against one or more of the parties in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all, this does not mean that in real life each of the members of the alliance will react in case any of the other members is

the victim of an aggression in the same manner as if his own territory were attacked. The United States for example, as the main guarantor of the security of other alliance members would certainly not react in the same way after an attack against Turkey or France as it would after an attack against W. Germany (Turkey appearing less important than W. Germany from an overall strategic point of view, the US having stronger historical ties and socio-cultural affinities towards W. Germany than towards Turkey, more than 200,000 American troops being deployed in W. Germany but only a few thousand in Turkey etc.; France being not a member of the integrated military system of NATO etc.); neither would it react in the same way after an attack on W. Germany as it would after an attack on American homeland. This means that the alliance does not form a monolithic entity the way a nation state or a community does.

- p. 5 and 6: [Prof. Galaty] writes that the sticks carried by male Maasai signify not only conflict but also restraint.

[I] wonder whether it may not be possible to compare, in some sense, the stick in Maasai society and the Western nuclear doctrine called 'Second Strike Strategy' which is based upon a posture called 'Second Strike Capability'. ([Prof. Galaty] himself does not make such a comparison.) A 'Second Strike ~~Capability~~^{Strategy}' based upon a 'Second Strike ~~Strategy~~^{Capability}' signifies, as does the stick in the hand of a male Maasai, a capacity for defense but also restraint. Indeed such a 'Second Strike Strategy', also called sometimes 'Mutual Assured Destruction' (MAD) shows the potential adversary that one is neither willing nor above all capable to disarm him (i.e. to prevent him from dealing a full retaliatory blow) by striking first but only to inflict unacceptable damage (i.e. damage exceeding

by far whatever the adversary could reasonably expect to win ⁴⁾) upon him should he not stick to the tacit rules of the game, i.e. should he try a preventive first strike (be it counterforce or countercity or both at the same time).

Such a 'Second Strike Capability' which is most dreadful in itself, i.e. by its sheer physical potentialities, if seen in the context of the system of mutual strategic deterrence existing between the superpowers is only an instrument for preserving the status quo. Of course one can argue that such a restraint is the restraint of two scorpions in a bottle.

- p. 6 and 7: [Prof. Galaty] writes about the Maasai spokesman who carries a smaller, highly polished black stick, an emblem of office and who has a seat reserved for him when he sits; his dominance is according to [Prof. Galaty] an outcome of cultural intentionality and it is more implicit than explicit.

A similar pattern of dominance can be found in the society of states. France and Great Britain, even if they are no longer great powers but at best middle powers, are permanent members of the Security Council of the United Nations (together with the USA, USSR, China) and play a role in world politics that goes far beyond their real power. Their nuclear capacity is more a symbolic expression of this role than a genuine power instrument which would allow them to impose their views by threatening the use of this instrument. In fact it can be useful as long as it will not be pushed towards a showdown, as long as its dominance remains implicit.

- p. 17: resemblance between segmentary theory and a theory of balance of power

[Prof. Galaty] writes that there is an inherent dualism in both models, since alliances would tend to congregate units of disparate and varying interest into large blocs; when conflict would occur units which would attempt to sit on the fence would tend to be pushed to one bloc or the other.

The latter part of the statement is not necessarily true for neutral states: it would certainly not hold true for Sweden, Austria or Switzerland. A state such as Finland on the other hand would probably turn resp. be pushed to one bloc or the other in case of serious East-West-conflict.

The statement might however prove right for states which, without being neutral by international law or international behaviour, show no strong interest, in time of détente, in supporting clearly the aims and actions of an alliance whose general objectives and outlook concerning world affairs they share.

Intensified conflict may, however, have in this case an opposite effect: the fear of states which sit on the fence that they could be entangled into this conflict and therefore run, especially in the nuclear age, a greater risk of annihilation might lead these states to turn further away from the bloc they think could suffer the consequences of conflict.

The statement made by [Prof. Galaty] may be correct from an intra-alliance perspective, i.e. for states which are legally and materially committed to an alliance. So one can notice that in periods of rising tensions (s. Cold War) there is reinforcement of alliance solidarity, alliance cohesion, that there may be even progress towards greater integration whereas in times of lessening tensions (s. Détente) there is a lessening of alliance

harmony, mounting discontent, disputes on political aims, on strategic foundations, on economic burden-sharing.

One must notice, however, that there are to-day, in a time of renewed East-West confrontation, strong neutralist tendencies in several West European countries, i.e. tendencies towards withdrawal from the Atlantic alliance and a policy of appeasement towards the Soviet bloc.

- p. 18: [Prof. Galaty] writes that the various sides tend towards balance because smaller groups gravitate towards alliances with or assimilation into the larger and because an asymmetry in relation between the two might produce a form of instability that would lead to diplomatic realignments.

[I] think that this is too mechanistic a view of international relations and that, while being attractive from a theoretical point of view, it does not take well enough into account the complexities of these relations (interstate activities do not take place under laboratory conditions).

First, states do not always have the opportunity to align or realign according to their preferences (eventually their concern for overall equilibrium). They do not always have this opportunity in the US sphere of influence and they certainly do not have it in the Soviet one (Yugoslavia is an exception; moreover it defected but did not realign itself with the West).

Second - and this seems quite natural - states sometimes tend to realign themselves with the stronger bloc (or the one they think will be stronger in the future).

- p. 18 and 19: appropriate response to hostilities,
limitation on warfare

According to [Prof. Galaty], the feud represents a system of justice based on the appropriateness of response, in a sort for "tit-for-tat" form; it is aimed at resolution rather than continuance of hostilities and represents an intrinsically limited notion of conflict, since an act of aggression calls for a balanced and specific, rather than an unpredictable or generalized response.

This analogy goes to the heart of the strategy debate of the Western alliance ever since its inhibition in 1949. When Dulles proclaimed in 1954 the doctrine of 'massive retaliation' ⁵⁾ the US were in a situation of clear nuclear superiority. But even in this situation the credibility of this doctrine was soon to be doubted more and more: would the US really risk a general nuclear war because of a minor Soviet encroachment somewhere in the world. The doubts and critiques were summed up in Maxwell Taylor's 'The Uncertain Trumpet' ⁶⁾ and led finally to a doctrine of 'Flexible response' adopted by NATO in 1967 (MC 14/3). The essence of the new doctrine was that NATO would react in case of Soviet aggression with those means that were just necessary for stopping the attack and to make clear that it was up to the Soviets to make the next steps in the ladder of conflict escalation. The purpose is to terminate eventual hostilities at the lowest possible level.

The secretary of defense McNamara declared in June 1962 in Ann Arbor: "The US has come to the conclusion that, to the extent feasible, basic military strategy in a possible general nuclear war should be approached in much the same way that more conventional military operations have been regarded in the past. That is to say, principal military objectives should be the destruction of the enemy's military forces, not of his civilian population." ⁷⁾

One of his successors, Schlesinger, said in his Annual Defense Department Report FY 1975: "what we need is a series of measured responses to aggression which bear some relation to the provocation, have prospects of terminating hostilities before general war breaks out, and leave some possibility for restoring deterrence."

The Presidential Directive No 59 issued by Carter in 1980 affirmed selective and limited nuclear options as American strategic policy. The Reagan-Administration has also offered some rather loose talk about limited nuclear war, protracted nuclear war, fighting a nuclear war, winning a nuclear war.

These reflections and statements as well as new technological achievements have aroused much public concern: some people think that all this could lead to an official posture of nuclear war-fighting and to a destabilization of the existing delicate balance of terror. Nuclear war could thus, they fear, lose part of its horror, ^{become} ~~because~~ more thinkable and therefore more feasible. In fact as Ian Clark has written, "the attempt to create the infrastructure of the future convention of limited nuclear warfare could easily be interpreted by the opponent as threatening and provocative, and as being more aggressive than the simple espousal of total war threats".⁸⁾

- p. 21: [Prof. Galaty] writes that defensive responses tend to be perpetuated even in the absence of continuous and restrained threat.

One can observe this kind of perpetuation of defensive responses also in the behavior of nation states, at least on a political if not on a military level. The USSR and France have spoken of a terrifying German threat in the years following the Second World War (in the case of the USSR even into the sixties and the Ostpolitik of the

Brandt/Scheel government) when this threat had long since gone and Germany had no longer by any rational account and even after its - purely conventional - rearmament in the middle of the fifties the smallest possibility of attacking these states. The same seems to have been true for China v. Japan after 1945.

On the other side and in a positive sense, a commitment (by a state for the security of another one) can persist long after it has expired on a legal level, ^{has been} terminated on a material one and even faded away on a psychological one. 9)

- p. 22 and 23: - the issue of "display":

[Prof. Galaty] writes that if a pattern of violence and raiding is feared and has been experienced it then is only necessary for a group to sight a member of the threatening group for it to experience intimidation and he also stresses the importance of the visibility of the military force as a factor in its 'influence'. As examples he mentions the presence of American troops in NATO-Europe and land-based intercontinental missiles.

[I] think that this observation is quite valid. It might be partially for this reason that the Soviet Union keeps such enormous numbers of troops and tanks especially in its Western military districts even if it knows that part of the troops have not a very good combat readiness and many of the armoured forces are of poor quality and could even impede a rapid advance of the better ones, that they prefer to deploy land-based missiles rather than sea-based ones, that they build huge missiles with enormous megatonnages when smaller missiles could serve the strategic objectives as well or even better (at least for eventual preventive counterforce strikes). This might also be the reason why big military parades are

organized all over the world (but especially in Moscow and East Berlin), that huge military manoeuvres regularly take place in East and West (and that even the East has agreed, in the context of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe that observers can be present at such manoeuvres).

A. Clesse

Notes:

- 1) Tönnies, Ferdinand: Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft, Darmstadt 1970.
- 2) Easton, David: A System Analysis of Political Life, New York 1965, p. 185.
- 3) Political Community and the North Atlantic Area, by Karl W. Deutsch, Sidney A. Burrell, Robert A. Kann, Maurice Lee, Jr., Martin Lichterman, Raymond E. Lindgren, Francis L. Loewenheim, Richard W. Van Wagenen in International Political Communities. An Anthology, New York 1966, p. 2-4.
- 4) In the sixties unacceptable damage was sometimes defined as meaning the destruction of about one fifth to one third of the population and one half to two-thirds of the industrial capacity.
- 5) In a speech of January 12, 1954, Dulles declared that the Eisenhower-Administration had decided a strategic policy according to which the US would "depend upon a great capacity to retaliate, instantly, by means and at places of our choosing".
- 6) New York 1960.
- 7) Address given at Ann Arbor, Michigan, June 16, 1962, Department of State Bulletin of July 9, 1962, p. 64-69.
- 8) Clark, Ian: Limited Nuclear War, Oxford 1982, p. 145.
- 9) Schelling, Thomas C.: Arms and Influence, New Haven 1966, p. 52.