

Book Reviews

The Chessboard and the Web: Strategies of Connection in a Networked World by Anne-Marie Slaughter. New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 2017. 304 pp. \$26.00.

Policymakers often see the world as a chessboard: a game of strategic power plays between self-interested states in competition. What would happen if, instead, they saw a world of social connections between people and groups within and across borders? Anne-Marie Slaughter argues that it would change the world. Her remarkable new book starts from the premise that state sovereignty no longer rules. States now coexist and compete for influence alongside many other actors—companies, nongovernmental organizations, intellectuals, criminals—woven into networks that often transcend borders. These networks shape the world in ways that are not yet fully understood. This new reality requires a fundamental shift in thinking. Slaughter eloquently lays out a template for that shift.

The central claim is that networks can be more effective solutions to humanity's global problems than existing hierarchical, state-driven efforts. (Think the United Nations or the World Bank.) Translating that claim into reality requires recognizing that we live in a world in which both state power and networks of people coexist. And it requires leveraging different types of networks to fit the kinds of problems they can most readily influence—specific problems require specific network solutions.

Consider disaster relief. Slaughter lays out a tool kit for how to create an effective response network: her answer is a modular hierarchical network, with one center point connecting others in a descending hierarchy of connections. In a crisis, people need a system of relationships in order to share information. Doing that effectively requires connections between people from government, civil society, and everyday citizens. Too often, this structure is not in place, and that is something policymakers—with Slaughter's tool kit—can change.

When matched to the right task, networks are powerful. They provide efficient, reliable information; they are adaptable; and often they are scalable. Power in a network is all about where you are located: you need connectedness to others (or "centrality"). That determines your access to and control over information. It also determines your ability to act as a broker, and thus to

bargain, as well as your ability to include or exclude, or to be included or excluded. Because power is at stake, making networks civically oriented is thus critical to the mission—sometimes networks foster problems rather than solutions. Creating these networks means a lot more than holding meetings. It means generating sustainable, positive relationships within and across borders. It means trust, rule following, and repetition.

Slaughter's view is that a networked world is "the best hope of humankind for addressing planetary problems that now touch us all" (p. 228). I do not doubt it. But the book raises some challenging questions about how feasible this admirable vision of the world is on a grand scale. The call is for open society, open government, and an open international system, one in which existing international institutions become hubs for citizens as well as states and policymakers proactively generate and nurture the right kinds of connections to help them down the road. That requires states to flatten out the very institutionalized hierarchies they have jealously crafted and guarded. For many, that seems an improbable feat. It also requires a tremendous amount of time, effort, and resources (all scarce) by many actors—generating trusting personal connections is no easy task. And there are potential risks associated, including the cacophony that can come with too many voices at the table. Still, the book weaves a powerful vision for a better world, provides a toolkit for actual practitioners, and shines a ray of hope for a more nuanced theory of international relations.

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Return to Cold War by Robert Legvold. Oxford, Polity Press, 2016. 208 pp. Paper, \$19.95.

Amid the dramatic downturn in relations between the United States and Russia over the past few years, many analysts and commentators have fallen back on the Cold War as an easy analogy for the new U.S.-Russia rivalry. In *Return to Cold War*, Columbia University professor emeritus and longtime advocate of improved U.S.-Russia relations Robert Legvold asks whether the analogy holds and, more to the point, what lessons diplomats and politicians in both countries can learn from the process by which Washington and Moscow managed to wind down the original Cold War in the 1980s.

The first two chapters of *Return to Cold War* attempt to answer the question of whether the post-2014 competition between the United States and Russia is in fact a return to the Cold War. Legvold identifies a series of characteristics that, in his mind, defined the Cold War—which he uses as a kind of checklist to develop something like a general theory of cold wars,