

Linkage - April 2012

Written by Daryl Morini

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DARYL MORINI, APR 17 2012

- Dominic D. P. Johnson and Dominic Tierney, 'The Rubicon Theory of War: How the Path to Conflict Reaches the Point of No Return', in *International Security*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (Summer 2011): 7-40.

Dominic D.P. Johnson and Dominic Tierney explain how nations and leaders cross the rubicon of war psychologically, with an "implemental mind-set". This article is a must read for students of war and peace, and covers new terrain in detailing the psychological processes and biases underpinning leaders' decisions to go to war. It turns out that leaders aren't emotionally-stunted, cold calculating machines, punching in raw data and outputting linear and predictable policy outputs after all – Putin and Saakashvili are people, too. For disciples of Robert Jervis, and interested IR students, this simply must go on your reading pile.

- Larry Crump, 'Negotiation Process and Negotiation Context', in *International Negotiation*, Vol. 16 (2011): 197-227.

Larry Crump is pursuing pioneering work on the niche negotiation analysis question of external "negotiation linkage" between one negotiation and its context. He uses the example of direct linkages between discrete sets of multilateral trade negotiations. For example, Crump analyses the dynamics of linkages between an EU-Chile and an EU-Mercosur negotiation. This article is based on nearly 100 original field work interviews with trade negotiators, diplomats and ambassadors, including a Brazilian Minister.

- Forrest E. Morgan, 'Dancing with the Bear: Managing Escalation in a Conflict with Russia', *Proliferation Papers*, No. 40, Winter 2012.

In a retro yet frighteningly believable scenario, Forrest Morgan discusses a potential military conflict between Russia and NATO, in sometimes harrowing detail. For example, he writes that NATO doctrine would suggest that "they would attack Russia's integrated air defense system...aggressively to establish air superiority." Morgan nevertheless argues that the West should seek to avoid the crossing of escalatory "thresholds", especially nuclear war. Contrary to mainstream IR scholarship, this paper suggests that the concepts of crisis stability, nuclear deterrence, and conflict management are far from dead. They are clearly alive in the minds of military contingency planners and some analysts. This paper reads like a Hollywood script.

- Milja Kurki, 'The Limitations of the Critical Edge: Reflections on Critical and Philosophical Scholarship Today' *Millenium Journal of International Studies*, 40(1), 129-146.

Milja Kurki makes a well-argued call for more *self-critical* and relevant, critical IR scholarship. Its argument derives from a thoughtful reflection on the paucity of publicly-influential critical alternatives to capitalism, despite the 2009 crisis and abundance of critical scholarship. It presses critical scholarship to justify itself despite its diversification and sophistication. However, the argument does not lay blame and point fingers. It provides a careful analysis of potential hegemonic forces at work and begins to outline interesting reorientations for critical IR theory. It is a rewarding read for any critically-minded IR student and scholar. (*Linkage* by **Aaron McKeil**, *Editorial Assistant on e-IR*).

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- John Hickman, 'How Plausible is Chinese Annexation of Territory on the Moon?', in *Astropolitics: The International Journal of Space Politics and Policy*, Vol. 10, No. 1, 2012: 84-92.

If you thought that future U.S.-China strategic competition would be most likely to play out in the air, land and seas of East Asia, such as the South China Sea, then you should reconsider your terrestrial- and stratosphere-centric assumptions. In a counter-factual *tour de force*, John Hickman hypothesises that China's challenge to U.S. power could materialise not on earth, but on the moon. Interestingly, the author isolates the overwhelming influence of constructivism in IR as a veil over the faces of international observers, preventing them from perceiving the possibility of China's moon annexation. Whether you agree with Hickman's assumptions or not, one can only admire his refreshingly original, out-of-the-box thinking. "A Chinese Moon," he concludes, "is not more implausible than a Russian Alaska or a British Australia." Unless, that is, North Korea gets there first.

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About the author:

Daryl Morini is an editor-at-large of E-IR. He is pursuing a PhD in preventive diplomacy at the University of Queensland, Australia. Follow him on Twitter @DarylMorini