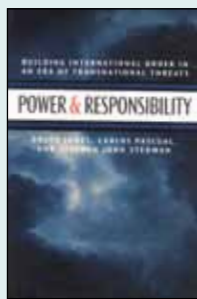


reflecting on my own experiences as I read these pages. This is an immensely important text for those responsible for operational planning and execution in today's military. It is even more compelling for our small unit leaders and noncommissioned officers. **JFQ**

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**Power & Responsibility:  
Building International Order in  
an Era of Transnational Threats**

By Bruce Jones, Carlos Pascual,  
and Stephen John Stedman  
Washington, DC: Brookings  
Institution Press, 2009  
360 pp. \$32.95  
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Reviewed by  
JOHN W. SUTHERLIN

**T**his book is the second of two products from the Managing Global Insecurity (MGI) project, the ambitious purpose of which was to determine how to best organize the globalized world to manage pressing issues that no single nation has the power, credibility, or will to tackle unilaterally. The collective experiences of the authors (all international consultants) at the United Nations (UN) coupled with years in dialogue with diplomats, academics, and policymakers from every major nation provided a perspective that is both distinctive and accessible. In many ways, Jones, Pascual, and

Stedman amalgamate well-known multilateralist and neo-idealist works (for example, those of Robert Axelrod, Robert Keohane, and Hedley Bull) with their collective practices. But this book is not a highly theoretical one. It is probably not going to find its way into any undergraduate courses on American foreign policy. Rather, it is a convenient guide for foreign policymakers. But those looking for a justification for abandoning American-led institutional reform will not find it here. The authors are clear about the type of world they see: one in which “American leadership has been shallow and sometimes misguided, but is greatly needed” (p. 3).

An important assumption permeates this book: the line between national and global security has all but been erased. Consider that “most Americans would agree on most of the threats to their national security: transnational terrorism, proliferation of nuclear weapons, a pandemic of a new deadly disease, global warming, and economic instability and crisis” (p. 4). Could these threats be managed through unilateral action alone? The United States and its allies may have developed the global system after World War II, but much has changed since 1945. National interests alone have not ensured global security.

The authors offer the concept of “responsible sovereignty” as the centerpiece of their blueprint for ensuring global security, arguing that “all states [have] to be accountable for their actions that have impacts beyond their borders, and make such reciprocity a core principle in restoring international order and for providing the welfare of one’s own citizens” (p. 9). In short, they declare, “International order in an age of transnational threats requires power in the service of responsibility” (p. 15). Related to responsible sovereignty would be the creation of a Group of 16 (G-16), representing

“the smallest (and therefore most efficient) number of states that includes all major powers and rising and key regional states” (p. 16).

The book is neatly divided into three sections: “Power,” “Responsibility,” and “Order.” In part one, “Power,” the authors articulate what they call an “effective international architecture” by employing “nine lessons of institutional innovation” (pp. 47–51), which can be summarized as the requirement to build a system with U.S. and other G-16 support on a platform through improving the credibility of the process and the institutional support of the globalized system. The authors use their constructs to answer their own questions. How will this be done? The G-16 will be formed and based on the concept of responsible sovereignty. Why should the United States take the lead? In their view, the United States is too weak or lacks the credibility to act unilaterally but is essential to a multilateral policy approach. Such a dichotomy may indeed be false because world affairs are often more complex than either/or scenarios. By the close of the first part, the authors have made their case that something has to be done if global security will be managed.

The second part is titled “Responsibility,” but it reads like a litany of failings that the present system has produced. Climate change is discussed in a matter-of-fact manner that exacerbates an often teleological approach to the entire subject. If, as the authors state, “close to 90 percent of all carbon emissions” will come from rising powers, then it begs the question: what good is the G-16 in setting and enforcing policy? If the authors stopped there, they would have stumbled badly. But they link climate change to nuclear policy and expand the surface area of diplomacy to approach a multilateral and possible successful regime (a word

they do not actually use, but one that applies). This is significant because it could allow many states to forge an agreement across multiple issues instead of only pursuing bilateral agreements.

Perhaps the most relevant chapters are the ones on terrorism and economic security because of where the United States and its allies rank such issues among all others today. The authors’ mindset is apparent from statements such as: “If the United States took a lead role in reshaping the institutional counterterrorism architecture, it would go a long way toward reassuring other countries that its commitment to rebuilding international order is real” (p. 232). On the other hand, it could fuel the fires of terrorism by justifying a fear of American hegemony.

In the third section, “Order,” the Middle East is the focus. The authors show insight as they lament the failings of most efforts to establish order by the United States and the UN. But they appear to ignore one of the most pressing undercurrents for the region: how can you rely upon responsible sovereignty when many regional players lack sovereignty in the first place or when Israel’s sovereignty is being threatened? One suggestion was to bring together the UN and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (p. 287) for security and force all parties to become more “responsible.”

In all fairness to the authors, it is easy to point out mistakes or misjudgments for a book with such a sweeping agenda as reformulating the global security system. Even as the book ends, the authors make note of their “substantive and political difficulties” (p. 314) in formulating a central thesis that would be acceptable to all states. Yet they may have assembled the best argument for moving into a new direction: America’s (and hence the world’s) security demands that a new trail be blazed. **JFQ**