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BOOK REVIEW: WAR BY OTHER MEANS: GEOECONOMICS AND STATECRAFT

Vladimír Müller*

BLACKWILL, R. D. – HARRIS, J. M.: *War by Other Means: Geoeconomics and Statecraft*. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016. 384 p. ISBN 978-0-674-73721-1.

A well-known U.S. think-tank The Council on Foreign Relations published in 2016 a book called *War by Other Means: Geoeconomics and Statecraft*. Its authors are **Robert D. Blackwill** and **Jennifer Harris**. The first one is the Henry A. Kissinger Senior Fellow for U.S. Foreign Policy at the Council on Foreign Relations and he was the U.S. Ambassador to India from 2001 to 2003. After that, he worked in the National Security Council as the deputy assistant to the president and deputy national security advisor for strategic planning under President George W. Bush. He also served as presidential envoy to Iraq. **Robert D. Blackwill** is the author and editor of many foreign policy books and articles as well. His best-selling book co-authored with **Graham Allison** is *Lee Kuan Yew: The Grand Master's Insights on China, the United States, and the World*.

Jennifer Harris is senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations and prior to joining CFR she worked in the U.S. National Intelligence Council and at the State Department as a member of the policy planning staff. She was the lead architect of **Hillary Clinton's** economic statecraft agenda launched in 2011.

The book aims to analyse all important aspects of current geoeconomics. The authors define geoeconomics as “*the systematic use of economic instruments to accomplish geopolitical objectives*” (p. 1). They argue that states nowadays are increasingly carrying out geopolitical combat through economic

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means. Geoeconomics includes many aspects from trade and investment policy to energy, exchange rates or even cyber-economic actions, which are used to win diplomatic allies, punish adversaries, and coerce those in between. The main message of the book is to point out that the political representatives of the United States often use military methods instead of economic instruments to advance its interests abroad. Authors argue that economic instruments are usually more suitable to fulfil U.S. interests and USA should introduce new geoeconomic vision of U.S. statecraft.

The book consists of acknowledgments, introduction, ten chapters, long list of explanatory notes and alphabetical index. Chapter 1 focuses on the relationship between geoeconomics and geopolitics, and offers a systematic definition of geoeconomics. Authors also claim that geoeconomics is on the rise and explain its importance.

Chapter 2 examines the reasons behind the return of geoeconomics in current international relations. Authors identify three main reasons – the will of the states to use it, the increased presence of economic resources in direct state disposal, and changes to global markets. Chapter 2 also examines how the rise of geoeconomics changes the logic and operation of the foreign policy and creates new options and diplomatic tools.

The analysis of current instruments of geoeconomics is the objective of the Chapter 3. Authors identify seven leading instruments: trade policy, investment policy, economic sanctions, the cyber sphere, aid, monetary policy, and energy and commodity policies. Some of them are completely new (the cyber sphere) and others are not. Comparing them with previous golden eras of geoeconomics they are operating on a very different landscape and practically could be considered as new. The second part of the chapter investigates the effectiveness of each instrument and factors determining effective use of geoeconomic instruments by given state.

In Chapter 4 authors analyse the specific case of China “*which has been playing the new economic game at a maestro level*” (p.11). Chinese use of geoeconomics is analysed through six case studies: Taiwan, North Korea, Japan, Southeast Asia, Pakistan, and India. These case studies properly illustrate the Chinese ability to use economic instruments to reward, punish, coerce, or discourage different states from doing or not doing something, depending on particular state and Chinese interest in the issue.

Chapter 5 is about recognizing geoeconomic pressure at work. There are many specific examples from shutting off gas pipelines to attaching geopolitical

stipulations onto investments decisions. Authors claim that geoeconomic pressure actually works and helps to achieve political goals. That is true especially for China. China managed to reduce the number of countries recognising Taiwan, to curtail the activities of the Dalai Lama, to restrain countries from political support for human rights issues, and many others, and all of them were achieved on the back of economic pressure. On the other hand, geoeconomic coercion that failed to achieve the desired goal could have negative and destabilising consequences.

U.S. use of geoeconomic instruments in historical context is the topic of the Chapter 6. USA, since its founding, used geoeconomic means regularly, but during Vietnam War the U.S. political elites began to perceive economics as a realm which is not subjugated to traditional state power realities. This characteristic remains valid until today.

Chapter 7 examines the present use of geoeconomics by the USA. Authors claim that USA as the world's largest economy has a great potential for using geoeconomic instruments on a bigger scale than today. However, because of specific internal and external aspects, USA will never be able to use some of trade and investment tools to advance its foreign policy in a way that suits other countries.

In Chapter 8 authors describe one of the most promising areas of U.S. geoeconomic potential – energy realm. The North American shale revolution reshapes geopolitical realities in all parts of the world with strategic advantages for USA. Specifically, USA will not be so dependent on Gulf energy supplies and could change the form of engagement in the Middle East. USA will be more efficient in imposing sanctions on oil sectors of other countries, trade pacts with USA will become more attractive and the dollar's status as the world's reserve currency will be more certain.

The analysis of the signs, which indicate the waking up of the U.S. geoeconomic potential, is subject of the Chapter 9. At the end of the chapter, the authors offer their own recommendations about geoeconomic vision for U.S. foreign policy. However, U.S. administration should explain in detail to American citizens and country's allies and friends today's composition of geoeconomics. In addition, they should develop common responses with like-minded partners.

The last chapter concludes the question of where geoeconomics fits within broad U.S. grand strategy and national interests. Authors examine the use of national interests in U.S. external behaviour, and how geoeconomic instruments could promote those interests.

The book provides a considerable contribution to the research not only within the area of geoeconomics but geopolitics as well. The last comparable book on the topic is from 20th Century. Authors created a theoretical apparatus of geoeconomics and completed it with all sorts of recent historical examples. Especially beneficial is the part describing cyber geoeconomic instruments.

War by Other Means: Geoeconomics and Statecraft is primarily aimed at people dealing with international relations and geopolitics issues but it is highly recommendable for economists as well. Even for highly specialised experts on different aspects of international relations like cyber, energy security, trade policy or agriculture, it is highly recommendable to read at least the corresponding part of the book.

The book is well divided into chapters and it is relatively easy to find the desired information when you return to the book with the need to refresh a particular information. What should have been designed differently are the notes, which comprise explanatory notes, as well as bibliographical references. It is sometimes annoying to go to the end of the book and find the reference when someone seeks further explanation. In addition, author of the review would appreciate some graphic and chart material in the book. The authors of the book clearly did not want the book to become a collection of graphs and charts, but sometimes they could illustrate the situation better than just the words. On the side of the content, author of the review had only a small number of minor disagreements about specific aspects of trade agreements and policy recommendations for USA.

This book is a valuable piece, which illustrates specific aspects of economic fight between states in the 21st century and provides detailed view on how USA can extend its scope of foreign policy instruments. It will be very interesting to observe how these ideas will be incorporated into the **Donald Trump's** administration foreign policy.