



*Thomas H. Henriksen. America and the Rogue States. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.*

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In America and the Rogue States, Thomas Henriksen lays out the relationships that exist, and have existed, between America and the states that made up George W. Bush's 'Axis of Evil.' Henriksen outlines the history of the interactions between the United States and North Korea, pre-invasion Iraq, and Iran, and through this draws out a number of themes. He also shows that the ways the relationships have played out are highly situational and there is no one-size-fits-all solution. In the last chapter, Henriksen explores American relationships with a number of states that were either once considered rogue or could become rogue, like Libya, Syria, and Cuba, referring to them as either "lesser rogues" or "troublesome states." These states have remained "a puzzle for US foreign policy" (1) and are characterized by three things: autocratic governance, sponsorship of terrorism, and pursuit of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). There is

no clear definition provided by Henriksen for what can be considered a rogue state, making it difficult to judge what other states, if any, could be considered rogue. Henriksen seems to arbitrarily decide who is rogue and who is not: Cuba is a rogue state, while Myanmar is merely troublesome (1). Instead of synthesizing a clear definition of the term, something that could then be applied to other states in order to judge their 'rogueeness,' Henriksen uses the Bush administration's criteria (the term itself was coined by President Bill Clinton in a 1994 speech in Brussels), which was outlined in the National Security Strategy of 2002 (NSS-2002). These were "brutality toward their own people; contempt for international law; determination to acquire weapons of mass destruction (WMD); advanced military technology; sponsorship of terrorism; rejection of human rights values; and hatred for the United States and 'everything it stands for'" (23). The use of the NSS-2002 definition allows for the 'Axis of Evil' to fit neatly into the term, which constitutes a problem of tautology, at least for the Bush administration. Further compounding this was that, according to Henriksen at least, the administration was set on going to war in Iraq prior to assuming office. This creates a situation in which it is hard to determine whether the idea of rogue states was created to justify this desire, or it informed the desire prior to the administration taking office.

A slightly more nuanced definition of what Henriksen believes to be a rogue state can be gleaned from latter pages of his book. While examining historical examples of rogue states, the inclusion of Gaul by Henriksen helps to narrow the definition of the phenomena that he is trying to describe. Gaul was not a part of the Roman Empire, nor was it a part of the Roman system of organizing the world. Henriksen, therefore, asserts that it was a rogue state. In this light, any state that works outside of the international system as defined by the United Nations, or is bent on either remaking the system or challenging the system are rogue states. This implicit definition leads to a large selection of candidates for rogue states. Although the 'Axis of Evil' countries are the most obvious targets for American foreign policy, recently Syria has tried very hard to steal the spotlight.

Henriksen's narrative asserts strongly that the internal domestic politics of rogue states plays an important role in the way the relationship between these states and America plays out. Often the rhetoric presented by the rogue states, largely that of

fervent anti-Americanism, is as much, if not more, for a domestic audience than for the international community. This especially characterizes American relationships with Iran and North Korea. The ebb and flow of belligerence, aid, and more belligerence colours the relationship with North Korea, especially given the need to placate a starving population. Painting American imperialists as the 'The Great Satan' provides both North Korea and Iran with a strong enemy to justify and distract from their autocratic forms of government. This idea is portrayed by Henriksen as a fact which must always be kept in mind by anyone attempting to deal with these states.

The importance of domestic politics also colours the way that America deals with these states. The intelligence failure that took place in regards to finding WMDs in Iraq created a sense of mistrust of the intelligence agencies concerning other rogue states as well. This mistrust, coupled with war weariness after the long Iraq and Afghanistan wars, has created an American public less likely to support more aggressive action than diplomatic engagement against rogue states.

Iraq also stands out in the narrative as the only state of the three major rogues that has actually been dealt with militarily. It is ironic, Henriksen muses, that both Bush presidents had the option of an Iraq war versus a Korean war, and both times circumstances forced them to deal with what was really the lesser of two evils. Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait forced America to engage in 1990-91. In 2002, despite the ambiguity of Iraq's possession of WMDs and the certainty of North Korea's WMD capability, the potential for a nuclear attack of any size against the United States was enough to deter any military action on the Korean Peninsula.

Further deterring any action against North Korea is their Chinese allies. This is an inherent characteristic of the rogue states that Henriksen describes. During the Cold War, rogue or troublesome states aligned themselves with one of the major superpowers in order to maintain their own rule and stay alive both militarily and economically. With that possibility being crushed by the falling bricks of the Berlin Wall, the rogue states were forced to find new partners with which to prop up their regimes. Iraq acted too quickly with their invasion of Kuwait, and was promptly dealt with before it had a chance to find a major power to help it along. Iran, with a centuries old fear of Russian encroachment, found an eager friend in China, while the nature of

the relationship between North Korea and China was mentioned above. Additionally, and this is an important element to rogue states in the post-Cold War world according to Henriksen, is that they have increased their interactions with one another. Aside from the sharing of missile and nuclear technology between Iran and North Korea, Henriksen also cites the North Korean gifts of Soviet-style SCUD missiles to Qaddafi's Libya, and Cuba's reliance on troublesome state Venezuela for economic assistance. Also, recent events, like the capture in Panama of a ship sending Cuban aircraft to be repaired in North Korean, support Henriksen's claim.

Finally Henriksen shows that there is no single answer to all rogue states; all present their own particular sets of circumstances and must be dealt with in different ways. US policy between the three different administrations dealing with the rogue states (President Obama is rarely analysed in this volume) has largely remained uniform, treading the waters of containment and engagement. Among all three presidents, Bush Sr., Clinton, and Bush Jr., Iraq was dealt with through containment, Clinton bridging the gap between the two wars through no-fly zones and periodic air strikes. Meanwhile, North Korea has so far been addressed through engagement, despite small shifts in the strength of the negotiations. Henriksen is particularly hard on President Clinton for agreeing to supply North Korea with light-water reactors in exchange for a halt in their nuclear program, as this deal ended up falling through with further North Korean transgressions.

Henriksen's goal was to provide a summary and overview of the relationships that have taken up a large portion of American attention in the post-Cold War world of international relations (2). In this, he largely succeeds. This is all that the book is meant to be, not the end all and be all of analysing the phenomenon. While there is a tendency towards largely realist sentiments, his focus on hard power and the ineffectiveness of the UN to deal with the rogue state, Henriksen does not advocate an invasion or full on containment of the rogue states. It would be interesting, for example, to see what he would think about the current détente between Iran and America, a situation that arose since the publication of the book. Most likely, he would see this as a regime under economic stress due to international sanctions seeking reprieve before once again embarking on its nuclear program, as North Korea has consistently done. This, however, would be putting words in Henriksen's mouth.

Henriksen closes with a couple of recommendations. The first is that the only real way to approach rogue regimes is through containment and deterrence, something that requires overwhelming hard power to back up (186). The second is best said by Henriksen himself: "Rogue regimes are synonymous with autocratic rule. Policies and techniques to undermine autocracies complement sanctions and containment. The single best antidote to rogue regimes is democracy" (188).

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