



On why it's really hard to be a hard-charging foreign policy wonk on the beach

By: Daniel W. Drezner - February 22, 2013

Justin Logan has blogged a response to my post from yesterday. He's also done the courtesy of uploading the paper from which both his recent post and his 2009 post emanate.

Now Logan makes some compelling points to rebut me, such as:

It's worth noting that a disproportionate number of academics writing about grand strategy are realists, so that's coloring the ideological content of what the academics are producing. Drezner has complained about realist victimhood before, but grand strategy is an elite sport, and even headmits that "America's foreign policy elites are more hostile to realpolitik – though even here, things can be exaggerated." Drezner then points to Henry Kissinger and Brent Scowcroft as bearers of the realist flag, but even if you would lump Kissinger and Scowcroft in with Posen and Walt (I wouldn't), both men are in their late 80s. There is no realist faction in the FPC, if by "realist" we mean "person whose views on strategy comport with leading academic realists."

Think about members of the FPC who work on strategy and scholars in the academy who do so. Is a potential strategy debate between, say, a Democrat like Anne-Marie Slaughter and a Republican like Robert Kagan very interesting? I don't think so. It's fought between the seven and nine-yard lines at the primacy end of the field. Then consider a debate between, say, Barry Posen or John Mearsheimer, on the one hand, and Kagan or Slaughter on the other. Pass the popcorn.

Now, ordinarily, this would get my intellectual juices flowing and I'd start trying arguing that Logan is conflating IR theorists with realists a bit or whatnot.

The thing is, this was my actual view (as opposed to my worldview) for much of today:

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You know, with this kind of view, it doesn't take much to realize that the problems of a few international relations wonks doesn't amount to a hill of sand in this world.

So I'm conceding this round to Logan. Excellent points, and nicely done!! I'll read the paper when I'm back in a cold climate.