

Reducing the Risk of War

Avoiding Inadvertent War. Crisis Management. HILLIARD RODERICK and ULLA MAGNUSSON, Eds. Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, University of Texas, Austin, 1983. xviii, 184 pp., illus. Paper, \$9.95. From a conference, Austin, Tex., Feb. 1983.

It is hardly by chance that "Reducing the Risk of Inadvertent War: Crisis Management" was chosen as the topic of the 1983 Tom Slick Conference, for relations between the United States and the Soviet Union have deteriorated to such a degree that the incumbent president of the United States did not have a personal encounter with a member of the Soviet Politburo for almost the entire length of his first term. The reversal of East-West detente as well as the many crisis spots that exist in today's world provides strong grounds for questioning how well prepared the superpowers, particularly the United States, are to prevent an international crisis from getting out of hand and spilling over into warfare between them.

It was almost unanimously agreed among the conference participants—academics, policy analysts, (former) government officials, and military officers—that crises could not be prevented from occurring since neither of the superpowers would be willing to forgo the option of raising the stakes in a confrontation involving the risk of losing vital assets (allies, spheres of influence, and the like). This "realistic" assessment notwithstanding, Alexander L. George takes the position, shared by others, that "we need to give more thought, and to encourage U.S. and Soviet leaders to give more thought, to how the two superpowers might improve their ability to cooperate in regulating their rivalry and competition in third areas to avoid crises" (p. 28). Going one step further, Lloyd Dumas warns that concentrating too much on crisis management might amount to searching for "the best of a lot of bad solutions"; instead, more emphasis should be given to the reversal of the arms race.

The material included in the volume is grouped into five sections. The central issue of why and how international crises may lead to inadvertent war is introduced by Hilliard Roderick, the convenor of the conference. He is joined by George, who summarizes recent research on decision-making under stress such as is generated by an international crisis as well as recent research on the requirements, modalities, and problems of crisis management. Though neither

contribution breaks new ground, the two papers give a skillful and authoritative overview of what crisis management (or crisis control) is and what purposes it can usefully serve in overall national security policy-making.

The following three sections—The Nature of Unclear Threatening Events, Improving Judgment during a Crisis, and Means to Inform and Reassure Antagonists—cover problems that need to be thought about in advance if crisis management is to be more than a spontaneous, trial-and-error response by top-level decision-makers in a superpower confrontation. Since crisis management is above all a technique of behavior control within and among two or more sets of national decision-making elites it is no wonder that the contributions assembled under the above headings emphasize the failure and improvement of communications, the role of intelligence, the need for informal or even institutionalized arrangements for the exchange of information designed to reassure one side about the other side's intentions, and the like. The value of the papers derives from their being offered by specialists who can lay claim to substantial inside knowledge about decision-making processes in national security.

The last section of the volume consists of efforts at synthesizing the insights gained from research on, and informed argument about, principles, practices, instruments, and institutions of crisis management. Drawing on the results of the Harvard Negotiation Project, William L. Ury provides a concise description of four elements that make up "a 'stabilizing approach' to crisis management": bringing about a military stalemate, initiating negotiations immediately, bringing to bear the power of legitimacy, and learning from crisis. This and the other contributions are then integrated by the editor in 12 propositions about how to improve crisis management.

Though most conference participants held generally favorable views of the need for, and the feasibility of, improved crisis management, many also took pains to point to the dilemmas, inherent contradictions, and possible failures of this approach toward strengthening (inter)national security. From the vantage point of this reviewer one aspect of the discussion about improving crisis management deserves special attention: the participation of allies in crisis management by the U.S. government. Since present-day arrangements for consultations between the U.S. government and the NATO allies during an international crisis are far from satisfactory, Gerd Schmuckle

puts forward a proposal that "NATO should establish a Crisis and Defense Cabinet (call it CDC) which assembles as soon as NATO's alert system must be activated" (p. 93). Though this proposal may be flawed for practical reasons, the intensely negative reception it was accorded (see, for example, the comments by Lynn E. Davis, pp. 99–102) demonstrates the wide gulf that exists even among confirmed supporters of NATO on both sides of the Atlantic. If responsible Americans prefer not to take the trouble to build a European consensus in a superpower confrontation or crisis, what should prevent concerned Europeans from concluding that it is politically frivolous to remain almost totally dependent on U.S. decisions in matters of national survival? Thus, the issue of crisis management is likely to add to the many existing strains within NATO and to the calls for reforming it.

Avoiding Inadvertent War is a timely and thought-provoking book that avoids the pitfalls of over-dramatization. Read together with Daniel Frei and Christian Catrina's *Risks of Unintentional Nuclear War* (UNIDIR, Geneva, 1982) it enhances our awareness of both the serious dangers of nuclear war and the by no means negligible possibilities of containing these dangers by political means.

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Theory of Tides

Ocean Tides. Mathematical Models and Numerical Experiments, G. I. MARCHUK and B. A. KAGAN. D. E. Cartwright, translation editor. Pergamon, New York, 1984. xii, 292 pp., illus. \$65. Translated from the Russian edition by E. V. Blinova and L. Ya. Yusina.

This book appeared in Russian in 1977. Its aim appears to have been to draw together, for Russian researchers, both historical and modern aspects of the dynamical theory of tides. In this aim the authors have been successful. Students of the (predominantly English-language) literature on tides will thus find here much that is familiar, as is important in a self-contained discussion, although occasionally in unfamiliar notation and from an unconventional point of view.

An introductory chapter summarizes the tide-generating forces and presents the basic hydrodynamical problem posed by attempting to calculate the global