

Comments regarding certain articles assigned for class

In “Historical Reality vs. Neo-Realist Theory” (*International Security*, 19 (1), Summer, 1994), the author, Paul Schroeder, makes several assertions that are questionable as to their accuracy.

On page 121 Schroeder writes: “In several instances Napoleon was able to organize most of Europe for war against a single isolated foe”

Napoleon did not “organize” most of Europe; he conquered most of Europe. Napoleon was an aggressor, not an organizer.

On page 122 Schroeder writes (re: Crimean War): In short, some states, great and small, bandwagoned; others tried to hide: and then bandwagoned; still others, like Sweden, Denmark, and the Low Countries, remained in hiding; none balanced against Anglo-French domination.”

England and France did not dominate Europe. Also, countries that decided to remain neutral did not mean that they were hiding; they were on the sidelines carefully observing and assessing their options.

On page 123 Schroeder writes (re: World War Two): “Chamberlain’s appeasement policy was certainly not balancing, but an attempt at a British partnership with Germany for peace.”

At no time did the British, either explicitly or implicitly, ever “partner” with Adolf Hitler.

On page 131 Schroeder, paraphrasing another author, writes: “He further claims that in 1860-1910 Germany in a similar fashion, and the United States in a slightly different but equally ‘structurally determined’ way became great powers in imitation of and response to Britain’s hegemony.”

The idea of Germany or the United States wanting to imitate Britain is a stretch.

On page 133 Schroeder writes: “The Response to French Hegemony, 1660-1713”

The only time France ever achieved hegemony over Europe was under Napoleon and then it was at best tenuous. Also, France was sharing the international scene with several other major powers: The Austrians, the Prussians, the Spanish, and the British. With such players it was enough that France was able to survive.

On page 142 Schroeder writes: “The real British definition of a ‘balance of power’ thus becomes a system enabling Britain to enjoy hegemony and pass its costs to others.”

The British never gained hegemony over Europe. They had no client states on the continent. There was no British version of the Warsaw Pact. There was no projection of British power anywhere in Europe except at the Rock of Gibraltar.

In “Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In” (*International Security*, 19 (1), Summer 1994), the author, Randall L. Schweller writes: “... Emperor Leopold I of the Austrian Hapsburgs bandwagoned with France to partition Spain” (89).

Two major powers joining together to gang up on a third power is not bandwagoning, at least not in the sense of the word as used by the author. Indeed it might have been France that bandwagoned with Leopold.

On page 94 Schweller writes: “... Hitler encouraged Italy, the Soviet Union, Japan, Hungary, and Bulgaria to feed on the pickings of the Nazi lion’s kill, in order to block the formation of a dangerous rival coalition.”

The only thing Adolf Hitler “encouraged” any country to do was to choose either to obey his bidding or be destroyed. Hitler’s foreign policy was based on extortion backed up by the (real) threat of military force. “You obey me or else.” When Poland defied Hitler, Hitler, with Stalin’s help, destroyed Poland; when Hitler believed that Yugoslavia was bailing out on him, he invaded and occupied Yugoslavia; when Italy bailed out on him, he occupied half of Italy; ditto for Hungary, which gave him the chance to exterminate more Jews. He tried the same bullying tactic with the Soviet Union too, launching the biggest land-based invasion in history, but it failed. The 1939 German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact was not bandwagoning. It is was a cynical and sordid plan concocted by two ruthless dictators to carve up Eastern Europe. Neither was jumping on the other’s bandwagon. Hitler was not known for his statesmanship. His goal was to invade, conquer, exploit and exterminate. His foreign minister, Von Ribbentrop, was an SS Obergruppenfuhrer. As for the Japanese, they were on the other side of the world and, luckily for them, beyond Hitler’s reach (though not beyond the reach of American B-25 bombers and B-29 superfortresses).