PART I

The Context of Diplomacy

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THE VALUE OF DIPLOMATIC HISTORY IN A CHANGING WORLD

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There has never been a better time to read diplomatic history than right now. The topic is covered in broader, deeper, and more engaging ways than it has ever been before.[1] The intellectual value of diplomatic history in giving an increased appreciation of the past is thus undeniable.[2] However, when discussing the "value" of history more generally, one typically alludes to its ability to inform decision-makers or its capacity to increase understanding in the broader public. The question is the extent to which the past speaks to the present, one that seems particularly pressing for a world in perceived upheaval. The answers provided here are ambiguous. On one hand, there are many reasons for being cautious about the capacity to learn from history and, even if learning is possible, to learn the appropriate lessons. On the other, decision-makers from the lowest to the highest level rely on their understanding of history to make decisions every day.[3] Finally, there is the potential that historical analogies – or even myths – based on diplomatic history have had for political purposes.[4]

In times of perceived upheaval, there is typically an upsurge in interest in history. Faced with an uncertain future, decision-makers and the public alike turn to history for guidance. The current international predicament is certainly no exception. In 2020–21, historians of disease, Great Power competition, and hegemonic decline have had few problems getting speaking engagements – over Zoom – or book contracts. History has long been considered the provider of "lessons" – informing those who perceive them correctly, misleading those who misperceive them, and damning those who ignore them. Turning to history for guidance is understandable, but also problematic. It is understandable in that the past, unlike the present and future, is somewhat accessible as a repository of knowledge. The problematic dimension lies in the past as only accessible through already narrated history and that few of the alleged lessons of the past are unambiguous. Turning to history in a time of upheaval adds an additional layer of uncertainty. In stable times, what happened yesterday is often a good guide for what will happen today. In unstable times, this continuity is threatened, and there is an urge to cast further about to find guidance from the past. Yet the more removed from the present, the less likely this guidance is going to be fitting. The degree of "fit" is nevertheless only one aspect of the use-value of history, diplomatic or otherwise. Another, possibly even more important issue, concerns usability. Repeatedly, history has proved highly useful as a "shortcut to rationality" for diplomats and bureaucrats and as a legitimising device for political leaders.[5]

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Can humans learn from history and, if so, what? Various philosophers of history have answered this question in different ways and, here, it is necessary first to look at the theoretical challenges of what one can know and if learning is possible, and then at the problems of learning the "right" lessons. The issue of whether one can learn from history is really two questions baked into one: whether there is any certain knowledge about the past and, if so, whether that past has anything to tell about the present? It needs emphasis straight away that a layperson would probably answer both in the affirmative. Philosophers and theorists of history have been less certain.

The nineteenth-century German historian, Leopold von Ranke, the founder of modern history, believed that it was possible at least to get close to certain knowledge of the past. Most historians since the middle of the twentieth century have been much more sceptical. At the outset, the modern world lacks "remains" of much of the past. And "in the absence of remains, there can be no evidence, and in the absence of evidence, there can be no history".[6] A lot of the past is simply unknowable for lack of "remains". Furthermore, few, if any, believe that "remains" – often referred to as "facts" – speak for themselves. The historian inescapably intervenes, first in the selection of which "remains" to include and exclude as evidence. Following from that decision, to become meaningful, evidence needs connexion to theory and narrative; and as soon as one adds ideas about how evidence hangs together, one requires interpretation. To become history, then, remains of the past must survive, be chosen, narrativised, and interpreted. This should raise immediate concerns about what the past can teach. If referring to lessons from Thucydides, the only source for much of what happened during the Peloponnesian War, are there lessons to learn from that struggle or from Thucydides' necessarily partial interpretation of it?

To most working historians, these are obvious epistemological concerns; the past is only accessible through the more or less random "remains" left behind and the histories that have narrated them together. When discussing the use-value of any kind of history, this should lead readers to a great degree of humility – one can never reach certainty about what one knows about the past. This uncertainty has nevertheless not led to despair. Even "postmodernist" historians refer to some form of knowledge of the past. This form of broadly accepted knowledge can usefully be described as "working truths",[7] widely accepted accounts about what happened in the past and perhaps even causal chains, but still in principle open for falsification.[8] There are often widely differing interpretations of synthetic accounts of the past, whilst there might at the same time be a fairly broad consensus on the building blocks. There have been, for instance, numerous competing narratives about the outbreak of the First World War, whilst there is hopefully unanimous acceptance that it broke out in 1914. It needs noting here that one of the concerns of traditional diplomatic history, namely the construction of timelines and chronologies,[9] is one that typically has been easy to convert into "working truths". The seemingly nitty-gritty work of establishing when events happened and sorting them in order remains a key value that diplomatic history brings to understanding the past.

So far, so frustratingly, not good. Knowledge of the past is at best partial and contingent. This situation obviously raises problems for how possibly to learn from the past. But this is not the only issue. Whether or not the past – or, more accurately, history – offers any lessons is a question where philosophers of history have differed dramatically. To put the proposition in the simplest possible terms, if there is a supposed ability to learn anything from the past, one must have some sort of belief in recurring patterns. In the ancient world, this was the standard view of how the world hung together. History – understood as the unfolding of events – was considered to repeat itself, thus insights about the past were directly applicable in the present. This belief remained deeply held into the Early Modern period. The key work of the humanist

Justus Lipsius, one of the most read scholars of early seventeenth century Europe, for instance, consisted largely of a curated collection of citations from ancient historians such as Tacitus.[10] To Lipsius, the past spoke directly to the present.[11] When, during the eighteenth century, history reconfigured as a dynamic developmental process – history as thought of today – this form of argumentation became harder to sustain.[12]

Thus, returning to Ranke, he was bullish on the capacity to get precise knowledge of the past. On the other hand, he had no belief in its predictive powers. History was to inform, not to predict. Whilst many historians would agree with Ranke, there is a distinct divide here in all historically oriented science, between those who believe that the past is "familiar" – that is repetitive or following known path(s) – and those who believe that it is "unfamiliar" – random or following unknown path(s).[13] If one believes the latter, it is obviously also hard to refer to lessons of the past – or history. The political realism underpinning mid-twentieth-century International Relations theory, as well as much traditional diplomatic history, implies a static or cyclical view of history, where lessons of the past seem both likely and useful. Likewise, liberal and Marxist theories, with their emphasis on a knowable linear development/progress, can easily turn to history to provide insight into likely future developments. Even beyond that consideration, many researchers who in principle would believe the past to be "unfamiliar" will still refer to similarities in processes and institutions, at least within specific contexts.

In sum, Jürgen Habermas might have provided the best, yet somewhat unsatisfying answer to the question of whether one can learn from history: "That is one of those questions to which there exists no theoretically satisfying answers".[14] Moving from theoretical concerns to practical action, it would seem to be a fairly well accepted "working truth" that historical actors have tried to learn from history, to copy successes but perhaps even more to avoid mistakes. It is certainly possible to read much of European history over the last 75 years as deeply concerned with avoiding the mistakes that led to the two world wars and the Holocaust.

Even if accepting that it might be possible to know the past, and enough recurrence to warrant comparisons and thus learning lessons, there remains a number of practical challenges. As famously laid out in a seminal treatment,[15] misperception is maybe even more likely than correct perception.[16] To learn the right lesson from history, one must understand both past and present situations correctly and be able to identify the causal mechanisms that led to past outcomes, thus to judge their applicability in the present. Getting either the past or present wrong can be disastrous. For instance, one could argue that this was what happened in summer 1914, where decision-makers could look back at a decade of bigger and smaller crises and assume that the current one would blow over just as the previous ones had. Looking at prior outcomes of diplomatic crises and assuming that the current one would lead to the same conclusion bypassed the necessary analysis both of what had led to those earlier peaceful outcomes and whether the earlier and current situations were in meaningful ways comparable.

This returns somewhat more prosaically to the problem discussed above: getting the past "right". History always remains narrated, and if it is to be of any use as a lesson or analogy, it must carry a surplus of meaning.[17] History that provides no additional understanding or guidelines for action is simply unusable. Mere chronology will not do. This surplus of meaning also implies that analogies, even though powerful vehicles for conveying meaning and framing action, are never fully stabilised. On one hand, alternative narrations of the original situation can lead any analogy to support competing causes of action. On the other, different analogies might make competing sense of the same current event.[18] Where there is one narrative, there can also be another narrative. The 1962 Cuban missile crisis can serve as an example; at a general level, the doves learnt the dangers of nuclear weapons whilst hawks the usefulness of the very same weapons.[19] At a more detailed level, sources – "remains" – that became available after

the end of the Cold War seriously undermined the accepted knowledge of the missile crisis as a success of United States brinkmanship, instead emphasising the eagerness of both sides to find a negotiated solution.[20] This example thus underscores both how a surplus of meaning makes it possible to draw different lessons and analogies from the same event and how analogous argumentation can never be fully stabilised. For students of diplomatic history, it also serves as a reminder about the risks inherent in relying on analogies for decision-making in times of crisis.[21]

Accordingly, the capacity to know the past is limited; it is at best unclear whether history can logically be a provider of lessons; and even if learning from history, it remains difficult to know whether one learns the "right" lessons. This caution, however, has hardly stopped academics and practitioners from referring to the lessons of history.

The philosophical problems involved in knowing the past, to say nothing about learning from history, have mattered little in the everyday unfolding of human life. On the contrary, the whole logic underpinning what is now known as experiential learning is to apply past lessons to be better equipped to the future; and in order to be prepared for situations that one has not experienced, one studies how others have handled them before. This is the idea behind everything from cookbooks and IKEA manuals to classics of diplomatic theory from Abraham van Wicquefort to Ernest Satow. Diplomacy remains typically seen as tied particularly closely to experiential learning. For centuries diplomacy was considered an art form or science of the aristocracy, and seen as beyond learning if one lacked an aristocratic upbringing.[22] Even after the twentieth century opening up of diplomacy to other classes, a combination of diplomatic manuals and on-the-job training remained essential to master diplomacy. This is not to say that active diplomats are the only people utilising – diplomatic – history. On the contrary, decision-makers more broadly, as well as the wider public, turn to history for several different reasons. It is valuable to discuss these reasons from the specific to the general, exploring the use of history for localised decision-making before moving on to "sense making" and legitimation and showing the importance of history for constituting collectives. This process moves from lessons and analogies towards myths – analytically understood – although the boundaries between these categories are blurred.

It would seem a relatively uncontroversial "working truth" that decision-makers on all levels believe themselves to be utilising history as a guide for making decisions. It is a completely unsurprising effect of the way the human mind and human bureaucracies work. The first response of humans to a new situation will tend to be to go for automated responses and quick solutions, to look for something that reminds them of something they already know how to understand.[23] At the level of decision-making, Charles Lindblom long ago famously defined this as "The Science of 'Muddling Through'". When faced with a policy-problem, administrators would most likely not examine all possible outcomes, nor go through a theory-guided comparison of all possible policies that would lead to value-maximisation. No, they would define their goal narrowly and compare a limited number of polices that they believed to be opportune. Disregarding theory, they would "rely heavily on the record of past experience with small policy steps to predict the consequences of similar steps extended into the future".[24]

Beset by potentially infinite information, decision-makers always rely on some cognitive tools for simplification. In bureaucracies and political systems, tradition is a key one, codified in law or remembered as history.[25] In domestic political systems, law typically provides the grounding in tradition. Whilst international law plays a prominent role in the working of the ministries of foreign affairs across the globe, the international system remains obviously much less regulated than most domestic systems. For diplomats, history has thus played an important role in day-to-day decision-making. If all things appear equal, choosing the course that has

been successful in a previous historical situation makes good sense; turning to historical lessons and analogies offers what Robert Jervis refers to as a useful "shortcut to rationality".[26]

In this daily work, diplomats appear like every day historians. When recounting their on-the-job training in the second half of the twentieth century, different Norwegian diplomats for instance told parallel stories of instructions to handle their first tasks: "look in the dossiers".[27] Spelled out, the course of action would be to check the archives for handling similar tasks in the past, and if that course of action had been successful or not. If previously successful, they would apply the same procedures to the new task. As one would expect in a system of bounded rationality – an assumption for most ministries most of the time – satisficing rather than maximising was the goal of the process. Lather, rinse, repeat. Such localised lessons about policy in all likelihood are the ones that come closest to the lay understanding of "learning from history": applying an understanding of the past more or less directly to the present.

As alluded to above, such procedures make good sense in stable times and in stable relations. When planning President Barack Obama's state visit to Britain in 2011, the Protocol Directorate of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office hardly needed to rethink procedures. They could mix and match, copy and paste from the programmes of President George W. Bush's state visit in 2003 and that of President Bill Clinton's in 1995; there was a wreath to be laid at the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey and an address to a joint session of Parliament. Even though massive protests related to the Iraq war met Bush in 2003, the official parts of the programmes caused little problem for the planners. When times and relationships appear more unsettled, standard operating procedures might not be applicable. When President Donald Trump was to pay a state visit to Britain, the Protocol Directorate could not simply follow routine. The Commons speaker, John Bercow, was a vocal opponent of Trump addressing Parliament, and opposition leaders refused the invitation to the official banquet. The actual visit only came in 2019, two years after the invitation had first been issued.

Drawing lessons from previous diplomatic experience can be challenging in unsettled times. It can be downright disastrous if the degree of unsettledness is underestimated. This was the case in 1914, as mentioned above, and it was most certainly the case in the late 1930s. Lessons learnt about how Great Powers could be appeased through a recalibrating of the balance of power and some territorial reshuffling were catastrophically unfit when confronting an aggressively expansionist regime. More generally, it constitutes the challenge of returning to the dossier – when things are not as before. Looking at recent history might be excellent for decision-making in stable times, but under periods of upheaval, recent history could be a terrible guide for what to do next; rather than a shortcut to rationality, they risk short-circuiting prudence.

In unstable times, in situations where there are no immediate precedents and the situation requires more than bureaucratic muddling through, decision-makers, media, and pundits often turn to analogy. Crisis-situations are the archetypical examples. Whereas lessons, even of a more general kind, try to distil some core insight from the past, analogies are also more directly involved in "sense making" and legitimation of action.[28] Accordingly, analogical reasoning is usually more about the present than about the past; or to be more precise, analogies are used to interpret the past and infer the future, at least in part to control the present.[29] At the stage of public opinion, "sense making" can come in a multitude of forms, highlighting special comparable aspects of the situations or entire causal chains as recently demonstrated in an analysis of the use of historical analogies in different leading newspapers.[30] The point is to make at least parts of the new situation familiar by drawing on something already known. In punditry and when applied by decision-makers, the menu is typically narrower. The point of "sense making" is at this stage typically to make some specific sense of what is going on, and to justify and legitimate a specific course of action – or non-action.[31] In October 2020, for instance, former American

national security advisor, H.R. McMaster, likened the Trump Administration's Afghanistan policy to the appeasement of Adolph Hitler at Munich, implicitly strongly suggesting a change of course.[32] More famously, when discussing the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 as analogous to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, the point was not the specific likeness between the situations, but a narrative of innocence, a cowardly attack, and the need for revenge, in the last instance a justification for war. In such instances, diplomatic history seems clearly deemed useful by policy-makers.

Other analogies are more open-ended and less oriented towards decision-making – employed to create a framework for understanding or a distinct feeling. When drawing parallels between the present changing world and the years predating the First World War or the interwar years, the point is again not the direct similarities between the periods. The function of the analogies is not to establish a 1:1 relationship. Rather, they are employed to convey a notion of possible impending disaster, with dangers stemming from such general phenomena as Great Power rivalries, diplomatic complacency, authoritarian politics, and nationalism. Using further specifications like these can in their turn frame desired actions.

Such generalised analogies between relatively distant times and today illustrate well the challenges of analogical thinking in periods of upheaval. For what exactly is there to compare? Scholarly genres such as those epitomised in works like *The Rise and the Fall of the Great Powers* and *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* create powerful lessons and potential analogies.[33] But to just mention one unique factor, the world has never before been in a situation of Great Power flux with three major nuclear Powers and a number of regional nuclear ones. It is hardly obvious how, for example, the breakdown of European order following the Reformation or the revolutionary wars around 1800 are useful for predicting how a current shakeup of the international order is likely to play out. This does not imply, however, that pundits and policy-makers will shy away from making sweeping analogies between past and present.

On the contrary, it seems as if the more unsettled the times, the bolder the analogies. One relatively recent example draws parallels between ancient Greece and the present age. The discipline of International Relations hails Thucydides as a forerunner – or the father – of political realism, serving up pithy lessons about the impossibility of neutrality and the inevitability of war in periods of Great Power transition. Historians have found this reading both of the actual Peloponnesian War and Thucydides highly unpersuasive,[34] but this debunking has hardly registered in International Relations. In 2012 – and in expanded form in 2017 – Graham Allison drew on this invented tradition of IR to warn against a "Thucydides Trap" in the Sino-American relationship.[35] In his reading, the Peloponnesian War was a paradigmatic example of how war can follow from fear in established Powers when faced by rising Powers. The analogy was obvious, with the United States substituted for Sparta and China for Athens. Complete with policy proposals, Allison presented this analogy to staffers of the National Security Council in May 2017,[36] and it has allegedly found traction in policy circles in both the United States and China.

This form of "usefulness" of diplomatic history, connected to legitimation and justification, can rub academics the wrong way. The typical scholarly way to deal with the use of an historical analogy is to gauge its accuracy as a first order representation – is there enough similarity between the past situation and the current one for the analogy to make sense? However, analogies must also occur as second order constructs; they are interpretations of already interpreted events. In that perspective, the accuracy of the representation is decidedly subordinate to its political functions.[37] To continue with the example, Allison's discussion of the Thucydides Trap probably tells more about Allison and his reading of the current relationship between the United States and China than Thucydides, ancient Greece, or current international affairs.

Moreover, another obvious example concerns the Iraqi dictator, Saddam Hussein, equated in the run-up to the 2003 Iraqi war to Hitler through a representation of the Munich-analogy. Scholars of the interwar years, Nazism, Middle East politics, or war might not have found this analogy historically sound, but that was never the key point of the analogy. It was supposed to set particular narratives in motion and induce specific political effects.[38] Such use of analogy is certainly not new,[39] but it has become more obvious over the last decades through expressing domestic or intra-alliance disagreements more explicitly as competing analogies. The blatantly ideological use of analogies also illustrates the problems with drawing on lessons and analogies from history if there is no agreement on the current situation. Domestic polarisation might reduce the value of any appeal to history. If no agreement exists on what sort of situation one is living through, it is unlikely to find any unifying lesson or analogy of history to set the course for the future.

Some understandings of – diplomatic – history have moved beyond lesson and analogy into the realm of the mythical. The mythical does not refer here to untrue or misunderstood stories. Rather, in line with scholarly usage, myths are forms of narrative providing meaning and significance. Myths in this sense are an inescapable part of the life of human collectives, telling decision-makers who they – and others – are and with what everyone should be concerned and provide blueprints for arguments about policy choices. Myths could thus be understood as a form of constitutive lessons of history and, like the analogies discussed above, approached as second-order constructs; the story they tell is more important than the history.

A first example of how myths can summon we-ness and guide action resides in the genesis of the Kosovo war in 1999. Meeting in London in early spring, the United States Secretary of State Madeleine Albright had to convince the other Western leaders present that the use of force might be necessary if the Serbian regime of Slobodan Milosevic failed to meet Western demands. Her pithy argument rejected an analogy and called upon its attendant myth: "This is London, remember, not Munich".[40] Soon thereafter, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation started bombing Serbia. Invoking "Munich", Albright not only made an argument through inverted analogy. The point was not primarily to contrast the present with the failed appeasement of the past, but to reference a broader myth of what "the West" was all about, and how it accordingly ought to act. This example also illustrates how myths go beyond lessons. They project on to present debates and decision-making the judgement of the past. In this constitutive way, myths become stories about who we are, but also why we are. Through myths, the present is bundled with the past, interwoven with the moral fabric of historical and future purpose.

The invocation of the myth of "Munich" in 1999 must also be understood in the aftermath of "Rwanda" in 1994 and "Srebrenica" in 1995, historical events now myths in their own right and entwined with the overall narrative of the West implied by "Munich". When referencing these two instances of genocidal violence, the point is typically not the events on the ground but the perceived moral failure of the West to act. This inaction was in turn partly a product of ingrained myths about tribalism and eternal conflict, exemplified by the importance of the book *Balkan Ghosts* in the Balkan discourse of the West in the 1990s.[41] It might be tempting to conclude that one is facing a case of "myths all the way down", but that would be too fatalistic.

Coming full circle at the end, does diplomatic history really have much value in the changing world beyond justification of political action and the forging of collective consciousness? If the capacity to know history and learn from it is at its best in localised and stable contexts, the more fluid present might contain challenges for which diplomatic history provides few answers. And if insisting on looking back to other periods of transition, it might end up comparing the incommensurable. Broadening the scope will enhance the value of diplomatic history by

looking beyond the traditional remits of the subject. Stressing some relatively general lessons from such an expanded diplomatic history might offer lessons to learn.

There is no denying that diplomatic history has traditionally been Eurocentric, state-centric, and focused on official sources – "remains". This clearly reflects in the lessons, analogies, and myths referred to above. However, if as seems likely, the present world diverges in important ways from the world that diplomatic history has known, a broadening of the scope, *ceteris paribus*, would yield more insights that are valuable. Luckily, such a broadening has been under way for a decade or more under the heading "new diplomatic history". On the one side, this literature has incorporated other actors than just states, chiefly a swathe of new sources, including questions of culture, ritual, gender, and race. This alone should make it able to generate a wide menu of new lessons. On the other side, there has been a growing urgency in studying diplomatic history beyond the West. If, for instance, interest exists in how relations between China and the West in the South China Sea might play out, there is no *a priori* reason to look to ancient Greek history rather than to ancient Asian history. Again, reading *other* histories would serve to bring forth potentially new lessons.[42]

The importance of alternative histories and lessons should be a cure against short-sightedness, and in a wider perspective, it would fit well with a humble reading of diplomatic history, not focused on blueprints for action, but on increased understanding. Stressed above is how earlier periods of upheaval might provide few analogies for today. Nevertheless, looking back to previous systemic upheavals can be useful in sensitising those today to the plethora of developmental possibilities and the likely importance of the unexpected and random. Taking diplomatic history seriously should be a strong antidote against teleology. As a corollary, since lessons and analogies obviously inform decision-making, an open-ended reading of diplomatic history should demonstrate the different possible analogies that can illuminate the present and how they provide sets of alternative scenarios.[43] Thus, much as was the case with Kennedy and the missile crisis, the most enduring lessons from diplomatic history might be the necessity of exercising prudent judgement when making life-and-death decisions.

Notes

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1 This chapter refers to diplomatic history as a topic, not as a specific academic field within the discipline of History. On the contrary, the current study of diplomatic history is strikingly interdisciplinary, and it has greatly increased its reach and relevance. A number of observations exist that apply to history's value more generally, not solely to diplomatic history. In the spirit of self-reflexivity, my background is formally in the discipline of International Relations. This indubitably colours the view of the topics at hand and how to deal with them.

2 This argument follows the convention of distinguishing between the past – all that has happened – and history – how historians represent the past.

3 There are significant literatures on learning from history, the use of historical analogies, and historical myths. The point of this chapter is not to give an exhaustive review, but to highlight some overarching challenges and possibilities involved in turning to the past to shed light on the present.

4 The thinking herein about historical analogies, historical myths, and learning from history has been developed in close co-operation with Benjamin de Carvalho. Cf. in particular H. Leira and B. de Carvalho, "The Function of Myths in International Relations: Discipline and Identity", in A. Gofas, I. Hamati-Ataya, and N. Onuf, eds., *Sage Handbook of the History, Philosophy and Sociology of International Relations* (London, 2018), 222–35.

5 As discussed below, one could thus argue that one of the more enduring "lessons" of history is that decision-makers will turn to their alleged "lessons" to reach and justify their decisions.

6 J. Wilkinson, "A Choice of Fictions: Historians, Memory, and Evidence", *PMLA*, 111/1(1996), 80.

7 M. Kornprobst, "Comparing Apples and Oranges? Leading and Misleading Uses of Historical Analogies", *Millennium*, 36/1(2007), 34.
8 This chapter relies on such a notion of "working truths", both about specific lessons and analogies and about the learning of them. If not, it would collapse under self-referential incommensurability.
9 T.G. Otte, "The Inner Circle: What is Diplomatic History? (And Why We Should Study it): An Inaugural Lecture", *History*, 105(2020), 13.
10 H. Leira, "Justus Lipsius, Neostoicism and the Disciplining of 17th Century Statecraft", *Review of International Studies*, 34/4(2008), 669–92.
11 Whatever one might think of Lipsius's approach to history as repeating, his explorations of the military tactics of ancient Rome became highly influential in the establishment of Dutch, Swedish, and Prussian military practices of the seventeenth century, such as volley fire and the counter march. Military reformers took lessons from Lipsius in what they assumed to be history. Cf. J. De Landtsheer, "Justus Lipsius's *De Militia Romana*: Polybius Revived, or How an Ancient Historian Was Turned into a Manual of Early Modern Warfare", in K. Enenkel, J.L. de Jong, and J. de Lanrtsheer, eds., *Recreating Ancient History: Episodes from the Greek and Roman Past in the Arts and Literature of the Early Modern Period* (Leiden, 2001), 115.
12 See in particular, R. Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (NY, 1985).
13 J. MacKay and C.D. Laroche, "The Conduct of History in International Relations: Rethinking Philosophy of History in IR Theory", *International Theory*, 9/2(2017), 213.
14 J. Habermas, *A Berlin Republic: Writings on Germany* (Lincoln, NE, 1997 [1995]), 13.
15 R. Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, NJ, 1976).
16 To Jervis, the likelihood of misperception stems from humans' cognitive makeup. Others have been more sanguine about the capacity to learn the right lessons from history; classics include E.R. May, *"Lessons" of the Past: The Use and Misuse of History in American Foreign Policy* (NY, 1973); R. Neustadt and E.R. May, *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision Makers* (NY, 1996).
17 In the literature, "lessons" and "analogies" often occur interchangeably. However, strictly speaking, lessons concern only an interpretation of the past, whilst analogies also involve comparison – drawing on a lesson of the past and a present situation. That said, there are often implicit analogies in play when referred to as lessons. In common usage, there is also a difference in scalability between the two. Processes great and small can allow "lessons" learnt in the immediate past just as well as long ago. "Analogies", on the other hand, typically require some temporal distance and for the process to be important enough to have entered some sort of collective memory.
18 J. Angstrom, "Mapping the Competing Historical Analogies of the War on Terrorism: The Bush Presidency", *International Relations*, 25/2(2011), 224–42.
19 L. Scott and S. Smith, "Lessons of October: Historians, Political Scientists, Policy-Makers and the Cuban Missile Crisis", *International Affairs*, 70/4(1994), 661.
20 Ibid., 680–83.
21 It is worth noting that President John F. Kennedy tried to learn from history during the 1962 Cuban missile crisis. Having recently read Barbara Tuchman, *The Guns of August* (NY, 1962) about the outbreak of the First World War, he was determined not to stumble into war, as he believed the Great Powers had done in 1914. He also wanted to avoid what could appear a "Pearl Harbor in reverse". On the other hand, these were rather abstract lessons about the virtue of prudence and the importance of moral action, rather than lessons about cause and effect.
22 H. Leira, "Kinship Diplomacy, or Diplomats of a Kin", in Kristin M. Haugevik and Iver B. Neumann, eds., *Kinship in International Relations* (Milton Park, UK, 2018), 62–80; idem, "The Emergence of Foreign Policy", *International Studies Quarterly*, 63/1(2019), 187–98.
23 D. Kahneman, *Thinking Fast and Slow* (NY, 2011).
24 C.E. Lindblom, "The Science of 'Muddling Through'", *Public Administration Review*, 19/2(1959), 79.
25 For example, J.G.A. Pocock, "Law, Sovereignty and History in a Divided Culture: The Case of New Zealand and the Treaty of Waitangi", *McGill Law Journal*, 43/1(1998), 481–506 discusses this issue at length.
26 Jervis, *Perception and Misperception*, 220.
27 I.B. Neumann and H. Leira, *Aktiv og Avventende i hundre år. Utenrikstjenestens liv 1905–2005* (Oslo, 2005).
28 Thus, analogies have a double potential, both guiding action and legitimising policy – both reason and rhetoric – to follow J. Meirenrich, "Analogies at War", *Journal of Conflict and Security Law*, 11/1(2006), 1–40.

29 This is a specification of a more general point made in A. Hom, "Time and Historical International Relations", in B. de Carvalho, J.C. Lopez, and H. Leira, eds., *The Routledge Handbook of Historical International Relations* (London, 2021).
30 R. Axelrod and L. Forster, "How Historical Analogies in Newspapers of Five Countries Make Sense of Major Events: 9/11, Mumbai and Tahrir Square", *Research in Economics*, 71/1(2017), 8–19.
31 Y.F. Khong, *Analogies at War: Korea, Munich Dien Bien Phu and the Vietnam Decisions of 1965* (Princeton, NJ, 1992) remains the classic study on this topic.
32 J. Rogin, "McMaster Says Trump's Taliban Deal is Munich-like Appeasement", *Washington Post* (20 October 2020): www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/10/19/mcmaster-says-trumps-taliban-deal-is-munich-like-appeasement/.
33 Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and the Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (NY, 1987); Oswald Spengler, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes; Umrisse einer Morphologie der Weltgeschichte* (München, 1963 [1918, 1922]).
34 Cf. D.A. Welch, "Why International Relations Theorists Should Stop Reading Thucydides", *Review of International Studies*, 29/3(2003), 301–19.
35 G.T. Allison, *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?* (Boston, MA, 2017).
36 M. Crowley, "Why the White House Is Reading Greek History", *Politico Magazine* (21 June 2017): www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/06/21/why-the-white-house-is-reading-greek-history-215287.
37 See H. Leira, "Political Change and Historical Analogies", *Global Affairs*, 3/1(2017), 81–88; Leira and Carvalho, "Functions of Myths".
38 M.V. Rasmussen, "The History of a Lesson: Versailles, Munich and the Social Construction of the Past", *Review of International Studies*, 29/4(2003), 499–519 thus suggested that it would make sense to move on from the "lessons of history" to "the history of lessons".
39 I thus disagree with A. Mumford, "Parallels, Prescience and the Past: Analogical Reasoning and Contemporary International Politics", *International Politics*, 52/1(2015), 1–19, who sees ideological uses of analogy as a recent phenomenon.
40 Rasmussen, "The History of a Lesson".
41 Robert D. Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey through History* (NY, 1993). L. Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War* (Milton Park, UK, 2006) provides incisive analysis.
42 For example, A. Kopper and T. Peragovics, "Overcoming the Poverty of Western Historical Imagination: Alternative Analogies for Making Sense of the South China Sea Conflict", *European Journal of International Relations*, 25/2(2018), 360–82; J. Palmer, "Oh God, Not the Peloponnesian War Again", *Foreign Policy* (28 July 2020): https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/07/28/oh-god-not-the-peloponnesian-war-again/.
43 Kopper and Peragovics, "Overcoming the Poverty", 367–69.