

# American Dove

## US Foreign Policy and the Failure of Force

Zachary C. Shirkey argues that the United States is overly reliant on the active use of force and should employ more peaceful foreign policy tools. Force often fails to achieve its desired ends for both tactical and strategic reasons and is relatively inflexible, making it an inappropriate tool for many US foreign policy goals. Rather than relying on loose analogies or common sense as many books on US grand strategy do, *American Dove* bases its argument directly on an eclectic mix of academic literature, including realist, liberal, and constructivist theory as well as psychology. Shirkey also argues against retrenchment strategies, such as offshore balancing and strategic restraint as lacking a moral component that leaves them vulnerable to hawkish policies that employ moral arguments in favor of action. US withdrawal would weaken the existing liberal international security, economic, and legal orders—orders that benefit the United States. Rather, the book argues the United States needs an energetic foreign policy that employs passive uses of force such as deterrence and non-military tools such as economic statecraft, international institutions, international law, and soft power. Such a policy leaves room for a moral component, which is necessary for mobilizing the American public and would uphold the existing international order. Last, Shirkey argues that to be successful, doves must frame their arguments in terms of strategy rather than in terms of costs and must show that dovish policies are consistent with national honor and a broad range of American values. *American Dove* offers a framework for US grand strategy and a plan for persuading the public to adopt it.

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