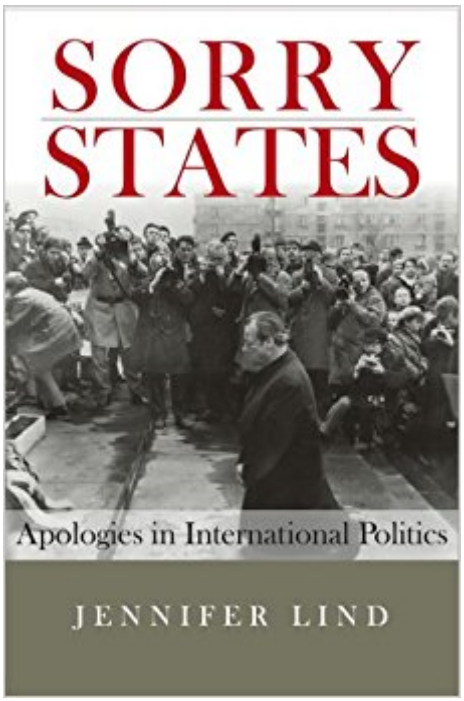
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Sorry States: Apologies In International Politics (Cornell Studies In Security Affairs)



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Synopsis

Governments increasingly offer or demand apologies for past human rights abuses, and it is widely believed that such expressions of contrition are necessary to promote reconciliation between former adversaries. The post-World War II experiences of Japan and Germany suggest that international apologies have powerful healing effects when they are offered, and poisonous effects when withheld. West Germany made extensive efforts to atone for wartime crimes-formal apologies, monuments to victims of the Nazis, and candid history textbooks; Bonn successfully reconciled with its wartime enemies. By contrast, Tokyo has made few and unsatisfying apologies and approves school textbooks that whitewash wartime atrocities. Japanese leaders worship at the Yasukuni Shrine, which honors war criminals among Japan's war dead. Relations between Japan and its neighbors remain tense.Examining the cases of South Korean relations with Japan and of French relations with Germany, Jennifer Lind demonstrates that denials of past atrocities fuel distrust and inhibit international reconciliation. In Sorry States, she argues that a country's acknowledgment of past misdeeds is essential for promoting trust and reconciliation after war. However, Lind challenges the conventional wisdom by showing that many countries have been able to reconcile without much in the way of apologies or reparations. Contrition can be highly controversial and is likely to cause a domestic backlash that alarmsÃ¢â ¬â ¢rather than assuagesÃ¢â ¬â ¢outside observers. Apologies and other such polarizing gestures are thus unlikely to soothe relations after conflict, Lind finds, and remembrance that is less accusatory-conducted bilaterally or in multilateral settings-holds the most promise for international reconciliation.

Book Information

Series: Cornell Studies in Security Affairs
Paperback: 256 pages
Publisher: Cornell University Press (February 25, 2010)
Language: English
ISBN-10: 0801476283
ISBN-13: 978-0801476280
Product Dimensions: 6.1 x 0.7 x 9.1 inches
Shipping Weight: 12.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)
Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars 6 customer reviews
Best Sellers Rank: #152,507 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #135 inÃ Â Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > International & World Politics > Diplomacy #213

inÃ Â Books > Textbooks > Humanities > History > Asia #333 inÃ Â Books > Textbooks > Social Sciences > Political Science > International Relations

Customer Reviews

"States victimized by aggression often harbor resentment against the perpetrator, but can apologies by the latter lead to reconciliation and harmonious relations' Jennifer Lind focuses on political rather than cultural factors in her cogent analysis of remembrance and remorse. She finds that the issue is whether apologies by the aggressor can reduce the perception of threat by former victims. She concludes that this is possible, but recognizes that bilateral ties may also be improved in the absence of apologies, and that apologies can produce jingoistic backlashes in their own countries."Ã¢â ¬â ¢Choice"At a time when nations and societies around the world are engaging in remarkable new means to restore comity in the aftermath of violence and brutality, detailed and comparative studies of national successes and failures in reconciliation are sorely needed. Jennifer Lind's work will stand as a valued contribution in this humane project."Ã¢â ¬â ¢Journal of Japanese Studies"Sorry States is an extremely timely book, covering an issue of great importance for the international relations of East Asia (and beyond). Jennifer Lind has compiled all of the important statements on war responsibility and related issues by Japanese and German politicians and other elites, including not just the official statements and acts but also the backlash statements that have received media attention."Ã¢â ¬â ¢Leonard J. Schoppa, University of Virginia, author of Race for the Exits: The Unraveling of Japan's System of Social Protection"Is remorse the condition of reconciliation? With this original piece of scholarship, Jennifer Lind presents a more subtle argument. Yes, West Germany apologized profusely for Nazi atrocities, while Japan could never quite go beyond 'those unfortunate incidents.' As a result, Germany enjoys excellent relations with its neighbors, and Japan does not. Austria and ItalyÃ¢â ¬â ¢Axis partners bothÃ¢â ¬â ¢largely dodged their wartime responsibilities and still became respected members of the Western community. Neither have the United States and Britain apologized for Dresden, and yet they went on to enjoy warm relations with their wartime foes. Similarly, the Germans have not apologized to the French, their best friends in Europe. As it dissects these paradoxical outcomes, Sorry States makes a critical contribution to our understanding of comparative foreign policy and the politics of remembrance and reconciliation. It is a fine blend of good history and good political science."Ã¢â ¬â ¢Josef Joffe, Publisher-Editor, Die Zeit, Germany, and Senior Fellow, Institute for International Studies, Stanford University

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Toward the end repetitive, but totally educational. Worth every penny and time.

You will NOT be sorry you read this book--probing analysis by Lind.

Books on public apologies in international relations (IR) are in the same company as books on the art of negotiation, inter-cultural dialogue, creative diplomacy, the virtues of patience, the political importance of linguistic analysis, religious analysis and transitional justice. War-making and IR theory books are usually a few library aisles down? The academic distance too often translates to a disconnect in practice. None of these virtues or practices is the sole domain of warrior or diplomat. The apology neighborhood is not the soft side of IR. In its proper place it is courageous and necessary IR.The "Uses and Abuses" begins by highlighting the increased preponderance of apologies in the domestic, international and post-colonial environments (the book's three categories). The application is timely in the midst of America's competing opinions between "apology presidents" (Obama), "no apologies" (Romney) or "we're not innocent either" (Trump) debates. Apologies are a very interesting battle ground through which to confirm a necessary virtue

while at the same time dissect and correct our own expectations of political morality. Why is it that our own personal pride will demoralize humility in a political opponent and at the same time praise the destructive pride in another?Jennifer Lind's "Sorry States" is a good balance to the "Uses and Abuses" case studies. The latter provides a general discussion of apology theory across multiple case studies with an obvious desire to normalize the practice of public apologies in IR. "Sorry States" on the other hand, digs through important public opinion archives, national textbook evidence, memorial monuments and leadership statements of post-WWII Germany and Japan to qualify the "when" and "why" of successful state contrition.Apologies carry with them a host of considerations. What makes a sincere apology? What damage might be done to the self-image, the national image? When is compensation for misdeeds simply unneeded, maybe impractical or tactically ignored? For whom and to whom can a national leader make an apology? Any prudent foreign relations agent should ponder the recipient's response to the public apology. It is an instructive irony when author Daniel Goldhagen debunks the "myth" of German public innocence to the harsh criticism of outsider commentators but to the willing embrace of Germany's own population (Lind, 148-9)? Whose opinion matters?There is no perfect apology but the best include remorse, admission of deeds and perhaps restitution if practical ("Uses and Abuses"). Apologies should make an actor vulnerable to public opinion. But prudence, sincerity and national pride are an odd combination that seeks to control for the public response, shrink the scope of fault and limit the extent of amnesty. Japan's 1998 public apology came only after it confirmed South Korea's intended response (Lind). Canada's recent apology for treatment of indigenous peoples was limited to education system abuses ("Uses").Theory on apology is difficult for many reasons, most due to availability of records. Australia, Canada, Germany and Japan are valuable examples but certainly not culturally and socially representative to a more comprehensive theory. Second, some apologies allow for mutual contrition as in the case of de Gaulle, admitting to Adenauer the 100 year animosity between France and Germany. On the other hand, Timor Leste's President Horta defended his 2008 common apology with Indonesia, for the sake of "truth" and not contrition, despite the latter's obvious aggression (Strassner in "Apology and Reconciliation").Truth and Reconciliation is sometimes the only way out of a circle of bitterness and pride that results from extensive atrocities or long-term occupation. For perpetrators of harsh colonial methods, an apology is a calculation of at least elapsed time, national prestige and control of reparations... not to mention the forgiveness by victims whose economic and social conditions are still directly influenced by recent history. Is it even possible to compensate for the "loss of language and culture" ("Uses", 144)? How former French and British colonies in Africa have responded to that question, along with their own forgiving

responses, in some cases gives as much credit to healing humility as it has raised more questions of unhealthy post-colonial entrapment.As Professor Colleen Murphy notes in her prescription of transitional justice: forgiveness is not enough. Humans should desire reconciliation which can begin with apology and forgiveness. But "Uses" and Lind both describe successful reconciliation without initial apology or forgiveness. It was not Japan’s apology that held back reconciliation, but its refusal to respond truthfully to its history. Nationalism is not always patriotism and neither are they necessarily the enemy of good international relations. Apology sometimes requires a vulnerability that national pride cannot stomach, but for which good patriotism can make up.In IR, the individual and the international realms are seen on different moral and political planes.The practice of individual apologies does and should have an influence on political contrition. Should a nation wait for a top down example of reconciliation when communities, where spiritual fervor is most active and least controversial, can influence the same from the bottom up? Individual apologies have a vulnerability that public apologies simply cannot muster in the political arena ("Uses", Chap 10).We speak of apology like it’s a science; forgiveness like it’s a feeling. The process of repentance, redemption and reconciliation is powerful! It cannot be confined to political prose but it can be a fire that refines. Apologies, like so many other ideas in its "library shelf neighborhood" cut across the moral planes in very fascinating, even spiritually informative ways ("Uses" Chap 5). Many might avoid discussing religion and apology but the truth is that religion has influenced greatly the concept of sincere repentance and forgiveness. It should not be an irony that Christians are as much in need of the forgiveness they teach as anyone else; nor that temptation to power can corrupt the purity of religious piety, in answer to John Dower’s, "Cultures of War" (My review, 17 books ago).Jesus once asked his audience, which son was to be lauded: the son who verbally acknowledged his obedience but sat on his hands or the son who verbally refused the task but completed it anyway. The answer was, and still is, the latter (Matthew 21:28-31). Japan issued in words what it did not follow with deeds. Germany’s remorse was witnessed first in reparations, silent contrition and popular humility which only later translated to multiple, heartfelt public apologies. The public ceremonies and carefully worded apologies, like forgiveness, requires actions that follow suit. The strongest proof of international reconciliation need not be from the top, but globalization, immigration, language competence and even care for refugees allow citizens to cultivate from the bottom up what politics too often cannot express from the top down.Both books mention how the reception and connotations of apology are not the same in every culture. Having lived and worked in dozens of countries, cooperating closely with Europeans, Arabs, Africans and East Asians I have had the privilege of making mistakes in each one. A number of the personal engagements required that I

apologize, not just for cultural misunderstandings but simply a result of my own, or my teams', honest faults. Culturally, however, the contrition was not always received in the same manner that my cultural background might expect. In some cases my apology was welcomed with astonishment and grace and at other times quickly abused as fodder through which to berate my entire character. Does that make apology any less important?In politics, apologies are made zero sum games. The contrite surrenders the moral "high ground" to a competitor who in reality is no more deserving of the podium; the pitfalls of "plank-eye politics". IR theory is quick to refuse the apology in one school knowing the human pride nature. Another IR school hopes for an idealistic result. Professor Lind herself "fought" her own conclusion that IR requires a post-conflict response somewhere between contrition and the whitewashing of history. Her own diligent research could not support the idealistic conclusion she so desired.The heart-wrenching image of Germany's Willy Brandt on his knees in 1970 brings many scholars to pursue the merits of public apology. The WWII Nazi atrocities were so clearly evident and the millions of defenseless slaughtered impossible to deny. Why is the need for reconciliation only "obvious" in the gravest of circumstances? Contrition is not just for the aftermath of human war but the whole of humanity. We don't need extermination to prove that humility should be a daily practice in conflict preventative maintenance.The barriers to and merits of political apologies is a necessary study. A government is perhaps influenced as much by nationalism, individual and collective pride, prudence and sincerity as much as its geographic and cultural identity. Do shared borders encourage reconciliation whereas the insulation of power and ocean distance forestall the effort?We cannot always know or control the outcome of a public or even private apology. The "mythology of victimhood" may justify militarism or cultivate a stubborn unforgiving heart. But even the worst of offenses must have a way out by honest contrition whether in a national, international or post-colonial context. No bitterness is eternally justified. If apology is a political risk, forgiveness can be too.

As the international spotlight moves east towards Asia, Jennifer Lind provides an insightful look at how historical remembrance of war crimes plays a key role in East Asia and other regions. By contrasting the German-France post-WWII experience with that of Japan-Korea, the author points out a puzzle that goes against conventional wisdom: apologizing for war crimes won't necessarily improve relations with the victim nation, and it may be counter-productive. Meanwhile, states that are not contrite will most likely be viewed as threatening by its previous victims, as demonstrated by Lind in her analysis of the Japan-Korea case study. Thus, states that have committed war crimes in the past are faced with a conundrum: act contrite, and risk a counter-productive domestic backlash,

or deny previous crimes and risk a foreign backlash.This book is a great read for anyone interested in international relations, East Asia, or European reconciliation. Lind attacks the conventional wisdom and clearly shows how reconciliation is a tricky game to play. "Sorry States" is sure to satisfy not only respected IR scholars with well-organized, detailed analyses and theory testing, but also students of IR (like me) with clear and engaging discussion of one of the most important issues facing Asia today.

Comparing German and French relationship with that of Japan and Korea is irrelevant. Germany and France fought several wars in the last few centuries to compete for the hegemony of European continent. Japan and Korea did not fight any war since these two countries opened the boarder for the western powers in late 19th century. Japan even fought the Sino-Japanese war in 1894 to secure independence of Korea from China. With the victory of the war, Japan signed Shimonoseki-Treaty with China and Korea became free of Chinese influence. The victory of Sino-Japanese war also changed the mindset of Korean intellectuals. This created a strong movement to be united with Japanese.Professor Lind says that Japanese rule of Korean Peninsula was a brutal plundering. However, the study by a British scholar Alleyne Ireland in his book ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“New KoreaÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• shows a very different view of Korea during the annexation. There has been significant misunderstanding and lack of discussion of Japanese rule of the Korean peninsula during the annexation not only in Korea, but also in Japan and other Western countries. I highlight some aspect of the Japanese rule of Korean Peninsula mentioned in ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“New KoreaÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â•.The Colonial Government modernized the territoriesÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ basic infrastructures and improved peopleÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s literacy and their standards of living with the fund provided by the Japanese Government. Many dams, factories and buildings built during the annexation period are still used today. After World War II, Korea and Taiwan became two leading new economies based on the well-educated populace and infrastructure.Professor LindÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s analysis and proposal for reconciliation is not relevant since her proposal is not based on the historical facts in Korea during the annexation.

"Sorry States" is on the ROROTOKO list of cutting-edge intellectual nonfiction. Professor Lind's book interview ran here as cover feature on September 21, 2009.

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