

Poker and US International Relations

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Region: [USA](#)

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We all know that Donald Trump (Pres.) is a shrewd and street-smart business wheeler-dealer. And we also know that bluffing and bullying are essential tools of street business – as well as poker. However, for these tools to work successfully, they must be accompanied by a clear vision and specific objectives. Otherwise, they soon spend themselves out and lose their effectiveness.

Bluffing, is a short-term tactic and assumes the stupidity or the naivete, of the opposing party. Also, it cannot be repeated, because opponents soon wise up and call the bluff. Then what?

As for bullying, it basically provides a temporary window through which specific goals may be slipped in. However, it does carry some serious drawbacks, such as the case of the proverbial mouse who, when bullied and pushed into a corner, suddenly turns into a roaring lion. Worse still, is the case where a bully miscalculates, and takes on a large bear or dragon.

These tactics may be useful in poker, where the player is dealt different cards and must make a spot call on each hand, thus replacing wisdom and careful judgement with bravado and luck. Of course, it helps if you play cards daily with the same crowd, for you would have had ample time to observe and study their gaming style and psyche under pressure. But if you are playing poker with a new opponent, then you are blind to his strengths and weaknesses, which invariably forces you to experiment, possibly to your detriment.

Poker is not related to International relations. One is short term with high risks, and the other is longer term and avoids risks, or at least tries to reduce them. Nevertheless, they may coexist in semi-primitive societies where the concept of “short term” is a way of life and is usually coupled with comparative military weakness and married to overall ignorance. But linking poker to international relations with more advanced societies, is a recipe for disaster.

The Trump administration is fairly new to international relations. In fact, many of its members have little experience outside party politics, local government, journalism, business and strict military hierarchal command modus operandi. Additionally, they are led by a centralized ultra-sensitive boss who can erratically switch his views and positions according to whim, perceived understanding of events or simply short term objectives and tactics.

No doubt, Trump’s international adversaries have thoroughly studied all the episodes of “*The Apprentice*” and have profiled him accordingly. So, using poker tactics of bluffing and bullying may not work in this case.

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