3 International Power Politics

THE STATE SYSTEM

The world of the twenty-first century is a world of sovereign states. We take for granted that the state system is the basis of political order on the planet, the primary organizing principle of world politics. The territory of the earth is divided among 193 states having the attribute we call sovereignty. (The precise number of states is, of course arbitrary: In 1945 there were 53, and in 1700 there were about 2,000). In principle, all lands, inland waters as well as islands, and large expanses of ocean waters are included in this political system. Only the so-called high seas and the continent of Antarctica, to which a special regime applies, are outside national jurisdictions. The territorial and maritime frontiers among states are the products of both history and agreement.

The state is so dominant today that we tend to forget this was not always the case and that the state system is not an immutable feature of the world. There are in theory manifold ways of organizing civil society; history is littered with the wreckage of all sorts of political entities that have existed, many with great success: empires, commonwealths, city-states, colonies, and various feudal structures that have come and gone on the world stage.

The contemporary state system was not decreed or invented – it evolved over hundreds of years. Its origin was in Europe in the early modern period. Historians and political scientists, who like to assign dates for everything, mark the beginning of the state system in Europe as 1648, the date of the Treaty of Westphalia, which ended the religious conflict known as the Thirty Years War. In reality there were states before 1648, so that it may be more accurate to say that on this date the state became the dominant political form of organization in Europe, and from there it spread to the rest of the world. At the end of the twentieth century, the process of globalization of the state system appears

to be complete – the last phase was the break-up of the Soviet Union and former Yugoslavia, which created many new states. The future will no doubt see changes in boundaries and split-ups or mergers of states, but no alterations as dramatic as in the past. The state system appears to be here to stay, affecting everyone on earth.

The intellectual justification of the state is the subject of debate. Political theorists, such as Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau, advanced the social contract theory for the origin or at least the justification of the state.[1] According to this theory, the state is the product of agreement by free individuals, and therefore, the state must serve their interests and recognize their rights. The German philosopher Hegel, on the other hand, found the justification of the state in the "way of God in the world, the manifestation of the divine on earth," the inevitable product of the spirit of history in the world. (The philosopher Karl Popper famously criticized this deification of the state in his classic study, *The Open Society and Its Enemies* [1945]). Many contemporary thinkers see the state system as simply a human convenience, the product of impersonal historical forces and political trial and error. In this view the state exists to provide its citizens and residents security, freedom, order, justice, and welfare. Its ability to provide these elements can serve as criteria for judging the merit of any contemporary state.[2]

What are the characteristics of the modern state? The diversity of the states that currently make up the global system is so great that lawyers and political scientists identify only a few minimal but important requirements. First, a state must have a defined territory. This is not to say that its frontiers must be undisputed, but it must claim a geographical area. Second, a state must have a permanent population, but there is no minimum necessary number. Third, a state must have a government; again the type of government – democracy, monarchy, or oligarchy – is not important. Fourth, a state must have political independence so that it is capable of entering into legitimate international relations with other states. This characteristic may be qualified as well; for

[1] This modern view of the state contrasts with the earlier theory derived from Aristotle (*Politics*, Book 1, Ch. 1–2) and Thomas Aquinas (*Summa Theologiae*, *Prima Secundae*) that political organization is part of the natural order of things. From this theory lesser thinkers derived the divine right of kings and the subjection of men and women to state authority. A contrasting idea of the social contract theory of the state was advanced by the eighteenth century conservative thinker Edmund Burke, who believed that society is a social contract between the dead, the living and those yet to be born. Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790).

[2] So-called critical theory urges the analysis of the underlying social structures of the state and the elimination of built-in pathologies and forms of domination and exploitation. M. Horkheimer, *Critical Theory* (1972).

example, Monaco has ceded its foreign policymaking powers to France, but Monaco is still regarded as a state. Statehood should be distinguished from the related concept of recognition of the government of a state. As a practical matter, recognition means only that diplomatic relations are desired with the state. Recognition is a political and legal act of legitimacy, but recognition by other states is not a constitutional requirement of statehood. For example, the People's Republic of China was a state from its inception in 1949, although the United States and many other countries refused recognition of its government for many years.

The concept of the state is different from the concept of nation. A nation is a community of people considered to have a common identity based on ethnicity, culture, language, or history. Sometimes the state and nation closely coincide, for example Italy, where almost all people consider themselves ethnically Italian. In this case it is proper to speak of the nation-state – the state is also a nation. However, many states today are multinational or multicultural; for example, India, China, and the United States. Moreover, there are some states that are devoid of nations – the Vatican, for example, does not involve any national group. In addition, there are cases of stateless nations, such as the Palestinians and the Kurds. This is frequently a source of international tension.

A further characteristic of states is that they are formally equal because they all enjoy the attribute of sovereignty, defined as independence and legal autonomy. This formal equality is limited, however, because in reality states have widely different economic, political, military, social, and cultural characteristics.

Sovereignty

The meaning and importance of the key term *sovereignty*[3] has changed radically over the past 100 years and continues to change today. In its traditional and pristine form, sovereignty was regarded as a concept unique to states and the very essence of statehood and membership in the international system. In its traditional formulation, sovereignty means that the state is subject to no higher power, and this implies a dual claim. First, within its territory and with respect to its own citizens the state has absolute and exclusive authority. This is the source of the idea (happily disputed today) that the state can do whatever it wants to the population within its territory. Second, the state has

[3] The term "sovereignty" was first coined and defined by the French political philosopher Jean Boudin in his essay, "De Republica" (1576).

a right to exercise unrestrained power internationally. This is the origin of the (equally pernicious) doctrine that any state has a right to go to war to assert its interests.

These bold ideas came out of the formative period of the state system in Europe, and they are attributed to the Renaissance French thinker, Jean Boudin, and the English political philosopher, Thomas Hobbes. These men posit a system of anarchy in international relations. The theoretical independence of states makes them judges in their own cause, and they may do anything they can get away with to pursue their interests. As a legal and political idea, this notion of sovereignty has always been incorrect, but like many wrong ideas, it has had tremendous influence that continues today.

Historically, the high-water mark of sovereignty was the nineteenth century in Europe when, beginning in 1815 after the defeat of Napoleon, the so-called Concert of Europe tried to maintain international order through consultations and negotiation. This was the balance of power system that ultimately came crashing down in 1914. Since the First World War the concept of sovereignty has been down but not out, as we shall see. The doctrine of sovereignty keeps popping up, often in new guises. In the twenty-first century sovereignty has a new and simple meaning – the right of the citizens of a state to determine their own destiny.

The State Today

What is the status of the doctrine of sovereignty today? In formal terms, there is still no higher authority than the state, and we still speak of sovereign concerns. But the classical view of sovereignty is discredited, and international relations experts debate how far the doctrine of sovereignty has eroded and what it means today. In this debate there tend to be political differences of opinion, with conservatives generally defending sovereignty, whereas liberals downplay its current significance.

Objectively speaking, a certain erosion of the doctrine of sovereignty is undeniable. First, in the twentieth century, many international actors emerged that share power with states.

- Intergovernmental organizations, such as the United Nations, NATO, and the International Monetary Fund, have the authority to take actions independent of states. Ironically, the European political order today in dominated by such an intergovernmental organization, the European Union, which in most ways is the antithesis of the nineteenth-century Concert of Europe.

- Multinational and transnational corporations are also major international actors today; many of these are richer, more powerful, and independent of all but the major sovereign states.
- Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), ranging from the Red Cross to the Catholic Church to Greenpeace, have unprecedented influence and often a certain moral authority.

These international actors counterbalance the power of states.

Second, it is no longer accepted today that the state can exercise unrestrained power either internally or externally. Accepted international legal norms constrain state power. For example, states no longer enjoy absolute immunity in domestic courts of law. Under the U.S. Foreign Sovereign Immunity Act and its analogue in other states, a foreign state may now be sued and will be liable in contract and in tort. Foreign states that foster terrorism may be sued for damages. The International Law Commission (an organ of the United Nations) has formulated broad rules for "international state responsibility" as well. States bear international responsibility and may have to pay damages for conduct that is in breach of international law.

Third, in the second half of the twentieth century important standards for the protection of human rights were formulated that must be observed by all states. A state that mistreats its population may be subject to enforcement action under the U.N. Charter, and there may be a right of "humanitarian intervention" even apart from the Charter. Moreover, a head of state as well as state officials who perpetrate violations of human rights may be prosecuted criminally for their actions. In the Pinochet case (2000)[4], for example, the U.K. House of Lords ruled that a former head of state is not immune from prosecution for international crimes. New international criminal tribunals, including a permanent International Criminal Court, have been constituted.

Fourth, in the twenty-first century it is widely conceded that interdependence has replaced independence as a characteristic of the global order of states. Globalization, the disputed characteristic that in any case defines our times, means that every state and its citizens are affected by events that may occur in far-flung places – because, simply put, there really are no far-flung places any more. Moreover, the international problems that we face – peace and security, protection of the environment, and economic development – are beyond the capability of any one state. There is no choice but to cooperate.

[4] Ex Parte Pinochet, [2000] 1 AC 147 (House of Lords).

Fifth, it is accepted today that states have international responsibility as well as rights. *State responsibility* arises from the violation by a state of an international obligation. This obligation can be derived from either customary law or treaty law. International responsibility means that a state must desist from breaching the obligation and must make reparation for any damages caused. International law contains what are referred to as both primary and secondary rules concerning state responsibility. The primary rules define what is substantively a wrongful act over a broad spectrum of areas, such as human rights, protection of the environment, breach of a treaty obligation, violation of the laws of war, and mistreatment of foreign nationals. The secondary law of state responsibility covers general and technical matters, such as the manner of attributing wrongful acts to a state, the mechanics of enforcement, and various defenses to state culpability.[5] This international regime of state responsibility is still embryonic and controversial (in some ways it is the antithesis of the doctrine of sovereignty), but there is a growing movement among legal and political scholars and practitioners to implement it widely in coming years. State responsibility is essential to the international rule of law.

In sum, the state and its concomitant, sovereignty, are not metaphysical in origin or divinely ordained; they are human institutions devised to serve instrumental ends – to provide the necessary framework for human flourishing. Scholars may debate the extent and necessity of the erosion of sovereignty, but a premise of this book is that sovereignty in the twenty-first century must be exercised within a framework of law and international institutions.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

International relations (IR) is the term commonly used to encompass the relationships and interactions among international actors, chiefly governments and states. This broad concept includes international politics – the policy relationships among states in widely diverse fields, ranging from nuclear nonproliferation to the protocol of receiving diplomatic visitors. Areas covered typically include security and military concerns, economics and trade, resources, environment, culture, and social and ethnic concerns – anything and everything a state may find of interest. IR also includes international law, the legal norms that are supposed to govern state behavior. For the purpose of interacting with other states and asserting their perceived interests, every state has established mechanisms of foreign policy formulation. States also have

[5] James Crawford, *The International Law Commission Articles on State Responsibility* (2002).

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND FOREIGN POLICY

International relations deals with transactions and relationships among the international actors of the world. States are the focal points of these relationships, but nonstate actors also play important roles. The chief categories of nonstate actors involved in international relations are (1) intergovernmental organizations, such as the United Nations; (2) multinational corporations, some of which exceed many states in yearly financial turnover; and (3) international NGOs.

Foreign policy is uniquely the province of states and consists of the sets of attitudes, transactions, and relations adopted with respect to external problems, situations, and conditions. Domestic actors and influences typically influence foreign policy, to a greater or lesser degree.

a variety of methods and instruments to assert their interests, but here states differ – powerful states have more ways to assert interests than weaker ones (see "International Relations and Foreign Policy").

An essential assumption of IR is that states, like individuals, have interests to promote that will enhance their well-being. The way to promote these interests in the arena of international politics is to possess power, which may be derived from many sources – military, economic, social, or diplomatic; even cultural power can be influential. As one of the most famous IR experts of the twentieth century, Hans Morgenthau (1965), put it, "[International] politics is a struggle for power over men, and whatever its ultimate aim may be, power is its immediate goal and the modes of acquiring, maintaining, and demonstrating it determine . . . political action."[6]

Although IR is a relatively recent field of study,[7] the underpinnings of this view of power can be found in history. One of the most famous instances is the account by the Greek historian Thucydides (404 BCE) of the relations between Athens and Melos during the Peloponnesian War waged between Athens and Sparta in the fifth century BCE. The inhabitants of Melos, a small island city-state in the Aegean Sea, were Dorian Greeks, who were closely related to the Spartans, but they chose neutrality during the war. In 416 Athens decided to enlist Melos as an ally and for this purpose mounted

[6] Hans Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations* 15 (1965).

[7] Interntional relations was not recognized as a field of study separate from political philosophy and international law until after World War I. The first holder of a university professorship in international relations was A. E. Zimmern at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, in 1919.

an expeditionary force of 38 ships, 320 archers, and 2,700 hoplites (infantry soldiers). Before attacking, the Athenian general held a parley with his Melian counterpart. Thucydides recounts verbatim the dialogue between the two men. The Athenian general explains his desire to preserve the Melian city "to our mutual advantage" and demands Melian submission and alliance: "Your subjection would give us security and an extension of empire," he explains. The Melian general demurs, arguing that subjugation of neutral Melos is not in Athens' interest: "Will you not be making enemies of all who are now neutral?" But the Athenian general is adamant: "You are weak, and a single turn of the scale may be your ruin," he warns. "We are not doing anything that goes beyond what men . . . desire in human relationships. For we believe . . . of men, that by a necessity of nature, wherever they have the power, they will rule. We did not make this law, and we are not the first to act upon it. . . . We obey it in the knowledge that . . . if you had our strength, you would do the same."

The Melians call their leaders together to determine what to do. They decide to reject the demand for submission and give the following answer: "Our resolution is unchanged – we will not . . . surrender that liberty which our city, founded seven hundred years ago, still enjoys . . . We are ready to be your friends and enemies neither of you nor the [Spartans], and we ask you to leave our country when you have made such a peace as appears to be in the interest of both parties."

The Athenians do not leave, but lay siege to Melos, which is soon forced to capitulate. The Athenians then "put to death all men of military age, and sold the women and children as slaves. They took over Melos itself, establishing later a colony of 500 people." This incident shocked even many Athenians. The treatment of the Melians is thought to have inspired Euripides' antiwar drama, *The Trojan Women* (411 BCE), as well as Aristophanes' play, *Lysistrata* (407 BCE), which is about the women of Athens deciding to withhold sexual favors until war is ended.

The viewpoint of the Athenian general was echoed during the Italian Renaissance by the influential Florentine courtier, Niccolò Machiavelli (*The Prince*, 1507). Machiavelli counseled that men are more prone to evil than to good and that politics is essentially a struggle for power, not a pursuit of ideals, although the struggle will be concealed by pious sentiments. Therefore, conflict and competition are natural components of international politics, and a cruel but strong leader – Machiavelli admired the way Caesare Borgia brought unity and order to the Italian province of Romagna – is better than a benevolent weakling. A century later, the English philosopher Thomas Hobbes

agreed in his famous work, *Leviathan* (1641), that nations are perpetually at odds because there exists no acknowledged sovereign to pronounce judgments that put an end to their disagreements.[8]

REALISM

Realism is the modern label for this view of international society as anarchical and emphasizing the necessity of power arrangements to advance state interests. The "founding fathers" of realism – Thucydides, Machiavelli, and Hobbes[9] – are known as *classical realists*. Although realists today do not advocate enslavement or mass murder, they do continue to emphasize the dichotomy of good and evil in the world and the necessity for the unilateral assertion of power – or, as it is put in contemporary language, firmness, toughness, and a willingness to take preemptive measures in the face of challenges. This is *power politics* in the international arena (see "Theories of International Relations").

Power politics emphasizes, especially, military and economic power, which provides the leverage to make demands and the ability to devise strategies, policies, and plans to achieve goals. A state playing power politics will look upon alliances only as a means of increasing power. Increasing power may lead to hegemony or overwhelming dominance. Bargains can sometimes be struck through positive actions that are designed to induce the other side to cooperate. For example, President Nixon's strategy to reduce China's support for North Vietnam and the Soviet Union during the Cold War was to relax the U.S. economic embargo of China. This led to reciprocal actions that culminated in Nixon's historic visit to China in 1972. Frequently, however, strategic leverage of a negative sort must be employed against others through deterrence or a threat or show of force to demonstrate to the other side the potentially great negative consequences of its actions.

Many believe that this is how the international system works and will always work. Note the differences between this system and what most people would consider good or right in private ethics and morality. In the sphere of international politics, moral considerations must frequently be ignored. This was

[8] The classical realist tradition is commonly said to include also such political thinkers as Spinoza, Hume, Rousseau, Hegel, Marx, and Weber.

[9] For an excellent account of Hobbes and his views on international law, see Charles Covell, *Hobbes: Realism and the Tradition of International Law* (2004).

THEORIES OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Specialists often devise theories of international relations to show how various patterns of conduct of international actors explain, influence, and determine policy and decisions. Many influential international relations theories exist, but two polar opposite theories are realism and liberal internationalism.

Realism assumes the following:

- States are the dominant actors of international society.
- States act rationally to pursue their interests and to maintain and increase their power.
- State interactions are dependent on power relationships.
- Cooperation is relatively rare and depends on the coincidence of state interests.

Liberal internationalism emphasizes the following:

- the role of international law in modulating state interactions
- the role of nonstate actors, such as intergovernmental organizations
- multilateralism and the collective benefits of cooperation
- the predominance of long-term common interests over narrow self-interests

These two theories are not mutually exclusive; the key question is how to balance them and which should predominate.

exactly the point made by Thucydides, Machiavelli, and Hobbes. "We" have to be strong so that the "bad guys" never get the upper hand.

But hold on a minute. The realist system just described is virtually identical to the world system described in Chapter Two, the nineteenth-century balance of power system that collapsed in disaster in World War I. Have we learned nothing in the last 100 years? Perhaps the answer is no, the world is unprepared and has not changed and cannot change – we just have to muddle through as best we can. Or we can say that the difference between 1905 and 2005 is that now the United States is the sole superpower – *hegemon*, as the political scientists would put it – and the United States is always right (well, almost always anyway), so we do not have to worry about something like 1914 happening again.

But we do have to worry about a future 1914 – of course in an updated, twenty-first-century form – something that we cannot predict in advance, just as no one in 1914 conceived of even the possibility of the horrors and the course of history of the twentieth century. Who predicted the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States? In retrospect we know there were warnings that were ignored. We have to establish new systems to safeguard the world against future catastrophes that may be widely ignored by the news media and may be outside present public consciousness.

Nor can we put complete trust in the United States as the sole superpower. As a hegemon, the United States can do many things, and many things well. A brutal dictator, Saddam Hussein, was toppled in 2003 by a military campaign lasting just three weeks. But American hegemony also has many limitations. The United States found that it could not handle the aftermath of the Iraq War alone and sought help from NATO, allies around the world such as Japan, and even the United Nations. This is just one example; in fact, resolving most of the problems of the twenty-first century is beyond the capability of any one state. In addition, we cannot depend on the leaders of the U.S. government to make the right decisions. Despite the best intentions, they may get it wrong. It used to be said that U.S. leaders were "the best and the brightest." This phrase was turned into irony by David Halberstam's book, which employed it as a title and minutely dissected the misguided decision making of the Vietnam War. It is remarkable that no one describes U.S. leaders this way anymore, even in jest.

LIBERAL INTERNATIONALISM

Why did realism become the dominant way of thinking in international relations after the disasters following 1914? Why did the world not turn away in revulsion from the failed thought of the past? Is there any alternative to power politics?

In fact, there was an alternative and a champion well placed to put it through, none other than the president of the United States, Woodrow Wilson. In 1918, with American prestige at a high point, Wilson dramatically called for changing the very basis of international relations in the world. What he termed "material interests" of states should not be determinative; foreign policy should instead be based upon morality, not expediency: "We will never condone iniquity because it is the most convenient thing to do," Wilson declared. He proposed "Fourteen Points" upon which international

relations should be conducted to "make the world safe for democracy." His goal was permanent peace. His key proposal was the League of Nations, which was in fact established by the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. This new world order was called *liberal internationalism*.

This effort regrettably came to naught. Wilson was incapacitated by illness, and the U.S. Senate rejected the League of Nations. Wilson's allies fought for acceptance of the ideas of liberal internationalism, but it was a losing battle. The high point of the new movement was the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928, which outlawed war as an instrument of policy. In retrospect, liberal internationalism was never really given a chance. The League of Nations was never taken seriously, and the Kellogg-Briand Pact was a "one-off" pronouncement, a momentous step with little preparation and no follow-up. Wilson's premature demise also removed the most eloquent advocate of political change.

Liberal internationalism also was defeated by the history and culture of the interwar period. As explained in Chapter 2, the impact of the First World War on culture was to throw into question the Enlightenment project – the orthodoxy held since the eighteenth century that through rationality and scientific principles human life will progress to new stages of peace and prosperity. Liberal internationalism as proposed by Wilson was drawn from the Enlightenment belief in reason and progress. The League of Nations was an idea similar to a proposal by the German philosopher Immanuel Kant in 1795 in his essay, *Perpetual Peace* – that the nations of the world must establish a League of Peace (*foedus pacificum*), a united international system to prevent war.[10]

BACK TO REALISM

World War I and its aftermath caused many people to lose faith in reason and rationality. The two most influential cultural figures of the time were Nietzsche and Freud, both iconoclastic thinkers. Freud applied his psychological theories to society in his book, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1933). His analysis of human nature was that our intellect is only a weak plaything of our subconscious desires and emotions. Our divided selves are torn between rationality and our irrational urges, which we can deal with only by repression and

[10] An opponent of Kant's *Perpetual Peace* was the nineteenth-century German philosopher Hegel, who maintained that war is necessary to the "dialectic of history" in order to prevent stagnation. War for Hegel was the principal means by which the "spirit of the people" can acquire renewed vigor and sweep aside decay. *Sammtliche Werke* (G. Lasson and J. Hoffmeister), Vol. VI, pp. 185 and 209.

sublimation. So too we live in a sick society potentially dominated by cruelty and animal instincts that cannot be easily denied. Nietzsche too emphasized the irrational side of human nature and questioned the moral order of the universe. He argued for a new morality based upon a "will to power," which would involve both cruelty and creativity for humankind. In this new world the rule of force would replace the rule of law, and the strong must naturally dominate the weak. The analyses of Nietzsche and Freud became dominant; all rational values and the very possibility of objective truth were thrown into question.

The foremost authorities in IR of interwar period mirrored these cultural trends. The British scholar E. H. Carr, writing in his 1939 book, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, labeled Wilson's vision "utopian," accusing him of misunderstanding the fundamental facts of history and human nature. According to Carr, International relations is a never-ending struggle between conflicting interests and desires. A second influential voice was Hans Morgenthau, who, echoing Nietzsche, spoke of the human "lust" for power. Universal moral principles cannot be applied to statecraft without endangering national interests. Liberal internationalists were "utopian idealists" who ignore "reality." The realist view seemed vindicated with the failure of appeasement of Hitler in Munich in 1938. These men and other IR specialists, known as *neo-classical realists*, ridiculed the liberal internationalist idea of "law, not war" as hopelessly naive.

This power-politics approach was based upon the determination to avoid another Munich and to reject anything that smacked of appeasement. The focus on Munich downplayed the failures in the international system that led to World War I, and neo-classical realists continued to regard Wilsonian ideas as utopian folly. When the realist paradigm led to mistakes, as in Vietnam, it was regarded mainly as a cost of doing business, not a fundamental error.

Experts in IR and academicians largely concurred in the realist approach, but in the second half of the century new ideas and nuances developed. With the onset of the Cold War and the possibility of nuclear annihilation, it was realized that realist thinking had to incorporate methods to facilitate cooperation or at least ways to avoid disaster. Thomas Schelling[11] (winner of the Nobel Prize in Economics in 2005) was a leader in developing what is termed *strategic realism* through a careful analysis of various stratagems and mechanisms by which states engaging in confrontation in a nuclear-armed world could generate collaboration or prevent conflict. One of his insights,

[11] Thomas Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (1980).

for example, is that in a confrontation between nuclear powers it is important for each side to leave open to the other side an honorable way out and not force a choice between extremes that may lead to a first strike.

Another seminal thinker is Kenneth Waltz,[12] who tried to put realist thinking into context by emphasizing the underlying political, social, and economic structures that necessarily shape foreign policy decisions. This approach, called *neo-realism* or *structural realism*,[13] recognizes that states have greatly varying capabilities for action and that these capabilities differ over time, as well as across different units of government. Waltz is at pains to show that these structural characteristics constrain actions and even may compel actions in a certain way. This view, for example, would explain the dissolution of the Soviet Union as dictated less by conscious free choice as by the structural position – in economic and military terms – of the Soviet bloc vis-a-vis the Western bloc in the 1980s. Structural realism thus purports to facilitate future strategy and to explain international political outcomes.

Neo-realism also provides an explanation and a scenario for collaborative bargains among states. Neo-realists accept that states are capable of cooperation, but only for absolute political or economic gains. Economic theory and rational choice analysis are therefore useful in determining conditions for state cooperation. A bargain will be struck and kept if a state's gains are not only greater than what it gives up but also if its absolute gains are greater or at least equal to the gains of all other parties to the bargain. This is a pessimistic theory of state cooperation that explains why true agreement must be rare; its premise is that cooperation is always a zero-sum game, which in today's world is often not the case.

BEHAVIORISM, EMPIRICISM, AND GAME THEORY

Many neo-realists, especially in the United States, have moved away from the anecdotal approach of Carr and Morgenthau and have tried to put realism on a more scientific basis. Three related methods have been used: behavior analysis, empirical research, and game theory. Behavioralists focus on actual state behavior and try to discover patterns, causes, and effects that are both predictive and explanatory. The empirical approach formulates testable hypotheses of IR conduct. For example, a recent study exhaustively analyzed all multinational peacekeeping operations to determine the optimum conditions

[12] Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (1979).

[13] Structuralists generally emphasize the influence of international organizations and structures on decision making.

for their effectiveness.[14] Finally, game theory analogizes IR to various games involving a conflict between collective welfare, on the one hand, and individual benefit, on the other. Game theory assumes that IR bargaining involves this same conflict and that, through the analysis of game moves and outcomes, we can discover and predict certain IR outcomes.

Game theory, then, employs the mathematical modeling of rational choice in competitive or cooperative situations. Three games are especially popular with IR game theorists to demonstrate the difficulties and conditions of international cooperation. One is the "prisoners' dilemma," which posits two men in police custody for a crime they both may have committed. The two are questioned separately so they cannot communicate with each other, and each is told that he will receive lenient treatment if he confesses. The best possible outcome is cooperation and silence because in that case both will go free. However, each man will have a great incentive to "defect" from cooperation and confess to save his own skin. This game may both explain why international cooperation is so difficult to achieve and reveal how the game should be changed to achieve cooperation. A similar game is "stag hunt," which posits a band of hunters chasing a large stag; all must cooperate to take down the prize. But suddenly a hare appears that will also provide food, albeit a lesser amount. How can we keep one or more of the hunters from quitting the stag hunt to chase the hare? Another analogy to IR is the game of "chicken" where two contestants try to face each other down in a confrontation. Who will give way first? If both refuse to break off, thinking the other will surely yield, disaster may occur. This game became frighteningly real during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. Luckily for the world, as Dean Rusk put it at the time, "the other fellow blinked first," and there was a cooperative outcome in the sense that the world survived a possible nuclear holocaust.

Such games demonstrate the realists' idea that international confrontation is the norm and cooperation is exceedingly rare and difficult to achieve.

THE NEO-CONSERVATIVES: UNILATERAL AMERICAN NATIONALISTS

A group of neo-conservatives (commonly termed "neo-cons" for short) dominate U.S. foreign policy at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Two big

[14] Virginia Page Fortna, "Does Peacekeeping Keep Peace?" 48 *International Studies Quarterly* 269 (2004). There are also many empirical studies of war and the causes of war. One area of research purports to show that democratic states tend not to start wars. See Michael Nicholson, *International Relations* 148 (1998).

ideas anchor their thinking and policies: (1) American nationalism, aggressive assertion of what is perceived as being in the national interest of the United States, and (2) unilateralism, the idea that international institutions are hopeless, discussions with allies are useless, and only America knows best. Thus, international problems are best handled on a unilateral basis[15] with an attempt to attract followers – "coalitions of the willing," as they are called. Even long-standing and traditional allies of the United States are castigated if they do not cooperate with perceived U.S. interests, and any state that does not follow U.S. policy interests is considered in the enemy camp. Multilateral institutions are dictated to and are derided or undermined if they do not serve U.S. policy interests. The neo-cons are convinced that, as the world's only superpower, the United States is uniquely free to project its military, economic, and political power to enhance its values and interests, which they assume are (or should be) shared by the rest of the world.

Neo-conservatives are disdainful of conventional diplomacy and antagonistic to international treaties and laws. They emphasize confrontation[16] – military and economic challenges to every regime hostile to U.S. values and interests. *Global unilateralism* is their watchword – asserting U.S. power to effect change. The neo-con creed emphasizes hard power – military force – rather than the soft power of diplomacy and persuasion.[17] After the events of 9/11, the neo-con network in Washington gained dominance with a president inexperienced in foreign policy, who found that playing sheriff in a ten-gallon hat resonated with the American public.

This neo-conservative foreign policy has produced a crisis of unparalleled proportions in relations between the United States and the rest of the world. American moral authority is questioned as never before. Opinion polls in Europe, Japan, and Canada show that large majorities condemn U.S. policies and distrust American leadership.[18] This rising anti-Americanism abroad is

[15] For example, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, while she was National Security Advisor to President Bush, publicly derided "the belief that the support of many states – or even better the United Nations – is essential to the legitimate exercise of power," quoted in Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order* (2003).

[16] For example, military action against Iraq was a long-standing neo-conservative objective that was implemented once neo-cons gained power. Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone: The Neo-Conservatives and the Global Order* (2004), pp. 147, 306.

[17] The term "soft power" was invented and extensively analyzed by Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *The Paradox of American Power* (2002).

[18] Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone: the Neo-conservatives and* the Global Order (2004), pp. 311–2; John Sperling, Suzanne Helburn, Samuel George, and Carl Hunt, *The Great Divide* (2004); Sam Roberts, *Who We are Now – The Changing Face of America* (2004); David Lebedoff, *The Uncivil War* (2004).

matched by a deep split over foreign policy among U.S. citizens, as symbolized by the red state and blue state divide, which is a split over foreign policy as much as domestic issues. Neo-conservative policies of one-sided support of Israel and confrontation with Islam have inadvertently focused and accelerated terrorist activity all over the world. Neo-conservatives have appropriated belief in American "exceptionalism" – the idea that American values, institutions, and leadership are indispensable to global progress – to characterize differing cultural and social values as potential security threats. As a result, Islamic radicalism is becoming the dominant voice of the Muslim world, creating the danger of a clash of civilizations, which would mean unending warfare and disaster for the entire world.

SUMMING UP

When we consider the history of the twentieth century from an IR perspective, we see an undercurrent of liberal internationalism dominated almost continuously by other perspectives – realism in its many guises, imperialism, totalitarianism, and unilateralism. Only on three brief occasions did liberal internationalism – deference to international law and multilateral institutions – become the norm. The first occasion was, as we have seen, the early interwar period of 1919–28. This was the time of the League of Nations and the Kellogg-Briand Pact, which not only failed but also were derided by the realist camp. The second internationalist period came at the end of World War II. In this period of transition, important multilateral institutions were created that are still with us today – the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), predecessor of the World Trade Organization – all products of the mid- to late 1940s. Even in today's globalized world, it would be difficult or impossible to create such organizations now. The mood of the times can be gleaned from a statement made by President Harry Truman at the conclusion of the 1945 San Francisco Conference that established the United Nations: "Americans must recognize that no matter how great our strength, we must deny ourselves the license to do always what we please. This is the price each nation will have to pay for world peace." The third period of internationalism occurred at the end of the Cold War when, briefly, Presidents Bush of the United States and Yeltsin of Russia proclaimed a new world order, and cooperation with the United Nations and other multilateral organizations seemed to be the wave of the future. The diplomacy and primacy of international institutions that typified the Gulf War in 1990–1, however, were short lived. They

did not prevent tragedies and genocides in the Balkans, Rwanda, and elsewhere. September 11, 2001, seemingly sounded the death knell of the new world order.

This book poses the question whether the rejection of liberal internationalism has been premature. Certainly, international law and institutions have manifest defects. But is there anything better or more reliable – is there any alternative? Despite the narrow Republican victory in the presidential election of 2004, there is a sense even among charter members of the neo-conservatives that international laws and institutions have been dismissed too quickly. This realization has come from bitter experience. For example, when a Chinese F-8 fighter jet intercepted a U.S. EP-3 reconnaissance plane over the South China Sea, forcing it to land on China's Hainan Island in 2001, the foreign policy team of the Bush administration at first took a hard-line stance demanding the immediate return of the plane and its crew. This stance turned out to be counterproductive, and the administration was forced to back down, make a statement of regret, and undertake patient negotiations. Some in the neo-con camp called this "a national humiliation," but the crew and the plane were returned. Similarly, in Iraq the Bush administration, after pointedly brushing aside the United Nations and other international bodies, now find these institutions indispensable to American goals. Condoleezza Rice, who as National Security Advisor to the President in 2002 urged a lack of concern for the opinions of an "ephemeral" international community, as Secretary of State in 2005 said that "no nation can build a safer, better world alone."

Neo-conservatives are committed to high ideals in their foreign policy goals. For example, President Bush in his second inaugural address in 2005 announced, "It is the policy of the United States to support the growth of democratic movements in every nation, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world." The wellspring of this ideal is a highly moralistic vision of bringing freedom and democracy to all peoples and bringing an end to what U.S. Secretary of State Rice terms "outposts of tyranny." These high ideals are redolent of Wilsonian liberal internationalism. The danger is that, despite the nobility of the ideals, this vision will founder on the methods employed, just as President Wilson's vision foundered on the partisan interests of the European powers and on the reluctance of the U.S. Congress and the American people to undertake his agenda.

The way forward in the twenty-first century is to marry the ideals of the neo-conservatives to reforms in international law and international institutions that will allow the implementation of these goals.

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