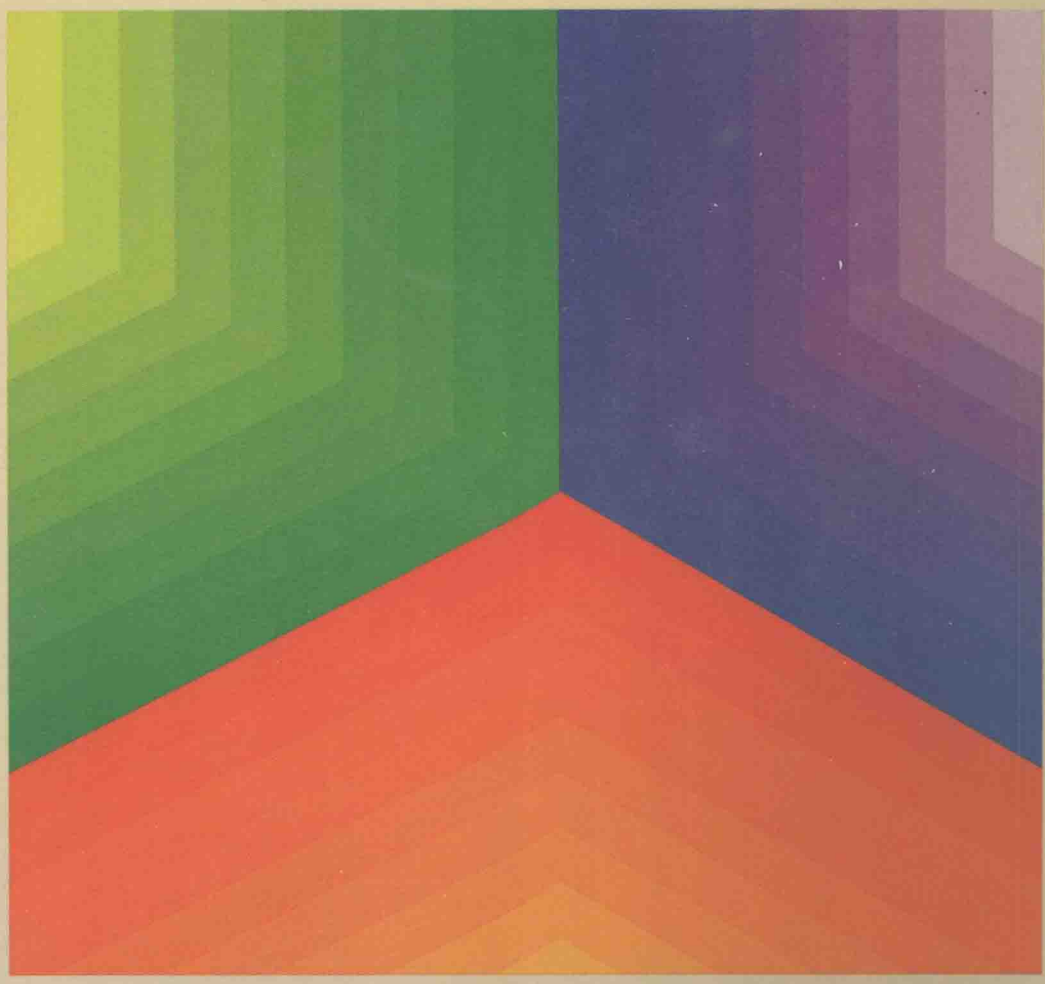
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN PERSPECTIVE

The Pursuit of Security, Welfare, and Justice



Steve Chan

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PREFACE

A book cannot be all things to all people. We must set priorities. *International Relations in Perspective* is not an account of contemporary diplomatic history. It also does not offer anecdotal details about particular foreign policy episodes, or cultural-historical explanations in the tradition of ethnographers. Students—and instructors—who seek these treatments will surely be disappointed.

We choose to stress concerns about *analysis* and *choice*. We try to convey to the readers the importance and necessity of making informed judgments about international relations, and, hopefully, we can help them to reach these judgments for themselves. In this attempt, we have sought to integrate the concerns of more traditional inquiries with the results of behavioral research, and to indicate the relevant theories and evidence. We do not expect to provoke any astonishing reactions. Indeed, we do not have any easy solutions for the complex questions we raise. Instead, we can promise only competing perspectives, fragmentary data, and, at best, reasoned speculations. However, to the extent that, as a result of this book, students acquire some humility and tentativeness in their judgments and learn to approach international relations on a basis other than raw instincts, we shall have succeeded in our endeavor.

Analysis means, minimally, a willingness to examine and, when warranted, to challenge facile assumptions and conventional wisdom. To provoke critical introspection, we frequently adopt the role of a devil's advocate. We do not expect the readers always to agree with the arguments advanced. We do hope, however, that they will take some stand on the issues discussed.

Analysis also requires a sensitivity to alternative perspectives. All too often, students feel frustrated about having to deal with imperfect theories and inconclusive evidence. They simply want to be told the "truth." Unfortunately, "truth" is usually in short supply in the analysis of international relations. People often disagree about the causes of events or situations (explanations), and sometimes even about the nature of these events or situations (descriptions). Thus, there are few "pure" cases in international relations that lend themselves to only one interpretation. On the contrary, the available evidence is often compatible with different and sometimes even contradictory perspectives. In this inquiry, we mean to present different points of view, and to assess the degree to which they are supported by data or logic. We must learn to live with uncertainty. We must also be able to distinguish strong arguments from weak arguments, and to adjust our confidence in them accordingly.

Different perspectives are an inevitable consequence of the diverse background and experience that people bring to the analysis of international relations. We indicate some of these contending explanations or descriptions, in order to heighten the readers' sensitivity to the views and concerns of the people of other cultures or states. We hope to discourage a false sense of confidence that somehow Americans (or the people of any other country) have a unique source of wisdom, and a feeling of self-righteousness that somehow we are always "on the side of God." To reduce our own intellectual parochialism, if not to avoid it entirely, we introduce some relevant studies from other disciplines, especially psychology, economics, and law.

Finally, analysis demands an ability to seize an important argument and to evaluate it empirically. Problems come and go, but analytical skills are "for all seasons." For this reason, we address to some degree the nature of scientific inquiry. More important, whenever possible, we present alternative arguments and then walk the student through these perspectives by using case illustrations. As will become apparent, we devote considerable attention to the analysis of pertinent data, at least by the normal standard of introductory texts. Instead of simply asserting our own views, we try to show the evidence for these assertions, and thereby to give the readers a basis for forming their own opinion about the quality and weight of this evidence.

Few people are interested in international relations simply out of intellectual curiosity ("We climbed the mountain, because it was there"). Most are likely to profess some normative or value-laden concerns, such as the avoidance of war and the promotion of international cooperation. We confess that these concerns underlie our selection and treatment of the topics. We do have some definite value preferences (biases, if you will) and shall not hesitate to take controversial positions. Moreover, we argue that because we live in a world of scarce resources, incompatible perspectives, and competing values, we must, as citizens or officials, make choices for personal or public policies. Even though we cannot be sure that we will always choose wisely, we cannot avoid choice because every action implies a commitment to a particular perspective or value. Even inaction implies a choice; it is, in effect, a vote for the status quo.

To illuminate the problems of choice, we focus on three broad areas: security, welfare, and justice. Unlike the standard treatment of these topics, our perspective is that of a "world citizen." Surely, the nuclear confrontation between the United States and the USSR is not an exclusive concern of Americans and Russians. The people of other countries, especially the Europeans, are also likely to be the direct or indirect casualties of a war between the superpowers. By the same token, the problems of poverty and overpopulation in the Third World countries have important trade, resource, and moral implications for the citizens of the developed world. Similarly, industrial pollution and economic recession in the developed countries can and do affect the people of the underdeveloped countries. Indeed, some have used the term *spaceship earth* to underscore the shared interests of the people of all countries. This metaphor suggests that we live in an interdependent world, and that humankind has a collective interest in peace, prosperity, and justice. As a result of mounting global communication, international trade, and mutual military vulnerability, contemporary states have become increasingly sensitive to each other's actions.

It is relatively rare for an international relations text to discuss justice. Yet the imperative of the rule of law is no less compelling or valid in the international context than in the domestic context. Moreover, international conventions and precedents do exist. For example, the Nuremberg, Tokyo, and Jerusalem trials after World War II confirmed that there are laws of basic morality and decency that supersede

the laws of states. They also established the standards for judging and punishing crimes of war. Surely, all humanity has a stake in preventing these crimes.

Justice also means respect for the basic security and integrity of a person, the satisfaction of his or her basic needs (e.g., food, shelter, and health care), and adherence to due process of law. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights after World War II and the subsequent conventions expressed internationally recognized standards of human rights. These standards represent the aspirations of all decent people. Violations of personal security and integrity, deprivation of basic human needs, and abuse of due process of law all constitute a denial of justice and human dignity.

The reader will notice that we devote substantial attention to the foreign policy of the United States. The actions and perceptions of U.S. officials are discussed at much greater length than those of the officials of other states for several reasons. In part, we talk more about the United States because there is more to say about the United States. As the dominant international actor after World War II, the United States has been more actively engaged than other countries in various facets of international relations. Moreover, information on U.S. foreign policy is more abundant than on the foreign policies of other countries. There are many more studies on the formulation and conduct of U.S. foreign policy, and our understanding of it is more solid and advanced than is our understanding of the foreign policies of other countries. A third consideration is that most of the readers of this text are likely to be U.S. citizens. We hope to inform them about their country's relations with others. Finally, if we occasionally give the impression of devoting a disproportionate amount of attention—positive or negative—to the behavior of the United States, it is because what it does, as the most powerful state in the world, will matter the most for the peace and well-being of the entire international community. Because Washington is also the leading champion of freedom and justice around the world, we are entitled to scrutinize more closely the extent to which its actions measure up to the lofty ideals that it espouses.

The book is organized into four parts. Part One (Chapters 1 and 2) deals with some questions about the analysis and domain of international relations. In Chapter 1, we examine the nature of international relations, as well as the motivations and methodologies for studying this subject. In Chapter 2, we present the structures of these relations in terms of the attributes and behaviors of states and in terms of people's perceptions of them.

Parts Two, Three, and Four deal with issues related to the pursuit of *security*, *welfare*, and *justice*, respectively. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 form Part Two. We present data on the incidence of war, intervention, and crisis in Chapter 3, and we introduce some relevant theories and evidence for explaining them. We then discuss various perspectives on the effects of alliance (Chapter 4) and of arms spending (Chapter 5) on international relations. Do alliances encourage or discourage wars? Does military strength deter aggression, or does it promote arms races which in turn induce conflicts? What are the domestic consequences and causes of military spending? We seek some answers to these questions in Chapters 4 and 5.

In Part Three, we take up the subject of welfare, defined broadly to mean the social and economic well-being of the people of the world. We explore in Chapter 6 the relationships between population growth and resource scarcity. Are we facing an impending crisis of resource shortage? If so, who and what are responsible for this crisis? The overpopulation of the developing world or the overconsumption of the developed world? In Chapter 7, we examine the concepts of dependence and

interdependence, and we focus especially on the asymmetrical economic relations between the "haves" and the "have-nots" of the world. To what extent is the system of unequal exchanges between the developed and the developing states responsible for the prosperity of the former and the poverty of the latter? We try to answer this question by examining the notion of feudal interaction structure and the evidence on this proposition. Then, we look more closely at two important institutions involved in the economic exchanges between the North (the developed countries) and the South (the developing countries). We discuss in Chapter 8 the role of multinational corporations and resource cartels in these exchanges.

Finally, in Part Four we devote our attention to normative, or moral, concerns. In Chapter 9, we examine international legal norms regarding the use of force. Under what circumstances are military reprisals or interventions justified by international law? What conceptual, moral, and legal issues are involved in the debate about terrorism and counterterrorism? We delve further into a discussion of law and morality in international relations in Chapter 10, where we examine the trial and punishment of war criminals after World War II. In both Chapters 9 and 10, we spend considerable time on the United States role in the Vietnam War and on the legality of this role with regard to both international and domestic laws. We conclude our discussion in Chapter 11 with a review of human rights conditions around the globe. Additionally, we try to clarify the concept of human rights, to suggest conditions that enhance the prospects of establishing liberal democracies, and to assess the role played by the United States and various international organizations in promoting global respect for basic human dignity.

Chapter 12, the final chapter, presents some brief parting remarks about the current status and the future prospects of international relations.

CONTENTS

PART ONE

ANALYTIC CONSIDERATIONS

CHAPTER 1

THE ANALYSIS OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

WHAT ARE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS?

As the familiar Hindu parable has it, once upon a time six blind men went to inspect an elephant. Because each came into contact with a different part of the animal's body, they reached very different—and wrong—conclusions about its anatomy. Yet each was convinced that his version was the absolute truth.

To avoid the mistakes of these men, we must consider very carefully what we mean by *international relations*. Before we can study a subject systematically, we must define it. What, then, are international relations?

You may feel that this question is silly and its answer obvious. International relations are relations between nations, you may be quick to respond. But this answer will not do, because it is not clear what *between* and *nations* mean.

A more assertive student may retort that *between* simply refers to anything one actor does to another actor, and that *nations* are groups of people with a common yet distinct heritage, territory, and government.

There are two problems with this answer. First, it assumes that we can easily separate what happens inside a nation from what happens outside it. Second, it confuses the concepts of nation and state. In reality, these issues defy easy solutions and often provoke intense disagreement. Consider these examples of disputes about the distinction between domestic and foreign affairs.

On March 15, 1977, a prominent Jewish dissident, Anatoly Shcharansky, was arrested in Moscow and charged with treason. The U.S. government regarded this incident as another example of Soviet violation of human rights. In a speech delivered on March 17 of that year, President Jimmy Carter of the United States pointedly stated that "no member of the United Nations can claim that mistreatment of its citizens is solely its own business. Equally, no member can avoid its responsibilities to review and to speak when torture or unwarranted deprivation occurs in any part of the world."[1] Leonid Brezhnev, then the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, responded quickly on March 21: "We will not tolerate interference in our internal affairs by anyone, no matter what the pretext."[2]

On August 9, 1981, President Ronald Reagan of the United States decided to produce and stockpile the controversial neutron bomb. The neutron warhead produces more radiation but less explosion than the regular nuclear warhead. It is designed to kill people without causing intolerable damage to the surrounding struc-

tures. Even though the neutron bomb was clearly intended for use against a massive Soviet tank assault in Central Europe, the U.S. State Department, in announcing the decision, stressed that "the production of these weapons is an internal U.S. government matter."[3] From all signs, neither the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) allies of the United States nor the USSR was disposed to accept this position. Moscow's official news agency, TASS, warned grimly that the Soviet Union "cannot remain an indifferent bystander to this U.S. decision."[4]

On August 24, 1981, Jimmy Carter arrived in Peking as a private citizen. His Chinese hosts were clearly wary of the policy of his successor, Ronald Reagan, toward Taiwan. Thus, not unexpectedly, the official Chinese news agency, Xinhua, used this occasion to protest anew the Taiwan Relations Act, which Reagan had pledged to uphold. It charged that this U.S. law was "enacted exclusively for interference in China's domestic affairs,"[5] because it provided for the sale of American weapons to the rival Nationalist regime.

As these examples show, governments often disagree sharply about the distinction between internal and external affairs. Each is quick to assert the right to manage its domestic problems without outside interference but is reluctant to recognize similar claims by others. As a result, official statements on this issue seem to serve mainly as justifications for policy needs on particular occasions. Indeed, one is reminded of the adage that "beauty is in the eyes of the beholder"—even though, ironically, eyes are precisely the physical quality that the men in the Hindu parable lacked.

What Are Nations and States?

How can we explain the seemingly partial and contradictory statements of governments? We can begin by examining more closely the concepts of *nation* and *state*. A nation is a group of people who share a common identity, heritage, and aspiration. It is not necessary that they also have a territorial base and a government. For example, the Jewish people constituted a nation, even though they lacked these attributes before the establishment of the state of Israel. Conversely, a government in control of an area does not necessarily constitute a nation. The people of this area must identify with others living elsewhere under the jurisdiction of the same government. If they do not and are instead dominated by those others, they in effect live in a colony. This was the status of many groups that were once a part of the British, French, and Spanish empires. In these cases, we can only speak of the existence of unified states—that is, political authorities backed up by the usual organizations (e.g., the military, the police, the courts, the prisons, and the tax collectors) for enforcing their decisions over particular territories—but not of unified nations. In contrast, we often refer to contemporary political entities loosely as nation-states, because they have not only a territory and a government, but also a more homogeneous population in terms of its sense of belonging to a common group.

These remarks may not appear very controversial to you, although they raise issues that have actually caused many disputes and conflicts. Several factors promote these differences of opinion. First, the boundaries of a nation do not always coincide with the jurisdiction of a state. The borders of many modern states separate people of the same ethnic group, and others incorporate people of many national origins. The United States, the Soviet Union, and the People's Republic of China are notable examples of multinational states. In fact, according to one estimate, over 90% of the contemporary states have citizens from different ethnic groups.[6]

Second, the boundaries of nations and states are not static. Clearly, Hawaiians and

Eskimos were not members of the American nation or state two hundred years ago, nor were the people of Siberia part of the Soviet nation or state. In both cases, the dominant nations and states expanded their territorial control and subjugated and later tried to assimilate the weaker nations (e.g., the American Indians). The history of civilization is replete with examples of the conquest of "savages" or "barbarians"—that is, the weak states or nations—by the strong ones.

Third, sometimes people living in the same region have divergent heritage and loyalty. Alsace-Lorraine was once the focus of intense rivalry between French and German nationalism, and Northern Ireland is the scene of a contemporary clash between Irish and English nationalism. In contrast, Switzerland offers a notable "success story"; its people from four nationalities have managed to live in harmony in the same state.

Fourth, and most important, you must remember that the concept of *nation* does not refer to common historical, ethnic, linguistic, or religious background alone. In the final analysis, it is based on the people's *feelings*. Do they feel that they belong to the same group and share the same visions for the future? We call this feeling *nationalism*. People with similar background have sometimes chosen to form separate states as, for example, the United States and Canada, and Australia and New Zealand. It is also not uncommon for one state to challenge the legitimacy of another state on the grounds that the latter does not actually represent its nation. Thus, for instance, the United States refused to recognize the People's Republic of China in the 1950s, ostensibly because the Marxist doctrine of Peking's leaders was alien to the Chinese people.

The problem with feelings is that they are subjective and difficult to measure. As is often the case, those who protest the loudest are usually the only ones heard. Moreover, governments have the nasty habit of *proclaiming* rather than *demonstrating* people's feelings about belonging to a nation. Their positions often reflect attempts to extend or legitimize the authority of the states they represent, or to deny to others the right of such assertion.

As you can imagine, questions about the national status of different peoples and about the legitimacy of different governments provide the fodder for many disputes between states. These debates, however, usually produce more heat than light. Thus, should the people of Taiwan, Palestine, South Korea, or East Germany be considered a separate nation and, as a result, be entitled to their own independent states? The answer very much depends on whom you listen to. Moreover, as you have probably guessed, disputes on these matters tend to be settled by bullets rather than ballots—most recently in Nigeria (Biafra), Pakistan (Bangladesh), and, of course, Vietnam. Lest you forget your own history, many people in the United States once fought and died for their belief that the South was a separate nation and should be allowed to establish its own state.

It is easy to see how the factors mentioned so far produce a great deal of disagreement about "national self-determination." It is also not difficult to realize that there is often a gulf between the ideal that each nation is entitled to freely choose its own state and the reality of international relations, which tends to operate on the basis of "might makes right."

Our earlier examples suggest a fifth reason for the frictions between governments. It has to do with the idea of *sovereignty*. This is a legal concept, meaning essentially that a state is the highest authority for its people, that it has the right to manage its affairs without outside interference, that it does not recognize any outside authority that it does not want to acknowledge, and that it has the same international status as

any other state. In other words, states are supposedly the supreme authorities in domestic matters, as well as equal authorities in foreign matters.

Our earlier examples suggest that there are no easy and set rules for separating domestic and foreign affairs. They are, in fact, often closely connected. We now argue that the concept of *sovereign equality* is also rather elusive and illusory. This is not to deny that in dealing with matters of diplomatic protocol, states sometimes go to extreme lengths to demonstrate that they have the same status as other states. But clearly, some states are much bigger, wealthier, and stronger than others (we shall examine the pertinent data in Chapter 2).

The United Nations offers a good example of the tension arising from this gap between legal fiction and international reality. On the one hand, the UN Charter acknowledged the sovereign equality of all states by granting each member, regardless of its size, one vote in the General Assembly.[7] On the other hand, it created a Security Council with the United States, the USSR, China, Britain, and France as its permanent members. Each permanent member has a veto, so that without the unanimous approval of all five, no UN security operation can be carried out. Thus, even in the UN, some states are "more equal than others."

This incongruity between the legal and the actual status of states is thus another source of friction. Small states complain about the domination of the big states, and the big states complain about the distortions in the formal provisions of international organizations that reduce their individual influence and enhance the collective influence of the small states.

The idea of sovereignty contributes to frictions in another way. Because no state recognizes a higher external authority, we lack an international body that has the power to make binding decisions for all the states and to enforce these decisions. In contrast to the domestic relations between, say, the federal and the state governments of the United States, there is no world government to impose order and to arbitrate differences among members of the international community. The absence of a viable international "regime" means, in turn, that each state will try to protect or advance its interests as it sees fit, on the premise that it is "a jungle out there." It is in this sense that international relations have been described as predatory (the "survival of the fittest") and anarchic (lacking law and order).

The Definition of International Relations

We define international relations as the interactions of those actors whose actions or conditions have important consequences for others outside the effective jurisdiction of their political unit. This is a rather broad definition, and we need to elaborate and explain several key points.

First, the term *interactions* implies mutual or reciprocal influences. Moreover, we must have at least two parties or units before a *relationship* can be said to exist. Thus, the study of international relations is concerned with the manner in which the actions or conditions of some units can affect or be affected by some other units. It is not interested in the analysis of these units in isolation. But what are these units?

Second, perhaps you have noticed that the definition avoids the term *nations* because, as we have seen, it is a rather slippery concept. Indeed, the term *international relations* is itself misleading and restrictive. Although we shall continue to use it throughout this text for lack of a better substitute, you must remember that not all the players involved in the game of world politics or economics represent nations—or, for that matter, states. Regardless of your feelings about their legitimacy or wis-

dom, international organizations (e.g., the United Nations, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization), political movements (e.g., the Palestine Liberation Organization, the Irish Republican Army, and the National Liberation Front), multinational corporations (e.g., General Motors and Exxon), and private citizens (e.g., former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger) are all involved in this game, in the sense that their actions and views have an impact abroad. For this reason, we use the more inclusive and less controversial term *actors* to refer to these organizations and individuals.

As we tried to indicate earlier, the boundaries between domestic and foreign affairs are sometimes quite fuzzy, and these two spheres overlap and intersect at many points. Thus, the willingness of citizens to support a president's conduct of a foreign war, of legislators to ratify treaties or to oppose foreign arms sales, or of judges to rule on the legality of draft laws—interactions that occur within the same state among its domestic groups or institutions—can and often do have important foreign ramifications.

Third, and as implied by the preceding remark, the distinction between domestic and foreign interactions is a matter of relative degree rather than absolute dichotomy, and we need to differentiate them on the basis of their *impact*. If the actions or conditions of an actor have important effects outside the effective jurisdiction of the political unit that it belongs to, it is engaged in international relations. Note that we refer to effective political jurisdiction rather than states, because some actors, such as the PLO (the Palestine Liberation Organization) and SWAPO (the South West Africa People's Organization), are not recognized by all as states and, indeed, operate from bases inside other states (various Arab countries and Angola respectively). Furthermore, you must realize that an actor can have important effects abroad in altering the perceptions, attitudes, or objectives of foreign people, without actually motivating them to take concrete actions in response to its own actions or conditions.

Fourth, we judge actors by the importance of their actions or conditions. We include only *important* actors in our definition of international relations. Although you may be an owner of a Toyota or a Datsun and are thus involved in international trade, your influence as a single individual is very slight. In contrast, the United Auto Workers and General Motors are far more influential in deciding possible restrictions on the import of Japanese automobiles into the United States. On the other hand, the UAW and GM are not likely to be important actors—or even to be much concerned—in the sale of U.S. grain to the Soviet Union. Thus the importance of actors varies according to issues and circumstances, and it has to be assessed on the basis of evidence and theory.

The Dominance of States

More specifically, the importance of an actor depends on four considerations: (1) Does the actor exercise a *decisive* influence in decisions on public policy? (2) Does it have an *autonomous* capacity to make its own decisions (or, alternatively, do other actors dominate its decision process)? (3) Does it have *broad* influence extending over a wide range of issues? and (4) Does it have *continuing* influence over a long period of time?

On all these dimensions, states are clearly the most dominant actors in international relations. Thus, although we indicated earlier that states are not the only actors in these relations, we now argue that they are much more important than oth-

ers. The modern state can be dated from 1648, marking the end of a long religious war—known as the Thirty Years' War—between the Protestants and the Catholics in Europe. To settle this dispute, the Treaty of Westphalia gave the kings and princes of Europe the right to decide the religion of their subjects. It therefore concentrated secular and religious power in the hands of one authority—the sovereign—and thus created the notion of state sovereignty. Since then, states have not only persisted and proliferated (especially after World War II, when many colonies achieved political independence), but have also greatly expanded their functions. Although the earlier states were preoccupied with the problems of raising taxes and armies, modern states have a far wider range of concerns. In addition to revenue and defense, they include, for example, the promotion and regulation of commerce, welfare, justice, and ecological quality.

Why are states more autonomous than nonstate actors in international relations? The doctrine of sovereignty provides the legal justification for the independence and supremacy of states, and it relegates nonstate actors to a subordinate status. Thus, officials acting in the name of states routinely make and enforce decisions—called *laws*—that others are expected to obey.

But why do people routinely comply with these decisions and thus give states such decisive importance? There are at least four reasons. First, states possess a near monopoly of force. The principal instruments of coercion, such as the military and the police, are under the direct control of state officials and can be called on to enforce their decisions. In the absence of civil wars, no other organization has a comparable coercive capability to challenge their authority. Indeed, in most countries, it is either illegal or difficult to possess firearms—the constitutional provision for the right of U.S. citizens to keep and bear arms being a rare exception (and, even so, this right is subject to the government's regulation). Moreover, not only do states possess vast coercive capabilities in comparison with the other actors, they claim almost exclusive legitimacy in the actual use of force.[8] Let us illustrate. Obviously, if we were to restrict someone's movement or, worse still, to take that person's life, we would be guilty of the crimes of kidnapping and homocide. But if a state does the same thing, it is called imprisonment and execution. Indeed, some people are decorated for their conduct in serving the state, conduct that is normally unacceptable in a domestic context (e.g., killing or spying on people of another state). Thus, different standards of acceptability apply to the conduct of states and individuals, and to domestic and foreign conduct. The latter discrepancy makes international relations anarchic in comparison with the law and order that generally prevail in domestic relations.

Second, and even more important than their coercive capabilities, states usually command the faith, trust, and allegiance of their citizens. The identification with and support of one's state often involve highly charged emotions. In the eyes of many people, the distinction between nation and state is blurred, so that disagreement with the policies of officials representing the state is often seen as disloyalty to the nation (you may have seen bumper stickers with the words "America: Love It or Leave It"). Sometimes extreme nationalism (known as *chauvinism*) provokes blind and almost fanatical loyalty to the state. Even though most people do not hold such intense feelings, it is important to recognize that they are socialized to respect and trust their government officials and institutions. That is, most people acquire during their childhood a rather benevolent image of the existing authorities. They tend to believe that their government is legitimate and impartial, and that their leaders are honest and competent. Although there are variations in the level of these positive

feelings across different countries, most governments can rely on this reservoir of goodwill to enforce their laws. In the final analysis, the effectiveness of governments and the survival of states depend on this goodwill of the people, and not on the threat of coercion. Most people obey laws because they feel that the laws are legitimate, and not because they are afraid of being punished by the government (Do you file your income tax return out of a sense of civic duty or fear of being caught by the Internal Revenue Service?). Governments do not have the necessary resources to monitor every behavior of their citizens and must therefore rely generally on people's voluntary compliance with laws. Thus, even the most repressive governments cannot stay in power without a minimal level of voluntary support or at least acquiescence by the people.

Third, unlike the other actors, only states control an expanse of territory. Although individuals and businesses in many countries can own land, states can and sometimes do take over their properties for public purposes under the legal doctrine of eminent domain. Therefore, states are at least in nominal control of their territories. Territories are important because they have provided a "hard shell" for defense in the past. One scholar even argued that "throughout history, that unit which affords protection and security to human beings has tended to become the basic political unit; people, in the long run, will recognize that authority, any authority, which possesses the power of protection."[9]

Finally, states have a vast bureaucracy to implement their decisions. Thus, only they are likely to have the organizational requisites for coping with massive problems or national emergencies, such as a foreign invasion, an energy crisis, an industrial nuclear accident, or an economic recession.

To summarize, states are the predominant actors in international relations because, unlike the other actors, they control a territorial base and the use of force within this base; they enjoy the loyalty of the people; and they have the organizational capability of dealing with problems that are national in their scope and significance. This is not to deny that states have competitors in these realms. For example, guerrilla movements also control territories and employ force; religion, tribe, and family also evoke deep loyalties; and nonstate actors such as large corporations sometimes also have a substantial ability to mobilize vast resources. However, the state often tries to regulate and even suppress these actors, lest they become a powerful opposition to the state's authority. None of these actors can match the importance of the state in terms of the four criteria stated earlier (decisiveness, autonomy, extensiveness, and continuity). For this reason, we shall focus most of our attention in this text on the role of and the relations among states.

Environmental Possibilism and Environmental Probabilism

We continue to explain our definition of *international relations.* What exactly did we mean by "actions and conditions"? Actions are what actors do (e.g., fighting wars, restricting imports, and visiting other countries), and conditions are what they have (e.g., the size of a state's population and territory, the level of its economic development, and the effectiveness of its military). Obviously, actions and conditions are intertwined, so that they influence each other. Thus, involvement in a foreign war can change the territorial size, the economic output, and the military morale of a state. Conversely, a state's strength—expressed, say, in terms of the size of its population, its economy, and its military—influences its decision on whether to enter a foreign war.

The last remark leads us to observe that an actor's freedom of action tends to be