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Toward the Twenty-First Century

A Reader in World Politics

Edited by

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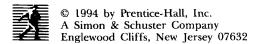
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Preface

Academic disciplines tend to be characterized by cyclical periods of great energy followed by periods of consolidation and calm. For quite some time now the study of world politics has existed in one of those periods of calm. The debate within it has moved along well-defined paths. To be sure, methodological, conceptual, and policy disagreements have arisen, but they have been accommodated rather easily within the existing parameters of the field or have required very little stretching. All of this appears to be changing. The end of the cold war, the demise of the Soviet Union and its alliance bloc in Eastern Europe, references to a "new world order," and the approaching end of the twentieth century have combined to inject new life into the study of world politics and its teaching. Topics that once received lengthy treatment are no longer universally held to merit such attention, and others have moved from the fringes of the discipline (or the end of the semester's syllabus) to places of greater prominence. Likewise, conceptual frameworks and methodological approaches that have been hovering outside the mainstream of the field are now receiving closer attention by many practitioners and teachers.

Although invigorating, these changes also present a challenge to instructors who wish to inform students of the debate as it unfolds. Textbooks tend to pass along the accepted wisdom of a field. They are far better at recording changes that have been made than at pushing the frontiers of debate. Moreover, the current debate over the future of world politics has

only recently begun. It is far too early to decipher its end point; whether the field will coalesce around existing ideas and practices, move to a new starting point, or split along several paths. As such, yet another dilemma arises: How much attention should be paid to the existing wisdom in the field compared to the more recent writings that seek to expand its boundaries?

Toward the Twenty-First Century is designed to provide instructors with a means for addressing these concerns in a systematic and coherent fashion over the course of a semester. Our goal in selecting essays for inclusion in this volume is to blend writings that present the predominant ways of thinking about a problem or issue with essays that take a fresh look. We have also included pieces on thinking about the future and commentaries on the recent past to sensitize students to the problems of predicting the course of future events. We feel that in doing so we have steered a middle ground between readers that pay primary attention to the classics in the field and those whose focus is exclusively on recent events.

A few words about the introductory essays are in order. Each set of readings is preceded by an essay that sets out some of the main issues under debate in that area. They are intended to introduce students to the subject and not to serve as a substitute for reading the essays themselves. They do not speak at any length about the essays that follow. Moreover, each of the introductory essays can stand alone; no references are made to discussions in previous chapters. Our goal in constructing them in this fashion was twofold. First, instructors who wish to give added attention to a topic might assign the introductory essay along with a textbook chapter as the required reading for that unit. Second, instructors who wish to devote less time to a topic could substitute the introductory essay for a textbook chapter with the confidence that a coherent overview of the topic will still be presented.

We should emphasize that we see Toward the Twenty-First Century as a volume designed for students to read. To that end we have chosen to limit the number of footnotes in the selected readings. Any article referred to in the introductory essays is cited in the reading list at its conclusion.

We owe thanks to many individuals. We are particularly grateful to Karen Horton for supporting the project and to Julie Berrisford for seeing it through to its conclusion. Thanks are also owed to the production staff at Prentice Hall for the excellent work they did in turning the manuscript into a completed book. Walter Bacon (University of Nebraska, Omaha), Howard Lehman (University of Utah), Joseph Lepgold (Georgetown University), Robert McCalla (University of Wisconsin, Madison), and Henry Shockley (Boston University) are thanked for the many comments they made in reading the manuscript at various points in its evolution. Although we were not always able to follow their counsel, it was greatly appreciated.

We dedicate this book to our families.

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Chapter 1

Studying World Politics

Making Choices

Interest in world politics proceeds at several levels. Academic writings often focus on questions of basic forces, normative standards, and methodology: Why do states go to war? What are international human rights? Should case studies or quantitative data be relied on more heavily in carrying out research? Policymakers are much more interested in problem-oriented inquiries that produce answers to the questions before them: When will economic sanctions work? When will deterrence fail? What type of international organization is best suited to deal with ocean pollution? The public at large has long been attracted to world politics by the drama of such events as large-scale movements of refugees and international crises. More recently the public has become interested in the more mundane and routine aspects of world politics for their ability to shape people's daily lives by affecting interest rates, unemployment levels, and the environmental order.

Two observations need to be made regarding these interest groupings. First, they are not self-contained. Not only do individuals such as Henry Kissinger, Jeane Kirkpatrick, and Zbignew Brzezinski cross from one group to another, but also a full appreciation of the dynamics of world politics requires an element of all three perspectives to be present. Consider policymakers who must make a decision regarding a request for foreign aid. As noted, their primary concern is with identifying and weighing policy options: What do we want to achieve? What, if anything, will work and how much will it cost? Yet without an

appreciation or interest in world politics, policymakers are not likely to pay sufficient attention to the problem even to be aware of its existence or to recognize the need to act. One of the most consistent findings by those who study world politics is that the reason policymakers are caught off guard is not because they failed to receive warnings but because they failed to listen to them. Often a type of tunnel vision sets in, and policymakers become so caught up with short-term problem-solving efforts that they fail to comprehend the severity of the problems looming on the horizon or the consequences their actions hold for other problems. At the same time failure to understand the structure and operation of the international economic system; the nature of the development process; and the social, political, and environmental consequences of economic growth would almost certainly doom a foreign aid initiative to failure.

Second, these three groupings are not internally consistent in their view of world politics. Terms such as realist, liberal, Marxist, behavioralist, and traditionalist are commonly used to distinguish among academics who write on world politics. Distinctions among policymakers are often made in terms of both their outlooks—hawk versus dove—and their institutional affiliations. It is not uncommon, for example, to see someone referred to as representing the State Department perspective or the congressional viewpoint. Differences in public perceptions of world politics have been organized in a number of ways. Some distinguish between those holding isolationist views and those holding internationalist views. Others make distinctions between individuals who are well informed and attentive and those who are only occasionally drawn to world politics. Finally, distinctions have been made on the basis of such characteristics as race, gender, economic class, age, and religion.

Although disagreements have always existed among those interested in world politics, the scope of the debate has not been uniform across groupings. Most notably, disagreements among academics have encompassed a larger set of issues than have disagreements among policymakers, who deal with problems on a day-to-day basis. The more limited scope of debate among the latter is understandable for several reasons. First, as policymakers are quick to point out, they must operate under time-sensitive deadlines. Whereas academics have the luxury of reformulating their ideas or gathering more data, policymakers must act even if all of the data are not there or their understanding of the problem is incomplete.

Second, domestic politics and the bureaucratic nature of government also act as constraints. Both promote incrementalism in problem solving. The tendency is to think in terms of what the government can do and what the public will accept rather than to develop and tailor programs to the problem at hand. Returning to our example of foreign aid, we see that governments and international organizations had to make decisions about giving aid to what was once the Soviet Union without really knowing the extent of the problem or who was in charge, and in formulating their plans they tended to rely on existing foreign aid programs and strategies rather than devising a new one designed to meet the specific needs of these newly independent states.

Third, and probably most important, policymakers tend to take the world as a given. For well over a quarter of a century the dominant and unchanging reality that policymakers saw when they looked at world politics was the super-

power competition between the United States and the Soviet Union. This competition, although most pronounced in the military area, reached into all aspects of world politics. Succinctly summarized in the notion of a cold war, it colored virtually all thinking about what was possible in world politics and why events unfolded as they did. That perceptual anchor is now gone. In quick order the East European states began to assert their independence from Moscow with an unprecedented and unexpected degree of success, the Berlin Wall fell, the Communist party and communism lost their grip on power in the Soviet Union, and then the Soviet Union self-destructed.

Cut loose from the familiar politics of the cold war international system, policymakers now find themselves with a far wider array of policy options than most ever imagined possible. The rationale for institutions and policies that long served as the starting point for foreign-policy decision making have now been called into question, and U.S. policymakers have had to address such questions as these: What is the role of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization)? What do we do with nuclear weapons? What should the relationship be between Japan and the United States? Although the questions may differ, the situation is repeated in Germany, Brazil, North Korea, Nigeria, and elsewhere around the world. At the same time that old ways of thinking and acting have been called into question a series of new foreign-policy issues (or ones previously downplayed) now also compete for positions of prominence on the foreign-policy agenda. Among these are questions regarding human rights, the promotion of democracy, environmental protection, water rights, and international health policy. No longer can they be easily dismissed as of secondary importance to a country's national interest.

Neither the enhanced freedom to choose among policy options nor the need to address new issues is necessarily welcomed by policymakers. At least in the short run, change is destabilizing, and there is also uncertainty over the end point. The inhibiting influences of domestic politics, government bureaucracy, and limited personal interest are also still present and have caused some to shy away from examining new options or tackling new problems. The point remains, however, that the range of choices in world politics open to policymakers as they face the twenty-first century is far larger than anyone would have imagined just a few short years ago.

One consequence of this expanded range of choice is that it focuses new attention on the types of "big-picture" issues and questions that academic writings on world politics have traditionally pursued. At a minimum, the changed and uncertain nature of the international system means that one can no longer expect policies to work in the future simply because they worked in the past. Some other basis for judging the merits of competing policies is needed. A theory provides one such benchmark for making judgments by supplying an organizing framework within which to fit the unfolding events of world politics. Theories accomplish this task by simplifying reality. Rather than trying to incorporate all possible explanatory factors, or variables, into the framework, theories emphasize certain points and push others to the fringes. Those factors selected for emphasis are the ones believed to be most important for explaining either the pattern of behavior or the nature of the event under study.

Choices Matter

A theory simplifies reality, but not all theories simplify reality in the same way. Depending on the theoretical perspective one starts with, one is likely to get different answers to the questions of why something happened or whether this strategy will work. Moreover, not every theoretical perspective is equally suited for all types of questions. Some theoretical perspectives are far better equipped to deal with questions relating to international conflict than to international cooperation. Others deal almost exclusively with a specific problem, such as international crises or human rights, and would be of little use in the study of other issues.

The importance of selecting a starting point can be illustrated by looking at international economic relations. Like virtually all topics in the field of world politics, international economic relations is interdisciplinary in nature. No one questions the need to bring insights from both economics and politics to bear on its study. The question is where to begin. There must be a first step, and this first step will lead down different paths. If the first step is taken from the perspective of international economics, the key organizing principles will be drawn from such concepts as the relative efficiency of foreign exchange markets, the costs and benefits of protectionism, the theory of comparative advantage, and the theory of optimum currency areas.

Susan Strange argues, however, that the proper starting point for the study of international economic relations is political science because to government officials who shape foreign-policy decisions, defense is more important than economic growth. Strange continues with a second point properly understood, international economic relations are a form of diplomacy and must be studied as such. Finally, she notes that starting from the vantage point of international politics casts one's study of international economic relations in terms of power, authority, and the role of the state. Strange holds that an intellectual appreciation of these terms is crucial if the study of international economic relations is to be free of "unrealistic assumptions, wild generalizations, or wishful thinking."

Joan Spero also makes a case against starting one's study solely from an economic perspective. Spero maintains that there are three ways in which political factors affect international economic outcomes. First, the structure and operation of the international economic system is shaped by the international political system. A free-trade economic order does not just happen but is brought into existence and maintained by states. Second, political concerns shape economic policy. An examination of the Bush administration's decision-making process in sending foreign aid to the former Soviet Union, placing an embargo on Haiti, or granting China most-favored-nations status would reveal the importance, if not the primacy, of political considerations. Third international economic relations are political relations. They lend themselves quite naturally to analysis in terms of such standard concepts as conflict, cooperation, power, and influence.

Choices in the World Politics of the Twenty-first Century

Although the range of problems addressed by academics and the scope of the answers put forward have consistently outpaced those addressed by policymakers, academic writing on world politics has not been immune to the tunnel

vision effect of the cold war. By far, one perspective—realism—has infused the largest amount of thinking about world politics. Realism defines the dynamics of world politics in terms of three fundamental assumptions: (1) Nation-states and their decision makers are the most important actors, (2) a clear distinction can be made between domestic and international politics, and (2) world politics is a struggle for power that pervades all foreign-policy issues. Realism emerged as a response to the values and assumptions about world politics that guided the thinking of Woodrow Wilson and other policymakers who looked at the destruction of World War I and sought to build a safer, more peaceful world. Central to their thinking was the belief that just as it was natural for a harmony of interests to exist among members of a society, it was also natural for there to exist a harmony of interests among states. They looked to public opinion, the human intellect, and international law and organization—not to the struggle for power—to provide the foundation for world politics.

Realism has never been without its critics. Just as advocates of realism criticized Woodrow Wilson and his followers for being "idealists" who were wedded to concepts that did not make sense given the realities of world politics after World War I, so too has realist thinking been criticized for not being attuned to the realities of world politics in the late twentieth century. Such criticisms come from many quarters. Students of world politics who emphasize the importance of the nonmilitary aspects of international relations as well as those who study patterns of international cooperation assert that the assumptions of realism make it ill suited for studying these topics. The same holds true for those who feel that the proper normative and empirical focus of world politics should be on individuals or groups and not on the state. Still others reject realism because of its intellectual roots, which, depending on the critic, are seen as either European in nature or gender-based. Finally, there are those critics who take exception to the claim long made by many realist scholars that realism provides the basis for an objective and all-encompassing theory of world politics. In this critical view the subjective nature of how reality is perceived and the value implications and assumptions that are often hidden in the concepts that researchers use to guide their analyses make the notion of a scientific study of world politics a dangerous illusion.

Although these challenges to realism are formidable, it is too early to consign realism to a place of secondary importance in the study of world politics. Realism has proved to be a resilient body of ideas in the face of challenges, and further adaptations are not impossible. It is also possible that a return to a more threatening international system might lend renewed credence to realist thought and discredit its challengers—such as occurred when President Reagan assumed office. The concepts of interdependence and international cooperation that guided many of the policy initiatives of the Carter administration were replaced by ones more firmly rooted in the realist view of world politics as a struggle for survival and concern for maintaining a balance of power with the Soviet Union. In fact, even as nothing more than a point of attack for other approaches, its influence would still be considerable because of its ability to influence the choice of concepts and frame debates.

It is no accident that challenges to realism have increased both in number and in intensity over the past several years. Ideas about world politics—its

underlying dynamics, what the major problems are, and how they should be solved—are not formulated in a vacuum. They are very much part of the social and political atmosphere in which their proponents live. Because all theorizing is rooted in time and space, when circumstances change so, too, will thinking about world politics. What was once a high-priority policy concern may be treated as a nonproblem. A theoretical perspective once seen as holding great insight may come to be regarded as fatally flawed.

It is in this sense of ushering in an unexpected period of transition to an uncertain future that the end of the cold war has had a liberating effect on thinking about world politics. It has provided scholars, policymakers, and citizens with a sense of expanded choice and the prospect of realizing goals (and avoiding evils) that once seemed beyond reach. What the ending of the cold war has not done is identify which values are worthy of pursuit or the best method of attaining them.

The Readings

We have sought to select essays that will both help clarify our thinking about the basic nature of world politics as we enter the twenty-first century and provide at least a partial basis for judging the merits of competing policy proposals. The essays do not tell us the "right" answer. That is not their purpose. Their purpose is to provide a point of departure for our own thinking.

The first reading in this section is from Hans Morgenthau's *Politics Among Nations*, which was first published in 1948. Morgenthau was one of the founding theorists of the realist approach. He argues that like all forms of political activity, world politics is a struggle for power. Regardless of the nature of the aim being pursued (freedom, security, prosperity, etc.) the immediate aim is always power. In the selection presented here Morgenthau lays out what he perceives to be the six fundamental principles of realism.

The second reading is from Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye's Power and Interdependence. The first edition of this work appeared in 1978, when largely because of the oil price hikes by OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) there was a growing awareness of the importance of international economic issues in world politics. Although neither its definition of realism nor its proposed alternative framework of complex interdependence were accepted by all who wrote in the field, this work quickly became influential and the basis for much subsequent theorizing about world politics. The selection presented here presents both aspects of the argument in capsule form.

In the final reading, J. Ann Tickner presents a feminist reinterpretation of Morgenthau's six principles of realism. Hers is only one example of the most recent wave of challengers to realism. Feminist theories of world politics are critical of existing theories because they neither focus on the role of women in world politics nor incorporate feminist perspectives into their analysis. For this reason, unlike many theorists, feminists see little that distinguishes realism from interdependence, world systems, globalism, or dependency-based theorizing.

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