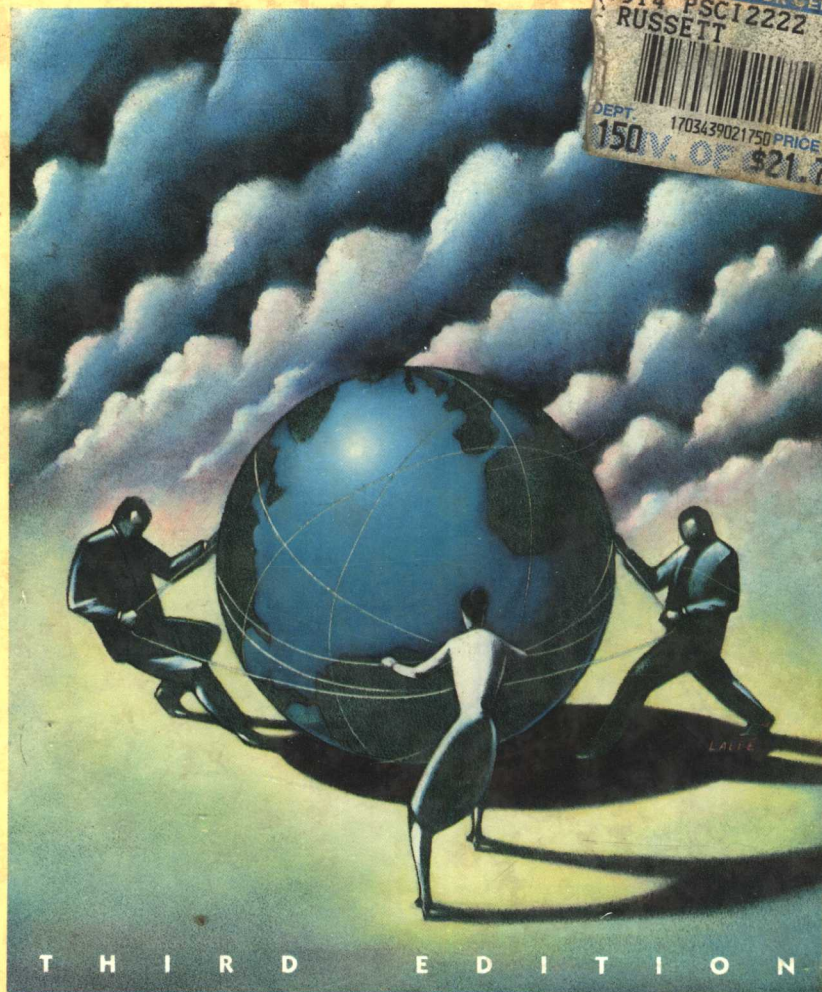


BRUCE RUSSETT • HARVEY STARR

WORLD



POLITICS

THE MENU FOR CHOICE

WORLD POLITICS

The Menu for Choice

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Preface

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Many of us who study and teach world politics have witnessed a revolution in the discipline. We have changed the ways we think about the subject: standards of concept formation, of logic, and of evidence are markedly different from what they were. Our progress in research, however, has not been matched by equal progress in communicating new knowledge, either to students or to lay people in general. We wrote this book to convey to beginning and intermediate students of world politics some common core of the theory, method, and substance of our field.

If there has been a revolution in the study of world politics, that revolution can be consolidated only when we have the pedagogical skill and tools to educate the next generation. Otherwise the revolution will

experience a well-deserved Thermidor reaction. The consolidation we have tried for in *World Politics* is inclusive rather than exclusive. That is, we have sought to synthesize the best of the older tradition with newer approaches.

In the first place, we have provided a substantial component of theory, from older and newer sources. Students must learn something about how theory is constructed and tested, and we therefore deal in some degree with scientific method, providing some “how to do it” material to give the student standards for recognizing well-executed research. Students need to learn a respect for evidence and learn to recognize a statement for which no evidence could be relevant. Perhaps more important is “how to think about it.” To survive in a rapidly changing world, as active citizens rather than passive objects of historic forces, people must develop a good set of basic concepts and questions, a taste for analysis, a certain degree of skepticism for the “revealed wisdom” of authority, and some tolerance for ambiguity on a subject—the behavior of large human organizations coping with very complex problems—where the extent of our understanding is, at best, barely adequate.

Second, we have provided a substantial amount of historical and contemporary facts about the world. One kind of “fact” is the evidence needed to support or disconfirm major theoretical statements. We have tried to give the student some sense of the volume and quality of evidence relevant to various statements. When we know the evidence to be reasonably solid, we have tried to document that. When we consider the evidence sparse or ambiguous, we have tried to indicate that. This means that we have given some references to empirical research, so students—or instructors—will not have to take our statements on faith. On the other hand, we have tried not to overburden readers with scientific detail or pedantry.

Another kind of essential fact is, simply, information on what it is, and has been, like “out there.” History and information on the contemporary system are essential. We have also therefore provided material on the characteristics of the major national and nonnational participants in world politics, and on the scope and function of major institutions. We have frequently introduced or punctuated our theoretical discussions with detail on how the world works, or has worked. The reader will see examples of this not only in the text, but in endpaper maps and the two (quite different) appendixes: a chronology and a set of comparative data on states’ characteristics. In this we have tried to walk a path that will have some appeal to traditionalists as well as to “hard-nosed” scientists.

Any consolidation demands a concern with questions of value: what the world "should" be like as well as what it is like. Sometimes all of us can gain; sometimes one's security is another's insecurity. Sometimes we must choose between equity and security, or between peace and justice. Students need guidance on how choices can be made, or perhaps avoided—guidance that attends to both the ethical and the empirical dimensions of choice.

Finally, the substance of what is taught today is very different from the substance of courses a decade or two ago. In *World Politics* we have tried to combine discussion of security issues with international political economy and to suggest how the two are in fact related. For example, they come together in the causes and consequences of arms races and in world environmental problems. At the end of the book we show how needs for growth, equity, political liberty, and peace are inextricably linked.

We have organized the book in two major parts. Part I introduces the student to the modern study of world politics and sets out the six levels of analysis we find useful: the global system, relations between states, the societal level, the governmental level, roles, and the individual actor. The book's subtitle (*The Menu for Choice*) illustrates our perspective that decision-makers are in fact limited in their selections by the rather constrained menu presented by global conditions. (The menu analogy appropriately evokes images both of restaurants and computers.) We discuss and illustrate how influences at various levels affect the process or act of choice. In Part II we apply these analytical perspectives to particular issues. Topics we consider include arms races, deterrence and arms control, theories about poor countries' dependence on rich ones and possible alternatives to dependence, the implications of interdependence among industrialized countries (we try to understand why these countries are, almost without precedent or parallel, at peace among themselves), problems of achieving collective goods in the context of global environmental problems, and finally an evaluation of demands for continued economic growth in a world of scarce resources and population pressures. We try to communicate a sense that rigorous theory is essential to any comprehension of these very real contemporary problems.



We owe thanks to innumerable colleagues and students over the years we have been working toward the production of this book. Rather than single

out some for expressions of gratitude here, we will pass over those who in the past contributed to the formation of our thinking. Many, but not all of them, will find themselves footnoted. Here we shall merely thank those who read and commented on parts or all of the manuscript on its journey all the way from initial draft through three editions: William Avery, Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Steven Chan, Claudio Cioffi-Revilla, Robert Dorf, Raymond Duvall, Michael Francis, Robert Harkavy, Jeffrey Hart, Terrence Hopmann, Darril Hudson, Patrick James, Robert Jervis, Brian Job, Robert Keohane, Zeev Maoz, Douglas Nelson, James Ray, J. Rogers, J. David Singer, Randolph Siverson, Michael Stohl, Richard Stoll, Stuart Thorson, and Dina Zinnes. Parts of the book represent research done with the aid of grants from the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, the National Science Foundation, the German Marshall Fund, and the United States Institute of Peace. Over the course of three editions our home universities, Yale and Indiana, have truly provided fine environments for research and reflection. Visiting appointments—for Bruce Russett at the Institute for Research in Social Science of the University of North Carolina (special thanks to the late Frank Munger) and the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study, and for Harvey Starr at the University of Aberdeen (special thanks to Professor Frank Bealey)—provided stimulating as well as pleasurable environments for thinking and writing at various times. We hope that all of these people will in some degree be pleased with the outcome; any embarrassment with it must be ours alone.

April 1988

Bruce Russett

Harvey Starr

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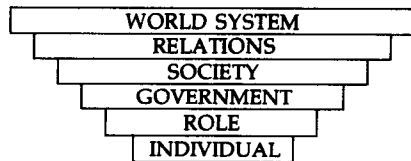
ANALYTICAL
DIMENSIONS

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*I would rather understand a single
cause than be king of Persia.*
—DEMOCRITUS OF ABDERA

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Analyzing World Politics: Levels of Analysis and Constraint



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THREE FOREIGN POLICY DECISIONS

Dropping the Atomic Bomb

On August 6, 1945, the U.S. bomber *Enola Gay* dropped an atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. Coupled with the explosion of another bomb over Nagasaki three days later, this act precipitated the Japanese surrender and the end of World War II. Nearly 200,000 people, most of them noncombatant civilians, ultimately died from the explosions. These two bombings represented the first—and so far the last—time nuclear weapons were used against enemy targets. Exploding a bomb of this magnitude (about 4,000 times larger than the biggest “conventional” World War II explosive) marked an enormous leap in killing ability. At the

same time it brought forth the age of nuclear deterrence, when peace among the great powers is kept, at least in part, by the awesome threat of mutual annihilation. At the time of these bombings both scientists and statesmen realized that they were doing something that would fundamentally change the future; the nuclear physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer, on watching the first test explosion a month before Hiroshima, quoted to himself the phrase from the Hindu scriptures, the *Bhagavad Gita*, "I am become death, destroyer of worlds."

Despite the magnitude of this act and the precedents it set, there was remarkably little discussion within the American government as to whether the bomb should be used in war. Questions of morality either were ignored or quickly stilled with the argument that, overall, use of the bomb would save lives. The only alternative to using the bomb to force Japan's surrender seemed to be an American invasion of the Japanese home islands, in which as many as 40,000 American and hundreds of thousands of Japanese casualties could be expected. As American Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson later put it, "At no time did I ever hear it suggested by the President, or by other responsible members of the government, that atomic energy should not be used in war." British Prime Minister Winston Churchill reported that "the decision whether or not to use the atomic bomb to compel the surrender of Japan was never even an issue. There was unanimous, automatic, unquestioned agreement."¹ How can we explain this?

Particular characteristics of President Harry Truman may have made some difference. Before President Franklin Roosevelt's death in April 1945 it was assumed that the atomic bomb would be used in combat, although Roosevelt had not entirely ruled out the possibility of first warning the enemy and demonstrating the bomb's power in a test. But Truman was inexperienced and uninformed about foreign affairs; when he became president he was not even aware that the atomic bomb project existed. He was therefore in no position to challenge the existing basic assumption about the bomb's intended use or to dissent sharply from the military and foreign policy plans that had been put into effect by the advisers he inherited from Roosevelt. Only one adviser (Admiral William Leahy, whose opinion had already been devalued by his prediction that the bomb would not work at all) disagreed with the general consensus. There was some disagreement among the nuclear scientists who had produced the bomb, but even among them the prevailing opinion was that they could

1. Winston S. Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1953), p. 639.

"propose no technical demonstration likely to bring an end to the war; we can see no acceptable alternative to direct military use."

Truman was caught up in the near unanimity around him; Roosevelt, although more experienced and politically stronger, probably would not have behaved much differently. Bureaucratic momentum carried matters along, and it would have required either a very unusual president or an exceptionally open structure of decision making to slow that momentum. Furthermore, the only alternative looked dangerous, technically and politically. If the Japanese were first warned and the bomb was tested publicly in some deserted spot, there was the risk that it would not go off or not look very impressive. Not only might the Japanese then be left unimpressed, but, some advisers feared, Congress would be in a political uproar over the fizzled demonstration and consequent American casualties suffered in an invasion. Nowhere — in the executive branch, in Congress, or in the public at large — was there much disagreement over the need to end the war as soon as possible, principally to spare American lives. Consequently, there were few moral restraints on the use of weapons in war. Certainly there had been little objection earlier to even the massive conventional bombing of civilian targets in Germany and Japan.

The basic constraints, therefore, stemmed from the international situation: war against a determined opponent in an era when the moral and legal restrictions on warfare were few. Moreover, the international balance of forces likely to emerge after the war reinforced this perspective. The wartime Soviet-American alliance was deteriorating rapidly, especially in the face of severe disagreements about who should control Eastern Europe. Most American decision makers welcomed the atomic bomb as a "master card" for "atomic diplomacy" to impress the Russians with American power and to encourage them to make concessions to the American view about how the postwar world should be organized. Additionally, the Soviet Union had not yet entered the war with Japan. If the atomic bomb could force Japanese surrender before the Russians were to attack Japan (in fact, the surrender came after such an attack), it would help to limit Russian intrusion into Japanese-controlled portions of the Far East. Most American foreign policy decision makers largely agreed on these perceptions, as did most members of Congress and most opinion leaders in the American public.²

2. Two valuable studies we have drawn on here are Barton J. Bernstein, "Roosevelt, Truman, and the Atomic Bomb: A Reinterpretation," *Political Science Quarterly* 90, 1 (Spring 1977), 23-69; and Herbert Feis, *The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1961).