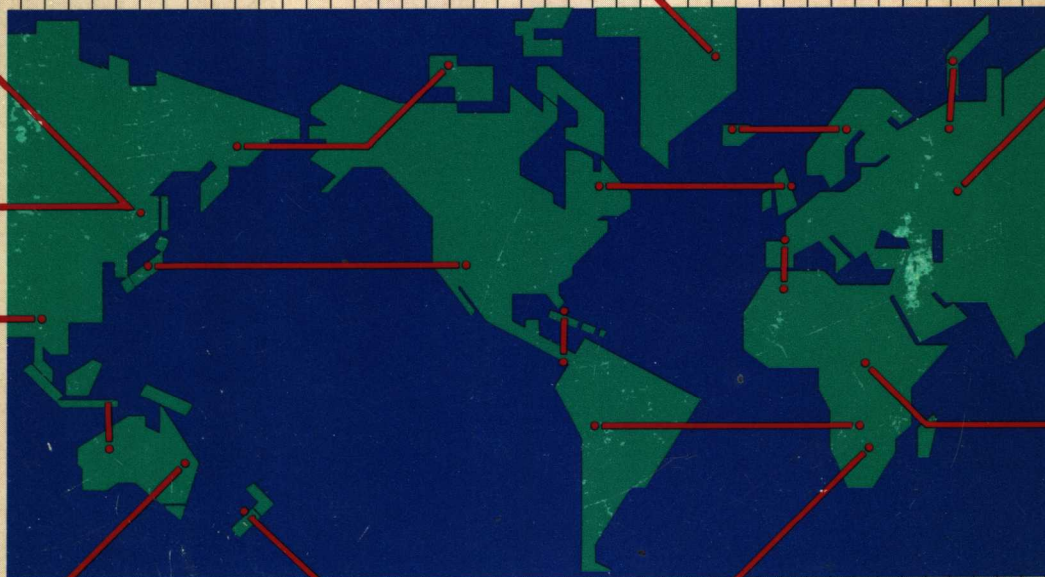


Power and Influence: An Introduction to International Relations

D.G. KOUSOULAS



..... POWER
AND
INFLUENCE

AN INTRODUCTION TO
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

D. G. Kousoulas

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Washington, D.C.



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“The nation which indulges
towards another an habitual
hatred or an habitual fondness
is in some degree a slave. It is
a slave to its animosity or to
its affection. . .”

George Washington in his
Farewell Address

..... Preface

International relations is a fascinating subject. On every given day, events involving international actors command front-page coverage in our newspapers and top billing in the broadcasts on radio and television. What happens in the international arena affects our lives in a variety of ways.

Before we can deal with major international issues or events of our time, we need to gain a clearer understanding of the basic concepts, processes, and relationships—the “nuts and bolts”—that make the discussion of these issues more meaningful and exciting. This approach has been the guiding principle in writing *Power and Influence*.

A textbook draws on the scholarship of those who have contributed to the development of the discipline. To be useful, it must be firmly grounded in the established knowledge. At the same time, it must not turn a blind eye to the future and refrain from fresh explorations, especially in political analysis. There are signs that the international environment has undergone major changes in the last 40 years and that these structural transformations will expand, accelerate, and deepen as we move into the twenty-first century. There has been a reluctant and uneven shift from the power approach that has traditionally dominated international relations to a transactional approach, which relies primarily on bargaining and persuasion. This shift has been caused by:

- The growing economic interdependence
- The growth of worldwide network of instant communication
- The uneven relevance of force to the solution of the enormous economic social problems facing humanity
- The emergence of new entities such as the multinational corporations
- The proliferation of international organizations dealing with political, economic, technical, and social problems

Age-old traditions, of course, are not easily discarded. The attachment of policy makers to the power approach remains a fact of international life. Yet, even a giant such as the United States with all its tremendous resources and power potential finds it increasingly difficult to impose its will on others or to resolve vexing international problems by fiat or force.

A clear understanding of the difference between the power approach and the transactional approach will help our discussion of the larger international issues that are

likely to dominate international relations. A mere listing of these issues reveals the changes that have occurred and the diminishing relevance of the power approach in addressing them:

- Control of the weapons of mass destruction
- Trade and economic relations among the developed countries
- Trade and economic relations between developed countries and the less developed countries
- The increase in food production and distribution to meet the needs of a rapidly increasing world population
- Control of violent revolutionary movements, which feed on poverty, frustration, injustice, and oppression
- Protection of the physical environment on an international scale
- Development of seabed resources
- Exploration of space
- Flow of information
- Activities of multinational corporations
- Management of international monetary relations

Few, if any, of these problems can be solved by force or by fiat; this does not mean the resolution of international issues is no longer sought by the application of force. With so many military confrontations currently underway, reliance on the power approach is still very much a fact of international life. Nonetheless, it is also a fact that current problems have become so complex that force—even when “victorious”—seldom leads to genuine solutions.

Whether international actors resort to the power or the transactional approach (or a combination of both) the outcome of any interaction depends on their assets and their ability to use these resources effectively. In a way, we may view international relations as business transactions. In business, the outcome of a “business deal” depends largely on the *economic* assets each side can bring to the bargaining table. The side with more economic assets has an advantage that no rhetoric can dissipate. Although effective negotiating skills can improve the chances of the weaker side, the content of the final agreement is bound to reflect the relative bargaining position of the participants—namely, which side is in greater need of reaching an agreement, which has alternative courses of action, and which possesses greater economic resources.

In international relations, the resolution of any conflict, confrontation, or transaction also depends on the relative assets. However, in international relations the relevant assets are much more varied: military force, economic resources, geographic location, population, industrial capacity, political leadership, ideology, alliances, political influence in other countries, and imaginative diplomacy, which can maximize the effect of all other assets.

The study of international relations requires some knowledge and understanding of what has happened in the past. Too often we tend to take an episodic view of foreign issues, devoid of history. Few current issues are unrelated to the past. For this reason I have included historical references to current disputes and developments and to the origins of existing institutions.

Part One answers questions about the international environment:

- Why do international actors behave as they do?
- Who are the international actors?
- What are the tangible and intangible assets that determine their power and influence potential?

Part Two focuses on the instrumentalities of international relations:

- The making of foreign policy decisions
- Diplomacy and the transactional mode of interaction
- The use of force
- International economic relations
- The significance of international law and international organization

Part Three moves on to a discussion of the great issues of today:

- The East–West rivalry
- The North–South dialogue

Parts One and Two will give the student sufficient background and familiarity with the “basics” to make the discussion in Part Three more meaningful.

One special feature which students and instructors may find particularly welcome, is the “Digest” at the end of the book—an easy reference compilation of concise discussions of basic terms, background on international organizations or treaties of particular interest, and key historical events or developments that could not be covered adequately without digressing from the subject matter.

I am grateful to the following people who reviewed the manuscript: Luther Allen, University of Massachusetts, Amherst; Francis Hoole, Indiana University; Ronald Meltzer, State University of New York, Buffalo; Joseph Nogee, University of Houston; Suzanne Ogden, Northeastern University; Thomas Palmer, College of Charleston; Gholam Razi, University of Houston; Neil Richardson, University of Wisconsin; Michael Schechter, Michigan State University; Richard Sears, Wake Forest University; Kurt Tweraser, University of Arkansas.

D. G. Kousoulas

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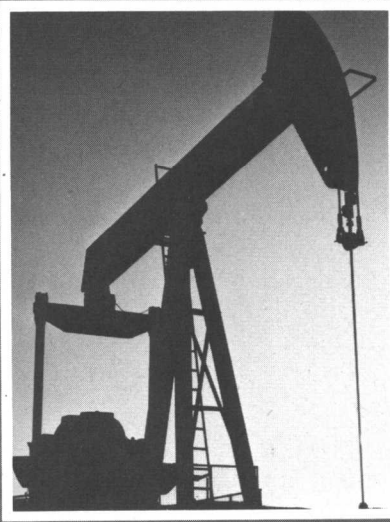
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PART
ONE

.....THE
INTERNATIONAL
ENVIRONMENT





1

.....Patterns
of Interaction



Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin at Yalta

Understanding the forces that affect the relations among international actors is not merely an academic exercise, nor is it of concern only to diplomats and politicians. It is a practical matter of vital significance to all of us. Consider these selected illustrations:

- Government officials decide that it is in the interest of the United States to prevent North Vietnam from taking over South Vietnam, and tens of thousands of United States soldiers lose their lives in a distant land.
- The U.S. government decides to send a “peace-keeping force” to Lebanon. A few months later, a young Arab opposing the move, because it conflicts with his perception of the problem, drives a truck full of explosives into the compound housing the U.S. marines and blows up the building, himself, and 246 U.S. soldiers.
- In 1973, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) decides to raise the price of oil and impose an embargo on shipments to the United States, causing long lines of cars at gasoline stations and sending inflation to unprecedented heights.
- The external debt of countries such as Mexico or Brazil reaches such a magnitude that the possibility that they may be unable to repay what they owe causes tremors in the Western banking establishment, which has lent most of the money.
- Japanese cars are sold in large numbers in the United States, and automobile workers in Detroit find themselves on the unemployment line.

What Is “International Relations”?.....

Our illustrations give a glimpse into the subject matter of international relations. As an academic discipline, international relations can be defined as *a branch of the social sciences dealing with those policies, developments, and interactions the effects of which*