



GAMES NATIONS PLAY

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JOHN SPANIER
SEVENTH EDITION

GAMES NATIONS PLAY

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John Spanier

University of Florida

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For Suzanne

Preface

Since the last edition of *Games Nations Play* in 1987, world politics have undergone a startling array of changes. This new edition takes these changes into account while maintaining one of the enduring and chief purposes of the book: to teach the reader, primarily the undergraduate student, how to think about international politics in the late twentieth century. Many students are interested in learning more about particular events and issues, such as the cold war, détente, Central America, reforms under Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, the Strategic Defense Initiative, terrorism, the possible reunification of the two Germanies, and the movements to “de-Communize” in Eastern Europe. But what is to be made of this information once it is acquired? In this book I try to provide the intellectual tools needed to analyze events and to gain a deeper understanding of some of the external and internal forces that states confront and the reasons they act as they do, whether they are capitalist or Communist, highly industrialized or economically underdeveloped. I also maintain a strong historical emphasis in the belief that analytical frameworks and concepts do not exist in a vacuum; they are based on events that have had the most profound and far-reaching effects.

One constant throughout the many editions of *Games Nations Play* has been its realist philosophical underpinnings. As fashionable as it has become among some academicians to criticize realism, no satisfactory substitute for its explanation of the continuities and changes in international politics has yet been found. Although other approaches have been useful, realism remains central to the study of international politics, and the reasons for this are spelled out in the concluding chapter of this book.

This edition also continues to focus on the “games nations play”—that is, the strategies and tactics states devise to achieve their security and other objectives. Although there are many ways to understand this subject, I employ three levels of analysis. The first focuses on the state system and emphasizes the balance of power among nations. The second focuses on nation-states themselves, emphasizing their domestic character. And the third level deals

with decision making: policy makers' perceptions of reality and the institutions that formulate and execute policy. This three-dimensional approach, which is a modification of Kenneth Waltz's "three images" and David Singer's "levels of analysis," enables students to view a single policy or set of policies from three different—and often conflicting—perspectives.

This threefold scheme reflects my view that international events must be analyzed in the context of the state system, the environment in which they occur. This is basic. But the analyst must also pay attention to the goals of nations and their general behavior patterns, as these patterns are shaped by their societies and specific policy makers. The environment has a powerful effect upon states—for example, upon their objectives and their degrees of choice among alternative policies—but their internal character and politics also exert major influences. To borrow Carl von Clausewitz's observation that war is the continuation of politics by other means, one could also say that foreign policy often is the conduct of domestic politics by other means.

Nothing illustrates the significance of the second and third levels more than the current changes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The Communist totalitarian systems and ideologies that, together with the bipolar division of power at the end of World War II, had precipitated the cold war are being replaced by political pluralism and elements of free market economies. Above all else, the coming into power of Gorbachev—who in response to the ailing Soviet economy was willing to risk major structural reforms and was able to carry them out despite considerable resistance—made it possible to talk of a post-cold war era.

The state system has endured, and states have been the primary international actors for more than three hundred years. My emphasis on the nation-state, however, does not imply a neglect of nonstate actors, transnational forces, or analysis of "world order" politics. The economic, technological, and other forces of change in the contemporary world are discussed at length. Nevertheless, I contend that the state-centered system not only has survived but also is in some respects stronger than ever.

This seventh edition of *Games Nations Play* has undergone a number of major changes. The one that will immediately strike previous users of this book is its reorganization. Part One again provides the framework for study, and Part Two presents the first level of analysis, which is the state system; but Part Three now addresses the second and third levels of analysis—the domestic character of nation-states and decision making, respectively. The military and economic instruments of power, previously integrated into the first level, now stand as a separate section, Part Four. This rearrangement allows a more balanced, logical treatment of the three levels and an uninterrupted analysis of state behavior before proceeding to the means that states use to achieve their objectives.

This edition also reflects the increasing attention given to domestic and international economics during the past decade. Chapter 7, on power, includes a new section on economics as the most important component of

power and introduces two themes that establish the basis for the later, more detailed analysis of economics. The first theme is the relationship between industrial strength and the rise and fall of the great powers since the nineteenth-century Industrial Revolution. The second is the relative industrial declines of both superpowers and the rise of Japan, China, the European Economic Community, and the newly industrialized countries (NICs), with the obvious implications these trends have for the shift away from the postwar bipolar structure to a more multipolar arrangement. Chapter 14, on the economic tools states have used historically to further their aims, is now followed by a new chapter that describes the impact of multinational corporations on the growing interdependence of Western industrial economies (including Japan), as well as the rapidly modernizing economies of the NICs, especially in Asia. The effects of this interdependence, the need for cooperation among the Western states, and the opposing trend toward economic rivalry and mercantilist policies are fully examined at the end of this new chapter.

Another change in this edition is the material on the impact of Gorbachev and his policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika* within the Soviet Union. These have done much to reduce cold war tensions. As Moscow, to everyone's surprise, tolerated the increasing de-Communization of Eastern Europe, and German reunification became a possibility, the end of the cold war seemed near. The contrast between Soviet ideology and behavior in the seven pre-Gorbachev decades and in the Gorbachev era (presented in Chapter 8) is startling.

The speed of the change in the U.S.-Soviet rivalry was also surprising. In the early 1980s the United States had launched a huge rearmament program in response to the prior Soviet one; among the U.S. proposals was President Ronald Reagan's ambitious plan for a space-based defense of the nation's population. In the related area of the politics of strategic defense, Chapter 10, on decision making, includes a new section on this Strategic Defense Initiative. Chapters 12 and 13, an analysis of the effect of nuclear weapons on the threat of force and the actual use of force in the contemporary world, have been revised extensively, with new sections on the strategic arms control regime and the achievements and failures in this critical area.

An author is indebted to many people. I am grateful to the undergraduates at the University of Florida, who over the years have taken my introductory international politics course, who have been exposed to different ways of organizing this material, and who have been kind and gentle in suggesting helpful improvements. Special thanks is also due to Timothy Lomperis of Duke University, whose detailed criticisms of the draft of this, as well as the last, edition were very insightful and helpful; to Joseph Nogee of the University of Houston, who has never failed to let me know what improvements I should make; and to CQ Press director Joanne Daniels, who wanted this book and has done everything she could to make it an even better one; and not least, to Sabra Bissette Ledent, for her careful editing of this edition.

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Part One

THE STUDY AND ANALYSIS OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS
