

# International Politics on the World Stage



John T. Rourke

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# **International Politics on the World Stage**

**John T. Rourke**

University of Connecticut, Hartford

Brooks/Cole Publishing Company  
Monterey, California

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## ***For Meredith***

*Praising what is lost  
Makes the remembrance dear.  
Shakespeare, All's Well That Ends Well*

Brooks/Cole Publishing Company  
A Division of Wadsworth, Inc.

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Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

### **Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Rourke, John T., [date]

International politics on the world stage.

Includes index.

1. International relations. 2. World politics—

1945- . I. Title.

JX1391.R588 1986 327 85-17429

**ISBN 0-534-05808-6**

Sponsoring Editor: *Marie Kent*

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Photo Editor: *Judy Blamer*

Photo Researcher: *Cris Pullo for Omni-Photo Communications, Inc.*

Typesetting: *Graphic Typesetting Service, Los Angeles, California*

Printing and Binding: *Malloy Lithographing, Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan*

**PHOTO CREDITS** CHAPTER 1. 7, AP/Wide World Photos, Inc.; 11, UPI/Bettmann Newsphotos; 15, United Nations; 19, Randy Taylor, SYGMA. CHAPTER 2. 27, United States Air Force; 33, SYGMA; 37, Culver Pictures, Inc.; 41, Library of Congress; 43, Owen Franken, SYGMA. CHAPTER 3. 49, United Nations; 53, Fabian, SYGMA; 59, UPI/Bettmann Newsphotos; 63, John F. Kennedy Library; 69, Leif Skoogfors, Woodfin Camp and Associates. CHAPTER 4. 75, United Nations; 81, Alinari, Art Resources, New York; 85, AP/Wide World Photos, Inc.; 87, UPI/Bettmann Newsphotos. CHAPTER 5. 99, Michel Philippot, SYGMA; 101 and 109, UPI/Bettmann Newsphotos. CHAPTER 6. 123, Jean Louis Atlan, SYGMA; 129, UPI/Bettmann Newsphotos; 131, AP/Wide World Photos, Inc. CHAPTER 7. 143 and 147, AP/Wide World Photos, Inc.; 153, Robert Azzi, Woodfin Camp and Associates. CHAPTER 8. 167, AP/Wide World Photos, Inc.; 177, Regis Bossu, SYGMA; 183, Greard, SYGMA; 193, Urraca, SYGMA. CHAPTER 9. 205, Yutaka Nagata, United Nations; 207, Jimmy Carter Library; 209, UPI/Bettmann Newsphotos. CHAPTER 10. 229, Atlan, SYGMA; 235, UPI/Bettmann Newsphotos. CHAPTER 11. 253, Joe Crachlola; 259, UPI/Bettmann Newsphotos. CHAPTER 12. 277, United Nations; 291, Alain Nagues, SYGMA. CHAPTER 13. 303, Owen Franken, SYGMA; 313, Yutaka Nagata, United Nations; 319, J. K. Isaac, United Nations; 325, Yutaka Nagata, United Nations. CHAPTER 14. 337, Culver Pictures, Inc.; 349, United Nations. CHAPTER 15. 363, Reuters, Bettmann Newsphotos; 373, SYGMA. CHAPTER 16. 389, R. Bossu, SYGMA; 397, John Isaac, United Nations; 401, Lofti Abou Zeid, CARE; 403, United Nations; 409, Bill Ross, Woodfin Camp and Associates.

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# **International Politics on the World Stage**

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# Preface

## Much Ado about Everything: A Beginning

*The world familiar to us and unknown*  
*Shakespeare, Henry V*

The text that follows is this author's attempt to introduce undergraduate students to the complex and compelling study of international politics. For someone who has taught the subject for years, the task turned out to be much more challenging than expected. One of the first choices that had to be faced was the question "Do I write this book for students or professors?" One of the perplexities of this endeavor is that a text has to appeal to two very different sets of consumers. In one sense, texts are bought by professors who assign them for their courses. For this group, a more sophisticated approach would often be the more appealing. But texts are actually read by students, and for that group, a more fundamental approach is most appropriate. The decision was to write for the student. That means using relatively straightforward prose, a format designed to facilitate notetaking, and a frame of reference that relates to students. To the professor/reviewer who couldn't understand why I would quote Robert Frost when I could have cited James Rosenau, my apologies.

A closely related question was where to pitch the text in terms of student sophisti-

cation. My basic assumption is that students taking this course know little about international politics. Study after study shows that, at the freshman/sophomore level, students have little sense of history or current events, much less of the basic forces that shape them. This text, therefore, operates from a reasonably *tabula rasa*, or blank slate, assumption. To the occasional student who has daily read the *New York Times* since age ten and is ready for a seventh-floor appointment at the State Department, again my apologies.

The next dilemma was what to cover and what to omit. My first-draft chapters were wonders of comprehensiveness—monsters, in fact. At the rate I was going, the text would have approached 1,000 printed pages. Obviously unacceptable. The choice was then either to touch on most of the significant aspects of international politics (but necessarily to do so only briefly, in the interest of space) or to omit many aspects and give those that remained an extensively detailed analysis. As will be plain, I opted for the former approach. There is no pretense here that the subjects I will address are covered exhaustively. They are not. This text, as the title says,



is an introduction. If you really want to *know* about something, you will have to do a lot more than just read this book or even take this course. It is the author's hope that the text can thus serve as a base, a beginning. It is a base on which the instructor can build, enlightening his or her classes on the many subtleties that, necessarily, this text could not fully elucidate. The text is also meant to be a base from which student readers can begin further study of international relations. Footnotes hardly ever enter the average undergraduate's consciousness, but for those who wish to expand their understanding, footnotes are a valuable source of reference to more comprehensive studies.

Organizing the topics of this text was another interesting challenge. Someday someone will invent a modular, snap-together text that instructors can rearrange so that it will follow their own concepts and syllabus in exact order. Unfortunately, that day did not arrive before this text went to print. The general idea behind the organization of this text was borrowed from one of my excellent graduate school teachers, Susan Koch. She, in turn, was, I think, influenced by John Stoessinger and his earlier text *The Might of Nations*, all of which leaves me in pretty good company. The first three chapters focus on some of the bases of international politics and the study of that subject. Topics include why international politics is important globally and individually, who the actors are, and how the subject can be approached. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 discuss some of the basic motivational drives of international politics, including nationalism, ideas and ideology, and national interest. Chapters 7 through 11 focus on the "action," the way the world drama is played out. Power, force, diplomacy, and subversion are the divisions. It is, as we see, a world "full of sound and fury." The final four chapters, 12 through 16, look again at some of the world problems and areas of

cooperation, such as organization, rules, arms, economics, and the human condition, and examine cooperation, the alternative to the all too common self-interested sound and fury.

For those many instructors whose organization differs from mine, care has been given to the table of contents and to the index in order to facilitate using the text for your syllabus. Economics, for one, is found in chapters 11 and 12 and in parts of chapters 1, 7, and 16. Arms and force are in chapters 8 and 15 and in parts of chapter 7.

It is also well that an author be clear about his or her basic orientations. As chapter 2 indicates, there are many approaches to the study of international politics. Which one an author adopts will heavily influence what is included in and excluded from a text and how the material is handled. I generally do not believe that any one of the approaches has all the answers. The text, therefore, is eclectic. It does, however, in its level of analysis, lean toward a state-centric approach. That does not mean that systems analysis (a term we will explore) is irrelevant. Indeed, the world system is an important factor, and we will spend considerable time examining its nature and impact. The overall view taken here, though, is that the primary actor in international politics is and, for the foreseeable future, will remain the state (that is, the country) and that states are reasonably free to choose courses of action based on their international goals and domestic pressures.

This text also has something of a traditional approach toward emphasizing power politics as the most important characteristic of international politics. The world is, at best, a primitive political system in which self-interest—and the power-based pursuit of that interest—is the main concern of the primary actors, or states. There are, however, significant other trends in international politics, and we will spend a substantial amount of

time exploring the possibilities of alternative processes and cooperation in areas such as international organization, international law, arms control, and a variety of transnational issues including human rights, environment, and resource preservation. In other words, although there is a slight emphasis on “what is” in terms of power politics and on the concerns and actions of the major powers, significant attention is also given to “what ought to be” for the survival of the world and also to the concerns and views of the less developed countries in the Third World.

Finally, some note should be made of this book’s title, *International Politics on the World Stage*, and the Shakespearean quotations that begin each chapter and are from time to time used to highlight a point. The idea behind this motif is to convey some of the sweep and complexity of the world drama. No one who has ever read William Shakespeare can dismiss his masterpieces as easily understood or inconsequential. Similarly, the events on the world stage are full of drama—sometimes hopeful, often tragic, but always riveting. But the play analogy can be taken too far, and overdoing it would only obscure some of the issues that need to be dealt with in a straightforward manner. You, the reader, would also be mistaken to assume that the play analogy means that, as a member of the audience, you can be content to sit back and watch the plot unfold. Quite to the contrary, part of what makes the world drama so compelling is that the audience is seated on stage and is part of, as well as witness to, the action

that is unfolding. Further, as in an improvisational play, the audience can become involved and, given the consequences of a tragic rather than a happy ending, ought to become involved, in its own self-interest. If there is anything this text preaches, it is that each and every one of us is intimately affected by international politics and that we have both a responsibility and an ability to become shapers of the script. As we shall see, our play has alternative scripts, and what the next scene brings depends in part on us. Last, with regard to the wholesale pilfering of the Bard of Avon’s wisdom, there is no pretense here of creating an all-encompassing play construct. Rather, the quotations are meant as a literary vehicle to give some shape to my discussion and to show the timelessness of many concerns. They are meant to be pondered and enjoyed, but they are not a substitute for an analysis of the many subjects I will cover.

As a last note, this author is sincerely interested in getting feedback from the faculty members and students who use this text. My pretensions to perfection have long since been dashed, and your recommendations for additions, deletions, and changes in future editions will be appreciated and seriously considered. Students, in particular, are encouraged to write to me in care of Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 555 Abrego, Monterey, CA 93940. This book, just like the world, can be made better, but its improvement depends heavily on whether you are concerned enough to think and act.

*John T. Rourke*

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# Acknowledgments

There are many involved in my immediate academic surroundings who contributed to this text. Russell Farnen, director of the University of Connecticut's undergraduate school on the Greater Hartford Campus, brought an atmosphere to that campus that has encouraged and allowed me, and others, to attempt what otherwise might never have been. And I am glad to have the opportunity to acknowledge an academic debt to my friend and colleague, J. Garry Clifford. Whatever I write, I know Garry will someday read, and my efforts are better for it.

This is the second book that Kathie Holmes has typed out for me, and she is a woman of tremendous skill and patience. Her role has been much closer to copyeditor than typist, and her suggestions and corrections were invariably on the mark. I also owe a debt to the librarians both of my home institution, the University of Connecticut, and Trinity College in Hartford. The Trinity staff's cooperation and their professional courtesy in giving me a work space provided important support.

During the gestation of this text, the ideas behind it and the manuscript changed extensively. A great deal of that evolution was due to the careful reading and thoughtful comments of the many reviewers who read parts

or all of the manuscript. They will see, I am sure, that many of their suggestions were incorporated and the text, thus, improved. Colleagues who participated as reviewers are Robert Bledsoe, University of Central Florida; Abbott Brayton, East Tennessee State University; Garry Clifford, University of Connecticut; Paul Davis, University of Nevada; Raymond Duvall, University of Minnesota; Michael Fry, University of Southern California; Francis Hoole, Indiana University; Thomas Hovet, University of Oregon; Richard Katz, Johns Hopkins University; James Lebovic, George Washington University; Vincent Mahler, Loyola University; Ronald Meltzer, State University of New York at Buffalo; George Modeleski, University of Washington; Harold Molineu, Ohio University; James Murray, University of Iowa; Suzanne Ogden, Northeastern University; Ilan Peleg, Lafayette College; Neil Richardson, University of Wisconsin; Charles Taylor, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University; and Conrad Waligorski, University of Arkansas.

Saving some of my greatest debts for last, I would like to applaud the work of the staff at Brooks/Cole. Marquita Flemming was my first political science editor. She got me off the ground and through the first half of the manuscript. She is a woman of great talent,



and I regard her with a mixture of affection and awe. When she left Brooks/Cole I was only consoled by the thought that it was for happy reasons. Distress at Marquita's departure was also eased by the arrival of Marie Kent. She has been a pleasure to work with personally and professionally. Given the tensions of publishing any book of this scope it may be rare to wind up liking one's editor, but I regard Marie with warm friendship as well as professional respect. I also found out that for all the grandiose titles like "author" and "editor" the real heroes of the publishing business are editorial assistants. Amy Mayfield, who is the "e.a." for political science, has worked very hard on this project and has helped turn the arduous into the bearable. She has responded to every need with dispatch and great good humor and can even understand why I'd rather be Marlin Perkins. In the production stage of the text, Phyllis Larimore has been my "boss." When I finished writing I thought I was finished. Wrong! Copyediting, galleys, page proofs, art, and a thousand other facets of publishing would

have overwhelmed me without Phyllis' expert guidance. Rephah Berg, who did the copyediting, is an individual of tremendous skill. After getting over feeling as if I had been sent back to the first grade, I learned to appreciate the fineness with which she "tuned up" my work. I'll never again lightly use *which* instead of *that*. Judy Blamer coordinated the photo and cartoon effort. We both learned a lot about intranational as well as international relations, and I have discovered what an interesting and exacting process photo editing is.

Finally, anyone who has written will recognize that it is an intensely personal, as well as professional, experience. During the good times and the bad Eileen McNutt has been there to listen, to understand, to encourage. Thank you. I would also like to thank my son, John Michael. Teenagers have a great perspective, sometimes, and on occasion when he and I wound up at a football game or watching MTV together, I was refreshed and my balance restored.

To all of you,

***I can no other answer make but thanks, and thanks, and ever thanks.***

***Shakespeare, Twelfth Night***

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