SECOND EDITION

Contemporary International Relations

Frameworks for Understanding

Daniel S. Papp

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Second Edition

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preface

When *Contemporary International Relations* was first published in 1984, the preface offered the not-too-original observation that "to some extent, we are all caught in the net of international relations."

That observation is more accurate and more obvious today than it was in 1984. International affairs and international issues intrude into more areas of everyday life now than ever before. Japanese manufacturers lower their prices, and the effects are felt in the United States as VCRs, TV sets, and microwave ovens become less expensive. Terrorists launch attacks in Europe, and thousands of Americans change their vacation plans. Reactor operators at a nuclear plant in the Soviet Union ignore proper operating procedures, and concern mounts that radiation has contaminated the food chain half a world away. The value of the American dollar drops precipitously in international markets, and domestic U.S. interest rates rise. Famine sweeps Africa, and TV viewers sitting in their living rooms in many cities are touched by the tragedy. A U.S.–Soviet summit fails to produce any results, and the entire international community holds its breath hoping that superpower relations have not been set back too far.

What is going on here? How can we hope to understand the complexities and cross-currents of contemporary international affairs? Even if we understand, is it possible to fashion policies that will shape future events, and in shaping future events lead to an improved international system?

As in the first edition, this second edition of *Contemporary International Relations* comes to grips with these questions by focusing on a set of key concepts grouped into five frameworks. These frameworks help provide order to the complexities and cross-currents of today's world by examining international actors and their interest; the views that the actors hold of themselves and others; the tools

that the actors use to work toward their objectives; the major issues that the actors and their world face; and the ways that the world might be expected to change by the end of the century.

The second edition has been completely updated, with current issues and events inserted throughout the text to provide examples of relevance and immediacy for students and professors alike. Two chapters have been substantially rewritten. This edition, again like the first, is written with introductory students in mind. It assumes only an elementary knowledge of international affairs, and steers clear of esoteric language and concepts alike. Even so, it provides a rigorous background in international affairs.

This edition of *Contemporary International Affairs* continues to stress that change is inevitable in international relations. But hopefully, change and the forces that lead to change can be understood. Optimistically, change and forces for change can even be shaped in ways that lead to improvements in the human condition.

"How long to sing a new song?" U-2 asked in one of its songs. No one can answer that question. And one need only stay abreast of contemporary international affairs to know that we have a long way to go. Indeed, in almost every respect this planet remains a land of confusion. Even so, the third stone from the sun still survives, and with understanding, skill, and perhaps a little luck, we may yet fashion a safer, saner, and more humane world for ourselves, our children, and future generations.

D. S. P.

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part five

chapter 1

Understanding International Relations

- **What is today's international system like?**
- **What methods have people used to study the international system?**
- **How does this text analyze the international system?**

Contemporary international relations are becoming increasingly complex. Although traditional interpretations of international relations emphasizing the East-West conflict, the primacy of the nation-state, and the problems brought about by economic underdevelopment all remain valid, they by themselves are no longer able to explain events in the international arena. Capitalist states are no longer necessarily allied with capitalist states against what they perceive as communist expansionism, and communist states are no longer necessarily allied with other communist states against what they perceive as capitalist imperialism. Nation-states have been joined by a bewildering variety of multinational corporations, international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and even individuals as prominent actors in the international community. Economic backwardness continues to plague broad areas of the world, but within this panorama of underdevelopment some states are beginning to make economic strides forward, whereas others are sinking into even more abject squalor and poverty.

A Selective Tour of International Relations: Libya, Chernobyl, and the Philippines

Three examples from early 1986 amply illustrate the complexities that exist within contemporary international relations. In Libya, the United States used its military power to punish Libya and its president Muammar Qadhafi for Libya's support of international terrorism directed against U.S. and other Western interests. In the Soviet Union, a nuclear power plant at Chernobyl experienced catastrophic failure, the consequences of which had widespread international impact. And in the Philippines, a "people's revolution," aided and abetted by the Catholic church and international television coverage of ongoing events overthrew Ferdinand Marcos, longtime ruler of the island nation. All three examples raised significant questions about the way the international system works today.

U.S.-Libyan tensions had been rising since at least 1981 when the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) accused Libya of being the leading sponsor of state-supported terrorism. Libya rejected the CIA's claim, but nevertheless proudly asserted that it supported the Palestine Liberation Organization's (PLO's) efforts to establish a Palestinian state and opposed U.S. imperialism and neocolonialism around the world. Also in 1981, U.S. F-14 fighters shot down two Libyan fighters, and reports circulated that Qadhafi had dispatched hitmen to the United States to assassinate U.S. government officials. Additionally, Libyan agents began a program of assassinations of Libyan exiles living in Europe and the United States that by 1986 had claimed the lives of at least fifteen Libyan exiles.

By 1983, Libyan links to terrorist activities were publicly well established. Libya was implicated in the 1983 destruction of the American embassy in Beirut; the 1984 mining of the Red Sea; the 1985 hijacking of the Italian cruise ship, *Achille Lauro;* the 1985 hijacking of a TWA jetliner; and the December 1985 massacres at the Rome and Vienna airports. "State-supported terrorism" became a new term that frightened many, and Libya was not the only country implicated in this new form of low-intensity conflict. Table 1–1 details the major incidents of state-supported terrorism against the United States and other Western interests between 1983 and 1986.

The Reagan administration, after long proclaiming its intention to retaliate for terrorist attacks, began to move against Libya following the Rome and Vienna airport massacres. In January 1986 President Reagan proclaimed economic sanctions against Libya and ordered Americans living there to leave. Additionally, the United States urged its European allies to apply economic sanctions to Libya; at first, none did. Nevertheless, it was clear that the United States was stepping up its pressure against Qadhafi.

Meanwhile, Qadhafi proclaimed Libyan sovereignty over areas of the Mediterranean Sea extending as far as 120 miles from the Libyan coast. This claim of sovereignty was not recognized by international law, which accepted only a 12-mile limit. Nevertheless, Qadhafi's "line of death" served as the perfect pretext for the United States to challenge the Libyan leader directly. In late March 1986, U.S. naval vessels and aircraft ventured across Qadhafi's "line of death." When Libyan antiaircraft missiles were fired at the U.S. planes, the United States attacked the base from which the missiles were launched, and when Libyan patrol boats moved toward U.S. ships, U.S. planes and ships used Harpoon missiles to attack three of the Libyan craft.

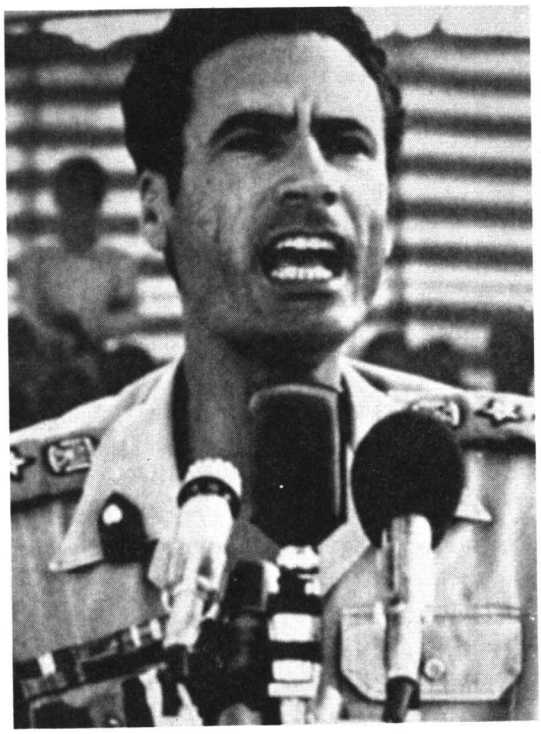
Table 1–1
Major State-Supported Terrorist Actions Against U.S. and Western Interests, and Major U.S. Responses—1983 to 1986

April 1983	17 Americans killed in truck bomb attack on U.S. Embassy in Beirut.
October 1983	241 Americans killed in truck bomb attack on U.S. Marine headquarters in Beirut; Iranian and Syrian complicity suspected, along with others.
December 1983	Truck bomb damages U.S. Embassy in Kuwait; Iranian and Syrian complicity suspected, along with others.
April 1984	British policewoman killed in London in hail of gunfire from Libyan Embassy.
July 1984	Libyan vessel mines the Red Sea; 18 merchant ships damaged.
April 1985	Qadhafi calls on supporters to undertake violence against the United States and its interests.
June 1985	TWA jetliner is hijacked, with one American killed; complicity of several countries suspected, including Libya, Syria, and Iran.
October 1985	Italian cruiseliner *Achille Lauro* is hijacked, with one American killed; Libyan complicity suspected.
November 1985	Egyptian jetliner is hijacked, with one American killed; Libyan complicity suspected.
December 1985	Terrorist attacks on Rome and Vienna airports kill 20, including 5 Americans; Libyan and Iranian complicity suspected, and Qadhafi calls attacks "heroic"; Reagan cuts all U.S. economic ties with Libya in January 1986 and orders Americans to leave Libya.
February 1986	CIA says Libyan agents are casing 35 U.S. foreign installations as potential terrorist targets.
March 1986	U.S. planes and ships cross Libya's "line of death"; Libya fires missiles at U.S. forces and sends out patrol boats; United States attacks missile sites and patrol boats.
April 1986	Bomb explodes on TWA flight, killing four Americans; Libyan complicity suspected.
April 1986	Bomb explodes in Berlin disco, killing two people including one American; United States claims that it has "exact, precise, and irrefutable" evidence of Libya's role in the bombing.
April 1986	U.S. air raid on "terrorist centers" in Libya.

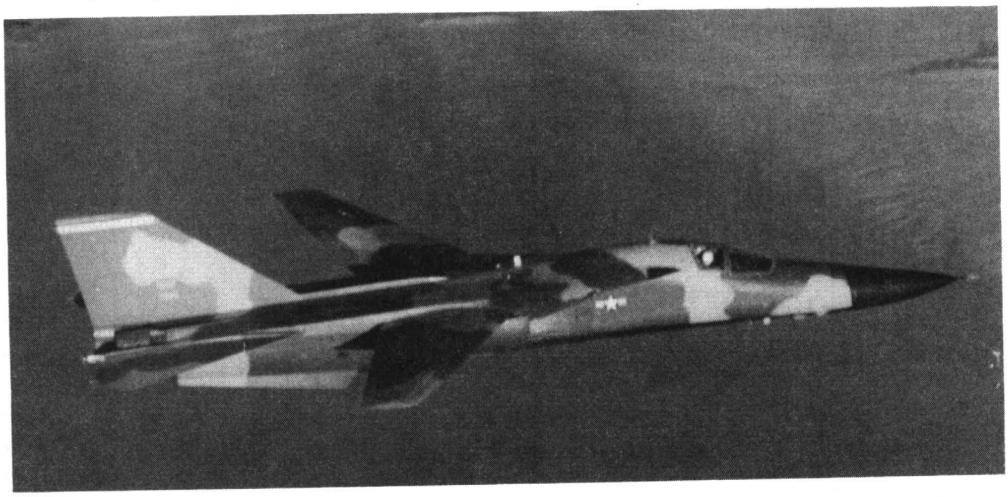
But the U.S.-Libyan confrontation did not end there. Several days later, a bomb tore through a Berlin disco frequented by American soldiers. Two people were killed, one Turkish woman and one U.S. serviceman. U.S. intelligence services again identified Libyan involvement in the bombing, and in mid-April, the United States launched bombing raids against five military installations in Libya. The United States used planes from U.S. aircraft carriers in the Mediterranean Sea, as well as FB-111 bombers based in Britain. U.S. allies in Europe, except for Great Britain,

opposed the attack; most other nations also condemned the U.S. raid. Some people even asserted that the U.S. raid proved that Ronald Reagan himself was a terrorist.

The confrontation between the United States and Libya gives rise to a number of questions about the state of contemporary international relations. When is it legitimate for a state to use military power to defend its interests? What is terrorism, and is it only a weapon that the weak use against the strong? Are terrorists sometimes more powerful than states, or does it only seem that way? To what extent should governments act to protect their citizens living or traveling overseas? The list of questions goes on and on.



Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi has played an active role in supporting international terrorism. In response to this, the U.S. attacked Libya in April 1986 using FB-111 aircraft such as the one pictured here. (United States Air Force.)



Very quickly, however, the questions raised by the U.S.-Libya confrontation were overshadowed by a new set of questions raised by the Soviet Union's nuclear reactor disaster at Chernobyl. An explosion and fire at one of four reactors located 80 miles north of Kiev released a cloud of radioactive dust that spread first across Scandinavia, then Europe, and eventually the rest of the world. At first, the Soviets said nothing, but then gradually admitted that a nuclear calamity of unrivaled magnitude had taken place. In the absence of factual data, some segments of the Western media reported that as many as 2,000 people may have died in the immediate aftermath of the accident; the actual number of immediate deaths was two, a number that had grown to twenty-five a month after the disaster.

Chernobyl was not the first nuclear accident; without doubt, however, it was the worst, and its international impact was immense. In Scandinavia and Eastern Europe, school children took iodine tablets to lessen the possibility of radiation poisoning. Throughout Europe, vegetables and other foodstuffs contaminated by radiation were removed from the marketplace. In Italy, one woman sued the Soviet government for the loss of her summer crops because of high levels of radioactivity. In Hiroshima, Japan, people huddled in their houses and refused to go outside for fear of radioactive fallout. American doctors went to Moscow to help their Soviet counterparts care for the victims of Chernobyl, and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev eventually used the disaster both to call for an end to the nuclear arms race and to appeal for a new international system of monitoring nuclear energy. In a curious twist, the Polish government rejected a U.S. plan to ship powdered milk to Poland to be distributed by nongovernmental organizations to those areas in Poland that received the most radiation, and instead offered to ship blankets and sleeping bags to New York City for distribution by private relief agencies to that city's poor and homeless. In Western Europe and the United States, Chernobyl reactivated antinuclear sentiment in wide segments of the population. And throughout the world in countries where nuclear power plants operated (see Table 1–2), citizens wondered, "Can Chernobyl happen here?"

Obviously, Chernobyl was a domestic Soviet disaster that had extensive international consequences. It also raised a number of frustrating questions. Where does domestic politics stop and international politics begin? What responsibility does one state have to notify other states of events that may affect them? In the absence of reliable information, what role should the international news media play? What legal and economic responsibility does one state have to citizens of other states? Again, the list of questions goes on and on.

And an entirely different set of questions was raised by yet another event that took place in the first third of 1986, the success of Corazon Aquino's "people power" revolution that forced longtime ruler Ferdinand Marcos to flee from the Philippines in late February 1986.

The Philippines' revolution had been smoldering for some time. Marcos had placed the Philippines under martial law during the early 1970s to quell growing violence and unrest, but increasingly the Philippine president, his wife Imelda, and their friends and relatives used martial law and the power that they acquired under it to exploit their improverished nation. At least in part because of Marcos' excesses, communist and Islamic insurrections grew throughout the Philippines in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Violence and unrest reached new heights in 1984 and 1985 following the late 1983 assassination of exiled Philippine opposition leader Benigno Aquino upon his

Table 1–2
Nuclear Power Reactors in Operation, 1984

Country	Number of Reactors	Total Nuclear Capacity (Megawatts)	Share of Total Domestic Capacity (Percent)	Share of World Nuclear Capacity (Percent)
United States	84	68,536	13	33
Soviet Union	44	22,706	8	11
France	36	28,015	39	14
Great Britain	32	6,569	10	3
Japan	28	19,025	12	9
West Germany	19	16,127	18	8
Canada	15	8,617	9	4
Sweden	10	7,355	24	4
Spain	7	4,865	12	2
Belgium	6	3,467	28	2
Others	47	23,375	—	11
Total	328	208,657	—	100

Source: Compiled from Tables 7–5 and 7–6, Lester R. Brown et al., *State of the World 1986* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1986), pp. 135, 137.

return to Manila. Meanwhile, the United States increased its pressure on Marcos to institute reforms and call an election. Finally, Marcos acceded to U.S. wishes and called an election for early 1986.

Marcos was opposed by Corazon Aquino, the wife of the assassinated Philippine opposition leader. The campaign itself was marred by violence and charges of impending fraud in the election. No less a person than Roman Catholic Cardinal Jaime Sin of the Philippines asked if the presidential election was not "a contest between good and evil, the children of light and the children of darkness." On other occasions, he denounced Marcos' violations of human rights and proclaimed, "God is higher than the government." Even so, in a clearly fraudulent election, Marcos emerged victorious.

But Marcos' base of power in the military had eroded. Within days, senior Philippine officers including the Minister of Defense revolted against Marcos. When it appeared that Marcos might use loyal military units to crush the rebels, Cardinal Sin used the Catholic church's "Radio Veritas" to call on the Philippine people to go to the rebel barracks and show their support for the rebels. Over a million people turned out to Sin's call and surrounded the barracks in a wall of humanity. With the presence of the international news media, Marcos could not order loyalist forces to attack through the unarmed crowd to get to the rebel forces. When the United States made it clear that Marcos had lost U.S. support, Marcos left the Philippines, and Corazon Aquino assumed the presidency.

The Philippines' "people's revolution" raised a number of fascinating questions, none of which were peculiar to the Philippines. What role does religion play in international affairs? How important is the media in influencing the course of international events? To what extent is it proper for one country to influence events in another country? Why does one government support another government, even if it is evident that the values of the second government are alien to those of the first?

The purposes of this text are to give some order to the seemingly unending list of questions about international affairs, and to move students of international affairs closer to answers to these and other questions. Before we clarify how this text handles these tasks, it may first be helpful to discuss other attempts that have been undertaken to make the study of international affairs more comprehensible.

Analyzing Contemporary International Relations

Without doubt, international relations appear at times bewildering. Students may at times feel that their efforts to understand the complexities of the international system today are futile.

The task is a difficult one, but it is not futile. It requires patience and persistence as well as logical inquiry and flexible perspectives. As the examples just given often illustrate, contemporary international events are regularly interrelated; our task of achieving understanding is therefore further complicated because seemingly unrelated events in different areas of the world may over time combine to affect still other regions of the globe. Events are demonstrably interdependent, and as we improve our ability to understand the causes of and reasons behind this interdependence, we will improve our ability to understand contemporary international relations.

How can our task best be approached? Throughout history, analysts of international relations have differed in their approaches to improving understanding in their field. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, for example, the study of international relations centered around *diplomatic history*. Who did what to whom at a particular time and place were the main features of the method of diplomatic history. This methodology concentrated on nation-states as the main actors in international relations and included the study of the major diplomats and ministers of the period. Detailed accuracy was required and obtained, but seldom, if ever, were causal connections or comprehensive analyses sought. As a means for understanding a particular series of events, diplomatic history was (and is) excellent; as a means for understanding broader sweeps of international relations or for developing a theoretical basis for the study of international relations, diplomatic history was (and is) of limited utility.

Whereas diplomatic history sought to explain a particular series of events, other methodologies were developed during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that viewed international relations on a global scale. *Strategic and geopolitical analyses*, methodologies in wide use even today, trace their roots to concepts developed by U.S. Admiral Alfred Mahan during the late nineteenth century and British geographer Sir Halford Mackinder during the early twentieth century. To Mahan the world's ocean were its highways, and whoever controlled its highways could control the course of international relations. Mahan was therefore a major proponent of sea power and advocated the development of a powerful American navy and the acquisition of overseas bases to support that navy. Not surprisingly, Mahan based most of his analysis on Great Britain and its Royal Navy.[1] Partly because of the urgings of Mahan, the United States strengthened its fleet during the late nineteenth century and actively sought and acquired territorial possessions in the Pacific Ocean, including Hawaii, Samoa, Guam, and the Philippines.

Sir Halford Mackinder, on the other hand, emphasized the importance of land power. To Mackinder whichever country dominated the center of the Eurasian land