INTERNATIONAL POLITICS AND STATE STRENGTH

THOMAS J. VOLGY
AND ALISON BAILIN

International Politics & State Strength

Thomas J. Volgy
Alison Bailin

BOULDER
LONDON

Published in the United States of America in 2003 by
Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc.
1800 30th Street, Boulder, Colorado 80301
www.rienner.com

and in the United Kingdom by
Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc.
3 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London WC2E 8LU

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Volgy, Thomas J.
International politics and state strength / Thomas J. Volgy and Alison Bailin.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 1-58826-141-7 (hc : alk. paper)—ISBN 1-58826-117-4 (pb : alk. paper)
1. International relations. 2. State, The. 3. Sovereignty. I. Bailin, Allison, 1963–
II. Title.
JZ1316.V65 2003
327.1'01—dc21

2002031838

British Cataloguing in Publication Data
A Cataloguing in Publication record for this book
is available from the British Library.

Printed and bound in the United States of America

The paper used in this publication meets the requirements of the American National Standard for Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials Z39.48-1984.

5 4 3 2 1

International Politics & State Strength

Preface

Although the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union were celebrated in most quarters, they introduced a substantial amount of gloom and doom in the halls of academe, particularly among those scholars—in comparative politics and international relations—who failed to predict these profoundly salient events of the twentieth century. Failure to predict meant to many that their tools of discovery lacked precision and insight into the processes at work within and between nations. Much gnashing of teeth and public introspection were evident in the scholarly journals and books that followed on the heels of these transforming experiences.

In writing this book, we have been motivated by those same events. Yet, we don't share the gloom and negativity of many of our colleagues. Political science and international relations are "complex sciences." As such, they build gradually from constant experimentation with and testing of concepts and theories against the rich tide of ongoing historical experience. Failure to us (and especially when such failure is about an extremely low probability event, no matter how grave its consequences) represents additional opportunity to reexamine what is useful in the academic toolshed and to either discard tools no longer valuable or build new tools as well as reapply potentially useful ones in more creative ways.

One path to such reexamination and learning from failure is to listen more closely to what policymakers are saying and doing about events. Their words may be confusing, since we may misunderstand the audience to which they are aimed. At times the words are meant to conceal behaviors. Still again, words may be spoken with the best of inten-

tions and without deceit only to fall prey to the inability to effectuate policies consistent with spoken desires. Yet, in all of those instances, the articulations of policymakers constitute important political phenomena, worthy of study.

The utterance of one such phrase will receive at least a footnote in history, and it has certainly prompted the research program behind this book. When George Bush used the words *a new world order,* he may have indicated an intention to set as a goal for U.S. foreign policy the shaping of the contours of the post–Cold War international system, or his phrase may have been simply an observation about how much the world would change after 1989. To us, it was a call for academics to investigate the shape of the new world order, its relationship to its antecedents, and the dynamics that may drive such global architectural creation. Here, we add our response to that call.

One of us spent several years between 1989 and 1997 working with elites and counterelites in Eastern Europe and in the countries newly emerging from the former Soviet Union. Although this was an exhilarating experience, involvement with the people emerging from the ashes of the Soviet era began to cast a bit of doubt about how new this new world order was. With the exceptions of Hungary, the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovenia, and the Baltic states, much of the encounter with those who sought to govern and to fashion the future looked distinctly familiar. Some of that familiarity was in the faces of people adapting to a world common to us in the West. Some of the familiarity was in the unwillingness to relinquish control regardless of the earthquake around them. Some—both old and new leaders—began to articulate symbols and worldviews that historians would quickly recognize. Many of these encounters were reminiscent not of the unique properties of the twenty-first century but acted more as reminders of how much the new era was part of what had come before. Thus, a significant part of this book was born from our experiences of trying to help "grow" democracy and state competence in Central Asia, Ukraine, and East-Central Europe. We owe much to the National Democratic Institute, particularly Nelson Ledsky, for making those experiences possible.

We owe as well a tremendous debt of gratitude to several scholars. First among them is Susan Strange, whose friendship and scholarship inspired us in equal parts. Susan was daring, she was tremendously creative, and she prided herself on being an academic bomb-thrower in the best sense of the phrase. Her concepts of relational versus structural power, and her movement back and forth between the demise of the state and the potential greatness of U.S. power, stand at the forefront of

much of our thinking about state strength and its relationship to the new world order. Her friendship proved to be even more important.

We owe much to Bruce Bueno de Mesquita as well. Tom Volgy spent a substantial number of years in scholarly pursuit, trying and failing to challenge Bruce's approach to international structure and its effects on international politics. Much later, it was Bruce's encouragement and prodding that led us away from the road of a couple of journal articles toward the book-length effort that this project became.

We owe a great deal as well to Terry Hopmann at Brown. Tom Volgy took Terry's first seminar at the University of Minnesota, an experience that quickly led to a shift from comparative to international politics. Since then, Terry has become a good friend and a very resourceful colleague.

In the best Susan Strange tradition (she had a unique dedication to graduate students even after she left the classroom), we need to acknowledge the debt we owe to several graduate students who have become friends and valuable partners in the scholarly enterprise. Larry Imwalle became an invaluable colleague before graduation and co-authored several articles with us on this topic. His methodological and conceptual insights and skills added greatly to the project. Likewise, Stacey Mayhall and Jeff Corntassel enriched our understanding of the enterprise. We are grateful as well to the graduate students of Political Science 596E (Mikhail Beznosov, Greg Dixon, Derrick Frazier, Gail Helt, Rob Ingersoll, Susan Jackson, Charles Rice, and Kelly Ward), students who were willing to plunge into materials we foisted on them; they responded with intelligence and eagerness to help uncover the patterns we were pursuing.

Alison Bailin is especially grateful to her graduate committee, William Dixon, Michael Sullivan, and Thomas Volgy. Without their guidance, this collaborative project would not have been possible.

Finally, but just as important, was the support of our spouses, Sharon Douglas and David Bellows, who kept putting up with us, reading our words, and listening to our angst. We are immensely grateful for their encouragement and advice.

Contents

1

Practicing Agnosticism Around Passionate Believers

Starting in 1989, the international political landscape—as it had been known to at least two generations since the end of World War II—was suddenly turned upside down. Mikhail Gorbachev's meanderings through glasnost and perestroika erupted into a gigantic explosion as revolutions swept through Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia while East Germany disappeared beneath the rubble of the Berlin Wall and the Iron Curtain separating much of Europe. Within the next two years the Soviet Union ceased to exist and was replaced by countries unfamiliar to observers of the modern international landscape: Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Georgia, Armenia—a seemingly endless list of new countries with old names. As one of two superpowers imploded and disappeared off the political map, it carried with it the last vestiges of a communist ideology and an international communist political party that claimed to speak for hundreds of millions of human beings. By 1992 the tumult began to subside, and as Gorbachev was being burned in effigy across the four corners of the former Soviet Union, Westerners praised his name and dispensed advice on the free market, privatization, democratic processes, and civic community throughout the range of new, postcommunist republics.[1]

Scholars and policymakers were immediately confronted with two immense questions. The first was, How did this happen? At least to international relations (IR) scholars (not to mention Soviet area specialists), the inability to predict the end of the Cold War posed a potential crisis of confidence regarding the utility of their theoretical and methodological tools. After all, this was not a minor event in the history of modern international politics. An entire global architecture suddenly

came to an end, a major power disappeared overnight, and the basic, bipolar framework guiding the relations of most states in international politics became meaningless. How much confidence could one have in a field's explanatory tools if such cataclysmic changes went unpredicted?[2] The self-flagellation, however, may have been a bit unwarranted. This was certainly a low-probability event: Such structural changes perhaps occur no more than once per century. Even more unlikely, they had not occurred in the previous five centuries without a major, global war.

The second question was even more salient: What would follow the demolished Cold War/bipolar architecture, and how would it be built? The answer to this question is critical not only to the scholarly community but to practitioners as well. There was little doubt that there would be new architecture. In the aftermath of the destruction of the Berlin Wall and the looming threat of Iraqi pressure on the Middle East, President George Bush readily proclaimed the coming of a "new world order" on the heels of the previous era. But the contours of such a new world order and the agents that would be its architects were and continue to be very much in doubt.

Is There a New World Order, and If So, What Is It?

It is this new world order that is the focus of this book. The world is now in the second decade following the previous order's demise. Compare this time to the previous world order construction. In analagous time, we can compare ourselves to the late 1950s, more than a decade after the end of World War II. Surely, we knew then the contours of the world order succeeding the postwar years. By 1958, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) had integrated West Germany's military infrastructure, the first stirrings of the European Union had been launched through the European Coal and Steel Community, the relations between East and West had fully hardened, and U.S. leadership of the global economic infrastructure was clearly in evidence. Today there is still no consensus on what the new world order entails. The absence of consensus seems to exist at both the policymaker level and at the level of international relations literature.

Among policymakers, the disagreements are quite clear. U.S. pronouncements focus on creating a new world order, and through statements that emphasize U.S. military and economic might, the implication is one of an order being led—if not primarily constructed—by the United States. Although the word *hegemon* does not seem to have left

the lips of U.S. decisionmakers, the implications of U.S. hegemony are nonetheless evident:

> Secretary of Defense William Cohen stated, "We want to dominate across the full spectrum of conflict, so that if we ever do have to fight, we will win on our terms."[3]
>
> U.S. Deputy Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers said that the United States is "the world's only economic superpower [and has] the world's most flexible and dynamic economy."[4]
>
> The U.S. Foreign Intelligence Board declared, "US global economic, technological, military, and diplomatic influence will be unparalleled among nations as well as regional and international organizations in 2015. This power not only will ensure America's preeminence, but also will cast the United States as a key driver of the international system. . . . US economic actions, even when pursued for domestic goals . . . will have a major global impact because of the tighter integration of global markets by 2015. . . . The United States will remain in the vanguard of the technological revolution from information to biotechnology and beyond. . . . Both allies and adversaries will factor continued US military pre-eminence in their calculations of national security interests and ambitions. . . . Some states—adversaries and allies—will try at times to check what they see as American 'hegemony.'"[5]

Meanwhile, the reaction from other quarters attests to fears about and resistance to U.S. hegemony. French, Chinese, and Russian foreign policy makers (not to mention a broad range of third world leaders from Malaysia, Venezuela, Singapore, and Iran) have either publicly denounced U.S. hegemonic intentions or have offered alternative designs for the new global architecture:

> Chinese officials denounced "America's global strategy for world hegemony."[6]
>
> French policymakers "expressed alarm at American domination in what they call a 'unilateral world' and have expressed a determination to stand for a different economic model and a more multilateral world order."[7]
>
> At the Group of 7 (G-7) summit of 1997, a French official pointedly asked, "When exactly did the Americans go from leadership to hegemony?"[8]
>
> A joint Russian-Chinese statement on the need for a multipolar world states, "No country should seek hegemony, practice power politics or monopolize international affairs."[9]
>
> The Russian Institute for U.S./Canada Studies proclaimed, "Neither Russia, nor China nor any other country is capable of creat-

> ing a symmetrical threat to the United States. And so the Americans are seeking ways of getting a free hand so as to gain even greater superiority in the military sphere."[10]

These statements indicate a desire to fashion a new, multipolar order and, at least by implication, suggest that such an order is still possible, since the new world order has yet to arise.

Among the scholarly international relations community, there is also little consensus on whether the new world order has arisen and what it may be. A small group has argued that the new world order has already emerged. Some of these scholars have called it the "unipolar moment" (Krauthammer, 1990–1991; Wohlforth, 1999) and see in U.S. strength either a temporary phenomenon or, more cautiously, a short-term opportunity to fashion the contours of international politics. Others (e.g., Ikenberry, 2001) can see more clearly the emerging contours of a "constitutional" world order shaped by both strong democratic states and continuity from and elaboration on previous practices. Some (e.g., Friedman, 1999; Gray, 1999) have suggested that the new world order is indeed here, is driven by processes of globalization, and is producing something entirely new in global relationships.

A second and larger group of scholars is far too cautious to fix the contours of a new world order in the present, warning us that it is still too early to tell the near future, but engages in forecasts for the longer term. Included in this group are those (e.g., Mearsheimer, 1990; Waltz, 1993) who warn us that the future is likely to look much like the past in forms of polarized relations between satisfied and dissatisfied states and in the reemergence of rivalries between great powers. One variation on this school of thought (e.g., Huntington, 1996) projects a new world order of sharply defined cultures (and states representing those cultures) in major conflict over basic human values and the ends to which global resources should be placed. The end result could be a new bipolarity between the West and the Islamic/Sinic cultures. In a similarly pessimistic vein, Immanuel Wallerstein (1995) forecasts a global system of crisis induced by uneven development and bipolar conflict, not on cultural lines but on the basis of a possible Japan-U.S.-China coalition against Europe-Russia (Modelski and Thompson, 1999). Paul Kennedy (1993) predicts, as well, rising conflict promoted by technological change and uneven development, leading to possible chaos in the system. A more centrist forecast is offered by George Modelski and William Thompson (1999); they see the evolution of democratic community as a trend that may be able to address problems of global organ-

ization. Most positive is Francis Fukuyama (1992), who sees a long-term future of liberal democratic peace driven by technological change and "self-esteem" (Modelski and Thompson, 1999).

If we are fortunate enough in three or four decades to survive global warming; the growing inequities between and within nations; technological innovations surrounding biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons; and ethnonational hostilities along with a host of future rivalries and conflicts, readers will judge readily enough if decisionmakers and scholars were accurate in their assessments of how the international system evolved after the Cold War. Such hindsight, however, is a luxury not available to those living in the present. Foreign policy makers need to pursue their objectives now, and in a manner sensitive to what they can and cannot accomplish in a world constrained by systemic structure. Academics know well that context matters,[11] and they cannot ply the tools of their trade without a clearer understanding of whether a new world order is emerging and what its contours are likely to be.

Clearing the Confusion

We write this book in the belief that systemic structure does matter and issues about world order are extremely important in understanding the ebb and flow of international politics. We will argue that there are two major reasons the evolution of the new world order continues to look so problematic. The first concerns the issue of state strength. The world orders of the past 500 years have been constructed by very strong states. Scholars (at least from the neorealist school) have assumed that it is the distribution of strength among states that is the key ingredient determining the formation of a new world order. In so doing, they have assumed that strong states will always have sufficient strength to fashion a new world order, although at times—witness the unwillingness of the United States after World War I—they may not wish to do so.

We argue that the assumption of sufficient strength is unwarranted and is due to some conceptual fuzziness over different concepts of strength. We suggest instead that whether states have the type of strength needed for global architectural construction is an empirical question, and sufficient economic or military strength should not be assumed. Then, we will demonstrate that in the context of post–Cold War international politics, the strength needed for architectural construction is indeed missing in those entities most likely to engage in building a new world order.

Second, we will suggest that the unique manner in which the old order ended—unexpectedly, and without war—has provided a rare opportunity for architectural construction (or at least the propping up of wobbling architecture from the previous era) despite the absence of sufficient state strength. A new order usually arises from the ashes of a major war and typically occurs as dissatisfied states challenge status quo powers (see, e.g., Organski, 1968; Gilpin, 1981; Modelski, 1978; Modelski and Modelski, 1988; Modelski and Thompson, 1988; Thompson, 1988; Rasler and Thompson, 1994; Tammen et al., 2000). Although each of these systemic theories—power transition, hegemonic changes, and long cycles—measures power differently, they all find a correlation between the changing distribution of relative capabilities and systemic upheaval.[12] Some scholars acknowledge that power transitions may be accomplished peacefully but note that there is no historical precedent for such an occurrence (Gilpin, 1981; Modelski, 1987; Modelski and Thompson, 1988).

We propose that the end of the Cold War is such an occurrence. We then develop a model to explain the peaceful power transition and restructuring of the international system. The outcome, however, is not likely to be typical of new world order construction. Typically, new architecture is not built from scratch but rebuilt from the skeletal remains of global wars. The end of the Cold War was unpredictable in large part because although significant aspects of its architecture collapsed without war, much of the "old order" was left standing. Thus, architects in the post–Cold War world have the enviable position of inheriting architecture that was designed for another era and may or may not be useful in the new one. Still, renovation with incremental adjustments takes far less effort and resources than building anew. Sometimes these adjustments may be so incremental that it is difficult to notice their changing shape. This incremental change may help to explain why identifying the new world order and its contours is so problematic.

There may be a third reason as well for the contention in the field over the nature of the new world order. It is a major understatement to suggest that the field of international relations is fragmented and in major conflict over alternative theoretical perspectives. Different schools explain different facets of international relations and see different types of state strength and different types of order in the system. Our approach seeks to synthesize and extend at least two of the approaches—neorealism and neoliberal institutionalism—in order to generate a more comprehensive view of the emerging world order.

Where We Stand Within the Field's Debates

How does our work generate a more comprehensive view and tie into the literature on international politics, especially among the major controversies between contending frameworks of analysis? Both realists and neorealists (Schweller and Priess, 1997) believe that structural arrangements matter a great deal in international politics. The manner in which systemwide capabilities are organized (around polarities) and rules and norms are created and sustained has important implications for interstate behavior, and as well for patterns of systemic conflict, cooperation, stability, and change. As long as neorealists believe that the primary principle of international political relations is anarchy (e.g., Herz, 1950; Waltz, 1979), these structural arrangements will continue to provide sufficient predictability for actors to act as if there is a *minimum* amount of order and certainty in the system.

At the same time, even neorealists will reluctantly admit that structural arrangements for dealing with anarchy in international politics do not provide a comprehensive explanation for *all* types of international phenomena. Their salience quite likely will vary with a number of considerations involved with the ebb and flow of relations between international actors (e.g., see Lamborn, 1997), and their importance is likely to be modified, diminished, or enhanced by considerations advanced by neoliberal institutionalists, multilateralists, postmodern feminists, linkage theorists, constructivists, and issue-oriented theorists. None of these approaches to international scholarship are incompatible with the perspectives of structural theorists. Although the debates among these contending schools of thought in the study of international politics have been harsh, loud, and at times quite undiplomatic, we agree with Lamborn (1997) that rather than being in conflict, these schools often address different facets of international relations with respect to the strategic interactions among actors participating in international politics. Thus, the importance of anarchy and the resulting security dilemma for states "may vary all the way from being a central preoccupation of policy makers to a residual background condition" (Lamborn, 1997:207).

We conclude as well from these debates that even the issue of architectural construction and the development (and perhaps the demise as well) of global structural arrangements—as important as they are to neorealists—cannot be solely explained from a neorealist perspective. It requires quite a neorealist contortion or two to try to account for the absence of U.S. global leadership between World War I and World War

II or to provide a quality neorealist explanation for the systemic structure that evolved between those two wars. It requires even more contortion to continue to minimize the role of multilateral institutions in the twentieth century, or to ignore the extent to which world orders can be creatively constructed and seem to be rebuilt anew in ways both similar to and different from previous orders, suggesting constructivist explanations (and giving hope that humankind actually learns from itself).[13]

We find it absolutely impossible to successfully pursue the task before us by choosing only one school of thought. Instead, we set out to beg, borrow, steal, and integrate as much as possible from contending perspectives while still trying to make our arguments and theoretical framework relatively parsimonious.

We start with the neorealist premise that structural considerations matter in critical ways for certain very important phenomena in international relations. Although structural considerations may not provide a comprehensive explanation to account directly for the behavior of international actors, those actors and actions are "strongly affected by the constraints and incentives provided by the international environment. When the international system changes, so will incentive and behavior" (Keohane, 1984:26). In these terms, we are part of the neorealist school. Nor are we alone: Foreign policy makers seem to believe as well in the crucial importance of global architecture (e.g., Bush, 1992; Lake, 1993).

We are still marching with the neorealist school when we ask questions about the nature of state strength (akin to the distribution of power capabilities in the system) and changes to state strength in international politics. We believe that our approach to state strength provides key answers to the puzzle of architectural construction, but we begin to depart from the neorealists when we unfold state strength into its components, including domestic factors. We find it impossible to assess the strength of major powers in the international system without asking questions about both the endogeneous constraints operating on state strength and the exogenous context of systemic constraints (other than those normally associated with major powers) operating on state strength. Our operationalization of state strength—and especially its domestic dimension—relies heavily on scholars (e.g., Evangelista, 1997; Risse-Kappen, 1991) who have stressed the importance of domestic structure as a critical intervening variable in the analysis of international politics.

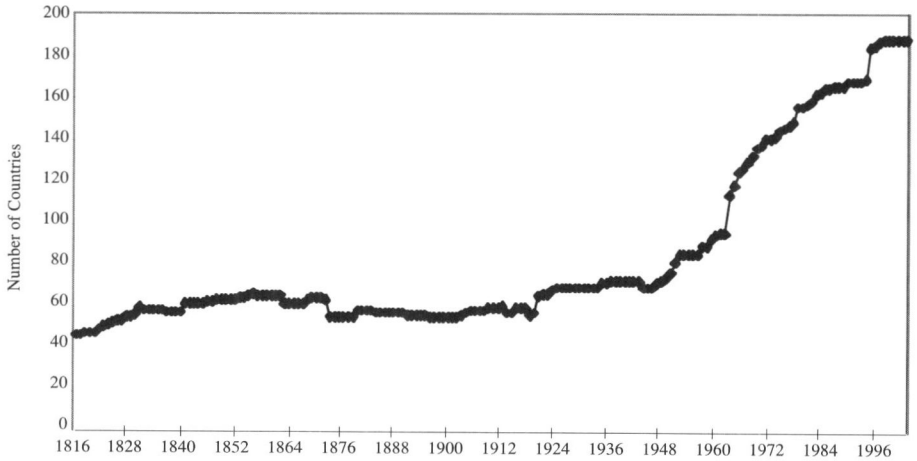
We move even further from neorealists when we think of the enormous changes that took place in the twentieth century with respect to the range of actors and institutions operating in the international sys-

tem. The number of state members of the system has grown fourfold over the past two centuries and doubled between 1959 and 1992 (see Figure 1.1).[14] These new states now make claims to Westphalian principles of sovereignty.

The number of nonstate actors has grown even faster with resources often more substantial than those held by many states. At some level, the existence of these actors is not profoundly new. One can compare the proliferation of global narcotics traffickers and organized international crime syndicates to the existence of organized pirateering centuries ago and, more recently, the Mafia in the early part of the twentieth century. Nor are multinational corporations new to the international landscape. Neither are thousands of nongovernmental actors such as Amnesty International, Greenpeace, or Physicians Without Borders. What is new is the sheer proliferation of such actors and the resources they bring with them to the international system.

Just as dramatic has been the growth of both regional and global multilateral institutions. These may have numbered in the dozens a century ago; today, they are in the thousands. The efforts of nonstate actors to organize themselves (and to help organize international relations) through nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are nothing less than spectacular (see Figure 1.2). Nongovernmental organizations alone increased more than fivefold between 1950 and 1995.

Figure 1.1 State Membership in the International System, 1816–1999



Source: Gleditsch and Ward, 1999, 2001.