

**THE  
DOMESTIC  
BASES OF  
GRAND  
STRATEGY**

**E D I T E D B Y**

**Richard Rosecrance  
and Arthur A. Stein**

# *The Domestic Bases of Grand Strategy*

EDITED BY

RICHARD ROSECRANCE  
AND ARTHUR A. STEIN

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of Grand Strategy*

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Mila Stein*

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## *Acknowledgments*

This book began in our conversations about the field of international politics. Each of us was dissatisfied with neorealist arguments and presentations of grand strategy. Our own work (Rosecrance, *The Rise of the Trading State*, and Stein, *Why Nations Cooperate*) clearly reflected departures from core realist assumptions. In the present work, we anchor the analysis of grand strategy in the political economy of domestic politics. This focus was reflected in two panels of papers at the 1989 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association and later in a conference at UCLA in March 1990, which included in addition to the scholars whose work appears in this volume, Joseph Nye, Jr., and David Lake.

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# [1]

## *Beyond Realism: The Study of Grand Strategy*

RICHARD ROSECRANCE AND ARTHUR A. STEIN

"Strategy" traditionally referred to the planning and employment of military resources to win major campaigns against a foe or to achieve victory in war itself.<sup>1</sup> Strongly influenced by the lessons of World War I, the British strategist Basil Liddell Hart broadened this conception when he recognized that military victory might be insufficient. If it left the nation weaker and vulnerable to a new conflict, success in war could not fulfill all the requirements of effective "strategy."<sup>2</sup> He wrote: "It is essential to conduct war with constant regard to the peace you desire. This is the truth underlying Clausewitz's definition of war as a 'continuation of policy by other means'—the prolongation of that policy through the war into the subsequent peace must always be borne in mind."<sup>3</sup> American nuclear strategists after World War II generalized this insight to include "deterrence" or the prevention of war.<sup>4</sup> According to them, the mounting of a permanently mobilized and invulnerable nuclear force in peacetime could deter attack by even the strongest enemy power.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See particularly Karl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976); Edward Mead Earle, ed., *Makers of Modern Strategy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1943); and B. H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy*, 2d rev. ed. (New York: Praeger, 1972).

<sup>2</sup> See particularly, B. H. Liddell Hart, *The British Way in Warfare* (New York: Penguin, 1942), chap. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Liddell Hart, *Strategy*, p. 366.

<sup>4</sup> Perhaps the signal works here are Bernard Brodie, *The Absolute Weapon* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1946), and Brodie, *Strategy in the Missile Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959).

<sup>5</sup> This was not a simple and straightforward process, however. Albert Wohlstetter's

"Grand strategy," however, represented a still more inclusive notion: it went beyond mere generalship in war or deterrence in peacetime to include "the policy governing [the use of military force] and combining it with other weapons: economic, political, psychological."<sup>6</sup> In modern terms, grand strategy came to mean the adaptation of domestic and international resources to achieve security for a state.<sup>7</sup> Thus, grand strategy considers *all* the resources at the disposal of the nation (not just military ones), and it attempts to array them effectively to achieve security in both peace and war.

After World War II, and particularly among U.S. strategists, this more encompassing definition became obscured as statesmen and policymakers became obsessed with the Soviet threat. Focusing narrowly on the military balance with the opponent,<sup>8</sup> they did not ask whether a Great Power could afford to maintain nuclear deterrence; they required it to do so, implicitly omitting other important variables in the grand strategic equation. A new group of realist thinkers in universities then joined nuclear strategists in this narrower conception. In addition to their endorsing deterrence, this second group were students and partisans of the traditional balance of power theory as it applied to relations among nations. Stressing the anarchic world in which states found themselves, realists held that nations must "balance" against their adversaries if they are to survive. In this process, states should act as the "international system" and the pattern of international threat dictates, and it is presumed that states initially balance internally via mobilization, irrespective of any political constraints.<sup>9</sup> In this respect, both nuclear strategists and realists tended to neglect patterns of domestic support and economic strength that might affect long term commitment to a deterrent, containment, or balance of power strategy.

Three recent critiques have questioned this narrowing of intellectual focus in the field of grand strategy. First, several analysts and his-

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"The Delicate Balance of Terror," *Foreign Affairs* 37 (January 1959): 211-34; and Thomas Schelling's "The Reciprocal Fear of Surprise Attack," in his *The Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960), make this abundantly clear.

<sup>6</sup>Liddell Hart, *Strategy*, p. 31.

<sup>7</sup>See particularly Michael Howard, *August 1941—September 1943*, vol. 4 of James Ramsay Montagu, ed., *Grand Strategy* (London: HMSO, 1956-76); Edward Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire: From the First Century AD to the Third* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976); Paul Kennedy, ed., *Grand Strategies in War and Peace* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

<sup>8</sup>It is perhaps suggestive that one of the most prestigious institutions dealing with nuclear strategy in the postwar period, the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), London, titled its annual publication *The Military Balance*.

<sup>9</sup>Great Powers especially respond this way. Only if internal mobilization proves insufficient do states balance externally by seeking allies.

torians have sought to show that victory in war or the maintenance of a successful far-flung empire in peace depends on a strong economic and industrial base that is not undermined by onerous military preparations. Nations should adopt a strategy that is economically efficient and does not produce "overstretch."<sup>10</sup> Others have contended that success in statecraft or grand strategy depends upon the ability to "extract" resources from one's own population. If the political opposition cannot be silenced, or if domestic groups demand a large slice of the resource pie, leaders may be tempted to adopt risky foreign policies to achieve cheap and easy victories in the short run. They may thereby precipitate foreign-policy disasters.<sup>11</sup> A third view is that the pattern of domestic politics involved in political and economic "logrolling" may help to account for territorial "overextension" and overcommitment in international relations.<sup>12</sup> Each of these contributions stresses the necessity of including domestic politics and economics in any broad calculus of grand strategy.

The purpose of this volume is to reinstate this broader conception of grand strategy and to indicate how it operates in specific historical and contemporary circumstances. The chapters all demonstrate that grand strategic assessments focusing only on the narrow constituents of realism—material power, changes in its distribution, and external threat—are radically incomplete and do not account for what nations actually do. Rather, domestic groups, social ideas, the character of constitutions, economic constraints (sometimes expressed through international interdependence), historical social tendencies, and domestic political pressures play an important, indeed, a pivotal, role in the selection of a grand strategy and, therefore, in the prospects for international conflict and cooperation. Under present international circumstances, such domestic forces may actually be increasing in scope and importance.

In contrast to realist theory, which places great stress on the "third image" in international politics—the level of the international system<sup>13</sup>—we want to illuminate the "second image" or the domestic

<sup>10</sup>The term "overstretch" comes from Liddell Hart but is used to great effect by Paul Kennedy, *Strategy and Diplomacy, 1870–1945* (London: Fontana, 1984), chap. 8, and also his *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (New York: Random House, 1987); and (as editor) *Grand Strategies in War and Peace*.

<sup>11</sup>The most important work here is Alan Lamborn's *The Price of Power: Risk and Foreign Policy in Britain, France, and Germany* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1991), particularly chap. 12.

<sup>12</sup>Jack Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).

<sup>13</sup>For the original distinction between "first image"—the nature of man, "second image"—the nature of the state and domestic society, and "third image"—the nature of the international system, see Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State, and War* (New York:

level. The particular nature of the domestic system in Japan, the United States, Britain, Imperial Germany, Eastern Europe, and even Soviet Russia has determined key decisions and national policies toward the outside world.

A central conclusion of the chapters that follow is that the presence or absence of *symmetrical* domestic conditions among the Great Powers is a major determinant of the viability of grand strategy. Countries that face unequal domestic constraints and pressures may not deter one another internationally. For example, long-run economic maximizers may not always deter short-term military maximizers. As another example, countries with a great deal of domestic support may need to mobilize less of their economic substance than a military regime that maintains only a shaky hold on public affection. As we shall see in a moment, the realist model presumes that the selection of grand strategies is unhampered by domestic constraints. Because realism represents the core approach to the study of international politics today and because arguments about the role of domestic politics are presented as deviations from realist theory, we begin with a discussion of the realist canon.

#### THE REALIST CANON

In the historical past, and particularly in the last ten years, the dominant approach to the study of international relations and also to grand strategy has been that of structural realism.<sup>14</sup> The structural

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Columbia University Press, 1959). Waltz's images are equated with levels of analysis in a review essay by J. David Singer, "International Conflict: Three Levels of Analysis," *World Politics* 12 (April 1960): 453–61. For further discussion see J. David Singer, "The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations," *World Politics* 14 (October 1961): 77–92; and Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), chap. 1.

<sup>14</sup>The realist tradition is virtually as old as recorded history, tracing its origins to Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*. Given its long pedigree, the practitioners of realism have not always agreed on individual points, but generally see a tendency toward international conflict as the salient characteristic of the field. This tendency, however, may be disciplined through alliances and the balance of power. The signal recent realist work is Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1979) and his sections in *Neorealism and Its Critics*, ed. Robert Keohane (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986). Also important are Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Stephen Krasner, *Defending the National Interest: Raw Materials, Investments, and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978) and Krasner, *Structural Conflict: The Third World against Global Liberalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); Stephen Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987); and Joseph Grieco, *Cooperation among Nations: Europe, America, and Non-Tariff Barriers to Trade* (Ithaca: Cor-



realist approach contends that nations embedded in an anarchic international system must engage in "self-help"<sup>15</sup> to survive. The system constrains individual states, shaping their foreign and security policies, and thus determines the system's stability. It does not, however, determine policy for each nation.<sup>16</sup>

In an anarchical system, states act to ensure their survival in the knowledge that no supranational institution or governing authority will protect them. Countries also cannot rely on other states to assist them even if they share a common ideology or political form. Each state, similarly insecure, has the liberty to think only of its own interests.

The key prediction of structural realism is that balances of power will form. Individual states may attempt to improve their position vis-à-vis others, but others will respond by reestablishing a balance of power. Realism thus presents an equilibrium theory, depicting the

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nell University Press, 1990). For an application to the realm of grand strategy see Barry Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany between the World Wars* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984). John Mearsheimer applies realist thinking to matters of current international politics in "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War," *International Security* 15 (Summer 1990): 5-56. Arthur Stein discusses the differences between realism and liberalism in *Why Nations Cooperate: Circumstance and Choice in International Relations* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990).

<sup>15</sup>It is possible to accept that the system of states (or the matrix in which states are embedded) determines state policy without thereby becoming a "realist." Those who analyze conflict and cooperation from the standpoint of game theory such as Michael Taylor, Robert Axelrod, Russell Hardin, and Anatol Rapoport cannot be described as realists because the payoffs that actors confront will often stimulate cooperation as well as conflict. In cooperative games or mixed-motive games, it is possible that cooperation will emerge as a result of iteration. In the case of the Prisoners' Dilemma this depends on the rate of discount for future gains and the indefiniteness of iteration. Moreover, these payoffs will not be determined only by the system. Rational choice analysts such as George Downs, Duncan Snidal, and Chris Achen cannot be described as "realists" because the cooperative or conflictual outcome depends on the particular pattern of cost and benefit for different courses of action, and these costs and benefits take into account a variety of national, international, individual, and perceptual factors. In short (and whether they recognize it or not), although all realists are implicitly rational choice theorists, the inverse is not true.

Not all realists accept that anarchy is the governing condition of international relations. Such hegemonic stability theorists as Robert Gilpin and Stephen Krasner note that a hegemonic stabilizer in effect substitutes its rule for an otherwise prevailing anarchy. When that stabilizer declines, however, the system returns to its antecedent anarchic state.

<sup>16</sup>It appears that the realist theory of international politics does not involve a theory of foreign-policy choice. But this theory necessarily depends on the responses of specific Great Powers to changes in the international distribution of power. Thus, for example, one Great Power in a bipolar world must respond to restore the balance of power when the other has taken steps to increase its own power. In this sense, the theory predicts systemically stabilizing actions in a small number system of Great Powers; it therefore also involves a theory of individual foreign policy for those same Great Powers.