

WORLD POLITICS



THE MENU FOR CHOICE

Bruce Russett

Harvey Starr

Fifth Edition

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PREFACE

In the three years since we prepared the fourth edition of this book we have witnessed a continuing revolution in world politics. With the end of cold war bipolarity; the resurgence of nationalism in areas formerly under authoritarian rule; and a new focus on democracy, economics, and ecology as global issues; all analysts have had their basic assumptions and theories challenged, and their policy recommendations superseded. The authors of this book are no exceptions, though we think earlier editions did provide readers with some important tools for thinking about these matters. From its first edition, for example, we anticipated the debate about whether the spread of democracy might lead to a more peaceful world and wrote at length about the challenges of promoting greater international cooperation to deal with collective problems, emphasizing the environmental issues that now are moving to the top of the global agenda. Although the fifth edition brings the relationship between democracy, development, and peace into sharper focus, we had addressed these concerns in the first edition, at a time when others focused more narrowly on military security.

No one can hope fully to absorb or to keep pace with such changes. A broad and self-conscious theoretical perspective remains the best resource for comprehending and coping with change. We have reflected the changing currents in world politics through the following:

- We have provided more extensive coverage of the nature and consequences of change in the world system, highlighting the relationship among economic growth, democracy, and peace in an increasingly interdependent world.
- We have highlighted the role and impact of economics in understanding the global system.
- We give stronger emphasis to the politics of a nonbipolar world, reflecting the end of the cold war and the paradox of the United States as the only power with a global military reach but an ever more vulnerable economy.
- We provide more historical background, especially on the origins and nature of the state and the system of sovereign states that has evolved since the Treaty of Westphalia in the mid-seventeenth century; this is crucial given the contemporary challenges to both sovereignty and that system of states.
- We have expanded the discussion of transnational relations and of nonstate actors such as the newly strengthened and relevant United Nations.
- We have clarified important concepts such as democracy and development and provided additional examples of international policy (e.g., in arms control or international trade) to illustrate important theories in action.
- We have maintained and strengthened the contrast among realist, transnationalist, and radical perspectives, showing both the value of the largely dominant realist paradigm and its increasingly evident limitations.

- We have provided a revised and expanded test bank, available in printed form or on disk for IBM or MAC personal computers. We are also proud to announce the creation of a *World Politics: The Menu for Choice* home page on the Internet (<http://www.whfreeman.com/world-politics>) with a variety of features designed specifically for this textbook—including syllabi exchanges, current events, maps, and data sets.

During the longer-run changes of recent decades we have also witnessed a revolution in the discipline itself. We have changed the ways we think about the subject: standards of concept formation, of logic, and of evidence are markedly different from what they were. If there has been a revolution in the study of world politics, it can be consolidated only when we have the pedagogical skill and tools to educate the next generation; otherwise, the revolution will experience a well-deserved reaction. The consolidation we have tried for in *World Politics* is inclusive rather than exclusive: we have sought to synthesize the best of the older tradition with newer approaches.

First, we have provided a substantial component of theory, from older and newer sources. Students must learn something about how theory is constructed and tested, and we therefore deal to some degree with scientific method, providing some “how-to” material and standards for recognizing well-executed research. We stress the importance of developing a respect for evidence and learning to recognize a statement for which no evidence can be relevant, and we provide a perspective on “how-to-think-about-it.” To survive in a rapidly changing world as active citizens rather than passive objects of historical forces, people must develop a good set of basic concepts and questions, a taste for analysis, a certain degree of skepticism for the “revealed wisdom” of authority, and some tolerance for ambiguity on a subject—the behavior of large human organizations coping with very complex problems—for which the extent of our understanding is, at best, barely adequate.

Second, we have provided a substantial amount of historical and contemporary factual material about the world. One kind of fact is the evidence needed to support or refute major theoretical statements. We have tried to give the student some sense of the volume and quality of evidence relevant to various statements. When we know the evidence to be reasonably solid, we have tried to document it. When we consider the evidence sparse or ambiguous, we have tried to indicate that fact. We have given some references to empirical research, so that students—or instructors—will not have to take our statements on faith, but we have tried not to burden readers with scientific detail or pedantry.

Another kind of essential fact is, simply, information about what it is, and has been, like “out there.” History and information about the contemporary system are essential. Therefore, we have also provided material on the characteristics of the major national and nonnational participants in world politics and on the scope and function of major institutions. We have frequently introduced or punctuated our theoretical discussions with detail on how the world works or has worked. The reader will see examples of this not only in the text but also in endpaper maps and the two

appendixes: a chronology and a set of comparative data on the characteristics of modern states. In this we have tried to walk a path that will have some appeal to traditionalists as well as to "hard-nosed" scientists.

Any consolidation demands a concern with questions of value: what the world "should" be like as well as what it is like. Sometimes all parties can gain; sometimes one's security is another's insecurity. At times we must choose between equity and security or between peace and justice. Students need guidance on how choices can be made or perhaps avoided, guidance that attends to both the ethical and the empirical dimensions of choice.

Finally, the substance of what is taught today is very different from the substance of courses taught a decade or two ago. In *World Politics* we have tried to convey a more broadly conceived idea of security by combining discussions of military issues with discussions of international political economy and to suggest how the two are related, for example, in the causes and consequences of arms races and in world environmental problems. At the end of the book we show how the needs for growth, equity, political liberty, and peace are inextricably linked.

We have organized the book into two major parts. Part I introduces the student to the modern study of world politics and sets out the six levels of analysis we find useful: the global system, relations between states, the societal level, the governmental level, roles, and the individual actor. The book's subtitle, *The Menu for Choice*, illustrates our perspective that decision makers are in fact limited in their selections by the rather constrained set of options presented by global conditions. (The menu analogy appropriately evokes images of both restaurants and computers.) We discuss and illustrate how influences at various levels affect the process or act of choice.

In Part II we apply these analytical perspectives to particular issues. Topics we consider include arms races, deterrence, and arms control; theories about the economic relations among states, and the pressing dilemma of development facing poor countries; the implications of interdependence among industrialized countries (we try to understand why these countries are, almost without precedent or parallel, at peace among themselves); the problems of achieving collective goods in the context of global environmental problems; the role of international organizations; and, finally, an evaluation of demands for continued economic growth in a world of scarce resources and population pressures. We try to communicate a sense that a systematic use of theory is essential to any comprehension of these very pressing contemporary issues.



We owe thanks to innumerable colleagues and students over the years as we have worked toward producing this book. Rather than single out some for expressions of gratitude here, we will pass over those who in the past contributed to the formation of our thinking. Many of them, though not all, will find themselves footnoted. We wish to thank all those who have read and commented on parts or all of this book in

its journey from the first to the fifth edition: Francis Adams, William Avery, Andrew Bennett, Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Steven Chan, Claudio Cioffi-Revilla, Major Delane E. Clark, David Clinton, Robert Dorf, Raymond Duvall, Nader Entessar, Michael Francis, John R. Freeman, Scott Sigmund Gartner, F. Gregory Gause, Guy Gosselin, Roger Hamburg, Robert Harkavy, Jeffrey Hart, Terrence Hopmann, Darril Hudson, Patrick James, Robert Jervis, Brian Job, Robert Keohane, Robert Mandel, Zeev Maoz, Douglas Nelson, Rene Peritz, James Ray, J. Rogers, J. David Singer, Randolph Siverson, Patricia Stein Wrightson, Michael Stohl, Richard Stoll, Stuart Thorson, Herbert Tillema, and Dina Zinnes. Thanks also to Susan Finnemore Brennan, Senior Editor at W. H. Freeman and Company, to Shannon Lindsey Blanton who served as research assistant on the fifth edition, and especially to Mike Ward for his creative and diligent efforts to bring about the home page on the Internet. Parts of the book represent research done with the aid of grants from the Ford Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the National Science Foundation, the United States Institute of Peace, and the World Society Foundation (Switzerland). Over the course of five editions our home universities—Yale, Indiana, and South Carolina—have provided truly fine environments for research and reflection. We hope that all these people and institutions will in some degree be pleased with the outcome; any embarrassment with it must be ours alone.

Bruce Russett
Harvey Starr
September 1995

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P A R T

I

Analytical Dimensions

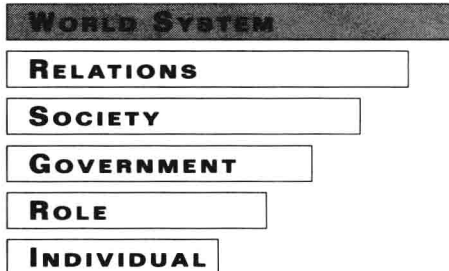


*I would rather understand a single cause
than be king of Persia.*

—DEMOCRITUS OF ABDER

1

ANALYZING WORLD POLITICS: LEVELS OF ANALYSIS AND CONSTRAINT



THREE FOREIGN POLICY DECISIONS

Ending the Cold War

In November 1988 Margaret Thatcher, then British prime minister, proclaimed, "The cold war is over." Events since then have dramatically confirmed her judgment. The cold war, which had dominated world politics for more than 40 years, enforcing political domination on hundreds of millions of people and threatening to bring war on billions, was indeed

over. The basic values of the West (democratic government and free-market economics) had triumphed—and the end of the cold war was then confirmed, even initiated, by the leader of the “losing” state, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.

The events came in a cascade. First, Gorbachev made limited political and economic reforms in the Soviet Union. Then free elections ousted the communist governments in most of Eastern Europe, and Gorbachev made no move to intervene in their support. In November 1989 the Berlin Wall was breached, and by October 1990 East and West Germany were united. Gorbachev took no military or political action to save what had been the Soviet Union’s most important and loyal ally. In response to demands from the new anticommunist governments, Gorbachev withdrew all Soviet military forces from Czechoslovakia and Hungary in 1991 and concluded a major arms reduction agreement with the West. Nearly all the formerly antagonistic NATO and Warsaw Pact countries agreed to reduce their military forces, the Soviets accepting disproportionately deep cuts. Soviet forces assumed a defensive posture, unable to mount any threat of invading Western Europe. Even the Warsaw Pact between the USSR and its former East European satellites—the linchpin of Soviet security and control—was disbanded in 1991, as was the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON), which had regulated trade among these countries for over 40 years. Gorbachev announced that Soviet troops would come home, without victory, from the war in Afghanistan, and he insisted that Soviet-dependent governments like that in Nicaragua face the consequences of elections. At home, open dissent and secessionist movements emerged in many Soviet republics; free elections resulted in anticommunist governments in several and brought the end of the communist monopoly on power everywhere. In fact, by the end of 1991, the Soviet Union itself had dissolved as a single entity, ultimately leaving the state of Russia and 14 other successor states of the former Soviet Union (FSU).¹ Gorbachev twisted and turned like an adroit slalom skier, but the slope he was on seemed to be leading ever nearer to drastic economic and political changes. After a reactionary coup against Gorbachev in August 1991 failed, Boris Yeltsin forced even more radical changes.

The end of the cold war, as initiated by Gorbachev’s actions, was as astonishing as it was swift. It was one of those world-shaking turns that few theories either clearly anticipate or explain well after the fact. Nevertheless, we have to grope toward an understanding, and in doing so we can at least offer some possible explanations even if we can prove little.

In one clear sense, Gorbachev’s own personal characteristics deserve much of the credit. After a series of aging leaders in ill health (his predecessors, Leonid Brezhnev, Yuri Andropov, and Konstantin Chernenko, all died within a three-year period), Gorbachev was only 53 when he came to power. He was vigorous, a skilled politician, and committed to reforming (but not necessarily to revolutionizing) the Soviet system.

¹ The collapse of the Soviet Union is recounted by Robert V. Daniels, *The End of the Communist Revolution* (London: Routledge, 1993).

His fresh perspectives, energy, drive, and intelligence were essential to the task. Previous leaders might have seen the need for some reforms but were unable or unwilling to make dramatic changes.²

Exclusive attention to Gorbachev's personal qualities, however, leaves much out. He changed Soviet domestic and foreign policies because they hadn't worked even by standards widely accepted among communist leaders. The Soviet economy was stagnant, with per capita income showing essentially no growth since the late 1970s, and the life expectancy of Soviet citizens was dropping. The insular and centrally planned Soviet economy, dependent on heavy industry and collective farms, was increasingly unable to compete in a world market based on innovation driven by high technology and the free flow of goods, capital, and information within and between states. The burden of military spending bore down ever more painfully on Soviet living standards, as did Soviet expenditures to prop up allies in Africa, Asia, and Central America. The USSR had overreached itself globally, acquiring weak clients and eroding its own security. Something had to give—why did it give then, rather than later, or sooner?

Another element was surely the increasingly assertive political and military competition the Soviet Union faced from the United States, which intensified in the decade or so before Gorbachev made his big changes. In the last years of the Carter administration and more dramatically in the Reagan years, the United States and its allies began a spurt of additions to NATO military capabilities, especially by the development and deployment of high-tech weapons that exploited Western scientific advances. American military assistance to opponents of Soviet-backed regimes in Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, Nicaragua, and elsewhere raised the costs to the USSR of supporting those governments. Again, the Soviet Union had always been technologically behind the West and had long borne heavy costs. Why could it have not maintained itself longer? In addition, the United States was also feeling the burdens of the cold war and by 1986 was no longer increasing its own military expenditures. American willingness to respond carefully to Soviet overtures, not exploiting Soviet weakness so as to risk "enraging a cornered bear," played an important part in allowing Soviet liberalization to continue.

Yet another influence was the spread of information across international borders, and especially in both directions across what had been known as the Iron Curtain. Citizens of communist countries could know more and more about the prosperity and political liberties enjoyed by their counterparts in the West. By the 1980s most East Germans could regularly watch West German television, and informal personal contacts between Western and Eastern peoples were increasingly difficult to regulate. Under pressure of the human-rights provisions of the wide-ranging Helsinki Accords of 1975, communist governments more and more had to tolerate dissident movements. Western news agencies regularly operated in East European and Soviet cities;

² For an in-depth look at the personal background and qualities of the man who saw things differently from his predecessors, see Gail Sheehy, *The Man Who Changed the World: The Lives of Mikhail S. Gorbachev* (New York: Harper Collins, 1990).