NEW FORCES OLD FORCES

AND THE FUTURE OF WORLD POLITICS

Post-Cold War Edition

SEYOM BROWN

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of Benjamin Brown,
pioneer builder of communities

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PREFACE

This book offers a sustained argument about the evolution of world politics and how the future of the world polity can be shaped by current choices. As such it differs from international relations textbooks that are primarily surveys of the prominent theories and research in the field. Nor is it the kind of scholarly exercise that devotes most of its pages to the support or denigration of one or another of the contending schools of thought.

I am more concerned here with the state of the world than with the state of the discipline. So too are my target audiences in the policy community and, I believe, most of the students who enroll in undergraduate courses in international relations. Some of my academic work focuses on theory-building and methodological questions, as do many of my exchanges with professional peers. I have written *New Forces, Old Forces, and the Future of World Politics,* however, as a contribution to serious public discourse on the emerging predicament of human society; the book's substance and style of exposition reflect that purpose.

Previous editions anticipated some of the developments that are destabilizing the post–Cold War world: the universal flare-up of ethnic conflict; the spread of weapons of mass destruction; the press of population growth and industrialization on the planet's finite resources and vulnerable ecologies; worsening pockets of starvation and disease; the impact of economic transnationalism on sovereignty; terrorism; and the proliferation of contraband and illegal substances. But these were for the most part subordinated to the analysis of Cold War relationships. In the 1974 and 1988 editions, I did give a lot of attention to the intensifying centrifugal forces and pressures in the United States–led and Soviet-led coalitions; but like my colleagues in government and academia, I was taken by surprise by Gorbachev's wholesale retraction of Soviet power from Eastern Europe and Germany in 1989 and 1990, and the subsequent rapid disintegration of the USSR itself.

Thus, even a book that foresaw the eventual depolarization of world politics and evolution of global polyarchy needed to be substantially recast. The process of rewriting has deepened my understanding of the forces that are durable and those that are merely transitory. Reflecting this, the present edition is in many respects an entirely new book.

My basic argument, however, has been confirmed—indeed strengthened—by the end of the Cold War and what has been happening around the world in the post–Cold War era. Namely, the world polity itself is in crisis, a crisis of incongruence between its traditional structure of governance, the nation-state system, and the most important interactions of peoples. I show many of today's headline-grabbing events to be symptoms of this systemic crisis. But I also find in this crisis the ingredients of new policies and institutions conducive to a more safe and just world order.

Because I have been developing and refining this argument over the course of three decades, my intellectual debts to individuals, beyond those cited in footnotes, are more extensive than can be listed in this preface. I do want to acknowledge, however, the financial and collegial support that the project, in its various incarnations, has received from the following institutions: the Brookings Institution, the Ford Foundation, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Harvard University's Center for International Affairs, and, of course, my current home institution, Brandeis University.

The manuscript for the present book was reviewed in whole or in part by my Brandeis colleagues Steven Burg and Mark Hulliung, by Elizabeth Prodromou of Princeton University, Joseph Lepgold of Georgetown University, and Patrick Callahan of DePaul University. Their criticisms were unfailingly constructive, even when reflecting views philosophically opposed to my basic argument. I trust I will be forgiven, however, for not incorporting some of them. This book, after all, is hardly designed to *end* debate on these matters.

I also want to thank my chief editor, Leo Wiegman, his staff at HarperCollins, and Gloria Klaiman, Tom Conville, and Ann-Marie WongSam of Ruttle, Shaw & Wetherill, Inc. for helping me to effectively express what I intended. If the prose flows, more often than not it will be because Tina Rebane removed the silt.

Finally, my two youngest sons, Matthew and Jeremiah, deserve medals for patiently enduring their father's insistence that in devoting so much of his energies to this project he was trying to make their world a better place.

Seyom Brown

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION: THE NEW, THE OLD, AND THE DURABLE

In any era of world politics, policymakers and their advisers seek to assess which of the many new and old features of the complex reality facing them warrant the status of basic "forces"—that is, material and social conditions of sufficient durability to strongly affect the chances that contemplated policies will succeed or fail. As often as not, judgments prevailing at any particular time as to what will last and what will fade may be poorly grounded in reality. The surprise of statespersons and academics alike at the sudden end of the Cold War during the 1989–1991 period was the product of fundamentally inaccurate assessments of this kind. As will be detailed in Chapters 4 through 7, loyalties, ideologies, alliances, governments, and even states that were widely believed to be highly durable turned out to be fragile and transitory; other developments that "realists" dismissed as ephemeral, such as the human rights movement in Eastern Europe, emerged as powerful forces able to shatter the pillars of empire.

Some such mistakes in prognosis are inevitable. Our understanding of why humans behave as they do lags behind our understanding of the behavior of inanimate matter and of living beings lower on the scale of organic complexity. Much remains guesswork. Yet some of the mistakes have been the product of shallow and ahistorical analysis—a tendency to extrapolate eternal verities from the surface of contemporary events, to infer causality from mere statistical correlation, to confuse what can be counted with its often hidden underlying dynamics.

Granting the uncertainties, and admitting the tentativeness of our conjectures, we can at least attempt to minimize the avoidable mistakes by probing more comprehensively into the historical record and more deeply below the visible surface of contemporary events to discover the evolved and evolving structures and basic movements of world politics and the reasons for their evolution.

From the perspective of 1994, what does such an inquiry tell us about the features of world politics that are likely to be transitory and those that are likely to be durable? Here, in summary form, are my "findings" on how the old forces and new forces have combined at this particular juncture in history to produce a set of interrelated conditions with considerable staying power—conditions that have profound implications for basic health and well-being of the human species.

Subsequent chapters elaborate on these findings and provide the supporting arguments and evidence.

Weakened Nation-States

The end of the Cold War was seen in many quarters as a renaissance of the nation-state system. The Cold War had been a profoundly transnational struggle between two antithetical ways of life, whose champions felt justified in subverting and overthrowing the governments of states run by those adhering to the wrong ideology. The end of the Cold War meant that the world no longer would be polarized into two supranationally organized coalitions and, presumably, could return to its "natural" political condition: a highly decentralized, virtually anarchic society of autonomous nation-states.

But this prognosis confused the renaissance of national and ethnic self-assertiveness with the revival of the sovereign nation-state. To be sure, the collapse of the Soviet Union's totalitarian imperial domain in the late 1980s provided the basis for democratic national self-determination by the countries of Eastern Europe and allowed the ethnic republics of the USSR to secede from the Union. And in the Third World, following the unraveling of the Cold War coalitions, states that were little more than pawns in the superpower contest for global dominance now achieved a considerable measure of "freedom" to develop their own international relationships.

Formal independence, however, is not the same thing as actual *sovereignty*, the power to determine the basic norms of behavior and conditions of life within the political entity. Nor does a country's internationally recognized legal status as a sovereign state necessarily reflect the ability of that country's government to provide the populations under its jurisdiction with the kind of civic order and justice they regard as legitimate or to control who and what enters or leaves the country. Indeed, the decades of the Cold War coincided with the greatest increases in the mobility of goods, information, and people in human history, creating new transnational associations and markets, and with the dramatic proliferation of industrial practices disturbing to regional and global ecologies, much of this beyond the effective control of national governments. Meanwhile, the universal contagion in the late Cold War period of democratic and human rights ideologies demanding, more than ever before, that governments be based on the consent of the governed (especially when asserted by ethnic populations transcending the borders of existing nation-states) has called into question a significant proportion of today's international borders.

Nation-states are still the most powerful political entities in world society; but many of the subnational and transnational material and ideational forces that were exploited by the Cold War superpowers, and were turned into instruments of their rivalry, antedated the Cold War and are flourishing in its aftermath. The demise of the Cold War left even the great nation-states in a *relatively* weaker position vis-à-vis other political and economic forces than during the first half of the twentieth century—not primarily because of the Cold War, but because these other forces are in many respects more ba-

sic and durable than the national idea and structures that are the foundation of the nation-state system.

Widening and Deepening of Material Interdependence

The progressive erosion of the ability of national polities to retain sovereign control over conditions in their respective countries is a symptom of the expanding—and essentially irreversible—interdependence of peoples across national boundaries. A dependent relationship exists whenever people living in one country rely for their security, economic well-being, or other amenities on the behavior of people in other countries, or on the condition of resources used in common with other countries. None of the world's some 185 countries is totally without such relationships. The June 1992 environmental "Earth Summit" in Rio de Janeiro, attended by 100 heads of state, was an expression of the fact that international interdependence, despite the efforts of most states to remain as independent as possible, is increasingly a feature of world society. So are the recurrent "rounds" of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the growing prominence of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Not all interdependent relationships are symmetrical among the parties. Some countries are more dependent on outsiders than are others; many are involved in a wide range of diverse dependency relationships. A few, being the crucial provisioners of resources or protection to certain allies or clients, are able to convert such asymmetrical interdependence into hegemonic power. But even the hegemon will be dependent on its wards to some degree; indeed, without being in need of what the ward could provide (by its location, its resources, its political support in international forums—the United States vis-à-vis Saudi Arabia, for example), the hegemon would not have bothered to cultivate the relationship in the first place; and once cultivated, various sectors of the hegemon's society tend to develop a vested interest in the maintenance of the relationship.

Globalization of Conflict Between Cosmopolitans and Parochials

The increasing mobility of goods, persons, and information has brought to center stage the age-old conflict between those who welcome an expansion of contacts and competition and those who fear it. In virtually every country and in the world as a whole, some groups perceive they will be the winners in larger and more open markets and political systems, whereas others perceive they will lose—relatively, if not absolutely—in material well-being,

political power, and/or social status if new groups are allowed into the marketplaces of trade, politics, and culture. The history of every region of the globe can be written in part as a dialectic, sometimes bloody, between these contrary reactions to the enlargement of spheres of societal interaction and interdependence. We find the dialectic recorded in the rise and fall of empires, in the transition from feudalism to consolidated nation-states, in the opposition between the champions of free trade and the devotees of mercantilism and protectionism, and in the clashes between internationalism and xenophobia and between principles of federalism and local autonomy.

This recurring axis of confrontation once again, and more widely than ever, divides and unites people around the world, supplanting the "East vs. West" (marxist vs. capitalist) confrontation that polarized global society during the Cold War era. Worldwide, coalitions and antagonisms are forming among the cosmopolitans and parochials over both material and cultural matters.

Currently, the phenomenon is reflected prominently in international bargaining between "Southern" (Third World) and "Northern" (industrialized) countries over trade, development, and environmental issues. A Third World coalition has been galvanized by concerns that the global market economy and environmental regulations being pressed on them by Northern governments, the IMF, and the World Bank will only enhance the competitive advantages already enjoyed by the advanced industrialized countries and by large Northern-owned multinational firms in Third World markets, leading to a de facto "neo-colonial" resubordination of the economically underdeveloped Southern countries to their former imperial overlords plus the United States and Japan.

Not all Third World countries, and certainly not all segments of society within Third World countries, are part of the coalition opposed to an open global market. Some of the newly industrializing countries (NICs), such as South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore, have found profitable niches in the international production and trade of high-tech items; some, like Mexico in the 1990s, hope to do so. Other Third World countries, their economies vulnerable to sudden declines in global prices for their agricultural commodities, have been demanding international price-support agreements for their exports. Moreover, within many developing countries there is, on the one hand, considerable division between exporting and/or tourist sectors who welcome more commerce with the industrialized world and, on the other hand, struggling domestic industry sectors who feel they need a considerable period of protection from more advanced foreign competitors in order to survive and develop even a domestic clientele.

Similarly, in the Third World, there are deep divisions on environmental issues, reflecting the unequal costs different sectors of the economy and population will have to bear in converting to ecologically sustainable development. But in the 1992 Earth Summit on Environment and Economic Development and its follow-on negotiations on matters such as global warm-

ing, ozone depletion, and biodiversity, most of the developing countries have coalesced around the proposition that abatement policies that would cost a lot of money, at least in the short run, should be funded by the advanced industrial countries. The Third World is saying, in effect, global ecological interdependence and its corollary, shared responsibility for the health of ecologies, must be a *two*-way street.

Within the industrialized world as well, there tends to be a divergence between the weak/immobile and the strong/mobile elements of the society when it comes to determining how open international borders should be and who should have full access to national and transnational markets. In the European Union, for example, the economically less-developed countries and less-modernized sectors within countries are by and large defenders of special subsidies and protections for local enclaves of industry and agriculture that might otherwise be displaced by the community-wide competition, let alone worldwide competition, championed by the Union's technocratic elite. Similarly in the United States, it is the executives of the most successful multinational corporations—not small businessmen and leaders of labor unions—that have been the staunchest advocates of United States–Canada free trade and the incorporation of Mexico in a North American common market.

Cultural affinities and antagonisms are often interlinked with, and indeed are sometimes the source of, the cosmopolitan vs. parochial lineup on economic issues. The dramatic increases in *physical* mobility of goods, people, and ideas brought on by the technological revolutions in transportation and communication both challenge and reinforce ethnocentric attitudes, leading in many places to efforts to thicken *legal* barriers to mobility. For some elements of society, the new opportunities to come into contact with and learn about peoples of other cultures confirm beliefs in the "family of humankind" and convictions that we should be mutually concerned about one another's well-being across national borders. For others, familiarity sustains or breeds contempt or fear of having one's way of life diluted or overwhelmed by foreign influences and intercommunal fraternization, particularly among young people. Much of the agitation for tightening controls on foreign immigration, usually presented as required to preserve a supply/demand equilibrium for jobs in certain occupational categories, is a transparent cover for racial or religious xenophobia.

Proliferation of Cross-Cutting Associations

Cumulatively, these various basic trends have been producing a multiplicity of cross-cutting relationships at all levels of society—individual, group, national, transnational, and global. Human existence, let alone the enjoyment of the varied amenities of modern life, has come to require sustained interaction among individuals and collectivities with quite different characteristics.

Typically, the modern individual will engage in these interactions as a member (formal or informal) of a variety of associations defined by location of residence, ethnicity, religion, occupation, and recreational pursuit. In contrast to traditional society, in which one's neighbors were likely to be of the same race and religion and to work at the same kind of jobs, in modern industrial or postindustrial society, one's neighbors are more and more just as likely as not to be of a different religion and to be employed in quite different occupations; co-members of one's labor union or professional organization will probably be heterogeneous in gender, ethnicity, and religion and in their memberships in other functionally specific organizations.

As a consequence, individuals are likely to find that their allies on one issue are their opponents on another; today's enemy may well be tomorrow's friend, depending on the subject matter around which conflict or cooperation is revolving at the time. There will be times when such multiple associations produce antithetical loyalties in an individual, setting up painful cross-pressures. On the positive side, such cross-pressures can induce the affected individuals to support efforts to resolve or at least moderate the intergroup conflicts that are the source of their pain.

An essentially similar dynamic to that which affects the cross-pressured individuals affects general membership *groups,* including nation-states, transnational movements, and interstate coalitions. In modern society, members of almost any large group will be heterogeneous in their socioeconomic and/or cultural characteristics, apart from that special characteristic that initially brings the group together (such as their religion, occupation, locale of residence, or special policy interest). The more general and heterogeneous the membership, the more difficult it will be to mobilize the group for action across a wide range of issues, particularly if such mobilization requires intense hostility to other groups sharing some of the characteristics and values of members of one's own group. Thus, as national societies become pervaded by such heterogeneous and transnationally interlinked membership groups, both international hostility against a definable enemy and interstate coalition-building across a range of issues become more difficult to sustain. This consequence of "modernization," as will be discussed in subsequent chapters, is significantly altering the role of force in world politics and the function of other traditional mechanisms of international statecraft such as alliances, the balance of power, and the operation of international institutions.

The Press of the Planet's Growing Population on Its Finite Resources

Enveloping and interacting with all of these trends is the continuing growth of the world's human population, which even at its current size (over 5.4 billion in 1994) is putting alarming pressure on vital ecological relationships: a

stratosphere with a chemical composition that screens out lethal rays of the sun; an atmosphere sufficiently free of heat-trapping gases to perpetuate a livable climate on Earth; and enough unpolluted soil, water, and air and biologically diverse plant and animal life to nourish and sustain the human species in a healthy condition.

Standard demographic estimates, assuming no dramatic worldwide revolution in population-control policies, project a global population approaching 8.5 billion by the year 2025 and 10 billion by the year 2050.[1] Assuming further that in the meantime there will have been no fundamental worldwide change in energy-consumption practices and in industrialization, this rough doubling in numbers of people over the next four decades is likely to strain the "carrying capacity" of the Earth's biosphere beyond tolerable limits. Credible dire predictions include exponential increases in the incidence of skin cancer and immune system failure (from unfiltered sunrays getting through holes in the ozone layer); drastic perturbations of the planet's climate (from an enhanced carbon dioxide "greenhouse effect"), leading to vast flooding of coastal regions and continental draughts and desertification in other regions; widespread shortages of healthy food and water (from inadequate means of disposing of waste products)—all of this increasing the proportion of humankind suffering from starvation and disease.

Political Conflict Over Who Gets What, When, and How

As the inhabitants of the planet continue to create scarcities in valued natural amenities (material resources, healthy living space, and climatic conditions), conflict among peoples for preferred access to these amenities can be expected to grow and intensify. The expectation of increasing conflict rests on more than forecasts of population growth and worldwide industrialization; it also rests in large part on the universal spread of ideas of social justice and equity focused on the *distribution* of rights and privileges to the Earth's scarce bounty—ideas that, ironically, first developed and flourished in the more affluent regions that are now the target of, and most resistant to, demands for *re*distribution.

This historical irony is compounded by the fact that the free-market ideas that in previous centuries served to redistribute wealth and privilege (and were formerly called "liberal") are now used to ward off policies aimed at further redistributions; in general, except for the post-Communist countries in which the terminology has been turned completely on its head, today's

[1]Eduard Bos, My T. Vu, Ann Levin, Rodolfo A. Bulatao, *World Population Projections 1992–93 Edition: Estimates and Projections with Related Demographic Statistics* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992 [published for the World Bank]).

staunchest defenders of the free-market capitalism call themselves "conservative" and apply the term "liberal" disparagingly to those who would have governments intervene in the free market in the name of social justice.

At the international level, the conflict between the advocates of laissez-faire regimes and the advocates of market-regulation/social justice regimes is particularly prominent when it comes to allocating use rights in the global "commons"—the high seas and deep seabed, the planet's life-sustaining biosphere, and the electromagnetic spectrum and geostationary orbit for communications and observational spacecraft. The 1992 Earth Summit on Environment and Development featured this dimension of political conflict, with the United States the most vociferous champion of nonregulatory market approaches for protecting the environment and the leaders of the Third World coalition and the Scandinavian countries arguing for international conventions binding on governments and firms to ensure their adherence to agreed-upon limits and standards (paralleling the alignment on the issue of who should finance the poor countries' conversion to environment-preserving development policies).

Incongruence of Governance and Society

These basic trends, operating within the inherited structures of the traditional nation-state system, are producing, on the whole, a global pattern in which the formal institutions of governance lack congruence with the loyalties and associations of peoples. Increasingly, the officials of the national governments who negotiate with each other on behalf of the people within their territorial jurisdictions or who take their countries into war do not, in fact, authoritatively represent, nor can they authoritatively command the behavior of, the "citizens" of their countries.

Well-functioning political systems feature an essential congruence between, on the one hand, the effective authority possessed by the society's governing *institutions* and, on the other hand, the *behaviors* that are supposed to be constrained by these institutions as they attempt to represent and service society's values. By contrast, where the relevant behaviors escape appropriate governmental constraints—as is increasingly the case in the global nation-state system—the political system can be said to be in "crisis."

This emerging global crisis of incongruence—its historical evolution, its contemporary sources, and what can be done about it—is a principal theme in the chapters that follow.