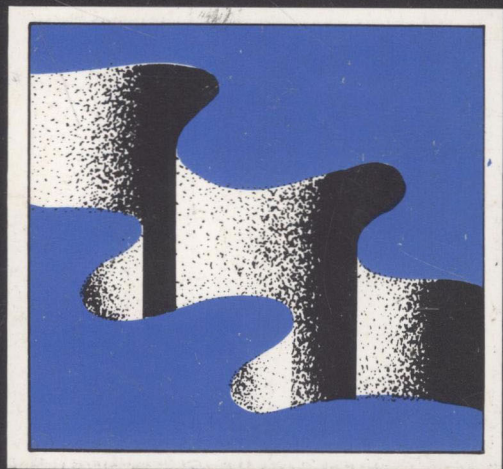


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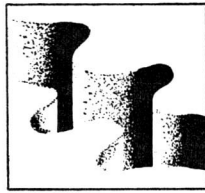


Clashing Views on Controversial Issues in World Politics

second edition

John T. Rourke

TAKING SIDES



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Edited, Selected, and with Introductions by

John T. Rourke

University of Connecticut

The Dushkin Publishing Group, Inc.

For my son and friend—John Michael

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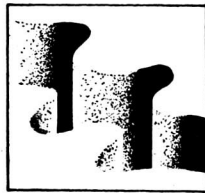
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Clashing Views on Controversial Issues in World Politics

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*We are not afraid to follow truth
wherever it may lead, nor to tolerate
any error so long as reason is left free
to combat it.*

Thomas Jefferson

PREFACE

In the first edition of *Taking Sides* I wrote of my belief in informed argument:

[A] book that debates vital issues is valuable and necessary. . . . [It is important] to recognize that world politics is usually not a subject of absolute rights and absolute wrongs and of easy policy choices. We all have a responsibility to study the issues thoughtfully, and we should be careful to understand all sides of the debates.

It was gratifying to discover in the success of the first edition that so many of my colleagues share this belief in the value of a debate-format text. The format of the second edition is the same as the first. There are nineteen issues on a wide range of topics in international relations. Each issue has two readings: one pro and one con. Each is also accompanied by an issue *introduction*, which sets the stage for the debate, provides some background information on each author, and generally puts the issue into its political context. Each issue concludes with a *postscript* that summarizes the debate, gives the reader paths for further investigation, and suggests additional readings that might be helpful.

I have continued to emphasize issues that are currently being debated in the policy sphere, and the authors of the selections are a mix of practitioners, scholars, and noted political commentators. In order to give the reader a truly international perspective on the issues of world politics, the authors of the selections represent many nations, including Australia, Canada, Colombia, Egypt, France, Great Britain, India, Israel, South Africa, the Soviet Union, and Zimbabwe, as well as the United States.

Changes to this edition The dynamic, constantly changing nature of the world political system and the many helpful comments from reviewers have brought about significant changes to this edition. Fourteen of the 19 issues are completely new. Thirty-two of the 38 readings are new, and of those 38 readings, the majority are from 1988/89 publications.

For this edition I have redoubled my efforts to select lively articles and pair them in such a way as to clearly show the controversies of a given issue. (See, for example, Issue 11 on Less Developed Countries and their international debts, where an American banker and a member of Colombia's Communist Party square off.)

Supplements An Instructor's Manual with Test Questions (both multiple-choice and essay) is available through the publisher for the instructors using *Taking Sides* in the classroom. A general guidebook, which discusses methods and techniques for integrating the pro-con approach into any classroom setting, is also available through the Dushkin Publishing Group.

A note especially for the student reader You will find that the debates in this book are not one-sided. Each author strongly believes in his or her position. And if you read the debates without prejudging them, you will see that each author makes cogent points. An author may not be “right,” but the arguments made in an essay should not be dismissed out of hand, and you should work at remaining tolerant of those who hold beliefs that are the opposite of your own.

There is an additional consideration to keep in mind as you pursue this debate approach to world politics. One is that to objectively consider divergent views does not mean that you have to remain forever neutral. In fact, once you are informed, you ought to form convictions. More importantly, you should try to influence international policy to better conform with your beliefs. Write letters to policy makers; donate to causes you support; work for candidates who agree with your views; join an activist organization. *Do something*, whichever side of an issue you are on!

Acknowledgments I was assisted in my work by the many suggestions from users of *Taking Sides* who communicated directly with my publisher. I also appreciate the spontaneous comments from instructors and students who wrote to me. Please continue to write to me in care of the Dushkin Publishing Group with recommendations for issues and articles. I would also like to thank the program manager for the Taking Sides series, Mimi Egan, for her help in refining this edition.

John T. Rourke
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INTRODUCTION

Elephants, Blind Men, and World Politics

John T. Rourke

APPROACHES TO STUDYING INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

There is a classic allegorical tale about several blind men who attempt to describe an elephant. Each touches the animal, and, depending on whether he is feeling the trunk, ear, leg, or tail, each variously describes the elephant as a snake, a fan, a tree, or a rope. The study of world politics is something like that. As will become evident as you read this volume, there are many approaches to the study of international politics. Some political scientists and most practitioners specialize in *substantive topics*, such as regional issues, or economics, or conflict, and this reader is organized along topical lines. The first section (Issues 1 through 6) deals with regional issues and actors. There are debates which deal with Asia, Europe, Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and the two superpowers. Section two (Issues 7 through 11) focuses on international economic issues, such as the relationship between economic and military power, the consequences of international investment, the development of Third World countries, and the international debt crisis. Arms and disarmament is the subject of section three (Issues 12 through 14), and section four (Issues 15 through 19) examines the conduct and future of international relations, including issues of morality, national decision-making processes, international organizations, international law, and international protection of the environment.

Political scientists also approach their subject from differing *methodological perspectives*. We will see, for example, that our subject can be studied from different *levels of analysis*. The question is: what is the basic source of the forces that shape the conduct of politics? Possible answers are world forces, the individual political process of a specific country, or the personal attributes of a country's leaders and decision makers.

Another way students and practitioners of world politics can approach their subjects is to focus on what is called the realist versus idealist debate. The basic issue here is whether to assume that the world is permanently flawed and therefore to follow policies in one's narrow self-interest, or to take the approach that the world condition can be improved substantially

by following policies which might call for some risk or self-sacrifice, at least in the short term.

DYNAMICS OF WORLD POLITICS

The action on the global stage is vastly different than it was just a few short decades ago. Rapid changes in *technology* is one of the causes of the change in the nature of the world system. Technology has changed communications, manufacturing, health, and many other aspects of the worldwide human condition. Technology has also created nuclear weapons, and those who support the Strategic Defense Initiative claim that technology is on the brink of creating a system to defend the United States against a potential nuclear attack.

There have also been changes in the nature of the actors in the world drama. States (countries) were once almost the only *international actors*. Now, and increasingly, there are other actors, such as the United Nations, the International Court of Justice, the International Monetary Fund, and multinational corporations. These actors are known by such names as international (governmental or nongovernmental) organizations or transnational actors. Issue 19 illustrates this change. Some commentators dismiss the United Nations as peripheral to world politics and largely impotent. But others see the U.N. as an organization that performs many important tasks and is representative of the direction in which the world system should proceed.

Another dynamic aspect of world politics involves the changing axes of the world system. For about twenty years after the end of World War II in 1945, a bipolar system existed, the primary axis of which was the *East-West Conflict*. That pitted the United States and its allies against the Soviet Union and its allies. For a variety of reasons that will be discussed in the debates (see Issues 2, 6, and 12, among others), the dominance of that axis as a focus of world politics has lessened—although it remains very important. One change is that the bipolar system has declined and is being replaced by a multipolar or tripolar system, depending on one's views. Another change has been the growing importance of the *North-South axis*, a concept which emphasizes the tremendous economic disparity between the industrialized countries (of the North) and the much poorer, less developed countries (of the South). Each axis is discussed further below.

Technological changes and the shifting axes of international politics also highlight the *increased role of economics* in world politics. Economics have always played a role, but, traditionally, the main focus was on strategic-political questions—especially military power. That concern still strongly exists, but it shares the international spotlight with economic issues.

PERCEPTIONS VERSUS REALITY

In addition to addressing the general changes in the world system outlined above, the debates in this reader also explore the controversies that exist over many of the fundamental issues that continue to face the world. Can Mikhail Gorbachev's announcement that the Soviet Union desires peace be trusted? Is the United States an international protector of democracy or an imperialist predator? Should Israel accede to the establishment of an independent Palestine?

One key to understanding these debates is the differing *perceptions* protagonists bring to them. There may be a *reality* in world politics, but very often what that reality is, is obscured. In these cases, it is often the perception, not the reality, that is more important because policy is formulated on what countries *think*, not necessarily on what *is*. Thus, perception becomes the operating guide, or *operational reality*, whether it is true or not.

Perceptions result from many factors. One is the information that decision makers receive. For a variety of reasons, the facts and analysis that are given leaders are inaccurate, or at least present only part of the picture. Perceptions also are formed by the *value system* of a decision maker, which is based on his or her own experiences and ideology. The way such an individual thinks and speaks about another leader, country, or the world in general is called his/her *operational code*. Issue 3, for example, discusses the issue of U.S. intervention in support of anticommunist rebels in Latin America and elsewhere. In substantial part, that debate is based on how one perceives communist regimes. The U.S. policy known as the Reagan Doctrine was strongly based on President Reagan's value system and was easily observable in his operational code. He referred, for instance, to the Soviet Union as an "evil empire," and he said that the Soviets will lie and cheat to accomplish their goals. Given his visceral, negative perception of communism, it was hardly surprising that the president strongly supported the attempts to topple the leftist governments in Nicaragua, Angola, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. President Bush's policy orientations are not yet fully clear; based on his past record and public statements, however, it seems that he shares (if less stridently) many of his predecessor's perceptions. Therefore, it is probable that his operational code and policy choices will not be dramatically different from Reagan's.

Another aspect of perception is the tendency to see yourself as peacefully motivated and your opponent as aggressive. This can lead to perceptual distortions such as an inability to understand that your (self-perceived defensive) actions may be perceived as a threat by your opponent and cause your opponent to take defensive actions that, in turn,

seem aggressive to you. Issue 6, for example, features Mikhail Gorbachev, the Soviet president and Communist Party general secretary, who proclaims his intention to work for a safer, more cooperative world. He certainly believes what he says, as do many others, both in the East and in the West. Others perceive Gorbachev and the Soviets very differently, however, as indicated by the cautious approach of French analyst Alain Besançon.

Perceptions can so divide analysts that they hardly speak the same language. Issue 11 is debated by a ranking officer of a large U.S. bank and a member of the Colombian Communist Party. Perceptually, they are poles apart, and their different native tongues is only one reason they would have difficulty communicating!

Perceptions, then, are crucial to understanding international politics. It is important to understand objective reality, but it is also necessary to comprehend subjective reality in order to be able to predict and analyze another country's actions.

LEVELS OF ANALYSIS

Political scientists approach the study of international politics from differing levels of analysis. The most macroscopic view is *system-level analysis*. This is a "top down" approach that maintains that world factors virtually compel countries to follow certain foreign policies. Governing factors include such things as geographic relationships, economic needs, and technology. System analysts hold that a country's internal political system and its leaders do not have a major impact on policy. As such, political scientists who work from this perspective are interested in exploring the governing factors, how they cause policy, and how and why systems change.

For approximately the first two decades following the end of World War II, the world was characterized by a *bipolar system*. This system was dominated by the United States and the Soviet Union. Further, each superpower was supported by a tightly organized and dependent group of allies. For a variety of reasons, including changing economic conditions and the nuclear weapons standoff, the bipolar system has declined. Issue 2 focuses on the debate over "burden sharing" between the United States and its allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). NATO has been the cornerstone of Western defense for nearly four decades. Now, however, it is under considerable strain, with some Americans arguing that the United States is paying more than its fair share. They call for the other allies to pay more and/or argue that the United States should

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substantially reduce, or even eliminate, its military commitment to Western Europe. One of the economic chances that has helped break down the bipolar system is evident in Issue 7. In that issue, U.S. historian Paul Kennedy argues that U.S. power has declined relative to other international actors, including the Western European countries, because the United States is investing too much of its financial resources in military spending.

As the bipolar system declines, some political scientists argue that it is being replaced, at least in part, by a developing *strategic triangle* system that may evolve into a tripolar system. This configuration is comprised of the United States, the Soviet Union, and China. One of the “rules” of a tripolar system is that each of the three principals must avoid being the odd man out by ensuring that the other two do not become allies. This foreign policy pressure helps explain why the United States has virtually befriended China. Even anticommunist president Reagan maintained friendly relations with China, and Issue 1 discusses the question of whether the United States is becoming too friendly with China.

State-level analysis is the middle, and most common, level of analysis. Social scientists who study world politics from this perspective focus on how countries, singly or comparatively, make foreign policy. In other words, this perspective is concerned with internal political dynamics such as the roles and interactions of the executive and legislative branches of government, the impact of bureaucracy, the role of interest groups, and the effect of public opinion on foreign policy. Issue 16 illustrates one aspect of state-level analysis. The issue examines the way in which the United States goes to war. Former senator Dan Quayle argues that the decision to use military force properly rests with the president and that congressional interference is both unconstitutional and dangerous. One of his colleagues, former senator Lowell Weicker, maintains that Congress has a constitutional right to help determine U.S. military action and that legislative input will benefit policy making.

A third level of analysis, which is the most microscopic, is *human-level analysis*. This approach focuses on the role of individual decision makers. It contends that decisions are made by individuals, and that the nature of those decisions are determined by the decision maker’s perceptions, predilections, and strengths and weaknesses. The aforementioned Issue 3 on U.S. interventionism illustrates this level of analysis. Given the differing views and policy pronouncements of George Bush and Michael Dukakis in the 1988 presidential election, the U.S. stance on foreign intervention was strongly influenced by the election’s results. If Governor Dukakis had won, then it is possible, even probable, that Washington’s policy would be very different. With George Bush in the White House, continuity with previous policy is more probable.

REALISM VERSUS IDEALISM

Realism and idealism represent another division among political scientists and practitioners in their approaches to the study and conduct of international relations. *Realists* are usually skeptical about the nature of politics and, perhaps, the nature of humankind. They are prone to believe that countries have conflicting interests, and that these differences can lead to conflict. Further, they contend that states (countries) are, by definition, obligated to do what is good for their own citizens (national interest). The amount of power a state has will determine how successful it is in attaining its goals. Therefore, for realists, politics is and ought to be a process of gaining, maintaining, and using power. This does not mean that realists are warmongers. It does mean, however, that they are apt to believe that the best way to avoid conflict is to remain powerful and, also, to avoid pursuing goals that are beyond one's power to achieve. "Peace through strength" is a phrase with which most realists would agree.

Idealists disagree with realists about both the nature and conduct of international relations. In the first place, idealists tend to be more optimistic that the global community is capable of finding ways to live in harmony and with a sense of collective, rather than national, interest. Idealists also claim that the pursuit of a narrow national interest is shortsighted. They argue that, in the long run, countries must learn to cooperate or face the prospect of a variety of evils, which could include nuclear war, environmental disaster, or continuing economic hardship. Idealists argue, for example, that armaments cause world tensions, whereas realists maintain that conflict requires states to have weapons. Idealists are especially concerned with conducting current world politics on a more moral or ethical plane, and they advocate searching for future alternatives to the prevailing process of pursuing nationalist interests through power politics.

Several of the issues debated in this volume address the realist-idealist split. For example, former secretaries of state Cyrus Vance and George Shultz differ over the proper role of morality as a guide to foreign policy in Issue 15. Vance contends that human rights represent a fundamental principle and should strongly influence policy. Shultz does not reject morality as a consideration, but he contends that it must be balanced with other factors to determine policy.

The issue of terrorism also presents several difficult moral questions. One question concerns morality of terrorism as such. Terror tactics are almost universally condemned in the West. Yet those who engage in or support terrorism defend terrorist causes and acts as just, and it is important to understand the views of terrorists. They argue that the justice of their goal (end) legitimizes their actions (means). They also

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maintain that whether explosives are dropped by military aircraft or delivered by automobile makes little moral difference, both kill. They say that given the overwhelming military superiority of their oppressive enemies, they have little choice but to use the only tactic, terror, available to them if they hope to win. How to respond to terrorists raises other moral issues. For example, how effective and moral is military action? In Issue 16, former Israeli ambassador Benjamin Netanyahu argues for a counter-strike policy against terrorists and their supporters. Martha Crenshaw disagrees and contends that military action is neither appropriate nor effective. More than any single world area, the Middle East is associated with the problem of terrorism. Of particular concern is the struggle between Israel and the Palestinians and their supporters in the region. Both the Jews of Israel and the Palestinian Arabs claim the right to a homeland, and their territorial claims overlap or even coincide. For a number of reasons, including moral shame over the holocaust of World War II and the long history of worldwide anti-Semitism, *Zionism* (a movement for the Jewish homeland) receives widespread support in the West. In recent years, however, support for the Palestinian cause has increased, as has criticism of Israel for its sometimes brutal (if, some argue, necessary) tactics against Arabs within its borders. Issue 5 focuses on whether or not the Palestinians should be allowed to establish an independent homeland, especially on the West Bank (of the Jordan River), a territory now controlled by Israel.

In addition to these very specific debates on the role of morality, many of the other issues in this volume also involve matters of principle, including Issue 3 on the U.S. policy of interventionism and Issue 4 on sanctions against South Africa.

Future *world alternatives* are discussed in the last three issues. The debate on the United Nations (Issue 18) explores one alternative. Another alternative favored by idealists is the growth of international organizations. They especially view the International Court of Justice as an important international organization. Realists are apt to argue that a country is at a disadvantage if it attempts to adhere to international law in what (they claim) is a generally lawless world. Issue 7 involves the question of whether or not the United States would be justified in expelling from New York City the Palestinian observer mission to the United Nations. A member of the U.S. Congress supports expelling the Palestinians because they support terrorism, while an Arab representative to the United Nations condemns the policy as a violation of international law.

The global future also involves the availability of natural resources, the condition of the environment, and the level of world population. Issue 19 addresses one of these concerns, with scientists disagreeing over whether

or not a life-threatening rise in the temperature of the Earth's climate is commencing.

THE EAST-WEST AND NORTH-SOUTH AXES

It is a truism that the world is politically dynamic and that the nature of the political system is undergoing profound change. In the two decades following the end of World War II, the primary axis of world politics was the *East-West confrontation*. World politics was primarily based on the confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union, and it was primarily a political-military struggle. That axis remains a strong, if somewhat diminished, focus of international politics. Issues 6, 12, and 13 all deal with the tension between Washington and its allies and Moscow and its allies. Issue 13, for example, discusses the desirability of a proposed 50% cut in the American and Soviet strategic nuclear arsenals. Issue 12 concentrates on a related issue, whether or not NATO could withstand an attack by the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact.

In recent years another axis of international politics has increased in importance and as a source of tension. This is the *North-South axis*. The wealthy, industrialized countries (North) are on one end and the poor, less developed countries (LDCs, South) are at the other extreme. Economic differences and disputes are the primary dimension of this axis, in contrast to the military nature of the East-West axis. In the past few decades, the LDCs have become more resentful of the economic gap that separates them from the North. They have called for a *New International Economic Order* (NIEO), which includes more aid and loans from the North, a revision of trade practices that work to the disadvantage the South, and more say in world economic policy making. Several of the issues address these disputes. Issue 10, for example, considers whether the North has in the past contributed to and continues to affect (and therefore has a responsibility to improve) the conditions of the South. Issue 11 takes up the causes and solutions for the international debt crisis.

INCREASED ROLE OF ECONOMICS

As the growing importance of the North-South axis indicates, economics is playing an increased role in world politics. Economics have always played a part in international relations, but the traditional focus has been on strategic-political affairs, especially questions of military power. This older concern is still important as the debates on NATO (Issue 3) and the strength of the United States (Issue 7) indicate. But political scientists are increasingly focusing on *international political economy*—the economic dimensions of world politics. International trade, for instance, has increased dramatically, expanding in the period between 1933 and 1987 from an

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annual world total of \$20 billion to \$2.5 trillion. The impact has been profound. The *domestic economic health* of most countries is heavily affected by trade and other aspects of international economics. Since World War II there has been an emphasis on expanding *free trade* by decreasing tariffs and other barriers to international commerce. In recent years, however, a downturn in the economies of many of the industrialized countries has increased calls for more *protectionism*. The debate is joined in Issue 8 on the recently ratified U.S.-Canadian Free Trade Agreement. The debate features the divergent views of the Canadian prime minister and the leader of the main opposition party in Canada's House of Commons. They argue vigorously over the economic, political, and social impact of the treaty on Canada.

The level and impact of *international investment* is another economic issue of considerable dispute, and Issue 9 examines the question of whether massive foreign investment in, and control of, American businesses, real estate, and other economic assets threatens U.S. economic independence.

Another economic issue is the use of *economic sanctions*. These refer to the utilization of trade, aid, and other economic factors to try to encourage or punish the foreign policy behavior of other countries. The oil-producing Arab countries, for instance, instituted an oil embargo against the West in the mid-1970s in an attempt to lessen support of Israel. The United States embargoed grain sales to the Soviet Union in response to its 1979 invasion of Afghanistan, and Washington has embargoed trade with Nicaragua in an attempt to weaken the leftist regime there. Issue 4 focuses on the current dispute over whether to apply economic sanctions against South Africa in order to try to change its racist, apartheid policies. Zimbabwe's prime minister Robert Mugabe argues for the imposition of economic sanctions; American State Department official John Whitehead maintains that sanctions would be counterproductive.

CONCLUSION

Having discussed many of the various dimensions and approaches to the study of world politics, it is incumbent on me to advise against becoming too hung up by them. Issues of focus and methodology are important to both the study of international relations and to an understanding of how others analyze global conduct. However, they are also partially pedagogical. In the last analysis, world politics is a highly interrelated, perhaps seamless, subject. No one level of analysis, for instance, can fully explain the events on the world stage. Instead, using each of the levels to analyze events and trends will bring the greatest understanding.

Similarly, the realist-idealist division is less precise in practice than it may appear. As some of the debates indicate, each side often stresses its own standards of morality. Which is more moral: defeating godless, totalitarian, threatening communism or withdrawing support from the sometimes terrorist contras? Further, realists usually do not reject moral considerations. Rather, they contend morality is but one of the factors a country's decision makers must consider. Realists are also apt to argue that different standards of morality apply to a country than to an individual. By the same token, most idealists do not completely ignore the often dangerous nature of the world. Nor do they argue that a country must totally sacrifice its short-term interests to promote the betterment of the world. Thus, realism and idealism can be seen most accurately as the ends of a continuum, with most political scientists and practitioners falling between, rather than at the ends of, the extremes. The best advice, then, is to think broadly about international politics. The subject is very complex, and the more creative and expansive you are in selecting your foci and methodologies, the more insight you will gain.

