

FOURTH EDITION

INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

**Enduring
Concepts and
Contemporary
Issues**

Robert C. Art Robert Jervis

International Politics

Enduring Concepts and Contemporary Issues

FOURTH EDITION

Robert J. Art

Brandeis University

Robert Jervis


Columbia University

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Preface

The first edition of *International Politics* appeared in 1973. Since then, the field of international relations has experienced a dramatic enrichment in the subjects studied and the quality of works published. Political economy came into its own as an important subfield in the 1970s. New and important works in the field of security studies appeared. The literature on cooperation among states flourished in the early 1980s, and important studies about the environment began to appear in the mid-1980s. Feminist, post-modernist, and constructivist critiques of the mainstream made their appearance also. With the end of the Cold War, issues of morality, human rights, and the tension between state sovereignty and the obligations of the international community came to the fore. The growing diversity of the field has closely mirrored the actual developments in international relations.

In fashioning the fourth edition, we have kept in mind both the new developments in world politics and the literature that has accompanied them. Central to this edition, though, as for the other three, is our belief that the realm of international politics differs fundamentally from that of domestic politics. Therefore, we have continued to put both the developments and the literature in the context of the patterns that still remain valid for understanding the differences between politics within anarchy and politics under a government. The theme for this edition continues to revolve around enduring concepts and contemporary issues in world politics.

The fourth edition makes moderate changes in the first three parts of the reader. We have retained the sections on anarchy, the use of force, and international political economy, but have changed some of the selections. In order to make room for the rapid changes in the contemporary world, we have had to omit the section on decision making that was in the third edition. We were reluctant to do so, but we felt the subjects of Part Four were sufficiently important and grew so naturally out of the first three parts that the decision was a wise one.

The fourth edition of *International Politics* is roughly one-third different from the third. But it continues to follow the four principles that have guided us throughout all previous editions:

1. A selection of subjects that, even though they do not exhaustively cover the field of international politics, nevertheless encompasses most of the essential topics that we teach in our introductory courses.
2. Individual readings that are mainly analytical in content, that take issue with one another, and that thereby introduce the student to the fundamental debates and points of view in the field.
3. Editors' introductions to each part that summarize the central concepts the student must master, that organize the central themes of each part, and that relate the readings to one another.
4. A reader that can be used either as the core around which to design an introductory course or as the primary supplement to enrich an assigned text.

Finally, in putting together the fourth edition, we received excellent advice from the following colleagues, whom we would like to thank for the time and care they took: Andrew Bennett, Timothy McKeown, Roslin Simowitz, and Robert J. Griffiths.

Robert J. Art

Robert Jervis

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PART One

ANARCHY AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Unlike domestic politics, international politics takes place in an arena that has no central governing body. From this central fact flow important consequences for the behavior of states. In Part One, we explore three of them: the role that morality can and should play in statecraft; the effects that anarchy has on how states view and relate to one another; and the ways that the harsher edges of anarchy can be mitigated, even if not wholly removed.

THE ROLE OF MORALITY IN STATECRAFT

Citizens, students, and scholars alike often take up the study of international politics because they want their country to behave as morally as possible. But they soon discover that morality and statecraft do not easily mix. Why should this be? Is it inevitable? Can and should states seek to do good in the world? Will they endanger themselves and harm others if they try?

The end of the Cold War has brought these questions once again to the fore of international politics. But they are timeless questions, having been asked by observers of international politics in nearly every previous era. They therefore make a good starting point for thinking about the nature of international politics and the choices states face in our era. Hans J. Morgenthau, one of the leading proponents of the approach known as Realism (also known as power politics), takes the classic Realist position: morality cannot be an invariable guide to statecraft. Although morality must be present if foreign policies are to be effective, both the nature of human beings and the nature of international politics mean that political behavior can never truly be moral. J. Ann Tickner, commenting on the primacy of power in Morgenthau's writings, explains that what he considers to be a realistic description of international politics is only a picture of the past and therefore not a prediction about the future. A world in which women play a greater role, she

argues, might be more cooperative and pose fewer conflicts between the dictates of morality and the power of self-interest.

Especially today, much of the argument about the role that morality should play in international politics turns on whether states should press others to respect their conception of human rights. Some argue that such altruism is not only out of place, but also that it will backfire because others will resist intervention in their internal affairs. Others argue that it is a moral error to apply the values and standards of one society to others that have different values, cultures, and political systems. Rhoda E. Howard and Jack Donnelly dispute both positions. They argue that, although cultures and systems differ, each individual human being still has a set of rights by virtue of being human. The difficulty, they note, is not with the definition of human rights but with their implementation. In the absence of effective international government, there is no choice but to rely on states for the enforcement of human rights. This reliance raises two difficult problems for the fostering of human rights internationally. First, what specific set of rights will a state try to enforce on another? Second, will a state pursue its human rights agenda at the cost of all the other goals that it legitimately holds?

PERSPECTIVES ON THE NATURE OF ANARCHY

Even those who argue that morality should play a large role in statecraft acknowledge that international politics is not like domestic politics. In the latter, there is government; in the former, there is none. As a consequence, no agency exists above the individual states with authority and power to make laws and settle disputes. States can make commitments and treaties, but no sovereign power ensures compliance and punishes deviations. This—the absence of a supreme power—is what is meant by the anarchic environment of international politics. Anarchy is therefore said to constitute a *state of war*: When all else fails, force is the *ultima ratio*—the final and legitimate arbiter of disputes among states.

The state of war does not mean that every nation is constantly at the brink of war or actually at war with other nations. Most countries, though, do feel threatened by some states at some time, and every state has experienced periods of intense insecurity. No two contiguous states, moreover, have had a history of close, friendly relations uninterrupted by severe tension if not outright war. Because a nation cannot look to a supreme body to enforce laws, nor count on other nations for constant aid and support, it must rely on its own efforts, particularly for defense against attack. Coexistence in an anarchic environment thus requires *self-help*. The psychological outlook that self-help breeds is best described by a saying common among British statesmen since Palmerston: “Great Britain has no permanent enemies or permanent friends, she has only permanent interests.”

Although states must provide the wherewithal to achieve their own ends, they do not always reach their foreign policy goals. The goals may be grandiose; the means available, meager. The goals may be attainable; the means selected, inappropriate. But even if the goals are realistic and the means both available and appropriate, a state can be frustrated in pursuit of its ends. The reason is simple,

but fundamental to an understanding of international politics: What one state does will inevitably impinge on some other states—on some beneficially, but on others adversely. What one state desires another may covet. What one thinks its just due another may find threatening. Steps that a state takes to achieve its goals may be rendered useless by the countersteps others take. No state, therefore, can afford to disregard the effects its actions will have on other nations' behavior. In this sense state behavior is contingent: What one state does is dependent in part upon what others do. Mutual dependence means that each must take the others into account. Kenneth Waltz explores this point more fully and shows why "in anarchy there is no automatic harmony."

Mutual dependence affects nothing more powerfully than it does security—the measures states take to protect their territory. Like other foreign-policy goals, the security of one state is contingent upon the behavior of other states. Herein lies the *security dilemma* to which each state is subject: In its efforts to preserve or enhance its own security, one state can take measures that decrease the security of other states and cause them to take countermeasures that neutralize the actions of the first state and that may even menace it. The first state may feel impelled to take additional actions that will provoke additional countermeasures . . . and so forth. The security dilemma means that an action-reaction spiral can occur between two states or among several of them so that each is forced to spend even larger sums on arms and be no more secure than before. All will run faster merely to stay where they were.

At the heart of the security dilemma are these two constraints: the inherent difficulty in distinguishing between offensive and defensive postures and the inability of one state to bank on the fact that another state's present pacific intentions will remain so. The capability to defend can also provide the capability to attack. In adding to its arms, state A may know that its aim is defensive, that its intentions are peaceful, and therefore that it has no aggressive designs on state B. In a world where states must look to themselves for protection, however, B will examine A's actions carefully and suspiciously. B may think that A will attack him when A's arms become powerful enough and that A's protestations of friendship are designed to lull him into lowering his guard. But even if B believes A's actions are not directed against him, B cannot assume that A's intentions will remain peaceful. B must allow for the possibility that what A can do to him, A sometime might do. The need to assess capabilities along with intentions, or, the equivalent, to allow for a change in intentions, makes statesmen profoundly conservative. They prefer to err on the side of safety, to have too much rather than too little. Because security is the basis of existence and the prerequisite for the achievement of all other goals, statesmen must be acutely sensitive to the security actions of others. The security dilemma thus means that statesmen cannot risk *not* reacting to the security actions of other states, but that in so reacting they can produce circumstances that leave them worse off than before.

The anarchic environment of international politics, then, allows every state to be the final judge of its own interests, but requires that each provide the means to attain them. Because the absence of a central authority permits wars to occur, security considerations become paramount. Because of the effects of the security

dilemma, efforts of statesmen to protect their peoples can lead to severe tension and war even when all parties sincerely desire peace. Two states, or two groups of states, each satisfied with the status quo and seeking only security, may not be able to achieve it. Conflicts and wars with no economic or ideological basis can occur. The outbreak of war, therefore, does not necessarily mean that some or all states seek expansion, or that men have an innate drive for power. That states go to war when none of them wants to, however, does not imply that they never seek war. The security dilemma may explain some wars; it does not explain all wars. States often do experience conflicts of interest over trade, real estate, ideology, and prestige. For example, when someone asked Francis I what differences led to his constant wars with Charles V, he replied: "None whatever. We agree perfectly. We both want control of Italy!" (Cited in Frederick L. Schuman, *International Politics*, 7th ed., New York, 1953, p. 283.) If states cannot obtain what they want by blackmail, bribery, or threats, they may resort to war. Wars can occur when no one wants them; wars do occur when someone wants them.

Even under propitious circumstances, international cooperation is difficult to achieve, Realists argue. Joseph Grieco points out that in anarchy, states are often more concerned with relative advantages than with absolute gains. That is, because international politics is a self-help system in which each state must be prepared to rely on its own resources and strength to further its interests, statesmen often seek to become more powerful than their potential adversaries. Cooperation is then made difficult not only by the fear that others will cheat and fail to live up to their agreements, but also by the felt need to gain a superior position. The reason is not that statesmen are concerned with status, but that they fear that arrangements which benefit all, but provide greater benefits to others than to them, will render their country vulnerable to pressure and coercion in the future.

In an anarchic condition the better question to ask is not "Why does war occur?" but "Why does war not occur more frequently than it does?" Instead of asking "Why do states not cooperate more to achieve common interests?" we should ask "Given anarchy and the security dilemma, how is it that states are able to cooperate at all?" This Realist perspective is not without its critics. As Milner notes, the absence of a formal international authority and world government may mean that international politics is technically anarchic, but it does not mean that the contrast to domestic politics is as extreme as Realists claim. States are tied together by a complex web of interests and values. Attacking or even menacing others often is not a prudent policy, even for a state that is more powerful than its neighbors. We should not exaggerate either the insecurities or the opportunities created by the international system.

THE MITIGATION OF ANARCHY

Even Realists note that conflict and warfare is not a constant characteristic of international politics. Most states remain at peace with most others most of the time. Statesmen have developed a number of ways of coping with anarchy, of gaining more than a modicum of security, of regulating their competition with other states,

and of developing patterns that contain, although not eliminate, the dangers of aggression. Summarizing a great deal of recent research, Kenneth Oye shows that even if anarchy and the security dilemma inhibit cooperation, they do not prevent it. A number of conditions and national strategies can make it easier for states to achieve common ends. Cooperation is usually easier if there are a small number of actors. Not only can each more carefully observe the others, but all actors know that their impact on the system is great enough so that if they fail to cooperate with others, joint enterprises are likely to fail. Furthermore, when the number of actors is large, there may be mechanisms and institutions that group them together, thereby reproducing some of the advantages of small numbers. The conditions actors face also influence their fates. The barriers of anarchy are more likely to be overcome when actors have long time horizons, when even successfully exploiting others produces an outcome that is only a little better than mutual cooperation, when being exploited by others is only slightly worse than mutual noncooperation, and when mutual cooperation is much better than unrestricted competition. Under such circumstances, states are particularly likely to undertake contingent strategies such as tit-for-tat. That is, they will cooperate with others if others do likewise and refuse to cooperate if others have refused to cooperate with them.

Most strikingly, it appears that democracies have never gone to war against each other. This is not to say, as Woodrow Wilson did, that democracies are inherently peaceful. They seem to fight as many wars as do dictatorships. But, as Michael Doyle shows, they do not fight each other. If this is correct—and, of course, both the evidence and the reasons are open to dispute—it implies that anarchy and the security dilemma do not prevent peaceful and even harmonious relations among states that share certain common values and beliefs.

Democracies are relatively recent developments. For a longer period of time, two specific devices—international law and diplomacy—have proven useful in resolving conflicts among states. Although not enforced by a world government, international law can provide norms for behavior and mechanisms for settling disputes. The effectiveness of international law derives from the willingness of states to observe it. Its power extends no further than the disposition of states “to agree to agree.” Where less than vital interests are at stake, statesmen may accept settlements that are not entirely satisfactory because they think the precedents or principles justify the compromises made. Much of international law reflects a consensus among states on what is of equal benefit to all, as, for example, the rules regulating international communications. Diplomacy, too, can facilitate cooperation and resolve disputes. Particularly if diplomacy is skillful, that is, if the legitimate interests of the parties in dispute are taken into account, understandings can often be reached on issues that might otherwise lead to war. These points and others are explored more fully by Stanley Hoffmann and Hans Morgenthau.

Statesmen use these two traditional tools within a balance-of-power system. Much maligned by President Wilson and his followers and often misunderstood by many others, balance of power refers to the manner in which stability can be the outcome of the efforts of individual states, whether or not any or all of them deliberately pursue that goal. Just as Adam Smith argued that if every individual pursued his or her own self-interest, the interaction of individual egoisms would

enhance national wealth, so international relations theorists have argued that even if every state seeks power at the expense of the others, no one state will likely dominate. In both cases a general good can be the unintended product of selfish individual actions. Moreover, even if most states desire only to keep what they have, their own interests dictate that they band together in order to resist any state or coalition of states that threatens to dominate them.

The balance-of-power system is likely to prevent any one state's acquiring hegemony. It will not, however, benefit all states equally nor maintain the peace permanently. Rewards will be unequal because of inequalities in power and expertise. Wars will occur because they are one of the means by which states can preserve what they have or acquire what they covet. Small states may even be eliminated by their more powerful neighbors. The international system will be unstable, however, only if states flock to what they think is the strongest side. What is called *bandwagoning* or the *domino theory* argues that the international system is precarious because successful aggression will attract many followers, either out of fear or out of a desire to share the spoils of victory. Stephen Walt disagrees, drawing on balance-of-power theory and historical evidence to argue that rather than bandwagoning, under most conditions states balance against emerging threats. They do not throw in their lot with the stronger side. Instead, they join with others to prevent any state from becoming so strong that it could dominate the system.

Power balancing is a strategy followed by individual states acting on their own. Other ways of coping with anarchy which may supplement or exist alongside this impulse, are more explicitly collective. Regimes and institutions can help overcome anarchy and facilitate cooperation. When states agree on the principles, rules, and norms that should govern behavior, they can often ameliorate the security dilemma and increase the scope for cooperation. Institutions may not only embody common understandings but, as Robert Keohane argues, they can also help states work toward mutually desired outcomes by providing a framework for long-run agreements, making it easier for each state to see whether others are living up to their promises, and increasing the costs the state will pay if it cheats. In the security area, the United Nations has the potential to be an especially important institution.

As Bruce Russett and James Sutterlin note, the end of the Cold War opens up new possibilities for the internationalization of deterrence and force in the service of common security.