

CONCEPTS OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS IN GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE



FOURTH EDITION

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Fourth Edition

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Preface

World politics has changed in major ways in recent years. The objective situations, the underlying forces and circumstances, distributions of power, economic influence, and prominent issues are certainly different. But in addition to these differences, the subjective situation, the frame of reference that people bring to the understanding of world events, has also changed—probably for everyone.

The biggest changes have been in values and ideas. We are leaving—have really left—a world in which participants in the global game of international politics could play their roles on the world stage without the self-conscious awareness that they were playing roles. We have entered a world in which the principal actors—from the president of the United States to a student demonstrator in Beirut—are as much concerned with how their actions will appear on television as they are with the direct impact they will have on the events of world politics.

Recently, the first truly global political community has begun to emerge around us. What we in the international relations field called the interpenetration of states in recent decades has not occurred only in the Western world. It has probably evolved so far as to be irreversible, short of global catastrophe. We have moved from a humanity that lived its collective life as fragments of the whole into a new context of humanity as a whole.

In fact, not only is it inaccurate to speak of the West as distinct from the East, but it is also not accurate even to speak of the North as opposed to the South. These distinctions are more appropriate as generalizations for popular mythology than as descriptions for actual international politics. For example, the gross value of manufactured goods exported by the Global South, formerly called the Third World, equaled the value of the manufactured goods exported by the United

States. Other examples abound: Japan is losing market share in steel and electronic home appliances to South Korea. Truly global industries are emerging and, along with them, the foundations for a world economic system.

The recent manifestations of neoconservatism in the West and religious fundamentalism in many parts of the world, for example, are masking the scale of global transformation now under way. Political rhetoric is essentially backward-looking—it translates contemporary issues into political distinctions of the past. This reactionary bias of political rhetoric is not the monopoly of practitioners of world politics. Media pundits and professional analysts are as much—if not more—the victims of rhetorical anachronisms.

If we in the field of international relations have been guilty of a single error during the recent years, it has been to overemphasize the traditional rituals of the world political game and underestimate the impact of the emergence of the first global civilization. Today's emerging global civilization has a far larger relative sway than Rome, the most extensive of its predecessors. For unlike Rome—which knew only dimly of the civilizations of China and India, and nothing at all of American Indian civilizations in the western hemisphere—the global culture now coalescing excludes no one. The remotest jungle village and the most isolated igloo in the arctic are coming to feel the grip and penetrating power of the first planetary culture.

This edition of *Concepts of International Politics in Global Perspective* emphasizes the kinds of new actors and issues now present within the context of emerging global civilization. The Introduction of this fourth edition updates our brief survey of the study of international relations, reflecting and explaining the changing treatment of the subject matter. Part I, "The Actors in Global Politics," underscores the expanding role of nonstate actors in the global system. Concepts are updated to accommodate the broadening environment of decision making and the new requirements of security. Part II, "The Global Political System: Actors and Their Relations," places emphasis on the expanding diversity of global relations. The treatment reflects greater sensitivity to nonstate actors. Part III, "The Substance of Global Politics: Major Issues of Our Age," has undergone major revision reflecting present challenges of world politics.

The new Conclusion develops the concept of cooperative global politics. The recommended readings for the Introduction, for each of the fifteen chapters, and for the Conclusion have all been updated to include essential works published recently. Yet, the concise nature of the previous three editions remains intact.

Acknowledgments

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Our sons Riyad and Jamil, and Carl and Jacob, respectively, inspired us to see and try to find the possibility of something new in the uncertainty of our times.

The boundless love of my soulmate Elena is a source and a mirror of vision and faith. Her radiant mind made me see this new edition, and her generous heart gave me confidence to do it.

A. A. S.

My wife Loni gave me unfailing and generous support. Her patience and encouragement sustained my effort.

C. O. L. III

Contents

Preface *xv*

Acknowledgments *xvii*

INTRODUCTION: CHANGING FRAME OF ANALYSIS 1

Development of the Study of International Relations 2

Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies 7

Epistemology or the Nature of World Politics 8

Feminist Perspectives on International Relations 9

Methods of Study 10

The Need for New Thinking 13

The Approach of This Study 14

PART I

***The Actors in Global Politics* 19**

1 *THE NATURE OF FOREIGN POLICY* 20

Politics: The Maximization of Values 20

The Nature of Politics 21

Social Values and Foreign Policy 22

Cultural Diversity 23

Value Content of Foreign Policy	24
Foreign Policy and International Politics	26
<i>Interests, Goals, and Objectives</i>	27
From "Social Values" to "National Interest"	27
Ends and Means in Foreign Policy	28
The Nature of an Objective	29
<i>Policy and Decision</i>	30
The Meaning of "Policy"	30
The Need for Priorities	31
The Classic Compromise	33
Initiatives and Responses	33
<i>Types of Foreign Policies</i>	34
The Policy of the Status Quo	34
The Policy of Revisionism	35
2 GOVERNMENT AND POLICYMAKING	38
<i>State Organization for International Action</i>	38
Government and Foreign Affairs	38
The Head of Government	39
The Foreign Minister and the Foreign Office	40
The Diplomatic Service	41
Other Departments	42
<i>The Policy Process</i>	43
The Process of Decision	43
The Analysis of Foreign Policy Situations	44
The Choice Among Alternatives	45
Evaluating and Revising Decisions	46
<i>Factors Influencing Decisions</i>	46
The Appreciation of the Problem	47
The Calculation of Costs and Risks	47
The Problem of Domestic Consensus	48
The Incompleteness of Information	49
The Pressure of Time	50
National Style	50
Commitments and Precedents	51
3 CAPABILITY IN ACTION	53
<i>Capability</i>	53
Definition	53
The Function of Capability	54
Influence and Coercion in Capability	54
Capability and "Power"	55

	<i>Capability Judgments in Foreign Policy</i>	56
	What Is a Capability Judgment?	56
	Judging the State's Own Capability	56
	Capability Judgments of Other States	57
	<i>Factors in Capability Analysis</i>	58
	Analytical Point of View	58
	The Situational Base	58
	Relativity of Capability	59
	The Dynamic Nature of Capability	59
	<i>Elements and Factors of Capability</i>	60
	The Major Categories	60
	The Tangibles	61
	The Intangibles	63
4	<i>THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS</i>	68
	<i>Political Techniques: Diplomacy</i>	69
	The Nature of Diplomacy	69
	The Functions of Diplomacy	70
	Success and Failure in Diplomacy	71
	<i>Economic Techniques: The Carrot and the Stick</i>	72
	The Rationale of Economic Methods	73
	Persuasive Economic Techniques	74
	Coercive Economic Techniques	74
	Conclusions on Economic Techniques	76
	<i>Psychological Techniques: Propaganda and Culture</i>	77
	The Nature of Propaganda	77
	Propaganda as a Foreign Policy Tool	77
	The Role of Subversion	78
	<i>Military Techniques: War and Its Approximations</i>	79
	War in Foreign Policy Calculations	80
	Technology, Nationalism, and War	80
	The Appropriateness of War	81
	Military Techniques Short of War	82
 PART II		
	<i>The Global Political System: Actors and Their Relations</i>	85
5	<i>TRADITIONAL IDEAS AND PATTERNS OF GLOBAL POLITICS</i>	86
	<i>The System of States</i>	86
	The Nature of the System	87

The State in the System	88
The Interstate Relationship	88
The Pole of Order and the Pole of Disorder	89
<i>Equality and Inequality in Global Politics</i>	90
The Law and Myth of Sovereignty	90
The Political Inequality of States	91
The Trend Toward Greater Inequality	91

<i>Power Politics</i>	92
The Assumptions of Power Politics	92
Power Status in World Politics	93
Patterns of Power Politics	94
<i>The Regularities of Global Politics</i>	96
Patterns of Equilibrium of Power	96
Multiple Balance of Power	96
Simple Balance of Power	97
Integration of Power	97
Methods of the Balance of Power	98

6 NEW CONDITIONS OF GLOBAL POLITICS 102

<i>A World of States</i>	102
The Contemporary Global System	103
Origins of the Nation-State System	104
<i>The Rise and Decline of the Traditional International System</i>	106
The Old International Order	107
The Emerging System	108
Diversity and Integration	109
<i>Nonstate Actors in Global Politics</i>	110
International Actors	110
Bloc Actors	111
International Organizations	112
Regional Actors	114
Transnational Actors	116

7 CONFLICT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION 119

<i>The Nature of Conflict</i>	119
Types of Conflict	120
Objectives of Conflict	122
Balancing-Objective Conflict	122
Hegemonic-Objective Conflict	123
Recent Views of Systemic Conflict	124
The Tactics of Conflict	125

	<i>The Resolution of Conflict</i>	126
	Pacific Methods	126
	Coercive Procedures Short of War	130
	Forcible Procedures: The Role of War	130
	The Changing Nature of Force	130
	Recent Trends in Conflict Resolution	131
8	LIMITATIONS ON STATE ACTION	135
	<i>Morality As a Limitation: What Is Moral Consensus?</i>	135
	The Moral Problem in International Politics	136
	The Rupture of the Moral Consensus	137
	Morality and Foreign Policy	137
	Morality, Interest, and Power	138
	The Rise of International Morality	139
	The Restraining Effect of Moral Consensus	140
	<i>International Law</i>	140
	The Subject Matter of International Law	141
	The Political Conception of International Law	142
	Global South Attitudes Toward International Law	144
	Recent Trends in International Law	146
	<i>The Calculus of Prudence in Statecraft</i>	146
	Rationality and Prudence in Statecraft	146
	The Role of Probability	147
	The Virtues of Half a Loaf	147
	PART III	
	<i>The Substance of Global Politics: Major Issues of Our Age</i>	149
9	WAR AND ARMS CONTROL	150
	<i>Total War and the States System</i>	151
	The Possibility of Catastrophe	151
	The Invalidation of "Victory"	152
	The Rethinking of Political Values	154
	The Disappearance of Decision	155
	Decision by Consensus	155
	<i>Political Effects of the New Warfare</i>	155
	The "Balance of Terror"	156
	The Declining Credibility of Military Force	157
	The End of Status	157
	The Utility of Military Force Today	158
	Arms Transfers	160

	<i>New Doctrines and the Military Dilemma</i>	161
	The Importance of Military Doctrine	161
	The Doctrinal Crisis: Is This a New Era?	162
	Doctrines of Total War	163
	Doctrines of Limited War	167
	<i>The Arms Race and Arms Control</i>	169
	The Arms Race	169
	Strategic Arms Limitation	170
	The Future of Arms Control	171
	The Role of Political Decision	172
10	<i>THE ROLE OF BELIEF SYSTEMS: IDEOLOGY, NATIONALISM, AND RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM</i>	174
	<i>The Nature of Ideology</i>	174
	Ideology and Contemporary World Politics	175
	Ideology and Foreign Policy	176
	<i>Ideology, Myth, and Reality</i>	178
	<i>Ideology in World Politics: The Cold War</i>	179
	The Former Soviet Approach to the World: A Form of Communism	180
	The U.S. Approach to the World: A Form of Democracy	181
	The Global South Approach to the World	183
	<i>Nationalism: Old and New</i>	185
	Traditional European Nationalism	185
	Nationalism in the Global South	187
	<i>Religious Fundamentalism</i>	188
	Islamic Fundamentalism: A Case Study	188
11	<i>HUMANKIND, TECHNOLOGY, AND THE ECOSYSTEM</i>	192
	<i>Energy</i>	193
	Fossil Fuels	193
	Nuclear Energy	193
	Solar Energy	195
	Appropriate Technology	195
	<i>The Exploration of Outer Space</i>	196
	The Military Uses of Space	197
	Cooperation in Space	197
	<i>Population, Hunger, and Poverty</i>	199
	Causes of the Population Problem	199
	Political, Social, and Economic Effects	200
	Avenues of Solution	201
	Population and Global Politics	202

	<i>Mass Communication</i>	202	
	Mass Media in World Politics	202	
	Destructive and Constructive Applications	203	
	<i>Production, Consumption, and Distribution</i>	204	
	New Production Techniques	204	
	Rising Consumer Expectations	204	
	The Problem of Distribution	205	
	Political Significance	205	
	<i>The Information Revolution</i>	206	
12	INTEGRATION, INTERDEPENDENCE, NORTH-SOUTH RELATIONS, AND DEVELOPMENT	209	
	<i>Interdependence, Integration, and Convergence</i>	210	
	Integration	210	
	Interdependence	211	
	Convergence Theory	212	
	<i>North-South Relations and the New International Economic Order</i>	214	
	A New International Economic Order?	215	
	<i>Development and Approaches to Development</i>	220	
	Approaches to Development	220	
	Beyond Economics, Toward Adaptation	222	
	Sustainable Development: Problems and Prospects	224	
13	THE WORLD ECONOMY AND THE MULTINATIONAL CORPORATION	227	
	<i>The World Economy: A Primer</i>	227	
	Perspectives	228	
	The Three C's: Commerce, Currency, and Capital	229	
	<i>Multinational Corporations (MNCs)</i>	232	
	Historical Evolution of Multinational Corporations	232	
	Goals of Multinational Corporations	235	
	The Relationship Between Multinational Corporations and Nation-States	237	
	Multinational Corporations and the Global South	238	
	Regulating the Multinational Corporations	241	
	Conclusion	242	
14	ETHNICITY, TERRORISM, AND NONVIOLENCE	244	
	<i>Ethnicity</i>	244	
	Ethnicity Versus States	246	
	Roots of Ethnic Conflict	247	

	Ethnicity and Development	248
	Ethnicity and Foreign Policy	251
	Neo-Ethnic Groups	252
	<i>Terrorism</i>	253
	Terrorism as a System	253
	Goals and Objectives of Terrorists	254
	Legal Control of Terrorism	255
	<i>Nonviolence</i>	256
	The Relationship Between Principle and Practice	257
	Nonviolence as a Power Technique	259
15	HUMAN RIGHTS	261
	<i>International Concern for Human Rights</i>	262
	<i>The First Global Conference on Human Rights</i>	265
	<i>Human Rights: Cultural and Ideological Perspectives</i>	266
	Western Liberalism	266
	Socialists: Marxists and Neo-Marxists	267
	The Global South	268
	Common Human Rights?	269
	<i>Human Rights: Cold War and Post-Cold War</i>	269
	<i>Toward Global Human Rights</i>	275
	CONCLUSION: TOWARD COOPERATIVE GLOBAL POLITICS	278
	<i>A New Frame of Reference</i>	278
	<i>The First Global Civilization</i>	281
	<i>Cooperative Politics</i>	283
	<i>Premises for a New World Order</i>	286
	AUTHORS' POSTSCRIPT TO THE FOURTH EDITION	290
	INDEX	293

***Chapter* 6**

NEW CONDITIONS OF GLOBAL POLITICS

The international political system, incorporating the historically validated ideas and patterns we have examined, has been decisively influenced by major changes in contemporary world civilization. The several “revolutions” in transportation, communication, energy, production, weapons, information, and space have all had their direct effects on the actors as well as the environment. Thus the conditions of global politics today are radically different from those of even a half century ago. As we will attempt to demonstrate, many of the tensions of present world politics come from the inevitably frustrating attempt to fit the contemporary environment into traditional political categories.

Today the states of the world function within a political system that is both global and interdependent. Every explosion of political, economic, or social force within this system is felt all around the planet. No part of the Earth’s surface can any longer be classified as politically remote, and to a greater or lesser extent every state is involved with every other state.

A WORLD OF STATES

One new dimension of world politics is the great change in the number and nature of participants in the process. The environment shapes the actors at least as much as actors shape the environment—in fact, in our era the system’s influence may be more important. Thus there is good reason to describe and analyze the characteristics of the overall environment faced by the diverse ensemble of actors

in global politics. We will see that political actors, like biological organisms, thrive in certain environments and decline or expire in others.

By stressing the nature of this environment—that is, the breakdown of distance, technological diffusions, expanding communication and information grids, and changing belief systems and forms of human organizations—we can anticipate what kinds of actors we would expect such an environment to support. Furthermore, we can analyze actual and potential patterns of change in the system and the types of new actors such changes might foster.

The international system, though still the arena of relations between states, is also increasingly characterized by *transnational* relations—relations among states and nonstate actors—and the politics of transnational exchange. This new variety of relations among actors has also modified the process of international politics.

The Contemporary Global System

The total number of national actors (states) in world politics has more than tripled since the end of World War II. When the UN was established in 1945, its membership included 51 states; the present membership has risen to 184. This increase in number has been accompanied by a change in the geographic distribution of membership. In 1945 the UN had 19 members from Central and South America, 19 from Europe and other Western areas, 9 from Asia, and 4 from Africa. The number of Central and South American and other American states remained unchanged until the Caribbean states Jamaica, Trinidad-Tobago, Guyana, Barbados, Grenada, and the Bahamas became independent in the 1960s and 1970s. The states of Europe and the West have increased to 34 as a result of the breakup of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. In contrast, the number of African and Asian states has increased to more than 100. Together the states of Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean constitute nearly two-thirds of the present UN membership, and the vast majority of these new members were formerly colonies or annexed parts of Western powers and the Soviet Union.

Thus the system that once had a purely Western cultural pattern has been altered by other peoples and their value structures. This great shift in the background and general orientation of the vast majority of participants in world politics has had a number of immediate consequences for the system. Consensus on many issues is more difficult to obtain than it was when states shared a common cultural and historical orientation. The new states arrived in the system with a point of view different from that of the older states, and they apply different criteria of judgment and evaluation.

Communication between old and new states has been marked, at least so far, by a certain degree of suspicion, misunderstanding, and confusion of motivations. A new force—Global South nationalism, expressing itself initially in the form of anticolonialism or anti-imperialism, and more recently in demands for change in the global economy—has come to play a major role in the course of political life. Many of the new states look upon their former colonial masters with

(perhaps deserved) mistrust and press their cases against imperialism and for a restructuring of the economic order as matters of principle. The older states—which have a history of rule over alien peoples and which continue to enjoy favorable positions in the world economy, both because of and in spite of their imperialistic pasts—have encountered difficulty in defending themselves against this onslaught.

Entry into the states system of peoples who were formerly peripheral to it has also unveiled to the masses of the less-developed countries the startling contrast between their way of life and the much higher standard long enjoyed by older states. The governments of these new states have pressed for a more just share of resources, wealth, and opportunity for their peoples, or at least for greater assurance of continued survival. Thus the familiar “revolution of rising expectations” was a direct consequence of the broader membership in the global system. In turn, the older and more favorably placed members of the system were obliged to broaden their own political perspectives (not a little grudgingly at times) to take account of the new conditions of world politics. Not only have they been required to extend their interests to include many once-neglected areas of the world, but they have also been constrained to deal with a broad range of substantive problems (e.g., basic human needs, ethnicity, terrorism, human rights, the environment) that were considered to be outside the traditional context of international politics.

Origins of the Nation-State System

To better appreciate the potential significance of the various changes in world politics, we should try to see the current system in a broader perspective. Then we can avoid the common tendency to take it for granted and begin to understand it as a product of a particular set of historical circumstances that are themselves subject to change.

Social behavior is closely related to our basic physical needs. Historical example suggests that, though individuals have organized in a variety of ways, the reasons for grouping together have remained relatively constant—search for food, shelter, and protection. A variety of interrelated personal motives—fear, hunger, anxiety, and drives for recognition, power, material gain, or self-fulfillment, as well as an instinctive need for community—probably explain why individuals organize into larger collectivities.

More importantly, the way individuals organize presupposes a type of value system. Even if our basic needs—food, protection, and shelter—do not change in their essence, our values and belief systems do change, and the prevailing sociopolitical order changes with them. When a political system does not adapt spontaneously to changes in the value system or to a new technology, it is forced finally to adjust or to go into decline. The failure of the former Soviet Union and the communist-bloc states to adopt a more liberal value system based on the discourse of rights is an example. When humanity valued kinship and community most, individuals grouped into tribes; when religion was most important, there