SAMPLE CHAPTER

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, 7/E

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Joshua S. Goldstein
Jon C. Pevehouse

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SAMPLE CHAPTER 2

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U.S. Marines in Fallujah, Iraq, November 2004.

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CHAPTER 2

Power Politics

Realism

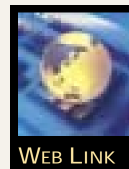
No single theory reliably explains the wide range of international interactions, both conflictual and cooperative. But there is a theoretical framework that has traditionally held a central position in the study of IR. This approach, called realism, is favored by some IR scholars and vigorously contested by others, but almost all take it into account. It is a relatively conservative theoretical approach; liberal and revolutionary alternatives will be reviewed in Chapter 3.

Realism (or *political realism*) is a school of thought that explains international relations in terms of power (see "Defining Power," pp. 57–58). The exercise of power by states toward each other is sometimes called *realpolitik*, or just *power politics*. Realists are often pessimistic concerning human nature. Realism has a long history, and it dominated the study of IR in the United States during the Cold War.

Realism as we know it developed in reaction to a liberal tradition that realists called **idealism** (of course, idealists themselves do not consider their approach unrealistic). Idealism emphasizes international law, morality, and international organizations, rather than power alone, as key influences on international events. Idealists think that human nature is basically good. With good habits, education, and appropriate international structures, human nature can become the basis of peaceful and cooperative international relationships. Idealists see the international system as one based on a community of states with the potential to work together to overcome mutual problems (see Chapter 3). For idealists, the principles of IR must flow from morality.

Idealists were particularly active in the period between World War I and World War II, following the painful experience of World War I. U.S. President Woodrow Wilson and other idealists placed their hopes for peace in the League of Nations as a formal structure for the community of nations.

Those hopes were dashed when that structure proved helpless to stop German, Italian, and Japanese aggression in the 1930s. Since World War II, realists have blamed idealists for looking too much at how the world *ought* to be instead of how it *really* is. Sobered by the experiences of World War II, realists set out to understand the principles of power politics without succumbing to wishful thinking. Realism provided a theoretical foundation for the Cold War policies of containment and the determination of U.S. policy makers not to appease the Soviet Union and China as the West had appeased Hitler at Munich in 1938.


WEB LINK
Aggression in the 1930s

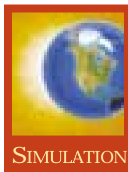
Realists ground themselves in a long tradition. The Chinese strategist *Sun Tzu*, who lived two thousand years ago, advised the rulers of states how to survive in an era when war had become a systematic instrument of power for the first time (the "warring states" period). Sun Tzu argued that moral reasoning was not very useful to the state rulers of the

day, faced with armed and dangerous neighbors. Sun Tzu showed rulers how to use power to advance their interests and protect their survival.[1]

At roughly the same time, in Greece, *Thucydides* wrote an account of the Peloponnesian War (431–404 B.C.) focusing on relative power among the Greek city-states. He stated that "the strong do what they have the power to do and the weak accept what they have to accept."[2] Much later, in Renaissance Italy (around 1500), *Niccolò Machiavelli* urged princes to concentrate on expedient actions to stay in power, including the manipulation of the public and military alliances. Today the adjective *Machiavellian* refers to excessively manipulative power maneuvers.[3]

English philosopher *Thomas Hobbes* in the seventeenth century discussed the free-for-all that exists when government is absent and people seek their own self-interest. He called it the "state of nature" or "state of war"—what we would now call the "law of the jungle" in contrast to the rule of law. Hobbes favored a strong monarchy (which he labeled a *Leviathan*) to tame this condition. Realists see in these historical figures evidence that the importance of power politics is timeless and cross-cultural.

After World War II, scholar *Hans Morgenthau* argued that international politics is governed by objective, universal laws flowing from the idea that national interests are defined in terms of power (not psychological motives of decision makers). He reasoned that no nation had "God on its side" (a universal morality) and that all nations had to base their actions on prudence and practicality. He opposed the Vietnam War, arguing in 1965 that a communist Vietnam would not harm U.S. national interests.



Power Politics

Similarly, in 2002, leading realists were prominent among 33 IR scholars signing a *New York Times* advertisement warning that "war with Iraq is *not* in America's national interest."[4] Thus realists do not always favor using military power, although they recognize the necessity of doing so at times. The target of the IR scholars' ad was the group of foreign policy makers in the Bush administration known as *neoconservatives*, who advocated more energetic use of American power, especially military force, to accomplish ambitious goals such as democratizing the Middle East. Neoconservatives appear likely to have more influence on U.S. foreign policy in the second G. W. Bush term than in the first.

Realists tend to treat political power as separate from, and predominant over, morality, ideology, and other social and economic aspects of life. For realists, ideologies do not matter much, nor do religions or other cultural factors with which states may explain their actions. Realists see states with very different religions or ideologies or economic systems as quite similar in their actions with regard to national power.[5]

Today realists share several assumptions about how IR works. They assume that IR can be best (though not exclusively) explained by the choices of states operating as autonomous actors rationally pursuing their own interests in a system of sovereign states. Sometimes the realist framework is summarized in three propositions: (1) *states* are the most important actors (the state-centric assumption); (2) they act as *rational* individuals in

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[1] Sun Tzu. *The Art of War*. Translated by Samuel B. Griffith. NY: Oxford, 1963, p. 22.

[2] Thucydides. *History of the Peloponnesian War*. Translated by R. Warner. NY: Penguin, 1972, p. 402.

[3] Machiavelli, Niccolò. *The Prince, and the Discourses*. Translated by Luigi Ricci. Revised by E. R. P. Vincent. NY: Modern Library, 1950. Meinecke, Friedrich. *Machiavellism: The Doctrine of Raison d'État and Its Place in Modern History*. Translated by D. Scott. Yale, 1957.

[4] Morgenthau, Hans. We Are Deluding Ourselves in Vietnam, *The New York Times Magazine*, Apr. 18, 1965; Advertisement, *The New York Times*, Sept. 26, 2002.

[5] Morgenthau, Hans J., and Kenneth W. Thompson. *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*. 6th ed. NY: Knopf, 1985. Carr, Edward Hallett. *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919–1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations*. London: Macmillan, 1974 [1939]. Aron, Raymond. *Peace and War: A Theory of International Relations*. Translated by R. Howard and A. B. Fox. NY: Doubleday, 1966.

TABLE 2.1 ■ Assumptions of Realism and Idealism

Issue	Realism	Idealism
Human Nature	Selfish	Altruistic
Most Important Actors	States	States and others including individuals
Causes of State Behavior	Rational pursuit of self-interest	Psychological motives of decision makers
Nature of International System	Anarchy	Community

pursuing national interests (the unitary rational-actor assumption); and (3) they act in the context of an international system lacking central government (the *anarchy* assumption).

Table 2.1 summarizes some major differences between the assumptions of realism and idealism. We will return to the realism-liberalism debate at the start of Chapter 3.

Power

Power is a central concept in international relations—the central one for realists—but one that is surprisingly difficult to define or measure.

Defining Power

Power is often defined as the ability to get another actor to do what it would not otherwise have done (or not to do what it would have done).[6] A variation on this idea is that actors are powerful to the extent that they affect others more than others affect them.[7] These definitions treat power as influence. If actors get their way a lot, they must be powerful.

One problem with this definition is that we seldom know what a second actor would have done in the absence of the first actor's power. There is a danger of circular logic: power explains influence, and influence measures power. Thus it is hard to use power to explain why international events occur (the aim of realism). A related problem is that common usage treats power as a thing rather than a process: states "have" power.

These problems are resolved if we recall that power is not influence itself, but the ability or potential to influence others. Many IR scholars believe that such potential is based on specific (tangible and intangible) characteristics or possessions of states—such as their sizes, levels of income, armed forces, and so forth. This is power as *capability*. Capabilities are easier to measure than influence and less circular in logic.

Measuring capabilities to explain how one nation influences another is not simple, however. It requires summing up various kinds of potentials. States possess varying amounts of population, territory, military forces, and so forth. *The best single indicator of a state's power may be its total GDP*, which combines overall size, technological level, and wealth. But even GDP is at best a rough indicator. An alternative method, compared to the method followed in this book, gives GDP estimates that are on average about 50 percent higher for countries in the global North and about 50 percent lower for the global

[6] Dahl, Robert A. *Modern Political Analysis*. 2nd ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1970.

[7] Waltz, Kenneth. *Theory of International Politics*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979.

POWER AS INFLUENCE

Power is the ability to influence the behavior of others. Military force and economic sanctions are among the various means that states and nonstate actors use to try to influence each other. The bombing of Spanish commuter trains in 2004 apparently swung an election a few days later and led to Spain's withdrawal from the U.S.-led multinational coalition in Iraq. In this case, the terrorists, linked to al Qaeda, had the power to influence outcomes.

South (see Chapter 1, footnote 9, p. 12). In particular, this alternative method reduces China's GDP substantially from the figures reported in this book. So GDP is a useful estimator of material capabilities but not a precise one. These tangible capabilities (including military forces) are often referred to as material power.

Furthermore, power depends on nonmaterial elements. Capabilities give a state the potential to influence others only to the extent that political leaders can mobilize and deploy them effectively and strategically. This depends on national will, on diplomatic skill, on popular support for the government (its legitimacy), and so forth. Some scholars emphasize the *power of ideas*—the ability to maximize the influence of capabilities through a psychological process. This process includes the domestic mobilization of capabilities—often through religion, ideology, or (especially) nationalism. International influence is also gained by forming the rules of behavior, to change how others see their own national interests. If a state's own values become widely shared among other states, it will easily influence others. For example, the United States has influenced many other states to accept the value of free markets and free trade. This has been called *soft power*.[8]

Because power is a relational concept, a state can have power only relative to other states. *Relative power* is the ratio of the power that two states can bring to bear against each other. It matters little to realists whether a state's capabilities are rising or declining in absolute terms, only whether they are falling behind or overtaking the capabilities of rival states. Most realists, moreover, emphasize material power.

Even realists recognize the limits to explanations based solely on power. At best, power provides a general understanding of typical or average outcomes. In actual IR there are many other elements at work, including an element of accident or luck. The more powerful actor does not always prevail. Power provides only a partial explanation.[9]

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[8] Nye, Joseph S., Jr. *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*. NY: Basic Books, 1990.

[9] Rothgeb, John M., Jr. *Defining Power: Influence and Force in the Contemporary International System*. NY: St. Martin's, 1992. Guzzini, Stefano. *Realism in International Relations and International Political Economy*. Routledge, 1998. Cox, Robert W. *Production, Power, and World Order: Social Forces in the Making of History*. Columbia, 1987. Barnett, Michael and Raymond Duvall. Power in International Politics. *International Organization* 59 (1), 2005: 1–37. Baldwin, David. Power in International Relations. In Carlsnaes, Walter, Thomas Risse, and Beth Simmons, eds. *Handbook of International Relations*. Sage, 2002, pp. 177–91.

Estimating Power

Sun Tzu's first chapter advises rulers to accurately estimate their own power—ranging from money to territory to popular domestic support—and that of their potential enemies. "Know the enemy and know yourself," he wrote. Any estimate of an actor's overall power must combine diverse elements and will therefore be inexact. But such estimates are nonetheless useful. The logic of power suggests that in wars the more powerful state will generally prevail. Thus, estimates of the relative power of the two antagonists should help explain the outcome of each war. These estimates could take into account the nations' relative military capabilities and the popular support for each one's government, among other factors. But most important is the total size of each nation's economy—the total GDP—which reflects both population size and the level of income per person (per capita). With a healthy enough economy, a state can buy a large army, buy popular support (by providing consumer goods), and even buy allies.

For example, the United States that invaded Iraq in 2003 was the most powerful state in the history of the world, and Iraq had been weakened by two costly wars and a decade of sanctions. The power disparity was striking. In GDP, the United States held an advantage of more than a hundred to one; in population, more than ten to one. The larger U.S. armed forces were much more capable technologically. In the 2003 Iraq War, the United States lacked some of the power elements it had possessed during the 1991 Gulf War—the moral legitimacy conferred by the UN Security Council, a broad coalition of allies (including the most powerful states regionally and globally), and partners willing to pay for most of the costs of the war. Despite these shortfalls, U.S. military power alone was able to carry out the objective of regime change in Iraq, within a month and with low U.S. casualties. When the war began, the U.S.-led coalition established its dominance within the first few hours and went on to systematically crush Iraq's military power and drive Saddam Hussein's regime from Baghdad.

So the GDP ratio—nearly one hundred to one—would seem to reflect accurately the power imbalance between the United States and Iraq. (In the short term, of course, other factors ranging from political strategies to military forces to weather play a role.)

And yet, two years later, the U.S. forces' grip on Iraq remained tenuous as an anti-American insurgency proved far stronger than expected. At the same time, the war in Iraq weakened support for American policies around the world. The difficulties encountered by the world's superpower in trying to establish stable political control in Iraq demonstrate that power—getting others to do what you want—includes many elements beyond just military might. GDP does not always predict who will win a war, as shown by the U.S. loss in the Vietnam War and the Soviet Union's loss in the Afghanistan War in the 1980s. Nonetheless, despite its lack of precision, GDP is probably the best single indicator of power.

Elements of Power

State power is a mix of many ingredients, such as natural resources, industrial capacity, moral legitimacy, military preparedness, and popular support of government. All these elements contribute to an actor's power. The mix varies from one actor to another, but overall power does relate to the rough quantities of the elements on which that power is based.

Power resources are elements that an actor can draw on over the *long term*. The power measure used earlier—total GDP—is in this category. So are population, territory, geography, and natural resources. These attributes change only slowly. Less tangible long-term power resources include political culture, patriotism, education of the population, and strength of the scientific and technological base. The credibility of its commitments (reputation for keeping its word) is also a power resource that a state can nurture over time. So is the ability of one state's culture and values to consistently shape the thinking of other

states (the power of ideas). Power resources shape an actor's potential power.

The importance of long-term power resources was illustrated after the Japanese surprise attack on the U.S. fleet at Pearl Harbor in 1941, which decimated U.S. naval capabilities in the Pacific. In the short term, Japan had superior military power and was able to occupy territories in Southeast Asia while driving U.S. forces from the region. In the longer term, the United States had greater power resources due to its underlying economic potential. It built up military capabilities over the next few years that gradually matched and then overwhelmed those of Japan.

Power capabilities allow actors to exercise influence in the *short term*. Military forces are such a capability—perhaps the most important kind. The size, composition, and preparedness of two states' military forces matter more in a short-term military confrontation than do their respective economies or natural resources. Another capability is the military-industrial capacity to quickly produce tanks, fighter planes, and other weapons. The quality of a state's bureaucracy is another type of capability, allowing the state to gather information, regulate international trade, or participate in international conferences.

As with power resources, some power capabilities are intangible. The *support* and *legitimacy* that an actor commands in the short term from constituents and allies are capabilities that the actor can use to gain influence. The *loyalty* of a nation's army and politicians to its leader (in the short term) is in effect a capability available to the leader. Although capabilities come into play more quickly than power resources, they are narrower in scope. In particular, military capabilities are useful only when military power can be effective in gaining influence. Likewise, economic capabilities are of little use in situations dominated by a military component.

Given the limited resources that any actor commands, there are always trade-offs among possible capabilities. Building up military forces diverts resources that might be put into foreign aid, for instance. Or buying a population's loyalty with consumer goods reduces resources available for building up military capabilities. To the extent that one element of power can be converted into another, it is *fungible*. Generally money is the most fungible capability because it can buy other capabilities.

Realists tend to see *military force* as the most important element of national power in the short term, and they see other elements such as economic strength or diplomatic skill or moral legitimacy as being important to the extent that they are fungible into military power. Such fungibility of nonmilitary elements of power into military ones is considerable, at least in the long term. Well-paid soldiers fight better, as do soldiers imbued with moral fervor for their cause, or soldiers using higher-technology weapons. Skilled diplomats can avoid unfavorable military confrontations or provoke favorable ones. Moral foreign policies can help sway public opinion in foreign countries and cement alliances that increase military strength. Realists tend to treat these dimensions of power as important mainly because

THE ECONOMICS OF POWER

Military power such as tanks rests on economic strength, roughly measured by GDP. The large U.S. economy supports U.S. military predominance. In the 2003 U.S. Iraq War, the United States could afford to send a large and technologically advanced military force to the Middle East. Here, U.S. forces enter Iraq, March 2003.

of their potential military impact. Indeed, realists share this emphasis on material (usually military) power with revolutionaries such as communist leaders during the Cold War. Chairman Mao Zedong of China said: "All power grows out of the barrel of a gun."

The different types of power capabilities can be contrasted by considering the choice to possess tanks or gold. One standard power capability that states want is battle tanks. In land warfare to control territory, the tank is arguably the most powerful instrument available, and the leading defense against it is another tank. One can assess power on this dimension by counting the size and quality of a state's tank force (an imprecise but not impossible exercise). A different power capability of time-honored value is the stockpile of *gold* (or its modern-day equivalent in hard currency reserves; see Chapter 9). Gold represents economic power and is a power resource, whereas tanks represent military power and are a power capability.

In the long term, the gold is better because one can always turn gold into tanks (it is fungible), but it might be hard to turn tanks into gold. However, in the short term the tanks might be better because if an enemy tank force invades one's territory, gold will not stop them; indeed they will soon take the gold for themselves. For example, in 1990, Iraq (which had gone for tanks) invaded its neighbor Kuwait (which had gone for gold). In the short term, Iraq proved much more powerful: it occupied Kuwait and plundered it.

Morality can contribute to power, by increasing the will to use power and by attracting allies. States have long clothed their actions, however aggressive, in rhetoric about their peaceful and defensive intentions. For instance, the 1989 U.S. invasion of Panama was named "Operation Just Cause." Of course, if a state overuses moralistic rhetoric to cloak self-interest too often, it loses credibility even with its own population.

The use of geography as an element of power is called **geopolitics.** It is often tied to the logistical requirements of military forces (see Chapter 6). Frequently, state leaders use maps in thinking about international power positions and alignments. In geopolitics, as in real estate, the three most important considerations are location, location, location. States increase their power to the extent they can use geography to enhance their military capabilities, such as by securing allies and bases close to a rival power or along strategic trade routes, by controlling key natural resources, or by enjoying separation from potential adversaries by large bodies of water. In general, power declines as a function of distance from a home state, although technology seems to be making this decline less steep.

A recurrent geopolitical theme for centrally located, largely landlocked states such as Germany and Russia is the threat of being surrounded. Militarily, centrally located states often face a *two-front problem.* Germany had to fight France to the west and Russia to the east simultaneously in World War I—a problem reduced early in World War II by Hitler's pact with Stalin (until Hitler's disastrous decision to invade the Soviet Union).

For states less centrally located, such as Britain or the United States, different geopolitical problems appear. These states have been called "insular" in that bodies of water protect them against land attacks.[10] Their geopolitical problem in the event of war is to move soldiers and supplies over long distances to reach the scene of battle. This capability was demonstrated in the U.S. participation in World War I, World War II, the Cold War, and the Gulf War.

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[10] Dehio, Ludwig. *The Precarious Balance: Four Centuries of the European Power Struggle.* Translated by Charles Fullman. NY: Vintage Books, 1962 [from the German version of 1948]. Modelski, George, and William R. Thompson. *Seapower in Global Politics, 1494–1993.* Washington, 1988. Goldstein, Joshua S., and David P. Rapkin. After Insularity: Hegemony and the Future World Order. *Futures* 23 (9), 1991: 935–59.

Bargaining

The exercise of power involves two or more parties, each trying to influence the other more than it is itself influenced. The mutual attempts to influence others constitute a bargaining process. Bargaining is important in various theoretical perspectives (not just realism), though different theories emphasize different motivations, tactics, and outcomes.

Bargaining and Leverage

Bargaining may be defined as tacit or direct communication in an attempt to reach agreement on an exchange of value—that is, of tangible or intangible items that one or both parties value. Bargaining need not be explicit. Sometimes the content is communicated through actions rather than an exchange of words.[11]

A bargaining process has two or more *participants* and sometimes has *mediators* whose participation is nominally neutral. Participants have a direct stake in the outcome; mediators do not. There are one or more *issues* on which each participant hopes to reach agreement on terms favorable to itself, but the participants' *interests* diverge on these issues, creating conflicts. These conflicts define a *bargaining space*—one or more dimensions, each of which represents a distance between the positions of two participants concerning their preferred outcomes. The bargaining process disposes of these conflicts by achieving agreement on the distribution of the various items of value that are at stake. The end result is a position arrived at in the bargaining space.

Such agreements do not necessarily represent a *fair* exchange of value; many agreements are manifestly one-sided and unfair. But in a broad sense, bargains whether fair or unfair contain an element of *mutual gain*. This is possible because the items of value being exchanged have different value to the different parties.

Participants bring different means of *leverage* to the bargaining process.[12] Leverage derives from power capabilities that allow one actor to influence the other to reach agreements more favorable to the first actor's interests. Leverage may operate on any of three dimensions of power: the *promise* of positive sanctions (rewards) if the other actor gives one what one wants; the *threat* of negative sanctions (damage to valued items) if not; or an *appeal* to the other's feeling of love, friendship, sympathy, or respect for oneself.[13] For instance, Cuba during the Cold War could obtain Soviet oil by purchasing the oil with hard currency, by threatening to cut its alliance with the Soviet Union unless given the oil at subsidized prices, or by appealing to the Soviet leaders' sense of socialist solidarity.

Bringing bargaining leverage into play generally opens up a new dimension in the bargaining space, allowing outcomes along this new dimension to be traded off against those on the original dimension (the main issue at stake). Leverage thus helps to get deals done—albeit not always fair ones. One-sided agreements typically result when one side has a preponderance of leverage relative to the other.[14]

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[11] Synder, Glenn H., and Paul Diesing. *Conflict Among Nations: Bargaining, Decision Making, and System Structure in International Crises*. Princeton, 1977. Morgan, T. Clifton. *Untying the Knot of War: A Bargaining Theory of International Crises*. Michigan, 1994. Telhami, Shibley. *Power and Leadership in International Bargaining: The Path to the Camp David Accords*. Columbia, 1990.

[12] North, Robert C. *War, Peace, Survival: Global Politics and Conceptual Synthesis* (see footnote 12 on p. 16).

[13] Boulding, Kenneth E. *Three Faces of Power*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1990. Hayward, Clarissa Rile. *De-Facing Power*. Cambridge, 2000.

[14] Art, Robert J., and Patrick M. Cronin, eds. *The United States and Coercive Diplomacy*. Herndon, VA: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2003.

The use of violence can be a means of settling conflicts. The application of violent negative leverage can force an agreement that ends a conflict. (Again, the agreement may not be fair.) Because such violence may also create new sources of conflict, agreements reached through violence may not last. Nonetheless, from a realist perspective violence is just another leverage—an extension of politics by other means. Politics itself has been described as the process of deciding "who gets what, when, how."[15]

BARGAINING PROCESS

Bargaining includes both indirect moves and explicit negotiations. Libya's relations with Europe and America improved dramatically, following years of implicit and explicit bargaining, after Libya disclosed and dismantled its weapons of mass destruction programs and the international community lifted long-standing sanctions on Libya. Here, British Prime Minister Blair and Libyan leader Gaddafi seal the deal, 2004.

The same principles of bargaining apply to both international security affairs and international political economy. In both cases power and leverage matter. Also in both cases structures and institutions have been designed to aid the bargaining process. In international security such institutions as diplomatic missions and international organizations facilitate the bargaining process. Realists studying international security focus on political-military bargaining more than economic bargaining because they consider it more important. The economic framework will be elaborated in Chapter 8.

Bargaining that takes place formally—usually at a table with back-and-forth dialogue—is called **negotiation.** Because the issues in IR are important and the actors are usually sophisticated players in a game with long-established rules and traditions, most issues of contention reach a negotiating table sooner or later. Often bargaining takes place simultaneously at the negotiating table and in the world (often on the battlefield). The participants talk in the negotiation hall while manipulating instruments of leverage outside it.

Negotiating styles vary from one culture or individual to another. In international negotiations on major political and military issues, problems of cultural difference may become serious obstacles. For example, straight-talking Americans might misunderstand negotiators from Japan, where saying "no" is rude and is therefore replaced by phrases such as "that would be difficult." A good negotiator will take time to understand the other party's culture and bargaining style, as well as its interests and available means of leverage.

[15] Lasswell, Harold D. *Politics: Who Gets What, When, How*. NY: Meridian, 1958.

Strategies

Power strategies are plans actors use to develop and deploy power capabilities to achieve goals. A key aspect of strategy is choosing the kinds of capabilities to develop, given limited resources, in order to maximize international influence. This requires foresight because the capabilities required to manage a situation may need to be developed years before that situation presents itself. Yet the capabilities chosen often will not be fungible in the short term. Central to this dilemma is what kind of standing military forces to maintain in peacetime—enough to prevent a quick defeat if war breaks out, but not so much as to overburden one's economy (see pp. 214–220). Strategies also include choices about how capabilities are used in situations—sequences of actions designed for maximum effect; the creation of alliances; the use of contingency plans; and so forth. Depending on the situation, most power strategies mix economic instruments (trade, aid, loans, investment, boycotts) with military ones. (In the short term, within a given situation such plans are called *tactics*.)

Strategies include whether (and in which situations) a state is willing to use its power capabilities. For example, in the Vietnam War the United States had overall power capabilities far superior to those of the Vietnamese communists but lost the war because it was unwilling or unable to commit the resources necessary or use them effectively. The *will* of a nation or leader is hard to estimate. Even if leaders make explicit their intention to fight over an issue, they might be bluffing.

The strategic actions of China in recent years exemplify the concept of strategy as rational deployment of power capabilities. China's central foreign policy goal is to prevent the independence of Taiwan, which China considers an integral part of its territory (as does the United Nations and, at least in theory, the United States). Taiwan's government was set up to represent all of China in 1949, when the nationalists took refuge there after losing to the communists in China's civil war. Since 1949, Taiwan has operated more and more independently, and many Taiwanese favor independence. China does not have the military power to invade Taiwan successfully, but it has declared repeatedly that it will go to war if Taiwan declares independence. So far, even though such a war might be irrational on China's part, the threat has deterred Taiwan from formally declaring independence. China might lose such a war, but would certainly inflict immense damage on Taiwan. In 1996, China held war games near Taiwan, firing missiles over the sea. The United States sent two aircraft carriers to signal China that its exercises must not go too far.

Not risking war by declaring independence, Taiwan instead has engaged in diplomacy to gain influence in the world. It lobbies the U.S.

AMPLIFYING POWER

Coherent strategy can help a state to make the most of its power. China's foreign policy is generally directed toward its most important regional interests, above all preventing Taiwan's formal independence. Despite conflicts with a number of its neighbors, China has had no military engagements for 25 years. Here, China uses its veto in the UN Security Council for only the fifth time ever, to end a peacekeeping mission in Macedonia, which had just established ties with Taiwan, 1999.

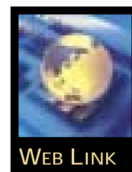
Congress, asks for admission to the UN and other world organizations, and grants foreign aid to countries that recognize Taiwan's government (26 mostly small, poor countries worldwide as of 2005).

China has used its own diplomacy to counter these moves. It breaks diplomatic relations with countries that recognize Taiwan, and it punishes any moves in the direction of Taiwanese independence. Half the countries that recognize Taiwan are in the Caribbean and Central America, leading to a competition for influence in the region. China has tried to counter Taiwanese ties with those countries by manipulating various positive and negative leverages. For example, in Panama, where China is a major user of the Panama Canal (which reverted to Panama from U.S. ownership in 1999), Taiwan has cultivated close relations, invested in a container port, and suggested hiring guest workers from Panama in Taiwan. But China has implicitly threatened to restrict Panama's access to Hong Kong, or to reregister China's many Panamanian-registered ships in the Bahamas instead. (Bahamas broke with Taiwan in 1997 after a Hong Kong conglomerate, now part of China, promised to invest in a Bahamian container port.) Similarly, when the Pacific microstate of Kiribati recognized Taiwan in late 2003, to gain Taiwanese aid, China broke off relations and removed a Chinese satellite-tracking station from Kiribati. Since the tracking station played a vital role in China's growing space program—which had recently launched its first astronaut—and in Chinese military reconnaissance, its dismantling underscored China's determination to give Taiwan priority even at a cost to other key national goals. In 2005, China prepared to retaliate against Vanuatu for recognizing Taiwan. But in 2004 China gave more than $100 million in aid to Dominica for breaking relations with Taiwan.

Two of the five vetoes China has ever used in the UN Security Council were to block peacekeeping forces in countries that extended recognition to Taiwan. These vetoes demonstrate that if China believes its Taiwan interests are threatened, it can play a spoiler role on the Security Council. When the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia recognized Taiwan in 1999 (in exchange for $1 billion in aid), China vetoed a UN peacekeeping mission there at a time of great instability in next-door Kosovo. By contrast, when its Taiwan interests are secure, China cooperates on issues of world order. For example, although China opposed the 1991 Gulf War, it did not veto the UN resolution authorizing it.

These Chinese strategies mobilize various capabilities, from missiles to diplomats to industrial conglomerates, in a coherent effort to influence the outcome of China's most important international issue. Strategy thus amplifies China's power. Similarly, during the Cold War, China used strategy to amplify power, by playing a balancer role between two superpowers and by playing up the importance of the global South, which it claimed to lead.[16]

Some individual actors too are better than others at using their capabilities strategically. For instance, in the 1970s U.S. President Jimmy Carter used the great-power capabilities available to him, but his own strategic and interpersonal skills seem to have been the key to success in the Camp David agreements (which achieved the U.S. foreign policy goal of an Egyptian-Israeli treaty). Good strategies bring together power capabilities for maximum effect, but poor strategies make inefficient use of available capabilities. Of course, even the most skillful leader never has total control of an international situation, but can make best use of the opportunities available while minimizing the effects of bad luck.



Camp David

[16] Rohter, Larry. Taiwan and Beijing Duel for Recognition in Central America. *The New York Times*, Aug. 5, 1997: A7. Zhao, Quansheng. *Interpreting Chinese Foreign Policy: The Micro-Macro Linkage Approach*. Oxford, 1996. Swaine, Michael and Ashley Tellis. *Interpreting China's Grand Strategy: Past, Present, and Future*. Santa Monica: Rand, 2000.

In the context of bargaining, actors use various strategies to employ leverage in an effort to move the final agreement point closer to their own positions. One common bargaining strategy is to start with extreme demands and then gradually compromise them in an effort to end up close to one's true (but concealed) position. Another strategy is to "drive a hard bargain" by sticking closely to one's original position in the belief that the other participant will eventually accept it. U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in the 1970s, however, used a policy of preemptive concessions to induce movement on the other side and get to a middle-ground agreement quickly in few steps.[17]

Another common bargaining strategy is *fractionation*—splitting up a complex issue into a number of small components so that progress may be sought on solvable pieces. For instance, the Arab-Israeli negotiations that began in 1991 had many sets of talks concurrently working on various pieces of the problem. The opposite approach, which some bargainers prefer, is to lump together diverse issues—called *linkage*—so that compromises on one can be traded off against another in a grand deal. This was the case, for instance, in the Yalta negotiations of 1945 among the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union. On the table simultaneously were such matters as the terms of occupation of Germany, the Soviet presence in Eastern Europe, the strategy for defeating Japan, and the creation of the United Nations.

Reciprocity, Deterrence, and Arms Races

To have the best effect, strategic bargaining over IR outcomes should take into account the other actor's own goals and strategies. Only then can one predict which forms of leverage may induce the other actor to take the actions one desires. But this can be a problem: often states do not know each others' true intentions but can only observe each others' actions and statements (which may be lies).

One very effective strategy for influencing another actor whose plans are not known is **reciprocity**—a response in kind to the other's actions, often referred to as a "tit-for-tat" strategy.[18] A strategy of reciprocity uses positive forms of leverage as promises of rewards (if the actor does what one wants); simultaneously it uses negative forms of leverage as threats of punishment (if the actor does not refrain from doing what one does not want). Reciprocity is effective because it is easy to understand. After one has demonstrated one's ability and willingness to reciprocate—gaining a reputation for consistency of response—the other actor can easily calculate the costs of failing to cooperate or the benefits of cooperating.

Reciprocity can be an effective strategy for achieving cooperation in a situation of conflicting interests. If one side expresses willingness to cooperate and promises to reciprocate the other's cooperative and conflictual actions, the other side has great incentive to work out a cooperative bargain. And because reciprocity is relatively easy to interpret, the vow of future reciprocity often needs not be stated explicitly.[19] For example, in 1969 China's relations with the United States had been on ice for 20 years. A total U.S. economic embargo against China was holding back the latter's economic development.

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[17] Kissinger, Henry. *White House Years*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1979, pp. 179–80.

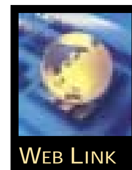
[18] Keohane, Robert O. Reciprocity in International Relations. *International Organization* 40 (1), 1986: 1–27. Rock, Stephen R. *Why Peace Breaks Out: Great Power Rapprochement in Historical Perspective*. North Carolina, 1989. Downs, George W., and David M. Rocke. *Optimal Imperfection? Domestic Uncertainty and Institutions in International Relations*. Princeton, 1995.

[19] Goldstein, Joshua S., and John R. Freeman. *Three-Way Street: Strategic Reciprocity in World Politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990. Goldstein, Joshua S., and Jon C. Pevehouse. Reciprocity, Bullying, and International Cooperation: Time-Series Analysis of the Bosnia Conflict. *American Political Science Review* 91 (3), 1997: 515–29.

China's support of North Vietnam was costing many American lives. The two states were not on speaking terms. President Nixon (and adviser Kissinger) decided to try a signal to China in hopes of improving relations (splitting China away from North Vietnam and further away from the Soviet Union). Nixon slightly relaxed the U.S. trade embargo against China. Three days later, with no explicit connection to the U.S. move, China released three U.S. citizens whose boat had earlier drifted into Chinese waters.[20] China reciprocated other U.S. initiatives in the following months, and the two states resumed formal talks within six months. By 1972, Nixon visited China in a spirit of rapprochement.

Reciprocity can also help achieve cooperation in the sense of refraining from an undesired action. This is the intent of the strategy of **deterrence**—the threat to punish another actor if it takes a certain negative action (especially attacking one's own state or one's allies). The slogan "peace through strength" reflects this approach. If deterrence works, its effects are almost invisible; its success is measured in attacks that did not occur.[21]

Generally, advocates of deterrence believe that conflicts are more likely to escalate into war when one party to the conflict is weak. In this view, building up military capabilities usually convinces the stronger party that a resort to military leverage would not succeed, so conflicts are less likely to escalate into violence. A strategy of **compellence**, sometimes used after deterrence fails, refers to the use of force to make another actor take some action (rather than refrain from taking an action).[22] Generally it is harder to get another state to change course (the purpose of compellence) than it is to get it to refrain from changing course (the purpose of deterrence).



Escalation

One strategy used to try to compel compliance by another state is *escalation*—a series of negative sanctions of increasing severity applied in order to induce another actor to take some action. In theory, the less severe actions establish credibility—showing the first actor's willingness to exert its power on the issue—and the pattern of escalation establishes the high costs of future sanctions if the second actor does not cooperate. These should induce the second actor to comply, assuming that it finds the potential costs of the escalating punishments to be greater than the costs of compliance.

U.S. actions against Saddam prior to the Gulf War illustrate the strategy of escalation. First came statements of condemnation, then UN resolutions, then the formation of an alliance with power clearly superior to Iraq's. Next came the application of economic sanctions, then a military buildup with an implicit threat to use force, then explicit threats of force, and finally ultimatums threatening force after a specific deadline. In this case the strategy did not induce compliance, and only military defeat induced Iraq to accept U.S. terms.

Escalation can be quite dangerous. During the Cold War, many IR scholars worried that a conventional war could lead to nuclear war if the superpowers tried to apply escalation strategies. In fact, side by side with the potential for eliciting cooperation, reciprocity in general contains a danger of runaway hostility. When two sides both reciprocate but never manage to put relations on a cooperative footing, the result can be a drawn-out, nasty, tit-for-tat exchange of punishments. This characterizes Israeli relations with Palestinian militants, for instance.[23]

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[20] Kissinger, Henry. *White House Years.* Boston: Little, Brown, 1979: 179–80.

[21] Zagare, Frank C. *Perfect Deterrence.* Cambridge, 2000. Goldstein, Avery. *Deterrence and Security in the 21st Century.* Stanford, 2000. Morgan, Patrick. *Deterrence Now,* Cambridge, 2003. Huth, Paul K. *Extended Deterrence and the Prevention of War.* Yale, 1988. Jervis, Robert, Richard Ned Lebow, and Janice Gross Stein. *Psychology and Deterrence.* Johns Hopkins, 1985. George, Alexander L., and Richard Smoke. *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice.* Columbia, 1974.

[22] Schelling, Thomas C. *The Strategy of Conflict.* Harvard, 1960.

[23] Goldstein, Joshua, Jon Pevehouse, Deborah Gerner, and Shibley Telhami. Reciprocity, Triangularity, and Cooperation in the Middle East, 1979–1997. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45 (5), 2001: 594–620.

An **arms race** is a reciprocal process in which two (or more) states build up military capabilities in response to each other. Since each wants to act prudently against a threat (often a bit overblown in the leaders' perceptions), the attempt to reciprocate leads to a runaway production of weapons by both sides. The mutual escalation of threats erodes confidence, reduces cooperation, and makes it more likely that a crisis (or accident) could cause one side to strike first and start a war rather than wait for the other side to strike. The arms race process was illustrated vividly in the U.S.-Soviet nuclear arms race, which created arsenals of tens of thousands of nuclear weapons on each side.[24]

Rationality

Consistent with the bargaining framework just outlined, most realists (and many nonrealists) assume that those who wield power behave as **rational actors** in their efforts to influence others.[25]

First, the assumption of rationality implies that states and other international actors can identify their interests and put priorities on various interests: A state's actions seek to advance its interests. The assumption is a simplification, because the interests of particular politicians, parties, economic sectors, or regions of a country often conflict. Yet realists assume that the exercise of power attempts to advance the **national interest**—the interests of the state itself.

But what are the interests of a state? Are they the interests of domestic groups (see Chapter 4)? The need to prevail in conflicts with other states (see Chapter 5)? The ability to cooperate with the international community for mutual benefit (see Chapter 7)? There is no simple answer. Some realists simply define the national interest as maximizing power—a debatable assumption.[26]

Second, rationality implies that actors are able to perform a **cost-benefit analysis**—calculating the costs incurred by a possible action and the benefits it is likely to bring. Applying power incurs costs and should produce commensurate gains. As in the problem of estimating power, one has to add up different dimensions in such a calculation. For instance, states presumably do not initiate wars that they expect to lose, except in cases where they stand to gain political benefits, domestic or international, that outweigh the costs of losing the war. But it is not easy to tally intangible political benefits against the tangible costs of a war. Even victory in a war may not be worth the costs paid. Rational actors can miscalculate costs and benefits, especially when using faulty information (although this does not mean they are irrational). Finally, human behavior and luck can be unpredictable.

The ancient realist Sun Tzu advised that the best general was not the most courageous or aggressive one, but the one who could coolly calculate the costs and benefits of alternative courses. The best war was a short one, in Sun Tzu's view, because wars are costly. Better yet was to take another state intact without fighting—by intimidation, deception, and the disruption of enemy alliances. Capturing an enemy army was better than fighting

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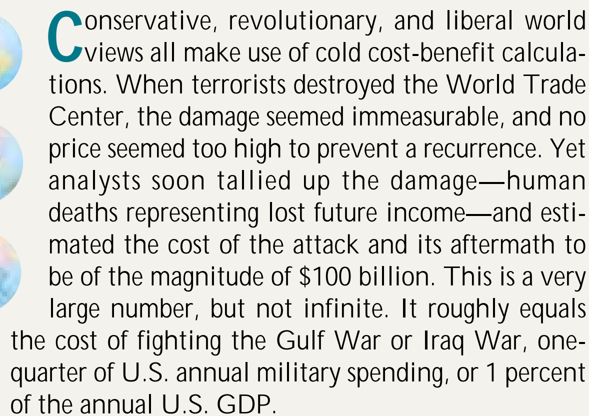
[24] Isard, Walter, and Charles H. Anderton. Arms Race Models: A Survey and Synthesis. *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 8, 1985: 27–98. Plous, S. The Nuclear Arms Race: Prisoner's Dilemma or Perceptual Dilemma? *Journal of Peace Research* 30 (2), 1993: 163–79. Glaser, Charles. When are Arms Races Dangerous? Rational versus Suboptimal Arming. *International Security* 28 (4), 2004: 44–84.

[25] Brown, Michael E., Owen R. Cote, Sean M. Lynn-Jones, and Steven E. Miller, eds. *Rational Choice and Security Studies*. MIT, 2000. Lake, David A., and Robert Powell, eds. *Strategic Choice and International Relations*. Princeton, 1999. Fearon, James. Rationalist Explanations for War. *International Organization* 49 (3), 1995: 379–414. Friedman, Jeffrey, ed. *The Rational Choice Controversy: Economic Models of Politics Reconsidered*. Yale, 1996.

[26] Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations* (see footnote 5 in this chapter). Mearsheimer, John J. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. NY: Norton, 2001.

THINKING THEORETICALLY

Costs and Benefits of Combating Terrorism



Conservative, revolutionary, and liberal world views all make use of cold cost-benefit calculations. When terrorists destroyed the World Trade Center, the damage seemed immeasurable, and no price seemed too high to prevent a recurrence. Yet analysts soon tallied up the damage—human deaths representing lost future income—and estimated the cost of the attack and its aftermath to be of the magnitude of $100 billion. This is a very large number, but not infinite. It roughly equals the cost of fighting the Gulf War or Iraq War, one-quarter of U.S. annual military spending, or 1 percent of the annual U.S. GDP.

A rational state, seemingly, should pay up to $100 billion annually to prevent a recurrence, or $50 billion a year to reduce the chances by half. The initial allocations of the U.S. government to fight the war on terrorism were on this level. Congress passed $29 billion in emergency funding to combat terrorism, and President Bush proposed a $45 billion increase in the annual defense budget. The funds primarily supported military and law-enforcement efforts.

However, there are other ways to spend funds. A rational actor considers a variety of options in making a cost-benefit analysis. The idea of world views (conservative, revolutionary, liberal) helps generate alternatives. From a conservative world view, the importance of national security makes cost a secondary factor. Also, the more seriously one takes the threat of weapons of mass destruction against American cities, the higher a price it would be worth paying to fight terrorism. This perspective helps explain the rapid increase in U.S. spending on national security since September 11, 2001, on the order of almost $200 billion a year including the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, increases in the regular Pentagon budget, and homeland security spending.*

From a more revolutionary perspective, such funds could be better spent. The War Resisters' League argues: "The best way to improve our national security is to redirect money from the military and arms trade to social programs at home and massive humanitarian aid abroad." And $50 billion a year would go a long way; for example, the UN is trying to raise $7 billion for a world AIDS fund, and total U.S. foreign aid is below $10 billion a year. Now think: Which would be more likely to reduce the frequency of major terrorist attacks on the United States—more military and law enforcement to stop terrorists from succeeding, or more foreign aid to alleviate the poverty and despair that breeds terrorism? One can make a good case either way, but how you answer will strongly affect your cost-benefit calculations.

Yet another alternative—perhaps appealing from a liberal perspective—is no dramatic response at all. Of course, law enforcement and international coordination can be improved incrementally, but suppose the United States put its funds and energies elsewhere and "took the hit" from time to time as terrorists destroyed people and property? This may seem callous, but economic liberals believe in rationality and cost-benefit just as much as realists do. Money spent fighting terrorism might be more rationally used for debt reduction and tax cuts, or possibly in such areas as public health, education, or other economically productive programs. A major terrorist attack even once a year would slow the economy by just 1 percent, whereas successful economic policies could raise the growth rate by more than that amount. You will find the do-nothing option less attractive, however, if you think future terrorist attacks could be even more costly (for example, by using nuclear weapons), or more frequent.

Theories should help us clarify our thinking. Considering multiple perspectives helps avoid "blind spots." If you were trying to reduce the future incidence of major terrorist attacks, how would you allocate $200 billion per year among the three options—military campaigns and law enforcement; foreign aid and social programs; or unrelated areas such as tax cuts or health research?

*Goldstein, Joshua S. *The Real Price of War: How You Pay for the War on Terror*. New York University Press, 2004.

it. If fighting was necessary, it should occur on another state's territory so the army could live off the land. Attacking cities was too destructive and thus reduced the benefits of war.

In addition to rationality, many realists make an additional assumption that the actor (usually states) exercising power is a single entity that can "think" about its actions coherently and make choices. This is called the *unitary actor* assumption, or sometimes the *strong leader* assumption, and it is used to describe the nature of states as international actors. Although useful, this simplification does not capture the complexity of how most states actually arrive at decisions (see Chapter 4).

These three assumptions about rationality and the actors in IR are simplifications that not all IR scholars accept. But realists consider these simplifications useful because they allow scholars to explain in a general way the actions of diverse actors. Power in IR has been compared with money in economics—a universal measure. In this view, just as firms compete for money in economic markets, states compete for power in the international system.[27]

INTERNAL DIVISIONS

The unitary actor assumption holds that states make important decisions as though they were single individuals able to act in the national interest. In truth, factions and organizations with differing interests put conflicting pressures on state leaders. Iran's government is badly split between reformers, led by President Khatami, and conservative ayatollahs who barred reformist candidates for parliament in 2004. This news kiosk in Tehran in 2002 sells a postcard of Khatami (below soccer players, top center) along with other political and sports figures.

Despite these criticisms of these assumptions, realists argue that rational actor models capture not all but the most important aspects of IR. These simplified models provide the foundations for a large body of IR research that represents international bargaining relationships mathematically. By accepting the limitations of the assumptions of rationality, IR scholars can build very general and abstract models of international relationships.

Game Theory

Game theory is a branch of mathematics concerned with predicting bargaining outcomes. A game is a setting in which two or more players choose among alternative moves, either once or repeatedly. Each combination of moves (by all players) results in a set of payoffs (utility) to each player. The payoffs can be tangible items such as money or any intangible items of value. Game theory aims to deduce likely outcomes (what moves players will make), given the players' preferences and the possible moves open to them. Games are sometimes called formal models.

[27] Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (see footnote 7 in this chapter).

Game theory was first used extensively in IR in the 1950s and 1960s by scholars trying to understand U.S.-Soviet nuclear war contingencies. Moves were decisions to use nuclear weapons in certain ways, and payoffs were outcomes of the war. The use of game theory to study international interactions has become more extensive among IR scholars in recent years, especially among realists, who accept the assumptions about rationality. To analyze a game mathematically, one assumes that each player chooses a move rationally, to maximize its payoff.

Different kinds of situations are represented by different classes of games, as defined by the number of players and the structure of the payoffs. One basic distinction is between **zero-sum games**, in which one player's gain is by definition equal to the other's loss, and *non-zero-sum games*, in which it is possible for both players to gain (or lose). In a zero-sum game there is no point in communication or cooperation between the players because their interests are diametrically opposed. But in a non-zero-sum game, coordination of moves can maximize the total payoff to the players, although each may still maneuver to gain a greater share of that total payoff.

A *two-person game* has only two players; because it is simple and easy to analyze mathematically, this is the most common type of game studied. An *N-person* game has more than two players, and the moves typically result in coalitions of players, with the members of the winning coalition dividing the payoff among themselves in some manner. In most games, all the players make a move simultaneously. They may do so repeatedly, in a *repeated game* (or an *iterated game*, a *sequential game*, or a *supergame*). In a few games, the players alternate moves so each knows the other's move before deciding on its own.

Analysis of a game entails searching for a *solution* (or equilibrium)—a set of moves by all the players such that no player can increase its payoff by changing its move. It is the outcome at which rational players will arrive. Some simple games have one solution, but many games have multiple solutions.

A category of games with a given structure—in terms of the relationships between moves and payoffs—is sometimes given a name that evokes a story or metaphor representing the nature of the game. Each such game yields an insight or lesson regarding a category of international bargaining situations.[28]

The game called *Prisoner's Dilemma (PD)* is the one most commonly studied. It is a situation in which rational players will choose moves that produce an outcome in which all players are worse off than under a different set of moves. They all could do better, but as individual rational actors they are unable to achieve this outcome. How can this be?

The original story tells of two prisoners questioned separately by a prosecutor. The prosecutor knows they committed a bank robbery but has only enough evidence to convict them of illegal possession of a gun unless one of them confesses. The prosecutor tells each prisoner that if he confesses and his partner doesn't confess, he will go free. If his partner confesses and he doesn't, he will get a long prison term for bank robbery (while the partner goes free). If both confess, they will get a somewhat reduced term. If neither confesses, they will be convicted on the gun charge and serve a short sentence. The story assumes that neither prisoner will have a chance to retaliate later, that only the immediate outcomes matter, and that each prisoner cares only about himself.

This game has a single solution: both prisoners will confess. Each will reason as follows: "If my partner is going to confess, then I should confess too, because I will get a slightly

[28] O'Neill, Barry. A Survey of Game Theory Models on Peace and War. In R. Aumann and S. Hart, eds. *Handbook of Game Theory*. Vol. 2. Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1994. Powell, Robert. *In the Shadow of Power: States and Strategies in International Politics*. Princeton, 1999. Morrow, James D. *Game Theory for Political Scientists*. Princeton, 1995. Myerson, Roger B. *Game Theory: Analysis of Conflict*. Harvard, 1991.

shorter sentence that way. If my partner is not going to confess, then I should still confess because I will go free that way instead of serving a short sentence." The other prisoner follows the same reasoning. The dilemma is that by following their individually rational choices both prisoners will end up serving a fairly long sentence when they could have both served a short one by cooperating (keeping their mouths shut).

In IR, the PD game has been used to gain insight into arms races. Consider the decisions of India and Pakistan about whether to build sizable nuclear weapons arsenals. Both have the ability to do so. In 1998, when India detonated underground nuclear explosions to test weapons designs, Pakistan promptly followed suit. Neither side can know whether the other is secretly building up an arsenal, unless they reach an arms control agreement with strict verification provisions. To analyze the game, we assign values to each possible outcome—often called a *preference ordering*—for each player. This is not simple: if we misjudge the value a player puts on a particular outcome, we may draw wrong conclusions from the game.

The following preferences regarding possible outcomes are plausible: the best outcome would be that oneself but not the other player had a nuclear arsenal (the expense of building nuclear weapons would be worth it because one could then use them as leverage); second best would be for neither to go nuclear (no leverage, but no expense); third best would be for both to develop nuclear arsenals (a major expense without gaining leverage); worst would be to forgo nuclear weapons oneself while the other player developed them (and thus be subject to blackmail).

The game can be summarized in a *payoff matrix* (see Table 2.2). The first number in each cell is India's payoff, and the second number is Pakistan's. To keep things simple, 4 indicates the highest payoff, and 1 the lowest. As is conventional, a decision to refrain from building nuclear weapons is called "cooperation," and a decision to proceed with nuclear weapons is called "defection." The dilemma here parallels that of the prisoners just discussed. Each state's leader reasons: "If they go nuclear, we must; if they don't, we'd be crazy not to." The model seems to predict an inevitable Indian-Pakistani nuclear arms race, although both states would do better to avoid one. And, indeed, a costly and dangerous arms race has unfolded since this book first discussed that prediction ten years ago. Both sides now have dozens of nuclear missiles, and they nearly went to war in 2002, with estimated war deaths of up to 12 million.

The model can be made more realistic by allowing the players to play the game repeatedly; as in most IR contexts, the same actors will bargain over an issue repeatedly over a sustained time period. Game theorists have shown that in a *repeated* PD game, the possibility of reciprocity can make it rational to cooperate. Now the state leader reasons: "If we defect now, they will respond by defecting and both of us will lose; if we cooperate they might cooperate too; and if we are suckered once we can defect in the future." The keys to

TABLE 2.2 ■ Payoff Matrix in India-Pakistan PD Game

		Pakistan	
		Cooperate	Defect
India	Cooperate	(3,3)	(1,4)
	Defect	(4,1)	(2,2)

Note: First number in each group is India's payoff, second is Pakistan's. The number 4 is highest payoff, 1 lowest.

cooperation are the non-zero-sum nature of the PD game and the ability of each player to respond in the future to present moves.[29]

IR scholars have analyzed many other games beyond PD. For example, *Chicken* represents two male teenagers speeding toward a head-on collision. The first to swerve is "chicken." Each reasons: "If he doesn't swerve, I must; but if he swerves, I won't." The player who first commits irrevocably not to swerve (for example, by throwing away the steering wheel or putting on a blindfold while behind the wheel) will win. Similarly, in the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, some scholars argued that President John F. Kennedy "won" by seeming ready to risk nuclear war if Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev did not back down and remove Soviet missiles from Cuba. (There are, however, alternative explanations of the outcome of the crisis.)

Through analysis of these and other games, IR researchers try to predict what rational actors would do in various situations. Games can capture and simplify the fundamental dynamics of various bargaining situations. However, a game-theoretic analysis is only as good as the assumptions that go into it. In particular, the results of the analysis depend on the preferences that players are assumed to have about outcomes. Of course, it is difficult to know what the exact preferences of players (such as state leaders) are, since this requires intimate knowledge of a player's goals and desires.

The International System

States interact within a set of well-defined and long-established "rules of the game" governing what is considered a state and how states treat each other. Together these rules shape the international system as we know it.[30]

Anarchy and Sovereignty

Realists emphasize that the rules of the international system create **anarchy**—a term that implies not complete chaos or absence of structure and rules, but rather the lack of a central government that can enforce rules.[31] In domestic society within states, governments can enforce contracts, deter citizens from breaking rules, and use their monopoly on legally sanctioned violence to enforce a system of law. Both democracies and dictatorships provide central government enforcement of a system of rules. If a law is broken, there is a police force and courts to punish the lawbreaker. Realists contend there is no such central authority to enforce rules and ensure compliance with norms of conduct. Lack of such a central authority among states is what realists mean by anarchy. The power of one state is countered only by the power of other states. States must rely on *self-help*, which they supplement with allies and the (sometimes) constraining power of international norms.

The Bush Doctrine

[29] Snidal, Duncan. Coordination vs. Prisoner's Dilemma: Implications for International Cooperation and Regimes. *American Political Science Review* 79 (4), 1985: 923–42.

[30] Buzan, Barry, and Richard Little. *International Systems in World History: Remaking the Study of International Relations*. Oxford, 2000. Luard, Evan. *Conflict and Peace in the Modern International System: A Study of the Principles of International Order*. London: Macmillan, 1988. Wight, Martin. *Systems of States*. Leicester, 1977.

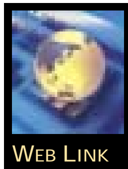
[31] Bull, Hedley. *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*. Columbia, 2002 [1977]. Taylor, Michael. *Anarchy and Cooperation*. NY: Wiley, 1976. Starr, Harvey. *Anarchy, Order, and Integration: How to Manage Interdependence?* Michigan, 1997.

SOVEREIGN TERRITORY

Sovereignty and territorial integrity are central norms governing the behavior of states. They give states control within established borders. Terrorism and other recent developments challenge these norms. Here, the Coast Guard enforces U.S. sovereignty near New York, 2003.

Some people think that only a world government can solve this problem. Others think that adequate order can be provided by international organizations and agreements, short of world government (see Chapter 7). But most realists think that IR cannot escape from a state of anarchy and will continue to be dangerous as a result.[32] In this anarchic world, realists emphasize prudence as a great virtue in foreign policy. States should pay attention not to the intentions of other states but rather to their capabilities. As Sun Tzu advised, do not assume that other states will not attack but rather be ready if they do.

Despite its anarchy, the international system is far from chaotic. The great majority of state interactions closely adhere to **norms** of behavior—shared expectations about what behavior is considered proper.[33] Norms change over time, slowly, but the most basic norms of the international system have changed little in recent centuries.



Sovereignty

Sovereignty—traditionally the most important norm—means that a government has the right, at least in principle, to do whatever it wants in its own territory. States are separate, are autonomous, and answer to no higher authority (due to anarchy). In principle, all states are equal in status if not in power. Sovereignty also means that states are not supposed to interfere in the internal affairs of other states. Although states do try to influence each other (exert power) on matters of trade, alliances, war, and so on, they are not supposed to meddle in the internal politics and decision processes of other states. For example, it would be inappropriate for Russia or Britain to endorse a candidate for U.S. president. (This rule is often bent in practice.)[34]

Putting together the concepts of anarchy and sovereignty illustrates a key realist concern about IR—the prospect of *enforcing* agreements. Since there is no "world police" to punish states if they break an agreement, parties to agreements will be concerned that states carry through with their obligations. The norm of sovereignty, however, can be used to forbid external "meddling" in internal affairs, making enforcement of international agreements difficult. Ultimately, states must rely on each other to allow inspections and enforcement.

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[32] Mearsheimer. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (see footnote 26 in this chapter).

[33] Franck, Thomas M. *The Power of Legitimacy Among Nations*. Oxford, 1990. Finnemore, Martha, and Kathryn Sikkink. International Norm Dynamics and Political Change. *International Organization* 52 (4), 1998: 887–917.

[34] Finnemore, Martha. *Purpose of Intervention*. Cornell, 2004. Krasner, Stephen D. *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy*. Princeton, 1999. Kegley, Charles W., and Gregory A. Raymond. *Exorcising the Ghost of Westphalia: Building World Order in the New Millennium*. Prentice Hall, 2002.

For example, in the 1990s, North Korea announced it would no longer allow inspections of its nuclear facilities by other states, which put it in violation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The international community debated on an appropriate response, eventually using a mix of positive incentives and threats to convince North Korea to stop production of nuclear material. But in 2002 North Korea again withdrew from the NPT, expelled inspectors, and proceeded to build perhaps a half-dozen nuclear bombs. This showed the difficulty of enforcing international norms in the sovereignty-based international system.

In practice, most states have a harder and harder time warding off interference in their affairs. Such "internal" matters as human rights or self-determination are, increasingly, concerns for the international community. For example, election monitors increasingly watch internal elections for signs of fraud (as in the Ukraine in 2004), while international organizations monitor ethnic conflicts for signs of genocide (as in the Sudan in 2004). Also, the integration of global economic markets and telecommunications (such as the Internet) makes it easier than ever for ideas to penetrate state borders.

States are based on territory. Respect for the territorial integrity of all states, within recognized borders, is an important principle of IR. Many of today's borders are the result of past wars (in which winners took territory from losers), or were imposed arbitrarily by third parties such as colonizers. The territorial nature of the interstate system reflects the origins of that system in an age when agrarian societies relied on agriculture to generate wealth. In today's world, where trade and technology rather than land create wealth, the territorial state may be less important. Information-based economies are linked across borders instantly, and the idea of the state as having a hard shell now seems archaic. The accelerating revolution in information technologies may dramatically affect the territorial state system in the coming years.

INFOREV

Cyberspace versus Sovereignty?

Membership in the international system rests on general recognition (by other states) of a government's sovereignty within its territory. This recognition is extended formally through diplomatic relations and by membership in the UN. It does not imply that a government has popular support but only that it controls the state's territory and agrees to assume its obligations in the international system—to accept internationally recognized borders, to assume the international debts of the previous government, and to refrain from interfering in other states' internal affairs.

States have developed norms of diplomacy to facilitate their interactions. An embassy is considered to be territory of the home state, not the country where it is located (see pp. 284–288). The U.S. embassy in China, for instance, harbored a wanted Chinese dissident for two years after the Tiananmen Square crackdown of 1989, and Chinese troops did not simply come in and take him away. To do so would have been a violation of U.S. territorial integrity. Yet the norms of diplomacy can be violated. In 1979, Iranian students took over the U.S. embassy in Tehran, holding many of its inhabitants hostage for 444 days.

Diplomatic norms recognize that states try to spy on each other. It is up to each state to keep others from successfully spying on it. In 2002, China discovered that its new presidential aircraft—a Boeing 767 refurbished in Texas—was riddled with sophisticated listening devices. But China did not make an issue of it (the plane had not gone into service), and a U.S.-China summit the next month went forward. In the post–Cold War era, spying continues, even between states that are not openly hostile (Russia and the United States) or are openly friendly (Israel and the United States).

Realists acknowledge that the rules of IR often create a **security dilemma**—a situation in which states' actions taken to assure their own security (such as deploying more military

forces) tend to threaten the security of other states.[35] The responses of those other states (such as deploying more of their own military forces) in turn threaten the first state. The dilemma parallels the Prisoner's Dilemma game discussed earlier. It is a prime cause of arms races in which states waste large sums of money on mutually threatening weapons that do not ultimately provide security. The current debate over developing U.S. missile defenses hinges in part on whether such defenses would cause a worried China to deploy more nuclear weapons against the United States—another case of a security dilemma.

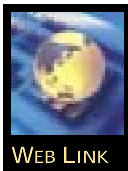
The security dilemma is a negative consequence of anarchy in the international system. Realists tend to see the dilemma as unsolvable, whereas liberals think it can be solved through the development of norms and institutions (see Chapters 3 and 7).

As we shall see in later chapters, changes in technology and in norms are undermining the traditional principles of territorial integrity and state autonomy in IR. Some IR scholars find states to be practically obsolete as the main actors in world politics, as some integrate into larger entities and others fragment into smaller units.[36] Other scholars find the international system quite enduring in its structure and state units.[37] One of its most enduring features is the balance of power.

Balance of Power

In the anarchy of the international system, the most reliable brake on the power of one state is the power of other states. The term **balance of power** refers to the general concept of one or more states' power being used to balance that of another state or group of states. The term is used in several ways and is imprecisely defined. Balance of power can refer to any ratio of power capabilities between states or alliances, or it can mean only a relatively equal ratio. Alternatively, balance of power can refer to the process by which counterbalancing coalitions have repeatedly formed in history to prevent one state from conquering an entire region.[38]

The theory of balance of power argues that such counterbalancing occurs regularly and maintains the stability of the international system. The system is stable in that its rules and principles stay the same: state sovereignty does not collapse into a universal empire. This stability does not, however, imply peace; it is rather a stability maintained by means of recurring wars that adjust power relations.



Balance of Power

Alliances (to be discussed shortly) play a key role in the balance of power. Building up one's own capabilities against a rival is a form of power balancing, but forming an alliance against a threatening state is often quicker, cheaper, and more effective. When such a counterbalancing coalition has a geopolitical element—physically hemming in the threatening state—the power-balancing strategy is called containment. In the Cold War, the United States encircled the Soviet Union with military and political alliances to prevent Soviet territorial expansion.

Sometimes a particular state deliberately becomes a balancer (in its region or the world), shifting its support to oppose whatever state or alliance is strongest at the moment.

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[35] Herz, John. Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma. *World Politics* 2 (2), 1950: 157–80. Jervis, Robert. Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma. *World Politics* 30 (2), 1978: 167–214.

[36] Rosenau, James N. *Along the Domestic-Foreign Frontier: Exploring Governance in a Turbulent World.* Cambridge, 1997. Ferguson, Yale H., and Richard W. Mansbach. *Polities: Authority, Identities, and Change.* South Carolina, 1996.

[37] Weiss, Linda. *The Myth of the Powerless State.* Cornell, 1998.

[38] Gulick, Edward V. *Europe's Classical Balance of Power.* Cornell, 1955. Niou, Emerson M. S., Peter C. Ordeshook, and Gregory F. Rose. *The Balance of Power: Stability and Instability in International Systems.* Cambridge, 1989. Vasquez, John, and Colin Elman, eds. *Realism and the Balance of Power: A New Debate.* Prentice Hall, 2002.

Britain played this role on the European continent for centuries, and China played it in the Cold War. But states do not always balance against the strongest actor. Sometimes smaller states "jump on the bandwagon" of the most powerful state; this has been called bandwagoning as opposed to balancing. For instance, after World War II a broad coalition did not form to contain U.S. power; rather most major states joined the U.S. bloc. States may seek to balance threats rather than raw power; U.S. power was greater than Soviet power but was less threatening to Europe and Japan (and later to China as well).[39] Furthermore, small states create variations on power-balancing themes when they play off rival great powers against each other. For instance, Cuba during the Cold War received massive Soviet subsidies by putting itself in the middle of the U.S.-Soviet rivalry.

In the post–Cold War era of U.S. dominance, balance-of-power theory would predict closer relations among Russia, China, and even France—great powers that are not close U.S. military allies. These predictions appear to be on the mark. Russian-Chinese relations have improved dramatically in such areas as arms trade and demilitarization of the border. France contested U.S. positions vigorously in global trade negotiations and discussions of NATO's command structure, and sometimes sided with Russia and China in the UN Security Council, notably before the 2003 Iraq War. French leaders have complained repeatedly of U.S. "hyperpower." Europe and Japan opposed U.S. positions on a range of proposed treaties in 2001, on such subjects as missile defense, biological weapons, small arms trade, and global warming. (Public opinion in European countries disapproved of Bush administration international policies by large majorities in mid-2001 and even larger majorities in 2003.)[40] Only the appearance of a common enemy—international terrorists—brought the great powers back together temporarily after September 2001. But the 2003 Iraq War brought back a power-balancing coalition of great powers (except Britain)—along with most other countries and world public opinion—against U.S. predominance. In 2003, as America used military force in Iraq, world public opinion revealed widespread anti-American sentiment. In Indonesia, Pakistan, Turkey, and Nigeria—containing half of all the world's Muslims—more than 70 percent worried that the United States could become a threat to their own country, a worry shared by 71 percent of Russians. In Indonesia, Pakistan, Turkey, and Jordan, less than a quarter of the population supported the U.S. war on terrorism. A survey of 38,000 people in 44 nations showed a dramatic drop in support for the United States from 2002 to 2003.

Great Powers and Middle Powers

Power, of course, varies greatly from one state to another. The *most powerful* states in the system exert most of the influence on international events and therefore get the most attention from IR scholars. By almost any measure of power, a handful of states possess the majority of the world's power resources. At most a few dozen states have any real influence beyond their immediate locality. These are called the great powers and middle powers in the international system.

Although there is no firm dividing line, **great powers** are generally considered the half dozen or so most powerful states. Until the past century the great power club was exclusively European. Sometimes great powers' status is formally recognized in an international structure such as the nineteenth-century Concert of Europe or the UN Security Council.

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[39] Walt, Stephen M. *The Origins of Alliances*. Cornell, 1987. Schweller, Randall. Bandwagoning for Profit. *International Security* 19 (1), 1994: 72–107.

[40] *The New York Times*, April 24, 1997: A3. Going It Alone. *The Washington Post*, August 4, 2001: A15. Clymer, Adam. Surveys Find European Public Critical of Bush Policies. *The New York Times*, August 16, 2001: A6.

In general, great powers may be distinguished by the criterion that they can be defeated militarily only by another great power. Great powers also tend to share a global outlook based on national interests far from their home territories.[41]

The great powers generally have the world's strongest military forces and the strongest economies to pay for military forces and other power capabilities. These large economies in turn rest on some combination of large populations, plentiful natural resources, advanced technology, and educated labor forces. Because power is based on these underlying resources, membership in the great-power system changes slowly. Only rarely does a great power—even one defeated in a massive war—lose its status as a great power, because its size and long-term economic potential change slowly. Thus Germany and Japan, decimated in World War II, are powerful today and Russia, after gaining and then losing the rest of the Soviet Union, is still considered a great power.

What states are great powers today? Although definitions vary, seven states appear to meet the criteria. Certainly the United States is one. In total GDP, a measure of potential power, the United States ranks highest by far at $11 trillion per year (2004 data). Because of its historical role of world leadership (especially in and after World War II), and its predominant military might, the United States is considered the world's only superpower.[42]

THE "TWO UPS"

Realists emphasize relative power as an explanation of war and peace. The modernization of China's military—in conjunction with China's rapidly growing economy—is expected to increase China's power over the coming decades. Chinese leaders refer to "two ups and two downs" in the region, as China and the United States increase in power while Russia and Japan decline. Some observers fear instability in Asia if the overall balance of power among states in the region shifts rapidly. Here, flags adorn the Old Executive Office Building for a Chinese visit, 1999.

China, with a total GDP of nearly $7 trillion, is or soon will be the world's second largest economy. China's GDP is especially hard to estimate, and another method would put it below $2 trillion. In any case, China's sheer size (more than 1 billion people) and its rapid economic growth (8–10 percent annually since the 1990s) make it a powerful state. China has a large but not a very modern military, and its orientation is regional rather than global. But, with a credible nuclear arsenal and a seat on the UN Security Council, China qualifies as a great power. It is expected to play a central role in world politics in the twenty-first century. Japan ranks third (or perhaps second), with a GDP of nearly $4 trillion. Along with Germany (over $2 trillion GDP), Japan is an economic great power, but both countries' military roles in international security affairs have been curtailed since World War II. Nonetheless, both Japan and Germany have very large and capable military forces, and recently both have begun using military forces beyond their own territories.

Russia, even after the breakup of the Soviet Union, has a GDP above $1 trillion—again a hard one to estimate—and very large (though rundown) military forces including a massive nuclear arsenal. France and Britain finish out the list at around $1.6 trillion GDP

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[41] Levy, Jack S. *War in the Modern Great Power System, 1495–1975.* Kentucky, 1983.

[42] Perito, Robert M. *Where Is the Lone Ranger When We Need Him? America's Search for a Postconflict Stability Force.* Herndon, VA: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2004.

each. With Russia, they were winners in World War II and have been active military powers since then. Although much reduced in stature from their colonial heydays, they still qualify as great powers by most standards.

The great powers thus include the five permanent members of the UN Security Council: the United States, Russia, France, Britain, and China. The same five states are also the members of the "club" possessing large nuclear weapons arsenals (there are also several recent smaller-scale nuclear states). In world political and economic affairs, Germany and Japan are also great powers (they would like Security Council seats, too; see pp. 267–268).

These seven great powers account for about half of the world's total GDP—and hence, presumably, about half of the total power in the world. This concentration of power is especially strong in practice because the remaining half of the world's power is split up among nearly 200 other states (see Figure 2.1).

The slow change in great-power status is evident. Britain and France have been great powers for 500 years, Russia and Germany for more than 250 years, the United States and Japan for about 100 years, and China for 50 years. Only six other states were ever (but no longer are) considered great powers: Italy, Austria (Austria-Hungary), Spain, Turkey (the Ottoman Empire), Sweden, and the Netherlands.

Middle powers rank somewhat below the great powers in terms of their influence on world affairs. Some are large but not highly industrialized; others have specialized capabilities but are small. Some aspire to regional dominance, and many have considerable influence in their regions.

A list of middle powers (not everyone would agree on it) might include states such as Canada, Italy, India, Brazil, Mexico, South Korea, Australia, Iran, and Turkey. Middle powers have not received as much attention in IR as have great powers. These states do, however, often come into play in the specific regional conflicts that dominate the day-to-day flow of

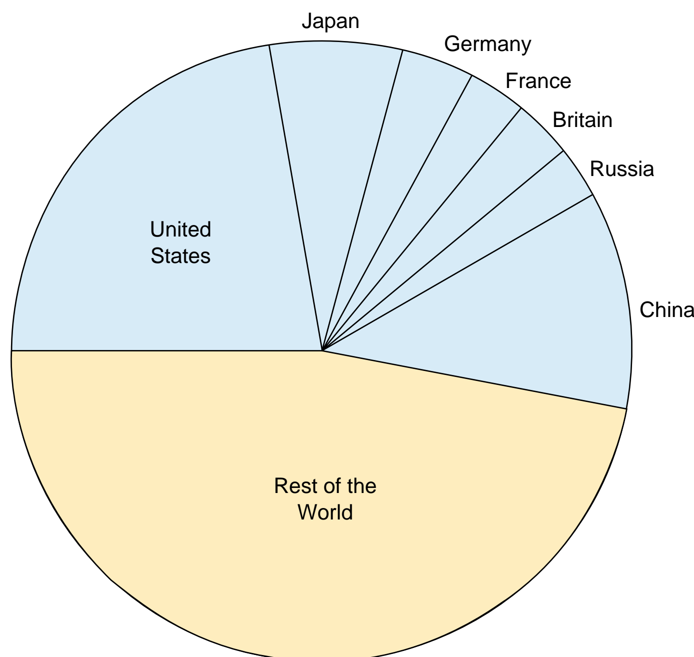

FIGURE 2.1 ■ Great Power Shares of World GDP, 2003 (purchasing-power method)

international news.[43] Smaller, weaker states (not even of middle-power strength) also are often at the center of specific conflicts and crises. But their own actions have only minor influence on world politics; the actions of great powers and middle powers in those conflicts and crises have more impact.

Power Distribution

With each state's power balanced by other states, the most important characteristic of an international system in the view of many realists is the *distribution* of power among states in an international system. Power distribution as a concept can apply to all the states in the world or to just one region, but most often it refers to the great-power system (with most of the world's total power capabilities).

Neorealists (so called because they have adopted and refined realism) try to explain patterns of international events in terms of the system structure—the international distribution of power—rather than the internal makeup of individual states.[44] **Neorealism** is thus also called structural realism. Neorealists often use game theory and related models in such analyses.[45] Compared to traditional realism, neorealism is more scientific in the sense of proposing general laws to explain events, but neorealism has lost some of the richness of traditional realists who took account of many complex elements (geography, willpower, diplomacy, etc.).

Sometimes an international power distribution (world or regional) is described in terms of polarity (a term adopted from physics), which refers to the number of independent power centers in the system. This concept encompasses both the underlying power of various participants and their alliance groupings.

In a **multipolar system** there are typically five or six centers of power, which are not grouped into alliances. Each state participates independently and on relatively equal terms with the others. They may form a coalition of the whole for mutual security through coordination of efforts. Some IR researchers think that multipolarity provides a context for smooth interaction. There are always enough actors present to prevent one from predominating. But to other IR scholars a multipolar system is particularly dangerous, lacking the discipline that predominant states or alliance blocs impose. In a sense, both are correct: in the classical multipolar balance of power, the great-power system itself was stable but wars were frequently used as power-adjusting mechanisms.

At the other extreme, a unipolar system has a single center of power around which all others revolve. This is called hegemony, and will be discussed shortly. The predominance of a single state tends to reduce the incidence of war; the hegemonic state performs some of the functions of a government, somewhat reducing anarchy in the international system.

A bipolar system has two predominant states or two great rival alliance blocs. Tight bipolar systems, such as the East-West standoff in the 1950s, may be distinguished from looser ones such as those that developed when China and (to a lesser extent) France split off from their alliance blocs in the 1960s. IR scholars do not agree about whether bipolar systems are relatively peaceful or warlike. The U.S.-Soviet standoff seemed to provide stability and peace to great-power relations, but rival blocs in Europe before World War I did not.

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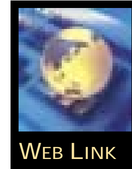
[43] Cohen, Stephen P. *India: Emerging Power*. Washington, DC: Brookings, 2001. Otte, Max. *A Rising Middle Power? German Foreign Policy in Transformation, 1989–1999*. NY: Palgrave, 2000.

[44] Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (see footnote 7 in this chapter).

[45] Keohane, Robert O., ed. *Neorealism and Its Critics*. Columbia, 1986. Buzan, Barry, Charles Jones, and Richard Little. *The Logic of Anarchy: Neorealism to Structural Realism*. Columbia, 1993. Vasquez, John. The Realist Paradigm and Degenerative versus Progressive Research Programs: An Appraisal of Neotraditional Research on Waltz's Balancing Proposition. *American Political Science Review* 91 (4), 1997: 899–912.

In a tripolar system there are three great centers of power. Such a configuration is fairly rare; there is a tendency for a two-against-one alliance to form. Aspects of tripolarity can be found in the "strategic triangle" of the United States, the Soviet Union, and China during the 1960s and 1970s.[46] Some scholars imagine that in the coming decades a tripolar world will emerge, with rival power centers in North America, Europe, and East Asia.

These various polarities can be conceptualized as a pyramid or hierarchy of power in an international system. At the top is the most powerful state, with other great powers and middle powers arrayed below. Such a pyramid is similar to the dominance (or status) hierarchies that many animals use to regulate access to valuable resources such as food. (We often call this a "pecking order.") A multipolar system, then, is one with a relatively flat pyramid—relative equality of status among actors. A unipolar system has a relatively steep pyramid with unequal status. The steepness of the pyramid represents the concentration of power in the international system.



Status Hierarchies in IR

Some IR scholars have argued that peace is best preserved by a relatively equal power distribution (multipolarity) because then no country has an opportunity to win easily. The empirical evidence for this theory, however, is not strong. The opposite proposition has more support: peace is best preserved by hegemony, and next best by bipolarity.

Such is the thrust of power transition theory.[47] This theory holds that the largest wars result from challenges to the top position in the status hierarchy, when a rising power is surpassing (or threatening to surpass) the most powerful state. At such times, power is relatively equally distributed, and these are the most dangerous times for major wars. Status quo powers that are doing well under the old rules will try to maintain them, whereas challengers that feel locked out by the old rules may try to change them.[48] Status disequilibrium refers to a difference between a rising power's status (formal position in the hierarchy) and its actual power. In such a situation, the rising power may suffer from relative deprivation—the feeling that it is not doing as well as others or as well as it deserves, even though its position may be improving in absolute terms. The classic example is Germany's rise in the nineteenth century, which gave it great-power capabilities even though it was left out of colonial territories and other signs of status.

If the challenger does not start a war to displace the top power, the latter may provoke a "preventive" war to stop the rise of the challenger before it becomes too great a threat.[49] Germany's intensive arms race with Britain (the top power) led to increasing hostility and the outbreak of World War I. After the war there was again a disparity between Germany's actual power (still considerable) and its harsh treatment under the terms of the Versailles Treaty. That disparity may have contributed to World War II.

According to power transition theory, then, peace among great powers results when one state is firmly in the top position, and the positions of others in the hierarchy are clearly defined and correspond with their actual underlying power. Such a situation usually results only from a great war, when one state predominates in power because its rivals and allies alike have been drained. Even then, the different rates of growth among great powers lead to a slow equalization of power and eventually the emergence of challengers: the system becomes more multipolar.

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[46] Schweller, Randall. *Deadly Imbalances: Tripolarity and Hitler's Strategy of World Conquest.* Columbia, 1998.
[47] Organski, A. F. K. *World Politics*. NY: Knopf, 1958. Organski, A. F. K., and Jacek Kugler. *The War Ledger*. Chicago, 1980. Kugler, Jacek, and Douglas Lemke, eds. *Parity and War: Evaluations and Extensions of the War Ledger*. Michigan, 1996.
[48] Mansfield, Edward D. The Concentration of Capabilities and the Onset of War. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 36 (1), 1992: 3–24. Thompson, William R., and Karen Rasler. War and Systemic Capability Reconcentration. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 32 (2), 1988: 335–66. Doran, Charles F. *Systems in Crisis: New Imperatives of High Politics at Century's End.* Cambridge, 1991.
[49] Levy, Jack S. Declining Power and the Preventive Motivation for War. *World Politics* 40 (1), 1987: 82–107.

Hegemony

Hegemony is the holding by one state of a preponderance of power in the international system, so that it can single-handedly dominate the rules and arrangements by which international political and economic relations are conducted.[50] Such a state is called a *hegemon*. (Usually hegemony means domination of the world, but sometimes it refers to regional domination.) The Italian Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci used the term hegemony to refer to the complex of *ideas* that rulers use to gain consent for their legitimacy and keep subjects in line, reducing the need to use force to accomplish the same goal.[51] By extension, such a meaning in IR refers to the hegemony of ideas such as democracy and capitalism, and to the global predominance of U.S. culture (see pp. 403–406).

Most studies of hegemony point to two examples: Britain in the nineteenth century and the United States after World War II. Britain's predominance followed the defeat of its archrival France in the Napoleonic Wars. Both world trade and naval capabilities were firmly in British hands, as "Britannia ruled the waves." U.S. predominance followed the defeat of Germany and Japan (and the exhaustion of the Soviet Union, France, Britain, and China in the effort). In the late 1940s, the U.S. GDP was more than half the world's total; U.S. vessels carried the majority of the world's shipping; the U.S. military could single-handedly defeat any other state or combination of states; and only the United States had nuclear weapons. U.S. industry led the world in technology and productivity, and U.S. citizens enjoyed the world's highest standard of living.

As the extreme power disparities resulting from major wars slowly diminish (states rebuild over years and decades), hegemonic decline may occur, particularly when hegemons have overextended themselves with costly military commitments. IR scholars do not agree about how far or fast U.S. hegemonic decline has proceeded, if at all, and whether international instability will result from such a decline.[52] And beyond the U.S. and British cases, IR scholars do not agree on which historical cases were instances of hegemony. Some see the Netherlands in the early seventeenth century, or Spain in the sixteenth, as cases of hegemony.

The theory of hegemonic stability (see pp. 107–109) holds that hegemony provides some order similar to a central government in the international system: reducing anarchy, deterring aggression, promoting free trade, and providing a hard currency that can be used as a world standard. Hegemons can help to resolve or at least keep in check conflicts among middle powers or small states.

From the perspective of less powerful states, of course, such hegemony may seem an infringement of state sovereignty, and the order it creates may seem unjust or illegitimate. For instance, China chafed under U.S.-imposed economic sanctions for 20 years after 1949, feeling itself encircled by U.S. military bases and hostile alliances led by the United States. To this day, Chinese leaders use the term *hegemony* as an insult, and the theory of hegemonic stability does not impress them.

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[50] Kapstein, Ethan B., and Michael Mastanduno. *Unipolar Politics*. Columbia, 1999. Rupert, Mark. *Producing Hegemony: The Politics of Mass Production and American Global Power*. Cambridge, 1995. Nye, Joseph S. *Paradox of American Power: Why the World's Only Superpower Can't Go it Alone*. Oxford, 2002.

[51] Gramsci, Antonio. *The Modern Prince and Other Writings*. NY: International Publishers, 1959. Gill, Stephen, ed. *Gramsci, Historical Materialism and International Relations*. Cambridge, 1993.

[52] Kennedy, Paul. *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500–2000*. NY: Random House, 1987. Posen, Barry R. Command of the Commons: The Military Foundations of U.S. Hegemony. *International Security* 28 (1), 2003: 5–46. Ikenberry, G. John, ed. *America Unrivaled: The Future of the Balance of Power*. Cornell, 2002.

Even in the United States itself there is considerable ambivalence about U.S. hegemony. U.S. foreign policy has historically alternated between *internationalist* and *isolationist* moods.[53] It was founded as a breakaway from the European-based international system, and its growth in the nineteenth century was based on industrialization and expansion within North America. The United States acquired overseas colonies in the Philippines and Puerto Rico but did not relish a role as an imperial power. In World War I, the country waited three years to weigh in and refused to join the League of Nations afterward. U.S. isolationism peaked in the 1930s; public opinion polls late in that decade showed 95 percent of the U.S. public opposed to participation in a future great European war, and about 70 percent opposed to joining the League of Nations or joining with other nations to stop aggression.[54]

Internationalists, such as Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, favored U.S. leadership and activism in world affairs. These views seemed vindicated by the failure of isolationism to prevent World War II (or to allow the United States to stay out of it). U.S. leaders after the war became alarmed by the threat of Soviet (and then Chinese) communism and drummed up U.S. public opinion to favor a strong internationalism during the Cold War. The United States became an activist, global superpower. In the post–Cold War era, U.S. internationalism became tempered by a new cost consciousness, and by the emergence of a new isolationist camp born in reaction to the displacements caused by globalization and free trade. However, the terrorist attacks of September 2001 discredited the idea of U.S. disengagement from world affairs, and renewed public support for U.S. interventionism in distant conflicts that no longer seemed so distant.[55]

A second area of U.S. ambivalence is *unilateralism* versus *multilateralism* in U.S. internationalism. Multilateral approaches—working through international institutions—augment U.S. power and reduce costs, but they limit U.S. freedom of action. For example, the United States cannot always get the UN to do what it wants. Polls in the 1990s showed that a majority of U.S. citizens supported working through the UN

PRICE OF HEGEMONY

The United States is the world's most powerful single actor. Its ability and willingness to resume a role as hegemon—as after World War II—are important factors that will shape world order, but the U.S. role is still uncertain. America's willingness to absorb casualties will affect its role. Here, soldiers return from Afghanistan, 2004.

[53] Zakaria, Fareed. *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role.* Princeton, 1998. Holsti, Ole R. Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: Challenges to the Almond-Lippmann Consensus. *International Studies Quarterly* 36 (4), 1992: 439–66.

[54] Free, Lloyd A., and Hadley Cantril. *The Political Beliefs of Americans.* Rutgers, 1967.

[55] Brown, Michael E., Owen R. Cote, Jr., Sean M. Lynn-Jones, and Steven E. Miller, eds. *America's Strategic Choices* (revised edition). MIT, 2000. Haass, Richard N. *The Reluctant Sheriff: The United States After the Cold War*. Washington, DC: Brookings, 1997. Ruggie, John G. *Winning the Peace.* Columbia, 1996. Lieber, Robert J. *Eagle Rules? Foreign Policy and American Primacy in the 21st Century*. Prentice Hall, 2002.

and other multilateral institutions.[56] However, members of the U.S. Congress, skeptical of the UN and international agencies, often favored a more unilateralist approach, in which the United States dictated terms and expected the world to comply. In the 1990s, Congress slipped more than $1 billion behind in paying U.S. dues to the UN. Similarly, in the late 1990s Congress passed the *Helms-Burton Act*, which provides for sanctions against countries that do business in Cuba, and the *Iran-Libya Sanctions Act*, which imposes sanctions on countries that invest in Iran or Libya. These unilateralist U.S. policies were resisted by European states and Canada. In 2001, the new Bush Administration declined to participate in such international efforts as a treaty on global warming (see pp. 422–423), a conference on racism, and an International Criminal Court (see p. 287). The international community's united front against terrorism pushed these disputes to the back burner, but they soon reemerged.

A third aspect of ambivalent U.S. hegemony is that of *morality* versus *realism*. Should the United States be a moral guiding light for the world—pursuing goals such as democracy and human rights—or should it concentrate on its own national interests, such as natural resources and geostrategic position? Most U.S. citizens do not want to be "the world's policeman," and some resent paying for the security of allies such as Japan and Europe. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, efforts to win congressional approval of foreign aid for Russia had to be couched in terms of U.S. interests (avoiding a return to costly Russian aggression), not humanitarian assistance or a moral obligation to help a nation achieve freedom and democracy. Yet the U.S. people also think of themselves as a caring nation and a beacon of hope for the world. Presidents continue to say things such as "where people are hungry, we will help. We are the United States!"[57]

Alliances

An *alliance* is a coalition of states that coordinate their actions to accomplish some end. Most alliances are *formalized* in written treaties, concern a *common threat* and related issues of international security, and *endure* across a range of issues and a period of time. If actors' purposes in banding together were shorter-term, less formal, or more issue-specific (such as the occupation of Iraq), the association is usually called a *coalition* rather than an alliance. Informal but enduring strategic *alignments* in a region are discussed shortly. But all these terms are somewhat ambiguous. Two countries may have a formal alliance and yet be bitter enemies, such as the Soviet Union and China in the 1960s or NATO members Greece and Turkey today. Or, two countries may create the practical equivalent of an alliance without a formal treaty.

Purposes of Alliances

Alliances generally have the purpose of augmenting their members' power relative to other states. By pooling their power capabilities, two or more states can exert greater leverage in their bargaining with other states. For smaller states, alliances can be their most important power element, and for great powers the structure of alliances shapes the con-

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[56] Kull, Steven, and I. M. Destler. *Misreading the Public: The Myth of a New Isolationism*. Washington, DC: Brookings, 1999.

[57] President George Bush, June 1992, speech on Sarajevo. McElroy, Robert W. *Morality and American Foreign Policy: The Role of Ethics in International Affairs*. Princeton, 1992. Smith, Tony. *America's Mission: The United States and the Worldwide Struggle for Democracy in the Twentieth Century*. Princeton, 1994.

figuration of power in the system. Of all the elements of power, none can change as quickly and decisively as alliances.

Most alliances form in response to a perceived threat. When a state's power grows and threatens to overmatch that of its rivals, the latter often form an alliance to limit that power. Thucydides attributed the outbreak of the Peloponnesian Wars more than 2,000 years ago to the growing power of Athens, and to the fear that caused in Sparta. Sparta turned to its neighbors in the Peloponnesian League, and that alliance managed to defeat Athens.

Alliances are an important component of the balance of power. Except in the rare circumstance of hegemony, every state is weaker than some combination of other states. If states overstep norms of international conduct they may face a powerful alliance of opposing states. This happened to Iraq when it invaded Kuwait in 1990, as it had to Hitler's Germany in the 1940s and to Napoleon's France in the 1800s.

MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE

Alliances generally result from a convergence of practical interests, not sentimental or ideological reasons. Here, a U.S. general gets rival Afghan warlords to patch up relations, 2002.

Realists emphasize the fluidity of alliances. They are not marriages of love, but marriages of convenience. Alliances are based on national interests, and can shift as national interests change. This fluidity helps the balance-of-power process to operate effectively.

Still, it is not simple or costless to break an alliance: one's reputation may suffer and future alliances may be harder to establish. There is an important norm that says that written treaties should be honored—in Latin, *pacta sunt servanda*. So states often do adhere to alliance terms even when it is not in their short-term interest to do so. Nonetheless, recall that because of the nature of international anarchy, there is no mechanism to enforce contracts in IR, so the possibility of turning against a friend is always present. Realists would agree with French president Charles de Gaulle (under whom France withdrew militarily from NATO and developed its own nuclear weapons in the 1960s) that "France has no permanent friends, only permanent interests." He also said, "Treaties are like roses and young girls. They last while they last."[58]

Examples are many. Anticommunist Richard Nixon could cooperate with communist Mao Zedong in 1972. Joseph Stalin could sign a nonaggression pact with a fascist, Adolph Hitler, and then cooperate with the capitalist West against Hitler. The United States could back the Islamic militants in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union in the 1980s, then attack them in 2001. Every time history brings another such reversal in international alignments, many people are surprised or even shocked. Realists are not so surprised.

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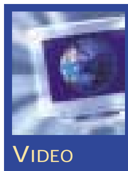
[58] *Time*, July 12, 1963.

The fluidity of alliances deepens the security dilemma. Recall that the dilemma is that one state's efforts to ensure its own security (building up military capabilities) reduce the security of another state. If there were only two states, it would be possible to match capabilities so that both have adequate defense but cannot attack. But if a third state is free to ally with either side, then each state has to build adequate defenses against the potential alliance of its enemy with the third state. The threat is greater and the security dilemma is harder to escape.

The nightmare of being overpowered looms large when a state faces a potential hostile alliance that could form overnight. For example, in a war Israel alone could defeat any of its neighbors. But Israeli leaders believe they must arm against the worst contingency—an attack by all their neighbors together. Because the neighbors are not very aligned (and the most important, Egypt and Jordan, are at peace with Israel), Israel's military capabilities appear excessive to those neighbors, deepening the security dilemma between these states.



The Transatlantic Alliance

Alliance cohesion is the ease with which the members hold together an alliance.[59] Cohesion tends to be high when national interests converge and when cooperation within the alliance becomes institutionalized and habitual. When states with divergent interests form an alliance against a common enemy, the alliance may come apart if the threat subsides (as with the U.S.-Soviet alliance in World War II, for instance). Even when alliance cohesion is high, as in NATO during the Cold War, conflicts may arise over who bears the costs of the alliance (**burden sharing**).[60]

The credibility with which an alliance can deter an enemy depends on the alliance's cohesion as well as its total power capabilities. If an alliance is successful at displaying a common front and taking a unified line on issues, a potential enemy is more likely to believe that members will honor their alliance commitments (such as their promise to fight if an ally is attacked). An enemy may try to split the alliance by finding issues on which the interests of the members diverge. For instance, the United States subtly encouraged the Sino-Soviet split, and the Soviet Union subtly tried to turn European members of NATO away from the United States.

Great powers often form alliances with smaller states, sometimes called client states.[61] In the Cold War, each superpower extended a security umbrella over its allies. The issue of credibility in such an alliance is whether (and under what circumstances) the great power will assist its clients in a war. Extended deterrence refers to a strong state's use of threats to deter attacks on weaker clients—such as the U.S. threat to attack the Soviet Union if it invaded Western Europe.

Great powers face a real danger of being dragged into wars with each other over relatively unimportant regional issues if their respective clients go to war. If the great powers do not come to their clients' protection, they may lose credibility with other clients, but if they do, they may end up fighting a costly war.[62] The Soviet Union worried that its commitments to China in the 1950s, to Cuba in the 1960s, and to Syria and Egypt in the 1970s (among others) could result in a disastrous war with the United States.

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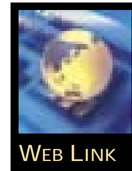
[59] Kegley, Charles W., and Gregory A. Raymond. *When Trust Breaks Down: Alliance Norms and World Politics*. South Carolina, 1990. Siverson, Randolph and Harvey Starr. Regime Change and the Restructuring of Alliances. *American Journal of Political Science* 38 (1), 1994: 146–61.

[60] Oneal, John R. The Theory of Collective Action and Burden Sharing in NATO. *International Organization* 44 (3), 1990: 379–402. Sandler, Todd and Keith Hartley. *The Political Economy of NATO: Past, Present, and into the 21st Century*. Cambridge, 1999.

[61] David, Steven R. *Choosing Sides: Alignment and Realignment in the Third World*. Johns Hopkins, 1991.

[62] Snyder, Glenn H. *Alliance Politics*. Cornell, 1997. Leeds, Brett Ashley. Do Alliances Deter Aggression? The Influence of Military Alliances on the Initiation of Militarized Interstate Disputes. *American Journal of Political Science* 47 (3), 2003: 427–40.

NATO and the U.S.-Japanese Security Treaty



NATO

At present, two important formal alliances dominate the international security scene. By far the more powerful is the **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)**, which encompasses Western Europe and North America. Using GDP as a measure of power, the 26 NATO members possess nearly half the world total (roughly twice the power of the United States alone). Members are the United States, Canada, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Denmark, Norway, Iceland, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Turkey, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Slovenia, Slovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania. At NATO headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, military staffs from the member countries coordinate plans and periodically direct exercises in the field. The NATO "allied supreme commander" has always been a U.S. general. In NATO, each state contributes its own military units—with its own national culture, language, and equipment specifications.

NATO was founded in 1949 to oppose and deter Soviet power in Europe. Its counterpart in Eastern Europe during the Cold War, the Soviet-led **Warsaw Pact**, was founded in 1955 and disbanded in 1991. During the Cold War, the United States maintained more than 300,000 troops in Europe, with advanced planes, tanks, and other equipment. After the Cold War ended, these forces were cut to about 100,000. But NATO stayed together because its members believed that NATO provided useful stability even though its mission was unclear.[63] Article V, considered the heart of NATO, asks members to come to the defense of a fellow member under attack. It was envisioned as a U.S. commitment to help defend Western Europe against the Soviet Union, but instead was invoked for the first time when Europe came to the defense of the United States after the terrorist attacks in 2001.

The first actual use of force by NATO was in Bosnia in 1994, in support of the UN mission there. A "dual key" arrangement gave the UN control of NATO's actions in Bosnia, and the UN feared retaliation against its lightly armed peacekeepers if NATO attacked the Serbian forces to protect Bosnian civilians. As a result, NATO made threats, underlined by symbolic airstrikes, but then backed down after UN qualms; this waffling undermined NATO credibility. More extensive NATO airstrikes in 1995, however, alarmed Russian leaders who were already concerned by NATO's expansion plans. These problems, along with tensions between the American and European NATO members over Bosnia policy, dogged the first major NATO mission of the post–Cold War era. Later NATO actions in the Balkans (the air war for Kosovo in 1999 and peacekeeping in Macedonia in 2001) went more smoothly in terms of alliance cohesion.

The European Union has formed its own rapid deployment force, outside NATO. The decision grew in part from European military weaknesses demonstrated in the 1999 Kosovo war, in which the United States contributed the most power by far. Although this Eurocorps generally works *with* NATO, it also gives Europe more independence from the United States. In 2003, the European Union sent military forces as peacekeepers to Democratic Congo—the first multinational European military operation to occur outside NATO. In 2004, NATO and U.S. forces withdrew from Bosnia after nine years, turning over peacekeeping there to the European Union (as they had in Macedonia). But NATO forces including U.S. soldiers remain next door in Kosovo.

The biggest issue for NATO is its recent eastward expansion, beyond the East-West Cold War dividing line. In 1999, former Soviet-bloc countries Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary joined the alliance. Joining in 2004 were Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania,

[63] Yost, David S. *NATO Transformed: The Alliance's New Roles in International Security*. Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace Press, 1999. Goldgeier, James M. *Not Whether But When: The Decision to Enlarge NATO*. Washington, DC: Brookings, 1999. Wallander, Celeste. Institutional Assets and Adaptability: NATO After the Cold War. *International Organization* 54 (4), 2000: 705–35.

ALLIANCE OF THE STRONG

The NATO alliance has been the world's strongest military force since 1949; its mission in the post–Cold War era is somewhat uncertain. Here, President Kennedy reviews U.S. forces in Germany, 1963.

Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania, and Bulgaria. Making the new members' militaries compatible with NATO is a major undertaking, requiring increased military spending by existing and new NATO members. NATO expansion was justified by liberals as a way to solidify new democracies while keeping Europe peaceful, and by conservatives as protection against possible future Russian aggression. NATO forces have participated in the war in Afghanistan, but the 2003 Iraq War bypassed and divided NATO members. France and Germany strongly opposed the war, and Turkey refused to let U.S. ground forces cross into Iraq. At the same time, U.S. leaders began shifting some operations (and money) to new members in Eastern Europe such as Romania—with lower prices and a location closer to the Middle East—while drawing down forces based in Germany. Russian leaders oppose NATO's expansion into Eastern Europe as aggressive and anti-Russian. They view NATO expansion as reasserting dividing lines on the map of Europe, but pushed closer to Russia's borders. These fears strengthen nationalist and anti-Western political forces in Russia. To mitigate the problems, NATO created a category of symbolic membership—the Partnership for Peace—which almost all Eastern European and former Soviet states including Russia joined. However, the 1999 NATO bombing of Serbia heightened Russian fears regarding NATO's eastward expansion.[64]

The second most important alliance is the **U.S.-Japanese Security Treaty**, a bilateral alliance. Under this alliance the United States maintains nearly 60,000 troops in Japan (with weapons, equipment, and logistical support). Japan pays the United States several billion dollars annually to offset about half the cost of maintaining these troops. The alliance was created in 1951 (during the Korean War) against the potential Soviet threat to Japan.

Because of its roots in the U.S. military occupation of Japan after World War II, the alliance is very asymmetrical. The United States is committed to defend Japan if it is attacked, but Japan is not similarly obligated to defend the United States. The United States maintains troops in Japan, but not vice versa. The United States belongs to several other alliances, but Japan's only major alliance is with the United States. The U.S. share of the total military power in this alliance is also far greater than its share in NATO.

Japan's constitution (written by U.S. General Douglas MacArthur after World War II) renounces the right to make war and maintain military forces, although interpretation has loosened this prohibition over time. Japan maintains military forces, called the Self-Defense Forces, strong enough for territorial defense but not for aggression. It is a powerful

[64] Moens, Alexander, et al., eds. *NATO and European Security: Alliance Politics from the End of the Cold War to the Age of Terrorism*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003.

NATO Expansion

army by world standards but much smaller than Japan's economic strength could support. Japanese public opinion restrains militarism in general and precludes the development of nuclear weapons in particular after Japanese cities were destroyed by nuclear weapons in World War II.

Japan is as dependent as ever on natural resources from foreign countries, but Japanese leaders generally believe that economic and diplomatic (rather than military) capabilities can best assure a smooth flow of resources to Japan and export markets for Japanese goods. The security alliance with the United States—Japan's largest trading partner—provides a stable

security framework conducive to business. Japan need not worry that in a dispute over trade barriers the U.S. Navy will arrive to pry Japan's doors open (as it did in 1854). Nonetheless, some Japanese leaders believe that Japan's formal security role should now expand commensurate with its economic power. Japanese troops participated in Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2004 (though not in combat roles), and Japan seeks a seat on the UN Security Council. The UN in turn is pressing Japan to participate fully in peacekeeping missions.

For its part, the United States has used the alliance with Japan as a base to project U.S. power in Asia, especially during the wars in Korea (1950–1953) and Vietnam (1965–1975) when Japan was a key staging area for U.S. war efforts. The continued U.S. military presence in Japan (as in Europe) symbolizes the U.S. commitment to remain engaged in Asian security affairs. However, these U.S. forces have been drawn down somewhat in the past decade in response to high costs, reduced threats, and some opposition by local residents (especially on Okinawa island). As the U.S. begins to focus more on the Middle East, more cuts in troops could follow in the coming years.[65]

Parallel with the U.S.-Japan treaty, the United States maintains military alliances with several other states, including South Korea and Australia. Close U.S. collaboration with militaries in other states such as Pakistan make them de facto U.S. allies.

The Former Soviet Republics

The 12 members of the *Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)* comprise the former Soviet republics except the Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania). Russia is the leading member and Ukraine the second largest. Officially, CIS headquarters is in the city of Minsk, in Belarus, but in practice there is no strong center and meetings rotate around. After its first decade, the CIS remains a loose coordinating institution for states to solve practical problems in economic and (sometimes) military spheres.

When the Soviet Union disintegrated in 1991, a chaotic situation emerged. Power for several years had been shifting from the center in Moscow to the 15 constituent Soviet republics. The Warsaw Pact had collapsed. The Soviet army itself began to break up, and several republics began forming their own military forces using Soviet forces, bases, and equipment located on their territories. At the same time, other former Soviet forces located outside Russia remained in a chain of command centered in Moscow, effectively under Russian control. Until 1997, Russia and Ukraine debated ownership of the Black Sea fleet, whose port was in Ukraine but whose history was distinctly Russian. (Russia and Ukraine are the two largest and most important members of the CIS; see this chapter's "Policy Perspectives" feature, p. 91.) One reason for forming the CIS was simply to speed the death of the old Soviet Union and ease the transition to full independence for its republics. After the formation of the CIS at the end of 1991, the Soviet Union quickly dissolved. The extensive property of the Soviet Union (including state-owned industry and military forces) went to the individual republics, especially to Russia, which became the USSR's successor state.

The disposition of the Soviet Union's property and armed forces was negotiated by CIS members. Although some military coordination takes place through the CIS, plans for a joint military force instead of 12 independent armies did not succeed. Among the largest CIS members, Kazakhstan and Belarus are the most closely aligned with Russia, while Ukraine is the most independent. In 1999, Russia and Belarus formed a confederation that might lead to future economic integration or even an anti-Western military alliance, but currently remains merely symbolic.

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[65] Vogel, Steven K. *U.S.-Japan Relations in a Changing World*. Washington, DC: Brookings, 2002. Marquand, Robert. U.S. Redeployments Afoot in Asia. *Christian Science Monitor* November 18, 2003: 6.

POLICY PERSPECTIVES

President of Russia, Vladimir Putin

PROBLEM *How do you confront a fluid security environment in which the balance of power could shift quickly?*

BACKGROUND Imagine that you are the president of Russia. Since the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, your relations with your most powerful and important neighbor, Ukraine, have been tense, but with periods of cooperation. You share a nearly 1,000-mile border, and Ukraine maintains an army of 300,000 troops. Ukraine owns a very modern military, including a nearly 3,000-plane air force.

Your country and Ukraine were able to reach an agreement to divide the Soviet Navy's Black Sea Fleet, left in Ukrainian ports when the Soviet Union collapsed. Ukraine agreed to return nuclear weapons placed in its territory, and you have signed an agreement to establish a free trade area. Still, tensions have recently arisen concerning the drawing of borders and the implementation of the free trade agreement. Moreover, Ukraine claims you have not abided by the agreement on the Black Sea Fleet.

For several years, several of your neighbors, including Ukraine, have cooperated with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). To date, no CIS members have joined NATO, but many are members of NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) program. Your own country, Russia, does not anticipate NATO membership but has cooperated with NATO through the PfP program. In addition, you receive large amounts of aid from NATO member states, including $1 billion a year from the United States.

NATO expansion is not popular within Russia. Voices from within your parliament (the Duma) are demanding you take efforts to ensure Russian security. Nearly 20 percent of the Duma is now controlled by Communist or nationalist parties that oppose NATO expansion. Public opinion polls consistently show 60 percent of the public believes that NATO expansion threatens Russia.

Ukraine depends heavily on you for fuel and relies on your market to export more than 17 percent of its economic output. The fuel issue is a double-edged sword, however, since you rely on Ukrainian shipping ports to export 40 tons of oil annually.

SCENARIO Imagine that Ukraine announces it will accept an invitation to join NATO. You could quietly allow this to happen without making any objections. Such a course would keep Western donor states happy, but place you in a strategically vulnerable position. Moreover, NATO may ask you to remove your portion of the Black Sea Fleet from Ukraine once military integration begins. At this time, however, you have no reason to expect military conflict between your country and Ukraine (or any other NATO member).

You could also cease cooperation with NATO while pressuring Ukraine to leave. This signal of hostility could place your aid from NATO states in jeopardy, but would be quite popular domestically. This option would also place strain on your trade relationships with Ukraine.

CHOOSE YOUR POLICY Do you object to Ukraine's admission to NATO? Do you cease cooperation with NATO? What relative weight do factors such as international aid play in your decision? How do you address security concerns arising from an alliance that may or may not be hostile to you in the future?

It is to the CIS's credit that in the post-Soviet chaos no major war erupted between major CIS member states. Substantial warfare did occur between some of the smaller members (notably Armenia and Azerbaijan), and there was civil violence within several other CIS states (Russia, Georgia, Moldova, and Tajikistan); CIS forces were drawn into a few small clashes. But the large members were not drawn into wars. The outcome could have been much worse.

One of the first problems facing CIS military forces was what position to take in inter-republic warfare, such as that between Armenia and Azerbaijan, secessionist wars as in Georgia, or civil wars to control republics' governments as in Tajikistan. In the mid-1990s, the CIS operated a 24,000-person peacekeeping force in Tajikistan, generally supporting the government in a civil war there. A 1,500-person force in Moldova and a 500-person force in Georgia, both acting as buffer forces to monitor cease-fires, operated under joint commands of Russia and the governments and rebel forces in each of those countries.

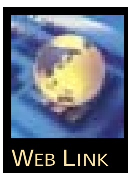
Another pressing military problem for the CIS was the disposition of the tens of thousands of nuclear weapons of the former Soviet Union. As the Soviet successor state, Russia assumed control of the weapons and within a year moved all the tactical nuclear weapons out of the other republics and into Russian territory. This was a very touchy operation because of the danger of theft or accident while so many weapons were in transit. The United States provided specially designed railroad cars for use in moving the weapons. Still, there were reports that nuclear materials (or perhaps even warheads) had been stolen and sold on the international market by corrupt CIS officers or officials (see pp. 241–245 on proliferation).

The strategic nuclear weapons—those on long-range missiles—presented another kind of problem. These weapons were located in four republics—Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan—under control of Russian commanders. They were not easily moved, and the three republic leaders expressed some ambivalence about losing them to Russia. At a minimum they wanted assurances that the nuclear weapons would be destroyed, not retargeted on their own republics. Ukraine toyed with using the missiles as bargaining chips in negotiations with Russia or with the Western powers. But in the end all the former Soviet republics except Russia agreed to become nonnuclear states.

Overall, the CIS is a marriage of convenience. For now the members find it a necessary marriage—especially because of the tight economic integration of the member states—if not always a happy one. A divorce could occur quickly.

Regional Alignments

Beyond the three alliances just discussed and the regional IGOs mentioned earlier, most international alignments and coalitions are not formalized in alliances. Among the great powers, a close working relationship (through the UN) developed among the United States, Western European powers, Japan, and Russia after the Cold War. By the mid-1990s new strains had appeared in great-power relations, including economic conflicts among the former Western allies, differences over policy in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Iraq, as well as Western alarm at Russia's war in the secession-minded Chechnya province. Of the great powers, China continues to be the most independent, but prudently avoids conflict with the others unless China's immediate security interests are at stake.



Nonaligned Movement

In the global South, many states joined a **nonaligned movement** during the Cold War, standing apart from the U.S.-Soviet rivalry. This movement, led by India and Yugoslavia, was undermined by the membership of states such as Cuba that were clearly clients of one superpower. In 1992, the nonaligned movement agreed to stay in business, though its future is unclear. One vestige of past centuries is the Commonwealth—a group of countries with historical ties to Britain (including Canada and Australia) working together for mutual economic and cultural benefit. France also maintains ties (including

regular summit meetings) with its former colonies in Africa. France had troops stationed in six African countries in the late 1990s. But France reduced its African ties in the 1990s, and in 1997 it stood by while friendly governments in Zaire (Democratic Congo) and the Republic of Congo were overthrown.

At the turn of the century, the 53-member Organization of African Unity, an IGO with few powers, reformed as the African Union (AU), a stronger organization with a continentwide parliament, central bank, and court. The African Union's first real test came with allegations of genocide in the Darfur region of Sudan in 2004. In response, the AU deployed 3,000 troops, but their effectiveness remained uncertain in early 2005.

In Asia, China used to have conflicts with most of its major neighbors: between 1940 and 1979, it engaged in military hostilities with Japan, South Korea, the United States, India, Russia, and Vietnam. In 1965, China lost its only major regional ally (Indonesia) after a violent change of government there. China has long been loosely aligned with Pakistan in opposition to India (which was aligned with the Soviet Union). The United States tended to favor the Pakistani side as well (especially when Pakistan supported anti-Soviet rebels in Afghanistan in the 1980s). But both U.S.-Indian and U.S.-Chinese relations have improved since the Cold War ended. Vietnam slowly normalized relations with the United States after the wars in Vietnam and Cambodia. The United States has 35,000 troops stationed in South Korea under terms of a formal bilateral alliance dating to the Korean War (North Korea is vaguely aligned with China). Other long-standing U.S. friends in Asia include the Philippines (where joint antiterrorist operations began in 2002), the Chinese Nationalists on Taiwan (only informally since the 1970s), Singapore, and Thailand. The United States attempted to re-create NATO-like alliances in Asia, but the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) was a short-lived treaty, lasting from 1954 to 1977. A formal alliance, ANZUS, bound Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. But in 1985 New Zealand banned nuclear-powered or nuclear weapons–carrying ships from its ports, and the United States suspended its obligations to New Zealand in response (although Australia continues as a strong U.S. ally).[66]

In the Middle East, the Arab-Israeli conflict created a general anti-Israel alignment of the Arab countries for decades, but that alignment broke down as Egypt in 1978 and then Jordan in 1994 made peace with Israel. As the Israeli-Palestinian peace process moves forward and backward year by year, Arab countries continue to express varying degrees of solidarity with each other and opposition to Israel. Meanwhile, Israel and Turkey formed a close military relationship that amplifies Israeli power and links it to the oil-rich Caspian Sea region (see pp. 436–438). Also, despite its small size, Israel has been the largest recipient of U.S. foreign aid since the 1980s (about $3 billion per year).[67]

The United States has close relations with Egypt (since 1978), and cooperates closely with Turkey (a NATO member), Kuwait and Saudi Arabia (cemented by the 1991 Gulf War), and Morocco. But U.S.-Iranian relations remained frosty (despite some recent warming) 25 years after the 1979 revolution. The United States had very hostile relations with Iraq before the 2003 war, and faced stronger antipathy in the region thereafter. U.S. relations with Libya were also hostile for decades until a 2003 agreement normalized Libya's place in the international system in return for Libya's reformed behavior. President Bush's second term began with an emphasis on spreading democracy and isolating what Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice called "outposts of tyranny"—Cuba, Burma, North Korea, Iran, Belarus, and Zimbabwe.

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[66] Hemmer, Christopher and Peter Katzenstein. Why is there no NATO in Asia? Collective Identity, Regionalism, and the Origins of Multilateralism. *International Organization* 56 (3), 2002: 575–607.

[67] Fawcett, Louise, ed. *International Relations of the Middle East*. NY: Oxford, 2004. Telhami, Shibley. *The Stakes: America and the Middle East*. Boulder: Westview, 2002.

It is unclear what new international alignments may emerge in the years to come. The fluidity of alliances makes them a wild card for scholars to understand and for policy makers to anticipate. For the present, international alignments center on the United States; although several independence-minded states such as China, Russia, and France keep U.S. hegemony in check, there is little sign of a coherent or formal rival power alignment emerging to challenge the United States. Although U.S. leadership in international security affairs has fluctuated, the leading U.S. role is central to the course of world politics in the early twenty-first century.

This chapter has focused on the concerns of realists—the interests of states, distribution of power among states, bargaining between states, and alliances of states. The chapter has treated states as unitary actors, much as one would analyze the interactions of individual people. The actions of state leaders have been treated as more or less rational in terms of pursuing definable interests through coherent bargaining strategies. But realism is not the only way to frame the major issues of international security. Chapter 3 reexamines these themes critically, from more liberal and more revolutionary theoretical perspectives.

THINKING CRITICALLY

1. Using Table 1.3 on pp. 22–23 (with GDP as a measure of power) and the maps at the front of the book, pick a state and speculate about what coalition of nearby states might form with sufficient power to oppose the state if it became aggressive.
2. Choose a recent international event and list the power capabilities that participants used as leverage in the episode. Which capabilities were effective, and which were not? Why?
3. Given the distinction between zero-sum and non-zero-sum games, can you think of a current international situation that is a zero-sum conflict? One that is non-zero-sum?
4. If you were the leader of a small state in Africa, bargaining with a great power about an issue where your interests diverged, what leverage and strategies could you bring into play to improve the outcome for your state?
5. Given recent changes in international power distribution and the end of the Cold War order, where do you think the threats to peace will come from in the future? Is the international system moving from one power distribution (unipolarity) to another (tripolarity, bipolarity, etc.)?
6. The modern international system came into being at a time when agrarian societies relied primarily on farmland to create wealth. Now that most wealth is no longer created through farming, is the territorial nature of states obsolete? How might the diminishing economic value of territory change the ways in which states interact?

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- Realism explains international relations in terms of power.
- Realists and idealists differ in their assumptions about human nature, international order, and the potential for peace.
- Power can be conceptualized as influence or as capabilities that can create influence.
- The most important single indicator of a state's power is its GDP.
- Short-term power capabilities depend on long-term resources, both tangible and intangible.
- Realists consider military force the most important power capability.

- International affairs can be seen as a series of bargaining interactions in which states use power capabilities as leverage to influence the outcomes.
- Bargaining outcomes depend not only on raw power but also on strategies and luck.
- Reciprocity can be an effective strategy for reaching cooperation in ongoing relationships but carries a danger of turning into runaway hostility or arms races.
- Rational-actor approaches treat states as though they were individuals acting to maximize their own interests. These simplifications are debatable but allow realists to develop concise and general models and explanations.
- Game theory draws insights from simplified models of bargaining situations.
- International anarchy—the absence of world government—means that each state is a sovereign and autonomous actor pursuing its own national interests.
- The international system traditionally places great emphasis on the sovereignty of states, their right to control affairs in their own territory, and their responsibility to respect internationally recognized borders.
- Seven great powers account for half of the world's GDP as well as the great majority of military forces and other power capabilities.
- Power transition theory says that wars often result from shifts in relative power distribution in the international system.
- Hegemony—the predominance of one state in the international system—can help provide stability and peace in international relations, but with some drawbacks.
- States form alliances to increase their effective power relative to another state or alliance.
- Alliances can shift rapidly, with major effects on power relations.
- The world's main alliances, including NATO and the U.S.-Japanese alliance, face uncertain roles in a changing world order.

KEY TERMS

realism 55
idealism 55
power 57
geopolitics 61
bargaining 62
negotiation 63
reciprocity 66
deterrence 67
compellence 67
arms race 68
rational actors 68
national interest 68
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alliance cohesion 86
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❑ D

LET'S DEBATE THE ISSUE

The Bush Doctrine: Will It Eliminate or Increase Terrorism?

by Mir Zohair Husain

Overview Less than a week after September 11, 2001, President George W. Bush revealed his plan for America's new "war on terrorism," known as the Bush doctrine. This proactive and preemptive strategy was to aggressively pursue "terrorists" wherever they are in the world and warn America's enemies to desist from harboring or sponsoring terrorists, or face the same fate as the Afghan and Iraqi regimes. However, following Bush's second inaugural address, he promised to tone down this rhetoric and place even greater emphasis on encouraging friendly governments to assist the United States in their continuing anti-terrorist efforts.

This global war on terrorism continues a heated debate in the United States and abroad. The supporters of the Bush doctrine argue that the only way for the United States to defend its national interests and prevent future terrorist attacks is by using America's enormous military and economic capabilities. However, critics believe that terrorism cannot be solved with violence alone and the world may view such U.S. unilateral actions as "vigilante justice." These critics would like the United States to adopt a multilateral approach toward terrorism that includes winning allies, going through the UN, adhering to international law, and fighting world poverty.

The Bush doctrine raises several key questions: Will the Bush doctrine effectively combat terrorism, reestablish national security, and usher in a new world order? Or will the Bush doctrine rapidly broaden and deepen anti-Americanism, thereby breeding more terrorism, producing more sanctuaries for terrorists, and isolating the United States further in the global community?

Argument 1 Bush Doctrine Proponents

The Bush doctrine shifted American foreign policy from containment to preemption. The containment of the Soviet Union and communism was the hallmark of U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War (1947–1989). However, targeting of terrorist cells is far more difficult than containing and deterring traditional states.

> For much of the last century America's defense relied on the cold war doctrines of deterrence and containment. In some cases those strategies still apply. But new threats also require new thinking. . . . Deterrence, the promise of massive retaliation against nations, means nothing against shadowy terrorist networks with no nation or citizens to defend. Containment is not possible when unbalanced dictators with weapons of mass destruction can deliver those weapons on missiles or secretly provide them to terrorist allies. . . . We cannot defend America and our friends by hoping for the best. We cannot put our faith in the word of tyrants who solemnly sign nonproliferation treaties and then systematically break them. If we wait for threats to fully materialize we will have waited too long. ("Text of Bush's Speech at West Point Military Academy." *The New York Times,* June 1, 2002.)

The U.S. desires multilateralism, but will do what is necessary to defend its national interests. The United States would prefer to fight the war on terrorism multilaterally. However, the United States cannot remain passive while terrorism spreads and endangers U.S. interests throughout the world.

> While the U.S. will constantly strive to enlist the support of the international community, we [Americans] will not hesitate to act alone, if necessary, to exercise our right of self-defense by acting preemptively against such terrorists, to prevent them from doing harm against our people and our country; and denying further sponsorship, support, and sanctuary to terrorists by convincing or compelling states to accept their sovereign responsibilities. ("Bush's National Security Strategy. President Bush's Speech at the National Cathedral in Washington, DC, on September 14, 2001." *The New York Times,* September 20, 2002.)

The U.S. is indispensable in maintaining a peaceful and stable international system. The international system is anarchic because it lacks a world government to maintain law and order. According to the hegemonic stability theory, a hegemon (dominant actor in a system) is necessary to maintain world order and prevent other states from destabilizing the international system. In the post-September 11 world, the United States is the indispensable hegemon. Therefore, the woes the world suffers with U.S. preeminence, which many view as imperialism, would be much worse without America's stabilizing presence.

> "Whatever else you can say about empire, it had the advantage of maintaining order and suppressing anarchy," Mr. [John Lewis] Gaddis said. "We may need some kind of structure we wouldn't call it empire, call it spheres of influence, to deal with these problems."
>
> . . . [For] scholars like John Mearsheimer, a political scientist at the University of Chicago, Sept. 11 shows that old-fashioned power politics still operates in this new world. Power is the currency of the international system, Mr. Mearsheimer argues, and the United States should use it when it sees fit. (Alexander Stille. "What Is America's Place in the World Now?" *The New York Times,* January 12, 2002.)

Argument 2 Bush Doctrine Opponents

International cooperation is more effective than the Bush doctrine. Despite America's unrivaled power, the Bush doctrine is making the United States an unpopular and lonely superpower in geopolitics. The United States should find greater success by working the national interests and opinions of other countries into its vision for peace and stability as proposed by the second term of the Bush administration.

> . . . [A] superpower cannot protect itself without the help of other countries. Much of the world already resents the United States because of its size and wealth. Even our allies hate being made to feel as if they live on a planet in which only one country's opinion matters. The biggest challenge for the U.S. is not how to win the next military encounter, but how to conduct itself so that other nations willingly accept its leadership.
>
> The most effective way to make other countries comfortable with American military power is to demonstrate that the United States has their best interests at heart, too. ("The Uses of American Power." *The New York Times,* March 2, 2002.)

The Bush doctrine is provoking more volatile and dangerous anti-Americanism. The central problem with the Bush doctrine is that it encourages the view that the United States is a bully that meddles in the affairs of other countries. Moreover, in the very country the United States argues it is liberating, Iraq, al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations have enjoyed surging levels of new recruits by using the U.S. presence as a selling point.

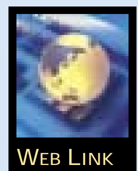
> The architects of America's national security policy at once grasp this crosscultural interdependence and don't. They see that prosperous and free Muslim nations are good for America. But they don't see that the very logic behind this goal counsels against pursuing it crudely, with primary reliance on force and intimidation.
>
> With hatred becoming Public Enemy No. 1, a successful war on terrorism demands an understanding of how so much of the world has come to dislike America. When people who are born with the same human nature as you and I grow up to commit suicide bombings or applaud them there must be a reason. And it's at least conceivable that their fanaticism is needlessly encouraged by American policy or rhetoric. (Robert Wright. "Two Years Later, a Thousand Years Ago." *The New York Times,* September 11, 2003.)

Other states will emulate America's example of preemption with catastrophic results. The United States is not the only country in the world to fear that international actors threaten its national security interests. Mimicking the United States, other countries could justify similar preemptive attacks on their adversaries labeling them an imminent threat to their national security interests.

> . . . [O]ther nations could immediately follow the American lead and twist a policy of pre-emption to their advantage. Israel could use it to justify harder strikes into Palestinian territory; India could use it to pre-empt any Pakistani nuclear threat; China could use it to justify an attack on Taiwan.
>
> "Consistency poses problems," said Peter W. Galbraith, a former ambassador to Croatia. Mr. Galbraith said he is a supporter of pre-emptive action against Iraq, yet he worries about what happens if the new American doctrine spreads uncontrolled. "No place is the risk greater than in South Asia," he said. "If India adopted the American doctrine of pre-emption, it risks a nuclear war, with devastating consequences for the world. It's a tricky business." (David E. Sanger. "Bush to Formalize a Defense Policy of Hitting First." *The New York Times,* June 17, 2002.)

Questions

1. Reflecting on recent events: Is the Bush doctrine succeeding in its goals of diminishing global terrorism? Has the Bush doctrine strengthened or weakened U.S. national security?
2. If preemption is adopted by other states, do you think we will live in a safer or more dangerous world?



The Bush Doctrine

Selected Readings

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