

Review: War and Peace

Author(s): Richard N. Rosecrance

Source: *World Politics*, Vol. 55, No. 1 (Oct., 2002), pp. 137-166

Published by: Cambridge University Press

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25054212>

Accessed: 16/07/2010 02:57

---

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublisher?publisherCode=cup>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).



Cambridge University Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *World Politics*.

## Review Article

# WAR AND PEACE

By RICHARD N. ROSECRANCE\*

Mearsheimer, John J. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2001, 555pp.

### I. INTRODUCTION: THE EVOLUTION OF REALIST THEORY

THE study of realism has taken on a new relevance and importance since the election of George W. Bush as president of the United States and particularly since the terror attacks of September 11, 2001. Bush's national security adviser, Condoleezza Rice, is an avowed realist and Vice President Richard Cheney has been identified with realist causes since the first Bush administration. In a number of countries in the Middle East and elsewhere, domestic political conflicts have increased as the tensions between Islamist and other political groups have heightened, leading to international uncertainty and competition. Suicide and other bombings have disrupted internal calm even as Western and developed states have launched an international response to terrorism. The Bush administration resorted to foreign military intervention as a solution in Afghanistan and debated the invasion of Iraq. And even before the spate of bombings in 2001, there were predictions of a power struggle between the United States and China as the latter came to world power status. It is extremely important, therefore, to chart the evolutions of realist doctrine. Spurred by terrorism as well as conflicts of interest, a greater realpolitik may well be unfolding before our very eyes.

To understand realism, however, it is important to recognize that realist theory has evolved in two different directions since 1980. One offshoot has moved closer to modern economic analysis, progressively adopting a cost-benefit stance for judging international outcomes and the policies of states. Works by Robert Powell, Robert Gilpin, Lloyd

\*The author would like to thank Robert Jervis, Carl Kaysen, Sean Lynn-Jones, Ernest May, Steven Miller, Andrew Moravcsik, Taku Nakaminato, Joseph Nye, Barbara Rosecrance, Paul Schroeder, Arthur Stein, Zara Steiner, Marc Trachtenberg, and two anonymous *World Politics* reviewers for suggestions and criticisms of previous drafts of this paper. They are, however, not responsible for what follows.

Gruber, and Glenn Snyder subject national behavior to a calculus of payoffs, assessing policies like “balancing,” “territorial expansion,” or joining international organizations in terms of their relative benefits.<sup>1</sup> Realist game-theoretic studies also advance this approach.<sup>2</sup> In this respect, realism has moved closer to neoliberalism, which also gauges outcomes by essentially economic criteria. The problem with this first evolution is that it obscures or even negates some of the distinctive features of traditional realist theory. In the new version of realism, nations simply do what is in their own interest. They do not necessarily expand territorially, engage in wars, or act to create and maintain a balance of power. The defensive realism of Kenneth Waltz is also consistent with this diluted evolutionary path because Waltz does not require or expect states to do any particular thing. He claims there is only a “tendency” to create a balance of power. States may or may not act to do so.

The second and more empirical version of realism is represented by John Mearsheimer’s work over the past ten years and more. Mearsheimer’s offensive realism involves a return to historical realism like that of Edward Vose Gulick and Edward Hallett Carr.<sup>3</sup> While the first, or economic, offshoot makes realism consistent with any but an altruistic account of international behavior, historical realism (or in Mearsheimer’s hands—offensive realism) propounds fairly specific historical claims. In contradistinction to Waltz, Mearsheimer also seeks to offer a theory of foreign policy to complement a theory of international relations.<sup>4</sup> Nations may buck-pass at the beginning of a threatening episode, but they will usually balance when the chips are down.<sup>5</sup> This

<sup>1</sup> See Lloyd Gruber, *Ruling the World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Glenn Snyder, *Alliance Politics* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997); Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); and Robert Powell, *In the Shadow of Power* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

<sup>2</sup> See Jack Hirshleifer, *The Dark Side of the Force* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2001); as well as the work of John Kroll, *The Closure of the International System* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1995); and Duncan Snidal “The Limits of the Hegemonic Stability Theory,” *International Organization* 39 (Autumn 1985).

<sup>3</sup> Mearsheimer does not quite accord realist status to Gulick, however, because of his attention to group interest. Gulick wrote *Europe’s Classical Balance of Power* (New York: Norton, 1955). E. H. Carr’s most important work is *The Twenty Years’ Crisis, 1919–1939* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964).

<sup>4</sup> Mearsheimer writes: “I will attempt to show that offensive realism can be used to explain both the foreign policy of individual states and international outcomes” (p. 422).

<sup>5</sup> Mearsheimer writes: “The more relative power the potential hegemon controls, the more likely it is that all of the threatened states will forgo buck-passing and form a balancing coalition” (p. 268). It should be noted, however, that Mearsheimer never says that the balance of power is automatic. It is important here to contrast Mearsheimer’s position with that of Glenn Snyder, who believes it is in the interest of previous buck-passing nations ultimately to balance. Snyder writes: “At some point, the cost of resistance will be assessed as lower than the cost of allowing the aggression to succeed”; Snyder (fn. 1), 51.

does not mean, however, that aggression will not succeed (pp. 37–40). Major powers will seek to expand, and the greatest powers will seek to expand the most, at least on their own continent. Even powers that wish merely to be secure will find themselves drawn into competition to maximize their share of world power, and (if they are strong enough) to become hegemonic.<sup>6</sup> Power is the only security: therefore nations must seek the greatest power to achieve the greatest security, though Mearsheimer is not fully consistent on this point.<sup>7</sup> In addition Mearsheimer claims that certain forms of polarity are more likely to produce war than others—specifically that multipolarity is more likely to issue in war than is bipolarity, because balancing is more certain under bipolar conditions. He draws many other historically based conclusions. Land power dominates air power (pp. 96–110). Military power preponderates over wealth.<sup>8</sup> A policy of “engagement” with a relatively growing great power is doomed to fail.<sup>9</sup> If true, Mearsheimer’s arguments would represent at least a partial refutation of liberal theories and strategies employed by President Carter and President Clinton and episodically by both Presidents Bush. Again if true, they would cast doubt on the democratic peace theory and all other theories that relate domestic politics to foreign affairs. They would also challenge the conflict-reducing effects of globalization and interdependence as they apply to today’s world (pp. 14–17).

Before examining his analytic argument, one must add a brief word of praise for Mearsheimer’s all-embracing effort. Whether successful or not, his work returns the field to its international and historical roots and to the analysis of diplomatic evidence, which will either demonstrate or refute key realist claims.<sup>10</sup> Over most of the past two decades international relations students have become relatively ignorant of history, or they have approached history largely through the quantitative analysis of standard data sets. Such approaches are far too gross to get at the key conclusions that Mearsheimer seeks to prove. In contrast to

<sup>6</sup> This is not because security is itself a goal that creates instability. It is because states entertain other goals as well. If all states aimed merely at security, offensive expansion would not be necessary. See Mearsheimer, 414.

<sup>7</sup> See Mearsheimer, particularly 2–4. This argument is inconsistent with the notion that the pursuit of security alone would not cause instability. Mearsheimer writes: “The structure of the system forces states which seek only to be secure nonetheless to act aggressively toward each other” (p. 3).

<sup>8</sup> There is a continuing gap between latent power (wealth) and military power. See pp. 75–82.

<sup>9</sup> Mearsheimer writes: “Unfortunately a policy of engagement is doomed to fail” (p. 4). See also chap. 10, esp. 360–72.

<sup>10</sup> The work of Marc Trachtenberg also underscores the essential importance of historical analysis to demonstrate theoretical conclusions. See particularly Trachtenberg, *History and Strategy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

current practices in the discipline, Mearsheimer's historical footnotes are themselves a model that others should seek to approach. Indeed, they are worth the considerable cost of the book itself, independent of the analysis that they seek to support.

In what follows I shall (1) state Mearsheimer's basic theoretical claims; (2) question Mearsheimer's conclusions that rational power motivations explain historical outcomes, offering an alternative explanation; (3) present his theory of war and peace; (4) offer a revised view which has both theoretical and policy implications that apply to the current stance of the Bush administration; and (5) discuss his overall contribution to the discipline.

## II. MEARSHEIMER'S CLAIMS

In Mearsheimer's catechism, every state seeks to improve its position relative to others. In striving for regional hegemony, continental states will seek additional territory or dominance over their neighbors. Insular powers like the United States or Great Britain will seek to dominate their own locale, to assert naval supremacy, or to acquire far-flung empire, but will perform as "offshore balancers" vis-à-vis major great powers on land. They will intervene if the land balance is threatened but otherwise will remain in their island fastnesses. Mearsheimer believes in "the stopping power of water" and thus concludes that "offshore balancers" will not long remain on adjacent continents. They will intervene and, after establishing a balance on land, withdraw.<sup>11</sup> Thus what appears as lesser ambition on the part of insular states becomes in Mearsheimer's hands obeisance to geography. The United States achieved hegemony in its own region (the Western Hemisphere) and was not tempted to assert it elsewhere because it would have to go over water. Hence it withdrew from Europe after 1918 and only remained there after 1945 because of the challenge posed by the Soviet Union. The British intervened episodically on the continent of Europe but did not stay there for the same reason—exerting power over water was a difficult if not impossible task.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Mearsheimer writes: "The United States did not attempt to conquer territory in either Europe or Northeast Asia during the twentieth century because of the difficulty of projecting military forces across the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans against the great powers located in those regions" (p. 236). The British held back for similar reasons. He notes "the stopping power of water" . . . "makes it virtually impossible for the United Kingdom to conquer and control all of Europe" (p. 237).

<sup>12</sup> This difficulty also practically ruled out the achievement of world hegemony. Mearsheimer says: "The principal impediment to world domination is the difficulty of projecting power across the world's oceans onto the territory of a rival great power" (p. 41).

Great powers will be aware of the challenge presented by other states. Initially, they will prefer to “buck-pass,” that is, shift the task of balancing against an expanding aggressor to some other state. Only if buck-passing fails will they consider acting to stop the threat. Others might see this hesitancy as a public goods problem in which supposed balancers seek to free ride. And in contradistinction to Kenneth Waltz, Mearsheimer raises the possibility that the tendency to buck-pass for long periods may occasion others to initiate expansion, hoping to avert a balancing response. Thus aggression takes form and content in Mearsheimer’s analysis in part because of the vagaries of balancing.<sup>13</sup> It is thus not surprising that he sees offensive rather than defensive realism as the defining characteristic of international relations.<sup>14</sup>

The tendency to expand one’s power, Mearsheimer believes, is not influenced by economic interdependence, democratic institutions, or domestic politics. Ideology plays no role in provoking aggression or causing retreat. A form of interdependence did not prevent war in 1914, and it will not do so today (pp. 370–71). Liberal-democratic states came very near to fighting one another (pp. 367–68), even if the Spanish–American War is the only actual case of war between two democratic nations.<sup>15</sup> Nor, he would say, are some leaders more aggressive than others. A German advantage in power over other nations would occasion the same military expansion regardless of who was in charge: Hitler, Kaiser Wilhelm II, or Bismarck. In U.S. policy, Woodrow Wilson was no less expansionist than James K. Polk or William McKinley. By implication, even Harding and Coolidge would have become imperialist aggressors if “the stopping power of water” had not barred the way. Mearsheimer does not agree with Fareed Zakaria that late-nineteenth-century America failed to expand commensurately with its power<sup>16</sup> or that Tojo’s and Japanese military ambitions greatly exceeded Japan’s narrow power base in the early 1940s. Countries aimed at objectives that they thought were within their reach.

<sup>13</sup> In contradistinction to Waltz, Mearsheimer writes: “There is no question that systemic factors constrain aggression, especially balancing by threatened states. But defensive realists exaggerate those restraining forces. Indeed, the historical record provides little support for their claim that offense rarely succeeds” (p. 39).

<sup>14</sup> For Waltz, the prospect of encountering a balancing response makes an aggressor hesitate. Too much power can create a problem. He writes: “The goal the system encourages [nations] to seek is security. Increased power may or may not serve that end. . . . The first concern of states is not to maximize power but to maintain their positions in the system”; Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Mass.: Addison Wesley, 1979), 126.

<sup>15</sup> Democratic Finland does not quite count as a case. It was involved in titular war with the United States and Britain simply because it was resisting the Soviet Union during World War II.

<sup>16</sup> See Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America’s World Role* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

Mearsheimer also rejects the various theories that suggest that domestic politics makes a difference. He does not concur with Jack Snyder that certain kinds of domestic political coalitions will be more aggressive than others,<sup>17</sup> with Michael Doyle that democracies do not fight each other, or with Arthur Stein that domestic influences sometimes constrain and sometimes exceed the limits of national interest defined in terms of power.<sup>18</sup>

Today and in the future Mearsheimer posits continuing conflict as other great powers, particularly China, augment their strength. No agreement among great powers can be sustained for a long period, since it will bow to relative power considerations, as China or the European Union, India or Russia gain on the United States of America. The panoply of international institutions will not prevent disagreements from issuing in military conflict since they only reflect, but do not shape, national interests. Between now and 2020, Mearsheimer continues, there will likely be a challenge to American leadership, so the United States had better prepare for that eventuality by seeking to diminish the Chinese rate of economic growth. Mearsheimer, following Peter Liberman, also explicitly rejects the notion that territorial conquest no longer pays.<sup>19</sup>

For now, however, and until such time as China's challenge is greatly expanded, the U.S. should withdraw or at least should be expected to withdraw from both Asia and Europe. There is no great power rival in either continent, and offshore balancers bring their forces home when that is true. This is the case even though Mearsheimer clearly foresees that there will again be a need to reintroduce American forces.<sup>20</sup>

### III. OFFENSIVE REALISM: HISTORY AS RATIONALITY

The first criticism of this view—a problem that besets all realist theory—is that it assumes that history is rationality, even to some degree that history limits or determines the possibility of morality. Since

<sup>17</sup> Jack Snyder, *Myths of Empire* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991).

<sup>18</sup> See Michael Doyle, "Kant and Liberal Legacies in Foreign Affairs," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 12 (Summer and Fall 1983), pts. 1, 2; and Arthur Stein's essays in R. Rosecrance and A. Stein, eds., *The Domestic Bases of Grand Strategy* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993).

<sup>19</sup> In so doing he also disagrees with the views of his fellow realists, Steve Van Evera and Jack Snyder. His own view of U.S. hesitancy to take over Canada and Mexico is also based on the present-day difficulties of conquest and assimilation of nationalist states. See also Liberman, "The Spoils of Conquest," *International Security* 18 (Fall 1993).

<sup>20</sup> Robert Jervis comments: "If it is true that such a move would produce destabilizing effects, and if it is also true that Mearsheimer's theory describes how states behave, the American leaders should see that the move would be unfortunate and stay engaged"; personal communication, June 2002.

all countries are actual or potential military expansionists, their use of power does not differentiate them in moral or legal terms.<sup>21</sup> Aggression cannot be evil since all countries would be aggressors if they could. There is therefore no difference in moral terms between the aggressive policies of Nazi Germany and Japan and the reactive and liberal-democratic policies of the United States and Britain. During the cold war the United States and the Soviet Union were morally equivalent, since each was striving to increase its power at the expense of the other. That one side favored democratic elections, liberal economies, and human rights does not enter into the equation, since moral judgments cannot be applied where power dictates the outcome. The application of morality requires at least the possibility of choice among alternatives.

In response to these assertions, however, one can argue that expensive Western interventions to reduce civil conflict in the Balkans, Somalia, Haiti, and elsewhere can scarcely be accounted to the normal calculations of power or promptings of interest.<sup>22</sup> None of them were designed to oppose another great power. Few of them were in the strict interest of the interveners, unless one tautologically includes humanitarianism as a part of self-interest.<sup>23</sup> For Mearsheimer, however, the narrow strictures of national egoism determine all action.

Yet a closer reading of history would suggest different conclusions. Nations do have choices that are actuated by more than considerations of rational power. The major difficulty with Mearsheimer's whole analysis is that he fails to recognize that there are powerful but nonaggressive states. The United States and Britain really have been less aggressive, *ceteris paribus*, than many other equally powerful countries.<sup>24</sup> And some smaller states like Vietnam in the 1970s or eighteenth-century Prussia have been more aggressive than their power base would appear to permit. In Mearsheimer's hands all states are equally aggressive, leaving us with the conclusion that Monaco would really like to conquer the globe. But we know in the real world that Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan were more aggressive than most other states.<sup>25</sup> Some

<sup>21</sup> This problem also arises in all theories that attempt to explain deterministically the entire course of international politics.

<sup>22</sup> See *inter alia* Andrea Talentino "Intervention in the International System" (Ph.D. diss., UCLA, 1998).

<sup>23</sup> A colleague and I once asked members of our graduate theory class if they could explain the U.S. intervention in Somalia in terms of reigning realist theory. None could.

<sup>24</sup> I owe one reader a particular debt for the formulation here.

<sup>25</sup> Ian Kershaw contends that Hitler's charismatic ideology led him to stress destruction of domestic enemies (the Jews) as well as foreign foes in a campaign of violence that ultimately undermined not only his own power, but also the functioning of the German state. He writes: "Time after time Hitler set the barbaric tone, whether in hate-filled public speeches giving a green light for discriminatory actions against Jews and other 'enemies of the state,' or in closed addresses to Nazi functionaries or

strong states, by contrast, are not only self-abnegatory but actually very generous. A state can decide to help another state even though its only long-term benefit may come in the form of some indefinable "good will."<sup>26</sup> States can even give other great powers their most high-level military technology.<sup>27</sup> If nations are free to choose their actions independently of the compulsions of interest, those choices can be evaluated from both moral and legal points of view. There remains a realm in which moral judgment can operate.

In fact three types of situations exist internationally: (1) where nations behave strictly according to the dictates of relative power; (2) where nations exceed their power bases to engage in expansion that cannot be warranted on strict power grounds; (3) where nations aim to achieve less in power terms than they could actually obtain. In conditions 2 and 3, ideologies, norms, and domestic politics play a determining role in charting the course of action. Since Mearsheimer's entire book is devoted to case 1, I shall focus here on cases 2 and 3.

#### UNWARRANTED EXPANSIONISM

It is of course true that nations sometimes make mistakes, misestimate their relative power positions, or engage in wishful thinking. Yet the egregious blunders that Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan made in attacking other states in the 1930s and 1940s go far beyond the most expansive interpretation of power interests. Instead of achieving and maintaining power, they both lost power and endangered the survival of their societies.<sup>28</sup> Influenced by then-fashionable ideologies, they believed that power was equivalent to the amount of national territory one could amass, irrespective of the population it contained or one's ability to assimilate it. Seeking autarchy, they also thought that raw materials and oil were the foundations of strength and these would be gained by resolute military expansion to the east and south. They were also animated by a quest for empire that would render them equal to

---

military leaders where he laid down, for example, the brutal guidelines for the occupation of Poland and for "Operation Barbarossa"; Kershaw, "Working towards the Fuhrer: Reflections on the Nature of the Hitler Dictatorship," in Ian Kershaw and Moshe Lewin, eds., *Stalinism and Nazism: Dictatorships in Comparison* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 105.

<sup>26</sup> In much the same way many businessmen in the 1950s simply added 10 percent to their average cost curve to derive the price, believing that their restraint would foster goodwill over the long term.

<sup>27</sup> The United States gave the Polaris system to Great Britain in 1962 and President Eisenhower was apparently prepared to give nuclear weapons to Germany. See Marc Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace: The Making of the European Settlement, 1945-1963* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

<sup>28</sup> As Paul Kecskemeti shows, countries are sometimes better off surrendering if their societies are threatened; Kecskemeti, *Strategic Surrender* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961).

their imperial brethren and rivals, Great Britain, France, and the United States. Japan's attempt to attack and assimilate China was both fatuous and unachievable, no matter how much military force Japan deployed. In fact, Japanese administrators, soldiers, and puppet regimes would in time be Sinicized, as the overarching power of Chinese demography, history, tradition, and dominant culture made itself felt. Recognition of this problem emerged in March 1940 when the Japanese army admitted that the "China Incident" was developing into an early-day Vietnam.<sup>29</sup> Japan returned to an offensive strategy of holding China only after the German success over France in May–June 1940.<sup>30</sup>

Whatever may be true concerning Japanese attempts to subdue China, however, Japan's attack on the United States involved a hopeless struggle to defeat an economic power that, according to Mearsheimer's own figures, in 1940 possessed 49 percent of world wealth as compared with Japan's trifling 6 percent (p. 220).<sup>31</sup> Japanese leaders recognized that the dice were loaded against them. Nonetheless, as early as July 1940 Foreign Minister Matsuoka asserted that a pact between Japan and Germany meant "going into battle assisting and embracing one another . . . even if it means committing double suicide." He added: "Unless you go into the tiger's den, you cannot catch the tiger's cub."<sup>32</sup> General Tojo extended the metaphor in November 1941, when he explained that "sometimes a man has to jump from the balcony of Kiyomizu Temple with his eyes closed."<sup>33</sup>

Of course, it was true that Japan could not secure its objectives in China without raw materials and oil, that those goods were available in Southeast Asia, and that only the American fleet, based at Pearl Harbor, barred the way to a Japanese move south. Had Japan wanted to buy such goods from the United States, as it had traditionally done, it would have had to moderate its policies and perhaps withdraw from

<sup>29</sup> According to Inoki Masamichi, the Japanese army recognized its China "quagmire" in March 1940; personal communication. Sally Marks writes: "Tokyo was trapped in the dreaded China quagmire with too much invested to withdraw but no end in sight"; Marks, *The Ebbing of European Ascendancy* (London: Arnold, 2002), 349. It did not withdraw, however, because the German victory over France in May–June opened the prospect of Japan moving south to encircle China.

<sup>30</sup> See Akira Iriye, who notes: "Had the European stalemate continued, Tokyo's leaders might have been compelled to undertake a much more drastic reorientation of their China policy"; Iriye, *The Origins of the Second World War in Asia and the Pacific* (London: Longman's, 1987), 95.

<sup>31</sup> The U.S. capacity to mobilize military force also greatly exceeded Japan's. U.S. mobilization was so successful that as early as 1943 American planners were already moving toward reconversion to civilian industry.

<sup>32</sup> Quoted in Chihiro Hosoya, "The Tripartite Pact, 1939–1940," in James Morley, ed., *Japan's Road to the Pacific War: Japan, Germany and the USSR, 1935–1940* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 216.

<sup>33</sup> Quoted in Marks (fn. 29), 370. Those who have visited the temple in Kyoto will recognize that its height guarantees that there is no surviving a jump.

China. If it could be won, war with the United States seemed an understandable, if desperate, gamble. Yet the Japanese knew they would lose. Their own calculations showed the forces the United States could deploy in the Pacific would completely overwhelm the narrow Japanese naval and air forces. And they had no basis for assuming that the United States would agree to a compromise peace after a year or two, as Russia had done in the Russo-Japanese War in 1905.<sup>34</sup> In fact their whole thinking was a house of cards. But they were not prepared to back away from their four-year investment in China and instead allowed the samurai tradition to determine their decision.<sup>35</sup> Japan's decisions then were based on ideological prescriptions in which it blindly sought to emulate its European imperial rivals and to maintain national honor.

Even more egregious were Hitler's decisions after June 1940. The Nazi leader had succeeded in everything he did from 1937 to 1940. Scandinavia, the Low Countries, and France were defeated and occupied, with only Sweden and Switzerland eking out a miserable neutral existence on Nazi sufferance. Eastern Europe lay at his feet, and Russia had become his dutiful ally.<sup>36</sup> There was ample precedent for a halt in successful German military operations.<sup>37</sup> Understanding Napoleon's failures, Bismarck had known when to stop even if overreaching ambition animated his successors. All the more reason for Hitler to avoid the kaiser's and Ludendorff's mistakes. Yet his policies involved fighting against Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States simultaneously. Of course, as Zara Steiner says, Hitler wanted to fight his wars as one peels an artichoke, a leaf at a time.<sup>38</sup> This meant avoiding a two-front war by eliminating one enemy at a time. But Hitler neglected to

<sup>34</sup> Mearsheimer suggests that Japan thought that it might hold the United States at bay in a long war. In fact, it did not—Japanese calculations assumed U.S. compromise after Japanese victories in a short war. See p. 223.

<sup>35</sup> The notion that states cannot concede great losses when faced with superior force and resolve is simply false. Russia gave up a huge amount of territory at Brest Litovsk in 1918. It conceded in Cuba in 1962. The United States gave way in Vietnam in 1972–75. In the Japanese case, they were not asked to surrender any metropolitan territory and in fact were fighting only for imperial gains, gains that every European power cast aside after World War II.

<sup>36</sup> There is no evidence that Stalin considered attacking Nazi Germany. He feared only a German attack on him.

<sup>37</sup> Omar Bartov writes: "As long as Germany pursued political and military goals which could be achieved by resorting to a series of brief, albeit highly brutal *Blitzkrieg* campaigns, it remained victorious. Once it moved beyond these relatively limited goals (by continuing the war with Britain and attacking the Soviet Union), Germany found itself increasingly embroiled in a total, world war which it had no hope of winning, due to the much greater industrial and manpower capacities of its opponents"; Bartov, "From *Blitzkrieg* to Total War: Controversial Links between Image and Reality," in Kershaw and Lewin (fn. 25), 159.

<sup>38</sup> Zara Steiner, personal communication, June 2002.

shore up his own alliances to achieve this goal. The German pact with Japan did not commit Japan to fight against Germany's foes (for example, the USSR), though it did appear to commit Germany to fight against Japan's foes (for example, the United States). With Japanese aid he might have defeated Russia in 1941 or early 1942. What would the United States have done then?

Mearsheimer is right that Roosevelt was trying to prevent such an outcome by forcing the Japanese to move south and perhaps getting them into war with the United States, though the U.S. Navy was not then ready for conflicts in both the Atlantic and the Pacific. But it was not enough for America to hang tough and wait for Germany and Japan to make the aggressive moves. Roosevelt needed explicit German and Japanese attacks on the United States and a declaration of war in order to obtain the popular support needed to launch American power. Japan obliged by attacking Pearl Harbor, and Hitler followed suit in declaring war on the United States on December 11, 1941, a blunder that will forever reverberate in German military history. By this date, Hitler had failed in his Operation Barbarossa summer offensive, and Stalin, buttressed by intelligence that Japan would not intervene against Russia, had transferred troops from Siberia to the Western front and had counterattacked German divisions on December 5. The Nazi onrush was stopped. Yet less than a week later Hitler declared war on the United States, the world's greatest power. Some argue that the war was already on and that Roosevelt was engaging in an antisubmarine war against Germany by escorting English convoys to their destinations in the British Isles. But incidents were still avoided on the German side. Alastair Parker writes: "Without the German declaration of war Roosevelt might not have been able to bring America into open war with Germany and so carry out the agreed Anglo-American strategic principle that the defeat of Germany should have priority over the defeat of Japan. We don't know why he did it."<sup>39</sup> Hitler's megalomania is a partial explanation. It is not sufficient to chalk it all up to bad luck as Mearsheimer does. Again Mearsheimer's own figures provide a devastating refutation of his own conclusions. In 1940 Germany had only 17 percent of world wealth, whereas Britain, Russia, and the United States controlled 73 percent.<sup>40</sup> Perhaps Hitler and Japan together could have defeated Russia, but only if the United States stayed out. Yet both acted

<sup>39</sup> Parker, *The Second World War: A Short History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 84.

<sup>40</sup> This latent power, moreover, could quickly be translated into actual military strength. The U.S. army, navy, and air strength quickly reached proportions capable of dealing with both the Germans and the Japanese.

to bring America in. One cannot escape the conclusion that Japanese and German actions irrationally exceeded the most expansive estimates of their power.

#### UNWARRANTED RESTRAINT

If for ideological and domestic reasons countries sometimes become egregious aggressors, they also frequently do not use the power that they unquestionably possess. Mearsheimer spends an entire chapter trying to convince us that the offshore balancers, Britain and the United States, were really striving to expand at all times but that they were frustrated by the “stopping power of water.” Their relative non-participation in the machinations of European and Far Eastern power politics, he would argue, had nothing to do with domestic introversion, ideological beliefs, economics, or the force of international institutions. The United States had gained hegemony in the Western Hemisphere, and Britain did not need any more colonies or territories on the European continent. Its economic sway governed many other regions without the use of military force. The United States might have considered conquering Mexico or Canada, but regarded this option as too costly.<sup>41</sup> Yet the United States was not prevented by any great power from undertaking such military campaigns. It relied instead on remaining on friendly terms with these two crucial states.

Mearsheimer’s argument for restraint is not based on relative power considerations—all of which favored further American expansion—but on the difficulties of conquest under conditions of modern nationalism, where assimilating the territories taken is difficult if not impossible.<sup>42</sup> But “friendship” is an evanescent quality in Mearsheimer’s terms. It comes and goes and cannot be relied upon. But if conquest is difficult, this fact casts an entirely new light on the likelihood of aggression against nationalist countries today. Great powers would perhaps like to expand, but they confront the “stopping power” of modern nationalism and social mobilization of the target population,<sup>43</sup> a stopping power that may be greater than the water barrier proffered by Mearsheimer. They may also find it unnecessary to acquire more land when land is no

<sup>41</sup> Mearsheimer writes: “The United States did not attempt to conquer and assimilate Canada and Mexico after 1812 because it would have been an enormously difficult and costly task” (p. 488). After 1850 it could have done so, but “because of the power of nationalism, subduing the people in those countries and turning them into Americans would have been a difficult if not impossible task” (p. 488).

<sup>42</sup> See Mearsheimer’s admissions on p. 488.

<sup>43</sup> See Joseph Nye, *The Paradox of American Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 5–6; and Richard Rosecrance, *The Rise of the Virtual State* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 81–82.

longer the most important factor of production.<sup>44</sup> This would explain great power quiescence in a series of contexts, not only those confronting the offshore balancers. It would seem then that countries can attain adequate military security more easily than offensive realists believe.

But however their hesitancy is explained, the notion that Britain and the United States could not have done more against other great powers is not credible. Between 1840 and 1850 England was the only industrial nation, and its technological standing revealed at the Crystal Palace Exhibition in 1851 was far ahead of anyone else's. While Russia kept up in total GDP, Britain was far superior in per capita GDP and could have turned her talents to military expansion had she chosen to do so. Later on the United States might have adopted an aggressive stance since her GDP equaled that of Britain and Germany combined and her technology revealed at the Philadelphia Exposition in 1876 was superior to all others. But like Britain, the United States held back.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, it was not water that stopped the two insular states. Nor did water prevent twentieth-century Japan from attacking the largest land powers: China, Russia, and the United States.<sup>46</sup> It did not stop England from waging the Crimean War against Russia, and it did not prevent the United States from invading Europe in 1944.<sup>47</sup> Today combined armaments—naval, air, and ground—can invade many inland areas of the world across vast bodies of water. Naval and air superiority make the transport of troops as feasible across oceans as across land. If the United States were so inclined, it could expand on the European continent as well. But the United States does not seek European territory because, as Mearsheimer knows very well, America and its European allies share a common culture, democratic institutions, and strong economic ties. These exist entirely aside from the balance of power and would continue irrespective of the decline of the Russian threat. Emphasizing such common orientations, the European Union has already obviated war among its member nations, and the

<sup>44</sup> See Carl Kaysen, "Is War Obsolete," *International Security* 15 (Spring 1990).

<sup>45</sup> Honed during the Civil War and in conflicts with Mexico, the United States Army was briefly larger than its continental counterparts.

<sup>46</sup> Mearsheimer grapples with the Japanese example but does not convince the reader that Japan is not a major exception to his case. He admits that the reasons for Japanese success across the Pacific and the Sea of Japan had to do entirely with the weakness of the opposing powers, not with the "stopping power of water" (pp. 264–65).

<sup>47</sup> Mearsheimer's "water argument" collapses with his admission that Japan could go over water because its East Asian opponents were weak, whereas the U.S. and Britain could not go over water because their European enemies were strong. Thus, it is the strength of opponents not geography that determines these outcomes.

burgeoning links with the United States have effectively done the same. "Friendship" has proved to be more durable than the balance of power and offensive realism would allow.<sup>48</sup>

If this were not true, then surely, on good realist grounds, there would already have been a world combination of power directed against the United States, for in power terms, the United States is the only country with the possibility of seeking world hegemony. This does not occur because America does not threaten other great powers.<sup>49</sup> Rather, it seeks to work with them to attain common goals.<sup>50</sup>

#### IV. ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS

How do we account for the occurrences that cannot be explained by the drive for power or hegemony? Ideological and domestic political factors are surely one important influence. Countries of different political and ideological persuasions may have more intense competitions.<sup>51</sup> As the democratic peace argument shows, countries with democratic institutions have fewer reasons for war. They recognize that if war took place between two democracies, the ensuing democratic peace would basically register the tendencies that had existed previously, negating the reason for war in the first place. Ideology also plays a major role. The conflicts between revolutionary and conservative powers at the time of the French Revolution were quite untrammelled. This was equally true of conflicts between democratic and fascist states in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Athens and Sparta were of different political types as well. The cold war was a struggle between political as well as power adversaries. In the First World War, however, the opposition was not primarily ideological, at least until the United States entered.<sup>52</sup> So political form does not explain everything. Today, however, as attested to by many authors, the radical Islamist movement does create important ideological conflicts with Western and Judeo-Christian countries, aside from any strong domestic power base. Most Arab states are weak. Thus

<sup>48</sup> This was the essential thesis in the work of Karl Deutsch; see Deutsch et al., *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957).

<sup>49</sup> This situation underscores again the key point made by Stephen Walt, that power is not equivalent to threat. See Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1987).

<sup>50</sup> See Richard Rosecrance, ed., *The New Great Power Coalition* (Boulder, Colo.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001); and Joseph Nye, Jr., *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World's Only Superpower Cannot Go It Alone* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

<sup>51</sup> Argued in terms of homogeneity and heterogeneity of political form, this is the basic thesis of Raymond Aron, *Paix et guerre entre les nations* (Paris: Calmann-Levy, 1962).

<sup>52</sup> However, Raymond Aron classifies them as heterogeneous in political-ideological terms; Aron (fn. 51).

Islamists have chosen terrorism as the weapon of the weak—outcomes that are entirely neglected in Mearsheimer's scheme.

The economic relationships between countries are also important. While trading relationships did not obviate war in 1914, no country went to war with another in which it had large amounts of foreign direct investment. Foreign direct investment linked colonies and the metropole, though not the great powers themselves. Today, by contrast, there are large and increasingly mutual foreign direct investments by the great powers in each other's economies. Attack under current circumstances would be an attack on one's fixed investments in another country, a somewhat counterproductive enterprise.

In fact it would be possible to construct a regression equation containing political form, reciprocal FDI, trade, and mutual membership in institutions as predictors of political relationships between countries. The coefficients would generally be positive. Bruce Russett and John Oneal have largely performed such an analysis in their effort to replicate Kant's theory of international peace.<sup>53</sup> These factors produce a stronger statistical correlation with peace than do indicators of brute power.

In sum, political form, ideology, and economic relationships help to account not only for cooperation but also for conflict. Excessive uses of force occurred when radical ideologies seized control of policy and when economic constraints led policymakers to try to use war to overcome them. Uses of force were dampened by common economic interests and intense trading and foreign direct investment ties. But as we shall see, these are not the only important factors in producing peaceful relations.

## V. MEARSHEIMER'S WAR AND PEACE

In Mearsheimer's canon there is no ultimate answer to the problem of war. Certain types of international systems may be less warprone than others, but even when the incidence of war is reduced, it is never entirely eliminated even in these systems. Mearsheimer contends that rising powers are likely to contest with hegemonic but declining states.<sup>54</sup> Surveying conflicts since 1792, he concludes that unbalanced multi-

<sup>53</sup> See the data in Bruce Russett and John Oneal, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001), 123, figure 1. Russett and Oneal conclude that (1) democracy, (2) economic interdependence, and (3) membership in international organizations reduce nations' propensity to violence. Foreign direct investment is left out of their calculations, however.

<sup>54</sup> Yet while Germany warred with Britain and France with Britain, America did not fight the United Kingdom when it passed the latter, nor did Japan attack the Soviet Union after 1980 when its GDP surpassed Moscow's.

polarity is the most unstable system while bipolarity is the most stable.<sup>55</sup> He writes: “The core of my argument is that bipolar systems tend to be the most peaceful, and unbalanced multipolar are the most prone to deadly conflict. Balanced multipolar systems fall somewhere in between” (p. 335).<sup>56</sup> To support his polarity theory, Mearsheimer examines seven international systems in terms of their polarity and balance and offers the following periodization of international conflict:

1. Napoleonic (*sic*) Era I, 1792–93: balanced multipolarity
2. Napoleonic Era II, 1792–1815: unbalanced multipolarity (France seeking hegemony)
3. Nineteenth Century, 1815–1902: balanced multipolarity
4. Kaiserreich Era, 1903–18: unbalanced multipolarity (Germany seeking hegemony)
5. Interwar Years, 1919–38: balanced multipolarity
6. Nazi Era, 1939–45: unbalanced multipolarity (Germany seeking hegemony)
7. Cold War, 1945–90: bipolarity

In this catalog unbalanced multipolarity appears to be the least stable system, though important wars occurred under conditions of balanced multipolarity as well—during the French revolutionary era and also in the nineteenth century (Austria and Prussia against France in 1792 and four wars between great powers from 1854 to 1871). Nonetheless, in Mearsheimer’s calculations the periods of unbalanced multipolarity (1793–1815, 1903–18, and 1939–45) were more warlike than others. At present bipolarity has given way to multipolarity, but it is not yet clear what kind of multipolarity will ultimately ensue. If China spreads its military wings after 2010, the world could face unbalanced multipolarity once again, and according to Mearsheimer a new cycle of conflict or war would then ensue. This would cause the United States to return to its role as offshore balancer in Northeast Asia and likely produce a major struggle between China and the United States. In conclusion Mearsheimer argues:

This analysis suggests that the United States has a profound interest in seeking Chinese economic growth to slow considerably in the years ahead. For much of the past decade, however, the United States has pursued a strategy intended to have the opposite effect. . . . The U.S. policy on China is misguided. A wealthy

<sup>55</sup> The two major historical cases of bipolarity—Athens versus Sparta and Rome versus Carthage—most assuredly did not promote balance or prevent disastrous war. See also Dale Copeland *The Origins of Major War* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2000), 210–12.

<sup>56</sup> Mearsheimer says: “War [in Europe] was going on 18.3 percent of the time in balanced multipolarity, as compared with 2.2 percent in bipolarity and 79.5 percent in unbalanced multipolarity” (p. 358). These figures chart all wars involving a major power in Europe.

China would not be a status quo power but an aggressive state determined to achieve regional hegemony. This is not because a rich China would have wicked motives but because the best way for any state to maximize its prospects for survival is to be the hegemon in its region of the world. Although it is certainly in China's interest to be the hegemon in Northeast Asia, it is clearly not in America's interest to have that happen. (p. 402)

Thus, in Mearsheimer's view, conflict is inevitable in international politics, and war will likely occur where multipolarity is unbalanced, for example, when major powers rise and fall. Since this process takes place cyclically, unless two powers rise and fall in lockstep, a clash and perhaps war are likely to result.<sup>57</sup> For Mearsheimer, as great powers rise, they follow their own interest as "offensive realist" powers and seek regional if not global hegemony. But other states must equally resist their incursions, and thus conflict breaks out in many regions. Great powers may also be tempted to expand by the buck-passing of their opponents. This is why Mearsheimer believes that great power relations constitute a never-ending "tragedy." The United States and other great nations are condemned to take part in the endless quadrille of expansion followed by balancing, conflict after conflict, and perhaps war after war. In this respect the twenty-first century will be no different from the twentieth.

## VI. AN ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVE

### IN GENERAL THEORETICAL TERMS

In the strict realist canon, intentions are not independent of capabilities but are simply derived from them.<sup>58</sup> In the matrix in Figure 1, however, the two are considered to be separate. An analysis of historical circumstances (see below) would demonstrate that intentions vary independently of capabilities—meaning that it is possible to have a country with large capabilities that is generally cooperative.<sup>59</sup> The contemporary United States would constitute one such example. The choice of cooperative or conflictual intentions is affected and perhaps even determined by the degree of embeddedness in alliance, security,

<sup>57</sup> If rising powers ultimately decline, however, why not wait for their weakening and inevitable demise? Gilpin provides a rationale for allowing domestic and economic processes to work themselves out without the need for external balancing; Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982). Paul Kennedy offers a similar view; Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (New York: Random House, 1987).

<sup>58</sup> Walt (fn. 49) is an exception to this dictum.

<sup>59</sup> See, for example, David Lake, *Entangling Alliances: American Foreign Policy in Its Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

		Intentions	
		Cooperation	Conflict
Capabilities	High	I embedded in large coalition	II nonembedded competition/rivalry
	Low	III embedded in interdependence	IV nonembedded autonomy

FIGURE 1

and economic networks. To achieve cooperation, large and powerful countries would need to be embedded in embracing security institutions and alliances, such as NATO or the EU. Cooperative lesser states would be bound up in interdependent political and economic bonds. There are, of course, countries that are not included in such networks or alliances—in Eastern Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and southern and central Asia. Smaller or weaker states can aspire to provide for their own autonomy in such circumstances but can scarcely expect to achieve hegemony in their region or elsewhere. Larger nations like China and India do not yet fit clearly in the one category or the other. They exist in quadrant II but may be moving to quadrant I. They participate in some networks and political-economic organizations but are not yet full members in a great power coalition.

In addition, democratic nations have generally limited their conflicts with each other. In modern times neither Great Britain nor the United States has sought additional territory in an increasingly democratic Europe, and they have also avoided major conflicts with each other. As Bruce Russett and John Oneal point out, "Democracies rarely, if ever, make war on each other."<sup>60</sup> The United States, despite its power, was

<sup>60</sup> Russett and Oneal (fn. 53), 43.

generally satisfied with its position in the Western Hemisphere and Great Britain was content with its leadership of the empire. Britain and the United States held back not merely because they were “offshore balancers.” Moreover, as we have seen, the water barrier did not prevent attack in other instances. In the twentieth century insular Japan launched overwater attacks against Russia, China, and the United States, undertaking to fight and, it hoped, defeat leaders of huge continental landmasses. Against this background, Britain and the United States seem unwontedly peaceful, given their great naval power. As their behavior contrasts with Mearsheimer’s offensive realist predictions, novel outcomes enter the realist landscape.

Equally, other realists and many nonrealists disagree with the restless and expansionist cast of Mearheimer’s offensive analysis. If countries aiming at hegemony can expect to encounter opposition, conflict, and war, their enlightened and longer-term self-interest would be to limit their ambitions. Where “the further the weaker”<sup>61</sup> obtains, nations should seek to diminish the opportunity costs of war and to achieve the otherwise forgone advantages of peaceful economic growth and trade.<sup>62</sup> Marc Trachtenberg writes: “Policies that are rational in power political terms are not the fundamental source of international conflict: in themselves, by and large, they help make for a stable international order. To understand why this is the case is to understand why realism is at its heart a theory of peace, and why it ought to be recognized as such.”<sup>63</sup>

## IN HISTORICAL TERMS

Is the future likely to be as malign as Mearsheimer supposes? An important limitation of offensive realist theory is that it focuses on war more than on peace and also neglects past periods in which peace obtained.<sup>64</sup> This is not entirely surprising. The “tragedy” of offensive realism consists in repetitive violence among great powers. Nations, though

<sup>61</sup> See Kenneth Boulding, *Conflict and Defense* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962).

<sup>62</sup> See particularly Kaysen (fn. 44).

<sup>63</sup> Trachtenberg, “Realism as a Theory of Peace” (Manuscript, UCLA, 2001), 27. Robert Jervis writes: “The growth of a nation’s power, if it becomes great enough to menace other strong states, will be at least partially self-defeating; the attempt to dominate the international system will call up a counterbalancing coalition that will restrain the state”; Jervis, “A Political Science Perspective on the Balance of Power and the Concert,” *American Historical Review* 97 (June 1992).

<sup>64</sup> See particularly Paul Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics, 1763–1848* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994). Schroeder regards the period 1815–53 as the real “long peace” in international politics. He writes: “It ended the whole war once and for all, stopping all the fighting in every theatre of conflict. It ended the competition in arms, led to a general and substantial armaments reduction, and averted any serious revival of the arms race for forty years. It addressed and settled at least in principle, all the issues before it leaving no major dispute unresolved”; Schroeder, “Reply to Trachtenberg,” *Orbis* (Spring 1996), 307–13.

aware of the tragedy, can do little to overcome it. Besides, a theory of war is obversely a theory of peace, so that in one sense Mearsheimer has already answered the question by empirically concluding that bipolarity and balanced multipolarity are associated with the fewest instances of major war. In addition, Mearsheimer's inability to find a secure theoretical foundation for peace is simply a reflection of the offensive cast of this theory.

Not surprisingly, then, Mearsheimer does not speculate on the role diplomacy and alliances might play in averting war. Nonetheless, it is possible to construct a theory of peace out of historical and diplomatic data. If we revise and extend the historical account to include periods of peace, we find that an overbalance of power (if attained among independent states by a single strong alliance) is likely to be a stabilizing force. The high power of an alliance combination has an entirely different effect from the high power of a single state.<sup>65</sup> While the former is correlated with peace, the latter may be disruptive.<sup>66</sup> Wars are less likely when alliance power is greater and more inclusive, whereas war is more probable when the strongest state's power is not bound up in a large coalition.<sup>67</sup> It is true that Napoleon occasionally clothed French power in an alliance combination, but he surrounded himself with vassal states that he had previously defeated. One can agree with Mearsheimer that Germany was a more powerful single state in 1905 than it had been in 1887, but it operated within a much less powerful alliance combination at the later date.<sup>68</sup> In another example of alignment constraints, Great Britain was the single strongest state in the 1840s, but it was aligned with Russia, France, Austria, and Prussia in the Concert of Europe. Individually Britain was stronger still in the 1850s, but by then the Concert had broken down owing to new ideological and nationalist conflicts arising from the revolutions of 1848. The breakdown of the Concert and the severing of the Anglo-Russian

<sup>65</sup> On this point, see also A. F. K. Organski, *World Politics* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1960).

<sup>66</sup> The failure to recognize this point helps to account for the difference between those who favor a "balance" and those who support an "overbalance" of power as a means of achieving peace. The "balance theorists" focus on individual states, while those who support an overbalance consider coalitions as well as states. See F. H. Hinsley, *Power and the Pursuit of Peace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964); and Organski (fn. 65).

<sup>67</sup> This may well be because of Paul Schroeder's distinction between alliances that are vehicles of balancing and/or expansion and those that are tools of management. See Schroeder, "Alliances, 1815-1945: Weapons of Power and Tools of Management," in Klaus Knorr, ed., *Historical Dimensions of National Security Problems* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1975). Schroeder writes: "Frequently, the desire to exercise . . . control over an ally's policy was the main reason that one power, or both entered into the alliance" (p. 230).

<sup>68</sup> See Paul Kennedy's calculations of the power of Triple Alliance and Triple Entente; Kennedy, "The First World War: In the International Power System," *International Security* 9 (Summer 1984).

link permitted the Crimean War (1854–56), which saw great powers fighting one another for the first time since 1815.

War took place in the Napoleonic period for similar reasons. Napoleonic France had not been part of a great coalition prior to war, and after the Peace of Tilsit in 1807 Napoleon had reduced Prussia and Austria to subordinate status. The Napoleonic imperium was not an alliance.<sup>69</sup> So although Napoleon forced other states into subservience, unlike Bismarck in respect to Austria and Russia, Napoleon was never the focus of a central combination of fully independent states. Later still, Kaiser Wilhelm did not follow Bismarck's advice to be "à trois" (among three) in a world of five major powers. In 1914 Germany had only Austria (and the renegade Italy) on its side, while the Triple Entente (Britain, France, and Russia) represented by far the most powerful combination in Europe.<sup>70</sup> In each of these cases, if the single strongest state was embedded in a central coalition of Great Powers it faced important and consequential constraints. This can be seen in my reformulation and expansion of Mearsheimer's seven subsystems below.

#### REVISED PERIODIZATION OF HISTORICAL CONFLICT

1. Napoleonic Era I (really French Revolutionary Era, 1792–93): balanced multipolarity; no preponderant alliance system. Austria and Prussia allied against France. War resulted.

2. Napoleonic Era I, 1793–1815: unbalanced multipolarity; again no preponderant alliance constrained French aggression. Individual states opposed France, but Russia, Prussia and Austria did not join to oppose Napoleon until after his defeat in Russia, 1812–13. War resulted.

3. Nineteenth-Century system, 1815–1902: Mearsheimer calls the whole period balanced multipolarity. In fact his periodization leaves out at least three different systems of power and alliance.

—Concert of Europe, 1815–48: unbalanced alliance multipolarity. While formal peacetime alliances did not exist, the European great powers acted together to resolve problems in Spain, Italy, Greece, Belgium, and the Near East. The Concert functioned successfully because Russia and England worked together usually (but not always) in support of Turkey. The threat from France was blunted in Belgium's struggle for independence from the Netherlands, 1830–32, and again in the Concert's restraint of France's client Mehemet Ali in his challenge to the Ottoman Empire (Turkey) in 1839–41. Peace prevailed. During the Concert's (unbalanced multipolar) sway, England's rising power was wrapped in alliance folds. England did not attempt to seize hegemony, though it might

<sup>69</sup> See Geoffrey Bruun, *Europe and the French Imperium, 1799–1814* (New York: Harper, 1938). Bruun refers to the French tie with Austria, for example, as an "imitation alliance" (p. 187).

<sup>70</sup> On the balance in 1914, see Kennedy (fn. 68).

have been tempted to do so. Peace resulted. The Concert collapsed when nationalism and ideological conflict resumed again with the revolutions of 1848.

—Balanced multipolarity, 1848–71: With the Concert gone and a new ideological conflict between Western nations (France and England) and Eastern courts (Russia, Prussia, and Austria), Britain and France could punish Russia as in the Crimean War. Later, France alone attacked and defeated ideologically retrograde Austria. The humbling of both Russia and Austria paralyzed the eastern courts and unleashed Prussia to unite most of the German states under her nationalist banner, resulting in three wars, 1864–71. In no case did Prussia confront a hostile alliance, nor was it already bound up in one. There was no preponderant coalition to unite the two halves of Europe. War resulted.

—Unbalanced (alliance) multipolarity, 1871–90: Germany formed the Three Emperor's League in 1873, the Dual Alliance in 1879, and the Three Emperor's Alliance of 1881. This led to the Triple Alliance of 1882 from which Russia was excluded. Bismarck then formed the Reinsurance Treaty with Russia in 1887. Despite Germany's formal support, however, Russia could not misbehave in the Balkans because Bismarck negotiated Mediterranean agreements with England, Spain, and Italy. Germany was not yet paramount as a single state, but it constituted the center of a four-to-one alliance network that dwarfed others and left France excluded. Peace resulted.

—Increasingly balanced multipolarity, 1890–1902: The new kaiser Wilhelm dropped the Reinsurance Treaty with Russia, which allowed France to forge the Franco-Russian Alliance of 1894. Baron von Holstein of the Wilhelmstrasse rationalized the situation as giving Germany a “free hand” to balance between the two wings of Europe—the Franco-Russian combination on one side and Great Britain on the other. As a single state Germany grew stronger, but as part of a coalition her position deteriorated. A tenuous peace obtained.

Mearsheimer's other systems depict the nature of multipolarity and an eventual bipolarity, offering links between these outcomes and the ensuing conflict and/or war. Bipolarity was scarcely peaceful but the focused hostility of the two poles resulted in a nuclear and conventional standoff.<sup>71</sup> He does not, however, consider the possibility that a new large coalition of great powers may be in process of formation today.

The new periodization sketched above casts greater light on the reasons for peaceful multipolarity and helps to explain outcomes that

<sup>71</sup> Mearsheimer's periodization, however, should admit a further modification. It is important to stress that the stability of bipolarity after 1945 represented the effective deterrence of a superior coalition over an inferior one. The Western nations including Japan amassed far greater economic, political, and eventually military power than that possessed by the Soviet Union and its allies. That the United States did not use that power—to expand territorially—is also a reflection of the status quo orientation of much of American policy during the cold war. See also Harrison Wagner, “What Was Bipolarity?” *International Organization* 47 (Winter 1993).

Mearsheimer neglects or overlooks. The Concert of Europe and the Bismarckian concert system represented the unbalanced power of preponderant alliance/alignment coalitions that safeguarded peace.<sup>72</sup> One reason for this is that if potential hegemonies are wrapped in alliance constraints, they will be less likely to follow a path of expansion.<sup>73</sup> They cannot convince their allies that such a course is legitimate, and allies may well defect if they persist.

From a more abstract point of view, the benefits of an inclusive coalition can also be shown in game-theoretic terms. Robert Jervis has argued that the Concert of Europe represented in fact a large coalition of states playing Prisoner's Dilemma with one another. Absent ideological conflicts, the European great powers could seek material gain. The more they interacted with one another, however, the more they came to realize the mutual benefits of cooperation.<sup>74</sup> Robert Axelrod carried this point further in *The Evolution of Cooperation* and *The Complexity of Cooperation*. He pointed out that for cooperation to be a stable outcome and for cooperative Tit-for-Tat to be a stable strategy in the Prisoner's Dilemma game, players must also punish both those who defect and those who do not punish defectors,<sup>75</sup> outcomes that are not likely to take place outside a large coalitional structure.

This result was developed further by Jack Hirshleifer's studies of cooperation in simulations of the PD game.<sup>76</sup> For cooperative players to be protected, they need the embrace of a coalition that includes "guardian" or "shield" players. In Hirshleifer's theoretical example, "bounty hunters" are required to police a game between "ranchers" and "rustlers." Preying on "rustlers" and supported by "ranchers," "bounty

<sup>72</sup> See also Richard N. Rosecrance, *Action and Reaction in World Politics: International Systems in Perspective* (Boston: Little-Brown, 1963), chaps. 1-6.

<sup>73</sup> Sometimes these alliance combinations will contain within them structural and unbalanced relations among participants of the sort: A is negative toward B, B is positive toward C, and C is positive toward A. The Russia-China-U.S. triangle was like this in the 1970s and so was the Russian-Austrian-German triangle in the 1880s. The lack of structural balance in the system keeps conflicting parties together. See H. Brooke McDonald and Richard Rosecrance, "Alliance and Structural Balance in the International System," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 29 (March 1985).

<sup>74</sup> Jervis writes: "DD—the actor's third choice—is required by narrow self interest and rationality only if the game is played just once; if the game is to be repeated for years, this is not the case" (p. 720). "Starting from assumptions similar to those of the balance of power, this model indicates that a different, more cooperative way of dealing with anarchy and the security dilemma can emerge under certain circumstances. Cooperation is most likely when the gains from exploiting the other (DC) and the costs of being exploited (CD) are both relatively low, when mutual competition (DD) is much worse than mutual cooperation (CC), when exploitation is not much better than mutual cooperation, and when being exploited is not much worse than mutual competition" (p. 721).

<sup>75</sup> See Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation* (New York: Basic Books, 1985); idem, *The Complexity of Cooperation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997). Axelrod acknowledges that "relying on individuals to punish defections may not be enough to maintain a norm" (*Complexity*, 55).

<sup>76</sup> See Jack Hirshleifer and Juan Martinez Coll, "What Strategies Can Support the Evolutionary Emergence of Cooperation?" *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 32 (1988).

hunters” prevent sudden breakdowns and the depletion of herds. Without their presence, the ranchers become vulnerable to rustlers and cooperation collapses. Do these findings have application to international relations?<sup>77</sup> It would appear that unless great powers are willing to police the system, disruptive states (such as Napoleonic France, the kaiser’s Germany, or Hitler’s Germany) can prey upon cooperative nations. This danger augurs in favor of a new concert, an encompassing coalition of great Powers to perform such tasks.<sup>78</sup> If the disrupter is a single power facing an overwhelming coalition of four against it, it will not act. In such an alignment, it cannot afford to leave the preponderant group and will therefore moderate its objectives accordingly (as Bismarck had to do after 1873).

Supporting the importance of such large alliance coalitions in peaceful international systems, these conclusions would seem to modify Mearsheimer’s pessimism. When ideological differences between great powers can be reduced or transcended, as they have been recently, large and peaceful coalitions can begin to emerge.<sup>79</sup>

#### IMPLICATIONS FOR THE UNITED STATES

Regarding the United States as a pinned-down “offshore balancer,” Mearsheimer offers today’s America an unattractive set of policies. Mearsheimer prescribes and predicts U.S. withdrawal from NATO and perhaps even an end to the organization.<sup>80</sup> As long as there is no denominated enemy, the U.S. should and will decamp from both Europe and Northeast Asia, to return only if China acts up. Both the premature withdrawal and the later reintervention are unattractive options. In fact September 11 and the international terrorist threat suggests the need for the United States to stay engaged around the world. But U.S. engagement is not likely to cause great power opposition, for most other major powers face similar threats and are willing to cooperate with the United States to deal with them. America is also dependent on others. The United States needs foreign intelligence, overflight rights, bases, and onshore support to deal with terrorism. As Joseph Nye argues: “The threat of terrorism . . . is merely the most alarming

<sup>77</sup> See Richard Rosecrance, *The Rise of the Virtual State: Wealth and Power in the Coming Century* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), appendix.

<sup>78</sup> See Richard Rosecrance, ed., *The New Great Power Coalition* (Boulder, Colo.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001), chaps. 1, 19.

<sup>79</sup> See Joseph Nye, *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World’s Only Superpower Cannot Go It Alone* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

<sup>80</sup> See also Mearsheimer, “Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War,” *International Security* 15 (Summer 1990).

example of why we must seek constructive relations with nations weak and strong. Now, more than ever, as technology spreads and non-governmental organizations ranging from transnational corporations to terrorists increase their power, American leadership must reorient itself toward the global community.<sup>81</sup> In these perilous times a coalition of nations including Russia, China, Japan, European nations, and key Middle Eastern states is needed to help the United States do the job. In fact the international threat of terrorism today focuses the great powers and fosters agreement, as the Napoleonic wars did two centuries ago. If great powers become divided again, regional aggressors and terrorists will profit and resume their actions with worse consequences to follow. The emergence of terrorism as a major factor in international politics is particularly inconsistent with Mearsheimer's theory: his "tragedy of great power politics" refers only to the threat that powers pose to each other, not to a threat from below that can undermine them all.

This suggests a role for the United States very different from that recommended by Mearsheimer. Viewing America as an offshore balancer, Mearsheimer sees only short-term interests and would therefore have the United States withdraw even when it has no longer-term interest to do so.<sup>82</sup> The presence of American forces in Europe and Northeast Asia surely deters conflict in those regions. Mearsheimer neglects the deterrent effects of these forces and sees only the likelihood that the U.S. would be drawn into wars not in its apparent immediate interest. In Europe, American withdrawal may lead to the nuclearization of Germany,<sup>83</sup> creating a crisis within the European Union. In Asia, a U.S. withdrawal will leave Japan and Taiwan on their own to face Beijing. Both would then likely acquire nuclear weapons and delivery capabilities, perhaps stimulating the very conflict with China that Mearsheimer seeks to avoid. In a sentence that acknowledges the likelihood of an unnecessary American withdrawal Mearsheimer writes: "So the United States is likely to pull its troops back across the Atlantic Ocean in the years immediately ahead, if there is no significant chance in the present distribution of potential power, even though that move is likely to intensify security competition in Europe and render it less peaceful" (p. 395). Here Mearsheimer overlooks the deterrent values of stationing forces abroad, as brilliantly elaborated in Thomas Schelling's

<sup>81</sup> See Nye (fn. 79), flyleaf.

<sup>82</sup> Robert Jervis observes: "If it is true that such a move would produce destabilizing effects, and if it is also true that Mearsheimer's theory describes how states behave, the American leaders should see that the move would be unfortunate and stay engaged"; personal communication, June 2002.

<sup>83</sup> As Mearsheimer recognizes elsewhere (fn. 80).

*Arms and Influence* and a host of other writings on the conventional and strategic balance during the cold war.<sup>84</sup> There is little recognition of the fact that when Ernest Bevin, British foreign secretary, was fashioning the European invitation to the United States to create the North Atlantic alliance, he sensibly reasoned that if American forces had been committed to defend France in 1939–40, Hitler almost certainly would have hesitated.<sup>85</sup> If U.S. divisions had been on the Marne (or the Somme) in 1914, Moltke would have had to abandon the Schlieffen Plan. In short Mearsheimer would have the United States receive the worst of all worlds—withdraw now and as a result have to fight later.<sup>86</sup> Nor do his prescriptions deal with the omnipresent threat of terrorism.

There is in the American administration today an alternative to Mearsheimer's analysis that needs also to be addressed—for want of a better name, the “Cheney School.” It argues that the United States needs to be even more engaged than it has been and to take an active part in shaping the world—perhaps to invade Iraq—but not to form relationships with other major powers.<sup>87</sup> This view diverges from President Bush's early hesitancy to participate in “nation building” in Eastern Europe and elsewhere. The Cheney School tends to believe that other nations will fall into line once the United States has charted a strong and consistent position. One of its major partisans, Paul Wolfowitz, the deputy secretary of defense, also argues that the U.S. should act to prevent the emergence of another great power challenger.<sup>88</sup> If China is that challenger, such an effort would be fraught with global economic and political consequences and would make it unlikely that Beijing would join a U.S.-led coalition.

The possible invasion of Iraq raises further questions. As of this writing, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Jordan, Turkey, and other nations are resisting agreement to launch an invasion of Iraq from their territory. Such an invasion would involve between fifty thousand and three hundred thousand American troops and would entail an occupation following the air and ground attack. Since it could well be prosecuted in cities and not in open terrain, the attack could involve much higher

<sup>84</sup> See Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966); and Bernard Brodie, *Strategy in the Missile Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959).

<sup>85</sup> See also Dean G. Acheson, *Present at the Creation* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987). Saving France, U.S. troops in Western Europe in the 1930s would also have prevented a German attack on Russia. Hitler would not have risked a two-front war.

<sup>86</sup> His argument that late-joining participants fare better than early antagonists in war is irrelevant if the war can be avoided altogether.

<sup>87</sup> See Nicholas Lemann, “The Next World Order,” *New Yorker*, April 1, 2002.

<sup>88</sup> The early version of this view was sketched in greater detail in by Zalmay Khalilzad, *From Containment to Global Leadership* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 1997).

military and civilian casualties than either the invasion of Afghanistan or Desert Storm. Nor could the United States rely on an Iraqi equivalent of the Northern Alliance to do some of the fighting and policing for it. The Iraqi opposition does not have occupation troops. U.S. forces would have to penetrate and occupy Baghdad and Basra, perhaps for a long time. How difficult this might be is seen in Israel's hesitancy to occupy and administer Arab cities in its various wars. It could not hold Beirut in 1982 and refrained from taking Damascus in both 1967 and 1973. How long could the United States garrison major Iraqi cities, and what casualties would result on both sides? Perhaps U.S. public opinion is now willing to accept more losses,<sup>89</sup> but these would have to be short term.

Allied support is another question. One must remember that the first Bush administration could rightly claim that the 1990 Iraqi attack on Kuwait had extinguished a recognized state on one of the first occasions since World War II. Kuwait's oil was taken, and there was danger of an attack on Saudi Arabia. But what constitutes Iraqi "aggression" today? While Saddam has ejected the UN inspectors, he has not invaded anyone. Presumably he is amply deterred from using chemical or biological weapons against his neighbors, and he does not yet possess nuclear arms. It is not clear how strongly he has supported international terrorism. The case made against him could also have been made in similar terms against Iran, Pakistan, and North Korea—countries already possessing or on the verge of acquiring nuclear weapons. Each has certainly engaged in terrorism on its own borders. Saddam's regime is truly oppressive of its citizens, but is it any more virulent than North Korea's? The case for singling out Iraq has not yet been made, and if the Bush administration is going to proceed with invasion, it needs to make such a case.<sup>90</sup> In this respect the Cheney doctrine is far more "offensively realist" than Mearsheimer's pallid counterpart. The two agree only on the questionable assumption that the United States should act to prevent the emergence of a new superpower rival.

The Cheney doctrine not only marginalizes the role of Secretary of State Colin Powell, who wishes to extend U.S. diplomatic influence, but it also makes the construction of an enlarged coalition of great

<sup>89</sup> The figure of thirty thousand soldiers has sometimes been cited.

<sup>90</sup> A high administration official close to Vice President Cheney declared recently: "The issue is not inspections. This issue is the Iraqis' promise not to have weapons of mass destruction, their promise to recognize the boundaries of Kuwait, their promise not to threaten other countries, and other promises that they made in '91 and a number of UN resolutions"; Lemann (fn. 87), 48. These promises have not been kept and in the view of the official, "There is no basis in Iraq's past behavior to have confidence in good-faith efforts on their part to change their behavior" (ibid.).

powers more difficult to achieve. European nations and Russia have accepted with distaste much of American policy and rhetoric. NATO will be expanded to include the Baltic nations. Britain, France, and Russia have reluctantly agreed to delay the International Criminal Court's possible jurisdiction over U.S. peacekeepers. The United States doctrine of preemption has not provoked any major debate or opposition since it has been confined to preempting terrorist attacks. But the fact remains that U.S. diplomacy today presents a degree of unilateralism not seen since the Second World War. Perhaps allies and others are seen to be too weak to influence the U.S. calculus or actions, but if so, that is a mistaken assessment. In economics the timbers of American markets have already been shivered. And there is no unipolarity involved in the struggle against terrorism. Great powers were traditionally supposed to be countries so strong that each could stand on its own, even against a combination of other nations. America's conventional and nuclear potency, however, does not translate into power in the underwar against terrorism. Since everything depends upon intelligence and access, success in that war rests on cooperation with other similarly situated nations. China and Russia as well as the EU countries are eager to participate in that war, but their cooperation depends on American recognition of their important role in it. The sole superpower in the overwar is only one player in the underwar.

Military prudence also places limits on the American role abroad. The United States can economize by seeking an international coalition to share the burden. This would not mean withdrawal from commitments overseas as Mearsheimer thinks is inevitable, because commitments can be sustained by less effort if other great powers assist. The right path for the United States is to steer between the Scylla and Charybdis of overcommitment on the one hand and of undercommitment on the other<sup>91</sup> and to reach a balanced and legitimate involvement overseas that is supported by other great powers and by the American public.

## V. CONCLUSION

Today the United States and the world face a threat far different from any in the past. Great power rivalry, pace Mearsheimer, is not the overriding danger. Rather, nonstate actors—terrorists, private organizations, corporations, and advocacy groups—play a decisive role in fomenting new challenges. Unless the threat from the bottom can be

<sup>91</sup> Though Paul Kennedy had preached the dangers of "overstretch," his recent views are quite different; see Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (New York: Random House, 1997); and idem, *Financial Times*, February 1, 2002.

dealt with, great powers will not reassert their accustomed sway. There is even a sense that the old “power rivalries” have been sidelined as new actors are transforming the international scene. In this way, the forces of globalization pose both negative and positive challenges to the old way of doing things. Government is less able to control transnational influences, but it is becoming more powerful in dealing with its own population at home. As many governments move to assert their authority domestically, they may—acting together—encapsulate the threat from the bottom. Countries will remain dependent upon flows of goods, capital, technology, and to some degree even labor from other nations as they recast their economies in a more virtual direction, shifting production abroad. But it is the collectivity of great powers that will attain security, not the single state. No matter how strong it may be, one nation will remain dependent on others. Until the underwar threat has been dealt with, great powers will need to stay closely aligned.

Great powers embedded in such an alignment will behave differently from those operating on their own. A generation ago William Riker startled the academic world by his argument on behalf of a “minimum winning coalition” in world and domestic politics.<sup>92</sup> Since, according to him, the victors win only what the losers lose, they need as large a losing coalition as possible—consistent, of course, with the still larger group of winners. Yet international relations is not a constant-sum game because benefits are won from the systemic environment, not just from the other players. Peace allows players to do this, and for that reason war has opportunity costs even if it is successful. In the 1960s U.S. policymakers were thus right to reject Riker’s advice and to build a larger and more powerful coalition of winners. Deterrence became more successful as the Western and democratic coalition grew in both number and strength. Yet because overwhelming power was not wielded by a single state but by a group of nations, the winners did not seek to aggrandize territory or to fashion a new empire. Gorbachev found it easier to concede to a Western coalition of nations than to the single United States.<sup>93</sup>

In the future, as Mearsheimer sees it, the world will have to deal with a strong but uncertain China. But unlike Mearsheimer’s prescrip-

<sup>92</sup> William Riker, *The Theory of Political Coalitions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962).

<sup>93</sup> See Deborah Larson and Alexei Shevchenko, “Mikhail Gorbachev and the Role of Emulation and Status Incentives,” in Richard Rosecrance, ed., *The New Great Power Coalition* (Boulder, Colo.; Rowman and Littlefield, 2001); and G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). Ikenberry writes: “Why was Gorbachev willing to undertake this risky unilateral move to end the Cold War through accommodation, steep arms reductions, and a hands-off policy in Eastern Europe? There are

tion for restraining Beijing, the best way to assure Beijing's long-term cooperation is to couple *de facto* limits with an invitation to China to join a preponderant coalition of nations. Socializing China will not be an easy task, but it will become immensely more difficult if it is conjoined with an American attempt to cut the Chinese growth rate.<sup>94</sup> There are better, positive ways to influence China's course. Historically speaking, the argument is clear. The benefits to a rising power of joining such a coalition are far greater than seeking to oppose all others by force of arms. Napoleon, the kaiser, and Hitler did not improve the international positions of their respective countries: they worsened and diminished them. Opposing nations—Great Britain, the United States, and for a while the Soviet Union—were longer-term beneficiaries of the aggressor's atavistic expansionism and ultimate isolation. China is among the most subtle of foreign observers, and we can scarcely conceal the benefits of joining such a group from her astute diplomatists. The same point applies to Mearsheimer. In his effort to account for the causes of war, Mearsheimer has neglected the potentiality for peace that diplomacy and inclusive alignments can bring to modern international politics.

If many of Mearsheimer's empirical arguments are wrong, what do we conclude about his theory? It would be a mistake to ignore the signal contribution he has made. John Mearsheimer has written an important realist treatise, perhaps the most important single essay since the 1970s. Differing in perspective from Kenneth Waltz, Mearsheimer has wedded international theory with a theory of foreign policy to fashion a potent new amalgam that will continue to be the focus of realist and nonrealist debate and argument. It is not necessary to be right to provoke reconsideration and to stimulate thought. Many other theories of international politics were technically wrong, tautologic, or overstated, yet, like Mearsheimer's, continued to reverberate in history and policy. Scholars and policymakers will now need to show how Mearsheimer's "tragedy" can be overcome.

---

many reasons, of course, but the overall institutional character of the Western order—the United States and its European allies—presented a relatively benign face to the Soviet Union during a time of troubles. The Western democracies together formed a grouping of countries that made it very difficult for them individually or collectively to exploit or dominate the Soviet Union as it contemplated the transformation of its posture toward the outside world" (p. 219).

<sup>94</sup> How the United States would expect to accomplish this task is unclear. New tariffs on Chinese goods would be a violation of American undertakings under the World Trade Organization. A suspension of U.S. direct investment in China would be possible but strongly resisted by American manufacturers. In any event, these measures will clearly fail when Chinese growth is determined by domestic Chinese demand, and largely beyond foreign ability to influence.