

ROBERT J. ART • ROBERT JERVIS

# International Politics

Enduring Concepts and  
Contemporary Issues

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Thirteenth Edition



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Enduring Concepts  
and Contemporary Issues

**Thirteenth Edition**

**Robert J. Art**

*Brandeis University*

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*Columbia University*

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# Preface

The first edition of *International Politics* appeared in 1973, and now, with the 13th edition, it celebrates its 43rd birthday. We are pleased that this reader has been so well received and so long-lived. We hope instructors and students find this edition as useful as they have the previous ones.

## New to This Edition

The thirteenth edition retains the four major parts of the previous edition and contains 58 selections, 13 of which are new, making this most recent edition 22% new. The new additions are spread across all four parts of the reader (see below). We also have made two organizational changes. We added a subsection on “Strategic Interaction in Anarchy” in Part I, and consolidated into one subsection the readings on civil wars, human rights, intervention, and international law that appeared in the 12th edition.

Finally, appearing in this edition for the first time are two sets of questions. One set contains 58 questions—one for each of the reader’s selections. Each of these questions appears at the end of its corresponding selection. The second set of questions contains only four—one for each of the reader’s four major parts. The purpose of the 58 selection questions is to help the student grasp the central argument of each selection by posing a pointed question or questions about it. The purpose of the four parts questions is to help the student tie together all the readings in each part. These two sets of questions, taken together, should help the student master the materials of this reader.

As always, the most important changes in this edition are in the new selections:

- In Part I, we have added three new selections: one by Joseph Nye on the nature of power in international relations; one by John Mearsheimer on anarchy and the struggle for power; and one on game theory by Thomas Schelling.
- In Part II, we added two new selections: one on losing control in crises involving nuclear armed states by Robert Jervis; and another on various scenarios of what the nuclear future might bring by Henry Sokolski.
- Part III contains four new selections: one on the relation between economic interdependence and the likelihood of war by Dale Copeland; one on whether labor or capital does better in the global economy by Erik Brynjolfsson and his associates; another on global financial governance by Erik Heilleiner; and a final one on a new global reserve system to replace the role of the dollar as the world’s reserve currency by Joseph Stiglitz.
- Part IV contains four new selections: excerpts from Pope Francis’ “Encyclical on the Environment”; a new and updated selection on the United Nations

Security Council by Adam Roberts and Dominik Zaum; one on what is often called “mini-multilateralism,” or governance produced by many disparate but interweaving international institutions, by Stewart Patrick; and an essay on the future of the European Union by Stephen Walt.

## Features

Originally, we put this reader together to help give the field of international relations greater focus and to bring to students the best articles we could find on the key theoretical concepts in the field. This accounts for the “enduring concepts” in the book’s subtitle. A few editions after the first, we then added a separate section on contemporary issues because of our view that these enduring concepts have more meaning for students when applied to salient contemporary issues. All subsequent editions have followed this basic philosophy of combining the best scholarship on theoretical perspectives with that on important contemporary problems.

In constructing the first edition, and in putting together all subsequent editions, including this one, we have tried to create a reader that embodies four features:

- A selection of subjects that, while not exhaustively covering the field of international politics, nevertheless encompasses most of the essential topics that all of us teach in our introductory courses.
- Individual readings that are mainly analytical in content, that take issue with one another, and that thereby introduce the student to the fundamental debates and points of view in the field.
- Editors’ introductions to each part that summarize the central concepts the student must master, that organize the central themes of each part, and that relate the readings to one another.
- A book that can be used either as the core around which to design an introductory course or as the primary supplement to enrich an assigned text.

Since the first edition, the field of international relations has experienced a dramatic enrichment in the subjects studied and the quality of works published. Political economy came into its own as an important subfield in the 1970s. New and important works in the field of security studies appeared. The literature on cooperation among states flourished in the early 1980s, and important studies about the environment began to appear in the mid-1980s. Feminist, post-modernist, and constructivist critiques of the mainstream made their appearance also. With the end of the Cold War, these new issues came to the fore: human rights, the tension between state sovereignty and the obligations of the international community, the global environment, civil wars, failed states, nation-building, transnational terrorist groups, and, most recently, the search for new modes of global governance to deal with the collective action problems that are increasingly pressing upon states. The growing diversity of the field has closely mirrored the actual developments in international relations.

Consequently, as for the previous editions, in fashioning the 13th, we have kept in mind both the new developments in world politics and the literature that has accompanied them. Central to this edition, though, as for the other 12, is our belief that the realm of international politics differs fundamentally from that of domestic politics. Therefore, we have continued to put both the developments and the literature in the context of the patterns that still remain valid for understanding the differences between politics in an anarchic environment and politics under a government.

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## Supplements

Pearson is pleased to offer several resources to qualified adopters of *International Politics* and their students that will make teaching and learning from this book even more effective and enjoyable. Several of the supplements for this book are available at the Instructor Resource Center (IRC), an online hub that allows instructors to quickly download book-specific supplements. Please visit the IRC welcome page at [www.pearsonhighered.com/irc](http://www.pearsonhighered.com/irc) to register for access.

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### Research and Writing in International Relations (0-205-06065-X)

With current and detailed coverage on how to start research in the discipline's major subfields, this brief and affordable guide offers step-by-step guidance and the essential resources needed to compose political science papers that go beyond description and into systematic and sophisticated inquiry. This text focuses on areas where students often need help—finding a topic, developing a question, reviewing the literature, designing research, and last, writing the paper.

### Acknowledgments

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*Robert J. Art*

*Robert Jervis*

## Part I

# Anarchy and Its Consequences



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## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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- I.1** Understand power, principle, and legitimacy in statecraft.
- I.2** Define anarchy and the anarchic environment of international politics.
- I.3** Discuss how international politics exemplifies strategic interaction and the role of game theory.
- I.4** Recognize how state actors cope with anarchy and develop patterns that contain the dangers of aggression.

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

## Power, Principle, and Legitimacy in Statecraft

### 1.1 Understand power, principle, and legitimacy in statecraft.

Citizens, students, and scholars alike often take up the study of international politics because they want their country to behave in as principled a way as possible. But they soon discover that principle and power, morality and statecraft do not easily mix. Why should this be? Is it inevitable? Can and should states seek to do good in the world? Will they endanger themselves and harm others if they try? These are timeless questions, having been asked by observers of international politics in nearly every previous era. They therefore make a good starting point for thinking about the nature of international politics and the choices states face in our era.

In his history of the Peloponnesian War, the Greek historian Thucydides made the first, and perhaps the most famous, statement about the relation between the prerogatives of power and the dictates of morality. In the Melian dialogue, he argued that “the strong do what they have the power to do and the weak accept what they have to accept” (more frequently stated as “the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must”). For Thucydides considerations of power reigned supreme in international politics and were the key to understanding why the war between Athens and Sparta began in the first place. At root, he argued: “what made war inevitable was the growth of Athenian power and the fear which this caused in Sparta.” Fearing that Athens’ power was growing more quickly than its own, Sparta launched a preventive war to stop Athens from becoming too powerful. Herein lies the first written insight that changes in relative power positions among states, in this case “city-states,” can be a cause of war. The forcefulness with which he argued for the “power politics” view of international relations makes Thucydides the first “realist” theorist of international politics. But Ian Hurd shows that in some, if not all international systems, legitimacy plays a powerful role in generating and modifying power.

Hans J. Morgenthau, a leading twentieth-century theorist of international relations, also takes the “power politics” position. He argues that universal standards of morality cannot be an invariable guide to statecraft because there is

an “ineluctable tension between the moral command and the requirements of successful political action.” Rather than base statecraft on morality, Morgenthau argues that state actors must think and act in terms of power and must do whatever it takes to defend the national interests of their state. J. Ann Tickner, commenting on the primacy of power in Morgenthau’s writings, explains that what he considers to be a realistic description of international politics is only a picture of the past and therefore not a prediction about the future, and proposes what she considers to be a feminist alternative. A world in which state actors think of power in terms of collective empowerment, not in terms of leverage over one another, could produce more cooperative outcomes and pose fewer conflicts between the dictates of morality and the power of self-interest. Joseph Nye sees power as central, but notes that it can take multiple forms, including “soft power” that stems from the appeal of a state’s culture and values and that can influence not only what others do, but also what they want.

## The Meaning of Anarchy

### 1.2 Define anarchy and the anarchic environment of international politics.

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

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

Although states must provide the wherewithal to achieve their own ends, they do not always reach their foreign policy goals. The goals may be grandiose; the means available, meager. The goals may be attainable; the means selected,



inappropriate. But even if the goals are realistic and the means both available and appropriate, a state can be frustrated in pursuit of its ends. The reason is simple but fundamental to an understanding of international politics: What one state does will inevitably impinge on some other states—on some beneficially, but on others adversely. What one state desires, another may covet. What one thinks is just due, another may find threatening. Steps that a state takes to achieve its goals may be rendered useless by the countersteps others take. No state, therefore, can afford to disregard the effects its actions will have on other nations' behavior. In this sense, state behavior is contingent: What one state does is dependent in part upon what others do. Mutual dependence means that each must take the others into account.

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

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

The anarchic environment of international politics, then, allows every state to be the final judge of its own interests, but requires that each provide the means

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

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

Kenneth N. Waltz develops the above points more fully by analyzing the differences between hierarchic (domestic) and anarchic (international) political systems. He shows why the distribution of capabilities (the relative power positions of states) in anarchic systems is so important and lays out the ways in which political behavior differs in hierarchic and anarchic systems. Anarchy, the security dilemma, and conflicts of interest make international politics difficult, unpleasant, and dangerous.

There is broad agreement among Realists on the consequences of anarchy for states' behavior, but not total agreement. One brand of Realists, who are called the "offensive Realists," argue that the consequences of anarchy go far beyond producing security dilemmas and making cooperation hard to come by. They assert that anarchy forces states, and especially the great powers, to become "power maximizers" because the only way to ensure the states' security is to be the most powerful state in the system. Offensive realism envisions a "dog-eat-dog" world of international politics in which power and fear dominate great power interactions and in which war, or the threat of war, among the great powers or among their

proxies is a constant feature of international relations. John J. Mearsheimer lays out the tenets of this brand of realism.

In an anarchic condition, however, the question to ask may not be, “Why does war occur?” but rather “Why does war not occur more frequently than it does?” Instead of asking “Why do states not cooperate more to achieve common interests?” we should ask “Given anarchy and the security dilemma, how is it that states are able to cooperate at all?” Anarchy and the security dilemma do not produce their effects automatically, and it is not self-evident that states are power maximizers. Thus, Alexander Wendt argues that Waltz and other realists have missed the extent to which the unpleasant patterns they describe are “socially constructed”—that is, they stem from the actors’ beliefs, perceptions, and interpretations of others’ behavior. If national leaders believe that anarchy requires an assertive stance that endangers others, conflict will be generated. But if they think they have more freedom of action and do not take the hostility of others for granted, they may be able to create more peaceful relationships. In this view, structure (anarchy) does not determine state action; agency (human decision) does.

## Strategic Interaction in Anarchy

### **1.3** Discuss how international politics exemplifies strategic interaction and the role of game theory.

International politics exemplifies strategic interaction. That is, outcomes are not produced directly by any one state’s foreign policy, but by the interaction of the policies of several of them. Each may seek peace and even act in a way that it thinks will bring it about, and yet war can be the result. Intentions and results can be very different, and interaction is central. Interaction is strategic because leaders understand this and when they act have to anticipate how others will behave. Furthermore, they know that others are similarly trying to anticipate what they will do. For example, even if state A is willing to cooperate if it thinks state B will, and state B has the same preference, cooperation will not ensure if A anticipates that B is in fact not likely to cooperate, in part because it thinks that B doubts that A state will cooperate. (This is a version of Rousseau’s “Stag Hunt.”)

Strategic interaction is best understood through game theory, which is explained in his selection by Thomas C. Schelling, who won a Nobel Prize for his work in this area. In the same vein James Fearon shows that if states were fully rational and informed, wars should not occur because both sides would prefer a peaceful compromise to the identical settlement that actually was reached after mutually costly fighting. The test of war is necessary not because of the conflict of interest itself, but because in the absence of an international authority states cannot commit themselves to living up to their agreements (a problem of anarchy) and cannot credibly reveal their intentions and capabilities to others (a problem of strategic interaction).

Robert Jervis shows a different facet of strategic interaction in arguing that the extent to which states can make themselves more secure without menacing others depends in large part on whether offensive postures can be distinguished from defensive ones and whether the offense is believed to be more efficacious than the defense. In a world where defense is thought to be easier than offense, the security dilemma is mitigated and, consequently, states are more secure and the hard edge of anarchy is softened. The reverse is true if offense is thought to be easier: the security dilemma operates powerfully, and, consequently, states are less secure and the effects of anarchy cut deeply.

## The Mitigation of Anarchy

### **1.4 Recognize how state actors cope with anarchy and develop patterns that contain the dangers of aggression.**

Even realists note that conflict and warfare are not constant characteristics of international politics. Most states remain at peace with most others most of the time. State actors have developed a number of ways of coping with anarchy; of gaining more than a modicum of security; of regulating their competition with other states; and of developing patterns that contain, but do not eliminate, the dangers of aggression.

Robert Jervis shows that the impact of anarchy and the security dilemma on the possibilities for cooperation is not constant but varies with both the circumstances states find themselves in and the strategies they follow. Even when states have benign intentions, cooperation is most difficult when the gains from exploiting the other are high and the costs of being exploited are also great. Here it is very tempting to try to take advantage of the other and symmetrically dangerous to trust the other side, which feels the same incentives. It is also not conducive to cooperation if the outcome of both sides working together is only slightly better than mutual competition. Conversely, a reversal of these incentives makes cooperation under anarchy easier and more likely. These are not only conditions that states can find themselves in; they can guide states that seek to cooperate. For example, to minimize the danger of exploitation states can divide a large transaction into a series of smaller ones in which the gains from cheating and the losses from being cheated on are relatively slight at each state. They can also increase transparency to clarify whether each state has cooperated in its previous moves, stake their reputations on living up to their pledges to cooperate, and small states can seek to have larger ones step in if they break their promises. Efforts to do this also signal a state's desire to cooperate and can increase trust. None of this is foolproof, of course, but it can reduce the danger that the policies states follow in anarchy and the security dilemma will generate rather than ameliorate conflict.

The kind of state we are dealing with may make a big difference. Most strikingly, it appears that democracies may never have gone to war against

each other. This is not to say, as Woodrow Wilson did, that democracies are inherently peaceful. They seem to fight as many wars as do dictatorships. But, as Michael W. Doyle shows, they do not fight each other. If this is correct—and, of course, both the evidence and the reasons are open to dispute—it implies that anarchy and the security dilemma do not prevent peaceful and even harmonious relations among states that share certain common values and beliefs.

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

National leaders use these two traditional tools within a balance-of-power system. Much maligned by President Wilson and his followers and misunderstood by many others, balance of power refers to the way in which stability is achieved through the conflicting efforts of individual states, whether or not any or all of them deliberately pursue that goal. Just as Adam Smith argued that if every individual pursued his or her own self-interest, the interaction of individual egoisms would enhance national wealth, so international relations theorists have argued that even if every state seeks power at the expense of the others, no one state will likely dominate. In both cases a general good can be the unintended product of selfish individual actions. Moreover, even if most states desire only to keep what they have, their own interests dictate that they band together to resist any state or coalition of states that threatens to dominate them.

The balance-of-power system is likely to prevent any one state acquiring hegemony. It will not, however, benefit all states equally nor maintain the peace permanently. Rewards will be unequal because of inequalities in power and expertise. Wars will occur because they are one means by which states can preserve what they have or acquire what they covet. Small states may even be eliminated by their more powerful neighbors. The international system will be unstable, however, only if states flock to what they think is the strongest side. What is called *bandwagoning* or the *domino theory* argues that the international system is precarious because successful aggression will attract many followers, either out of fear or out of a desire to share the spoils of victory. Stephen M. Walt disagrees, drawing on balance-of-power theory and historical evidence, to argue

that rather than bandwagoning, under most conditions states balance against emerging threats. They do not throw in their lot with the stronger side. Instead, they join with others to prevent any state from becoming so strong that it could dominate the system.

Power balancing is a strategy followed by individual states acting on their own. Other ways of coping with anarchy, which may supplement or exist alongside this impulse, are more explicitly collective. David C. Kang shows that before Western influences impinged, East Asian politics did not conform to either bandwagoning or balancing or indeed to other standard views of how states in anarchy “should” behave. Instead they adopted a hierarchical order under a Chinese leadership that was based as much on cultural legitimacy as on military or economic power. In other circumstances, regimes and institutions can help overcome anarchy and facilitate cooperation. When states agree on the principles, rules, and norms that should govern behavior, they can often ameliorate the security dilemma and increase the scope for cooperation. Institutions may not only embody common understandings but, as Robert O. Keohane argues, they can also help states work toward mutually desired outcomes by providing a framework for long-run agreements, making it easier for each state to see whether others are living up to their promises, and increasing the costs the state will pay if it cheats. In the final section of this reader we will discuss how institutions can contribute to global governance under current conditions.

## Part I Questions for Review

Does a focus on anarchy lead us to exaggerate the role and extent of conflict, especially violent conflict, in international relations? Have some of the ways that states have conceived of anarchy and tried to cope with it inadvertently increased conflict?