

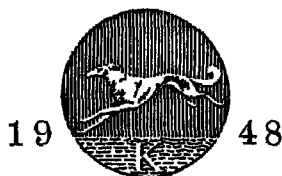
POLITICS *among* NATIONS

THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER
AND PEACE

by

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International Politics:

A Dual Approach

I. UNDERSTANDING INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

The purpose of this book is twofold. The first is to detect and understand the forces which determine political relations among nations, and to comprehend the ways in which those forces act upon each other and upon international political relations and institutions. In most other branches of the social sciences there would be no need to emphasize this purpose. It would be taken for granted, because the natural purpose of all scientific undertakings is to discover the forces underlying social phenomena and how they operate. However, in approaching the study of international politics, such emphasis is not misplaced. As Professor Grayson Kirk has so ably said:

Until recent times the study of international relations in the United States has been dominated largely by persons who have taken one of three approaches. First there have been the historians who have considered international relations merely as recent history, in which the student is handicapped by the absence of an adequate amount of available data. A second group, the international lawyers, have properly concerned themselves primarily with the legal aspects of inter-state relations, but they have seldom made a serious effort to inquire into the fundamental reasons for the continuing incompleteness and inadequacy of this legal nexus. Finally, there have been those who have been less concerned with international relations as they are than with the more perfect system which these idealists would like to build. Only recently—and belatedly—have students undertaken to examine the fundamental and persistent forces of world politics, and the institutions which embody them, not with a view to praise or to condemn, but merely in an effort to provide a better understanding of these basic drives which determine the foreign policies of states. Thus the political scientist is moving into the international field at last.¹

Professor Charles E. Martin has taken up Professor Kirk's theme by pointing to "the problem which faces the students and the teachers of international relations more than any other, namely, that dualism we have to face in mov-

¹ *American Journal of International Law*, XXXIX (1945), 369-70.

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ing in two different and opposite areas. I mean the area of institutions of peace which are related to the adjustment of disputes and the area of power politics and war. Yet, it must be so. There is no escape from it. . . . I think probably one of the greatest indictments of our attitude in teaching in the last twenty years has been to write off glibly the institution of war and to write off the books the influence of power politics. I think political scientists make a great mistake in doing so. We should be the very ones who are studying power politics and its implications and the situations growing out of it, and we should be the ones who study the institution of war."²

Defined in such terms, international politics embraces more than recent history and current events. The observer is surrounded by the contemporary scene with its ever shifting emphasis and changing perspectives. He cannot find solid ground on which to stand, nor objective standards of evaluation, without getting down to fundamentals which are revealed only by the correlation of recent events with the more distant past.

International politics cannot be reduced to legal rules and institutions. International politics operates within the framework of such rules and through the instrumentality of such institutions. But it is no more identical with them than American politics on the national level is identical with the American Constitution, the federal laws, and the agencies of the federal government.

Concerning attempts to reform international politics before making an effort to understand what international politics is about, we share William Graham Sumner's view:

. . . The worst vice in political discussions is that dogmatism which takes its stand on great principles or assumptions, instead of standing on an exact examination of things as they are and human nature as it is. . . . An ideal is formed of some higher or better state of things than now exists, and almost unconsciously the ideal is assumed as already existing and made the basis of speculations which have no root. . . . The whole method of abstract speculation on political topics is vicious. It is popular because it is easy; it is easier to imagine a new world than to learn to know this one; it is easier to embark on speculations based on a few broad assumptions than it is to study the history of states and institutions; it is easier to catch up a popular dogma than it is to analyze it to see whether it is true or not. All this leads to confusion, to the admission of phrases and platitudes, to much disputing but little gain in the prosperity of nations.³

The most formidable difficulty facing a scientific inquiry into the nature and ways of international politics is the ambiguity of the material with which the observer has to deal. The events which he must try to understand are, on the one hand, unique occurrences. They happened in this way only once and never before or since. On the other hand, they are similar, for they are manifestations of social forces. Social forces are the product of human nature in action. Therefore, under similar conditions, they will manifest them-

² *Proceedings of the Eighth Conference of Teachers of International Law and Related Subjects* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1946), p. 66.

³ "Democracy and Responsible Government," *The Challenge of Facts and Other Essays* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1914), pp. 245-6.

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selves in a similar manner. But where is the line to be drawn between the similar and the unique?

We learn what the principles of international politics are from comparisons between such events. A certain political situation evokes the formulation and execution of a certain foreign policy. Dealing with a different political situation, we ask ourselves: How does this situation differ from the preceding one and how is it similar? Do the similarities reaffirm the policy developed previously? Or does the blending of similarities and differences allow the essence of that policy to be retained while, in some aspects, it is to be modified? Or do the differences vitiate the analogy altogether and make the previous policy inapplicable? If one wants to understand international politics, grasp the meaning of contemporary events, and foresee and influence the future, one must be able to perform the dual intellectual task implicit in these questions. One must be able to distinguish between the similarities and differences in two political situations. Furthermore, one must be able to assess the import of these similarities and differences for alternative foreign policies. Three series of events taken at random will illustrate the problem and its difficulties.

1. On September 17, 1796, George Washington made a speech in which he bade farewell to the nation, outlining among other things the principles of American foreign policy. On December 2, 1823, President Monroe sent a message to Congress in which he, too, formulated the principles of American foreign policy. In 1917, the United States joined France and Great Britain against a nation which threatened the independence of both. In 1941, the United States followed a similar course of action. On March 12, 1947, President Truman, in a message to Congress, reformulated the principles of American foreign policy.

2. In 1512, Henry VIII made an alliance with the Hapsburgs against France. In 1515, he made an alliance with France against the Hapsburgs. In 1522 and 1542, he joined the Hapsburgs against France. In 1756, Great Britain allied itself with Prussia against the Hapsburgs and France. In 1793, Great Britain, Prussia, and the Hapsburgs were allied against Napoleon. In 1914, Great Britain joined with France and Russia against Austria and Germany, and, in 1939, with France and Poland against Germany.

3. Napoleon, William II, and Hitler tried to conquer the continent of Europe and failed.

Are there within each of these three series of events similarities which allow us to formulate a principle of foreign policy for each series? Or is each event so different from the others in the series that each would require a different policy? The difficulty in making this decision is the measure of the difficulty in making correct judgments in international affairs, in charting the future wisely, and in doing the right things in the right way and at the right time.

Should the foreign policy of Washington's Farewell Address be considered a general principle of American foreign policy, or did it stem from temporary conditions and was it, therefore, bound to disappear with them? Are the foreign policies of Washington's and Monroe's messages compatible with the Truman Doctrine? Stated another way, is the Truman Doctrine a mere

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modification of a general principle underlying Washington's and Monroe's conception of foreign affairs, or does the Truman Doctrine constitute a radical departure from the traditions of American foreign policy? If it does, is it justified in the light of changed conditions? Generally speaking, are the differences in the international position of the United States in 1796, 1823, 1917, 1941, and 1947 such as to justify the different foreign policies formulated and executed with regard to these different political situations? More particularly, what are the similarities and differences in the situation with which Europe confronted the United States in 1917, 1941, and 1947, and to what extent do they require similar or different foreign policies on the part of the United States?

What is the meaning of these shifts in British foreign policy? Are they the outgrowth of the whim and perfidy of princes and statesmen? Or are they inspired by the accumulated wisdom of a people, mindful of the permanent forces which determine their relations to the continent of Europe?

Are the disasters which follow in the wake of the three attempts at continental conquest so many accidents due to disparate causes? Or does the similarity in results point to similarities in the over-all political situation, similarities which convey a lesson to be pondered by those who might want to try again? More particularly, are the European policies of Stalin similar to those of Napoleon, William II, and Hitler? To the extent that they are, do they call for policies on the part of the United States similar to those pursued in 1917 and 1941?

Sometimes, as in the case of the retrospective analysis of British foreign policy, the answer seems to be clear. We shall have more to say about that later. Most of the time, however, and especially when we deal with the present and the future, the answer is bound to be tentative and subject to qualifications. The facts from which the answer must derive are essentially ambiguous and subject to continuous change. To those men who would have it otherwise, history has taught nothing but false analogies. When they have been responsible for the foreign policies of their countries, they have brought only disaster. William II and Hitler learned nothing from Napoleon's fate, for they thought it could teach them nothing. Those who have erected Washington's advice into a dogma to be followed slavishly have erred no less than those who would dismiss it altogether.

The first lesson which the student of international politics must learn and never forget is that the complexities of international affairs make simple solutions and trustworthy prophecies impossible. It is here that the scholar and the charlatan part company. Knowledge of the forces which determine politics among nations, and knowledge of the ways by which their political relations proceed, reveals the ambiguity of the facts of international politics. In every political situation contradictory tendencies are at play. One of these tendencies is more likely to prevail under certain conditions than others. But which tendency actually will prevail is anybody's guess. The best the scholar can do, then, is to trace the different tendencies which, as potentialities, are inferent in a certain international situation. He can point out the different conditions which make it more likely for one tendency to prevail than for

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another, and, finally, assess the probabilities for the different conditions and tendencies to prevail in actuality.

Because the facts of international politics are exposed to continuous change, world affairs have surprises in store for whoever tries to read the future from his knowledge of the past and from the signs of the present. Take the example of one of the greatest of British statesmen, the younger Pitt. In February 1792, in his budget speech to the House of Commons, Pitt justified the reduction of military expenditures (particularly the decrease by more than 11 per cent in the personnel of the British Navy) and held out hope for more reductions to come by declaring: "Unquestionably there never was a time in the history of this country when from the situation of Europe we might more reasonably expect fifteen years of peace than at the present moment." Only two months later the continent of Europe was engulfed in war. Less than a year later Great Britain was involved. Thus was initiated a period of almost continuous warfare which lasted nearly a quarter of a century.

When the prophecies of a great statesman fare so ill, what can we expect from the forecasts of lesser minds? In how many books written on international affairs before the First World War, when common opinion held great wars to be impossible or at least of short duration, was there even an inkling of what was to come? Is there a book, written in the period between the two world wars, which could have helped one anticipate what international politics would be like in the fifth decade of the century? Who could have guessed at the beginning of the Second World War what the political world would be like at its end? Who could have known in 1945 what it would be like in 1948? What trust then shall we place in those who today would tell us with absolute certainty what tomorrow and the day after will bring? ⁴

2. UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE

This leads us to the second purpose of this book. No study of politics and certainly no study of international politics in the mid-twentieth century can be disinterested in the sense that it is able to divorce knowledge from action and to pursue knowledge for its own sake. International politics is no longer, as it was for the United States during most of its history, a series of incidents, costly or rewarding, but hardly calling into question the nation's very existence and destiny. The existence and destiny of the United States were more deeply affected by the domestic events of the Civil War than by the international policies leading up to, and evolving from, the Mexican

⁴ The fallibility of prophecies in international affairs is strikingly demonstrated by the fantastic errors committed by the experts who have tried to forecast the nature of the next war. The history of these forecasts, from Machiavelli to General J. F. C. Fuller, is the story of logical deductions, plausible in themselves, which had no connection with the contingencies of the actual historic development. General Fuller, for instance, foresaw in 1923 that the decisive weapon of the Second World War would be gas! See *The Reformation of War* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1923).

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War, the Spanish-American War, and the Roosevelt corollary to the Monroe Doctrine.⁶

Two facts, peculiar to our time, have completely reversed the relative importance of domestic and international policies for the United States. One is that the United States is at the moment of this writing the most powerful nation on earth. Yet, in comparison with its actual and potential competitors, it is not so powerful that it can afford to ignore the effect of its policies upon its position among the nations. From the end of the Civil War to the beginning of the Second World War it mattered little what policies the United States pursued with regard to its Latin-American neighbors, China, or Spain. The self-sufficiency of its own strength, in conjunction with the operation of the balance of power, made the United States immune to the boundless ambition born of success and the fear and frustration which goes with failure. The United States could take success and failure in stride without being unduly tempted or afraid. Now it stands outside the enclosures of its continental citadel, taking on the whole of the political world as friend or foe. It has become dangerous and vulnerable, feared and afraid.

The risk of being very powerful, but not omnipotent, is aggravated by the second fact: a dual revolution in the political situation of the world. The multiple state system of the past, which in the moral sense was one world, has been transformed into two inflexible, hostile blocs, which are morally two worlds. On the other hand, modern technology has made possible total war. The predominance of these two new elements in contemporary international politics has not only made the preservation of world peace extremely difficult, it has also enormously increased the risks of war. Since in this world situation the United States holds a position of predominant power and, hence, of foremost responsibility, the understanding of the forces which mold international politics and of the factors which determine its course has become for the United States more than an interesting intellectual occupation. It has become a vital necessity.

To reflect on international politics in the United States, as we approach the mid-twentieth century, then, is to reflect on the problems which confront American foreign policy in our time. While at all times the promotion of the national interests of the United States as a power among powers has been the main concern of American foreign policy, in the age of two worlds and of total war the preservation of peace has become the prime concern of all nations. It yields in importance only to the most elemental considerations of national existence and security.

It is for this reason that this book is planned around the two concepts of power and peace. These two concepts are central to a discussion of world politics in the mid-twentieth century, when the greatest accumulation of power ever known gives to the problem of peace an urgency which it has never had before. In a world whose moving force is the aspiration for power

⁶ This corollary is found in the message of Theodore Roosevelt to Congress on December 6, 1904. In that message he proclaimed the right of the United States to intervene in the domestic affairs of the Latin-American countries. For the text, see Ruhl J. Bartlett, editor, *The Record of American Diplomacy: Documents and Readings in the History of American Foreign Relations* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), p. 539.

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of sovereign nations, peace can be maintained only by two devices. One is the self-regulatory mechanism of the social forces which manifests itself in the struggle for power on the international scene, that is, the balance of power. The other consists of normative limitations upon that struggle in the form of international law, international morality, and world public opinion. Since neither of these devices, as they operate today, is capable of keeping the struggle for power within peaceful bounds, three further questions must be asked and answered. What is the value of the main current proposals for the maintenance of international peace? More particularly, what is the value of the proposal for doing away with the very structure of an international society of sovereign nations by establishing a world state? And, finally, what must a program for action be like which, mindful of the lessons of the past, endeavors to adapt them to the problems of the present?

PART TWO

INTERNATIONAL POLITICS AS
A STRUGGLE FOR POWER

CHAPTER I

Political Power

I. WHAT IS POLITICAL POWER?¹

International politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power. Whatever the ultimate aims of international politics, power is always the immediate aim. Statesmen and peoples may ultimately seek freedom, security, prosperity, or power itself. They may define their goals in terms of a religious, philosophic, economic, or social ideal. They may hope that this ideal will materialize through its own inner force, through divine intervention, or through the natural development of human affairs. But whenever they strive to realize their goal by means of international politics, they do so by striving for power. The Crusaders wanted to free the holy places from domination by the Infidels; Woodrow Wilson wanted to make the world safe for democracy; the National Socialists wanted to open Eastern Europe to German colonization, to dominate Europe, and to conquer the world. Since they chose power to achieve these ends, they were actors on the scene of international politics.²

When we speak of power in the context of this book, we have in mind not man's power over nature, or over an artistic medium, such as language, speech, sound, or color, or over the means of production or consumption, or over himself in the sense of self-control. When we speak of power, we mean man's control over the minds and actions of other men. By political power we refer to the mutual relations of control among the holders of public authority and between the latter and the people at large.

Political power, however, must be distinguished from force in the sense of the actual exercise of physical violence. If the threat of physical violence in the form of police action, imprisonment, capital punishment, or war is an intrinsic element of politics. When violence becomes an actuality, it signifies

¹ The concept of political power poses one of the most difficult and controversial problems of political science. The value of any particular concept will be determined by its ability to explain a maximum of the phenomena which are conventionally considered to belong to a certain sphere of political activity. Thus a concept of political power, to be useful for the understanding of international politics, must be broader than one adopted to operate in the field of municipal politics. The political means employed in the latter are much more narrowly circumscribed than are those employed in international politics.

² For some suggestive remarks on power in relation to international politics, see Lionel Robbins, *The Economic Causes of War* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1939), pp. 63 ff.

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the abdication of political power in favor of military or pseudo military power. In international politics in particular, armed strength as a threat or a potentiality is the most important material factor making for the political power of a nation. If it becomes an actuality in war, it signifies the substitution of military for political power. The actual exercise of physical violence substitutes for the psychological relation between two minds, which is of the essence of political power, the physical relation between two bodies, one of which is strong enough to dominate the other's movements. It is for this reason that in the exercise of physical violence the psychological element of the political relationship is lost, and that we must distinguish between military and political power.

Political power is a psychological relation between those who exercise it and those over whom it is exercised. It gives the former control over certain actions of the latter through the influence which the former exert over the latter's minds. That influence may be exerted through orders, threats, persuasion, or a combination of any of these. The President of the United States, for instance, exerts political power over the executive branch of the government so long as his orders are obeyed by the members of that branch. The leader of a party has political power so long as he is able to mold the actions of the members of the party according to his will. We refer to the political power of an industrialist, labor leader, or lobbyist in so far as his preferences influence the actions of other men. The United States exerts political power over Puerto Rico so long as the laws of the United States are observed by the citizens of that island. When we speak of the political power of the United States in Central America, we have in mind the conformity of the actions of Central American governments with the wishes of the government of the United States.³ Thus the statement that A has or wants political power over B signifies always that A is able, or wants to be able, to control certain actions of B through influencing B's mind.

Whatever the material objectives of a foreign policy, such as the acquisition of sources of raw materials, the control of sea lanes, or territorial changes, they always entail control of the actions of others through influence over their minds. The Rhine frontier as a century-old objective of French foreign policy points to the political objective to destroy the desire of Germany to attack France by making it physically difficult or impossible for Germany to do so. Great Britain owed its predominant position in world politics throughout the nineteenth century to the calculated policy of making it either too dangerous (because Great Britain was too strong) or unattractive (because its strength was used with moderation) for other nations to oppose it.

The political objective of military preparations of any kind is to deter other nations from attack by making it too risky for them to do so. The political aim of military preparations is, in other words, to make the actual application of military force unnecessary by inducing the prospective enemy

³ The examples in the text illustrate also the distinction between political power as mere social fact, as in the case of the lobbyist, and political power in the sense of legitimate authority, i.e., of the President of the United States. Both the President of the United States and the lobbyist exercise political power, however different its source and nature may be.

to desist from the use of military force. The political objective of war itself is not per se the conquest of territory and the annihilation of enemy armies, but a change in the mind of the enemy which will make him yield to the will of the victor.

Therefore, whenever economic, financial, territorial, or military policies are under discussion in international affairs, it is necessary to distinguish between economic policies which are undertaken for their own sake and economic policies which are the instrumentalities of a political policy, that is to say, a policy whose economic purpose is but the means to the end of controlling the policies of another nation. The export policy of Switzerland with regard to the United States falls into the first category. The economic policies of the Soviet Union with regard to the Eastern and Southeastern European nations fall into the latter category. So do many policies of the United States in Latin America and Europe. The distinction is of great practical importance, and the failure to make it has led to much confusion in policy and public opinion.

An economic, financial, territorial, or military policy undertaken for its own sake is subject to evaluation in its own terms. Is it economically or financially advantageous? What effects has acquisition of territory upon the population and economy of the nation acquiring it? What are the consequences of a change in a military policy for education, population, and the domestic political system? The decisions with respect to these policies are made exclusively in terms of such intrinsic considerations.

When, however, the objectives of these policies serve to increase the power of the nation pursuing them with regard to other nations, these policies and their objectives must be judged primarily from the point of view of their contribution to national power. An economic policy which cannot be justified in purely economic terms might nevertheless be undertaken in view of the political policy pursued. The insecure and unprofitable character of a loan to a foreign nation may be a valid argument against it on purely financial grounds. But the argument is irrelevant if the loan, however unwise it may be from a banker's point of view, serves the political policies of the nation. It may, of course, be that the economic or financial losses involved in such policies will weaken the nation in its international position to such an extent as to outweigh the political advantages to be expected. On these grounds such policies might be rejected. In such a case, what decides the issue is, however, not purely economic and financial considerations, but a comparison of the political changes and risks involved, that is, the probable effect of these policies upon the international power of the nation.

2. THE DEPRECIATION OF POLITICAL POWER

~~The aspiration for power being the distinguishing element of international politics, as of all politics, international politics is of necessity power politics.~~ While this fact is generally recognized in the practice of international affairs, it is frequently denied in the pronouncements of scholars, publicists, and even statesmen. Since the end of the Napoleonic Wars, ever larger

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groups in the Western World have been persuaded that the struggle for power on the international scene is a temporary phenomenon, a historical accident which is bound to disappear once the peculiar historic conditions which have given rise to it have been eliminated. Thus Jeremy Bentham believed that the competition for colonies was at the root of all international conflicts. "Emancipate your colonies!" was his advice to the governments, and international conflict and war would of necessity disappear.⁴ Adherents of free trade, such as Cobden⁵ and Proudhon,⁶ were convinced that the removal of trade barriers was the only condition for the establishment of permanent harmony among nations and might even lead to the disappearance of international politics altogether. "At some future election," said Cobden, "we may probably see the test 'no foreign politics' applied to those who offer to become the representatives of free constituencies."⁷ For Marx and his followers, capitalism is at the root of international discord and war. They maintain that international socialism will do away with the struggle for power on the international scene and bring about permanent peace. During the nineteenth century, liberals everywhere shared the conviction that power politics and war were residues of an obsolete system of government and that, with the victory of democracy and constitutional government over absolutism and autocracy, international harmony and permanent peace would win out over power politics and war. Of this liberal school of thought, Woodrow Wilson was the most eloquent and most influential spokesman.

In recent times, the conviction that the struggle for power can be eliminated from the international scene has been connected with the great attempts at organizing the world, such as the League of Nations and the United Nations. Thus Cordell Hull, then Secretary of State, declared in 1943 on his return from the Moscow Conference, which laid the groundwork for the United Nations, that the new international organization would mean the end of power politics and usher in a new era of international collaboration.⁸ Mr. Philip Noel-Baker, then British Minister of State, declared in 1946 in the House of Commons that the British government was "determined to use the institutions of the United Nations to kill power politics, in order that, by the methods of democracy, the will of the people shall prevail."⁹

While we shall have more to say later about these theories and the expectations derived from them,¹⁰ it is sufficient to state that the struggle for

⁴ *Emancipate Your Colonies* (London: Robert Heward, 1830).

⁵ "Free Trade! What is it? Why, breaking down the barriers that separate nations; those barriers, behind which nestle the feelings of pride, revenge, hatred, and jealousy, which every now and then burst their bounds, and deluge whole countries with blood." "Free trade is the international law of the Almighty," and free trade and peace seem to be "one and the same cause." See *Speeches by Richard Cobden* (London: The Macmillan Company, 1870), I, 79; *Political Writings* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1867), II, 119; letter of April 12, 1842, to Henry Ashworth, quoted in John Morley, *Life of Richard Cobden* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1881), p. 154.

⁶ "Let us suppress the tariffs, and the alliance of the peoples will thus be declared, their solidarity recognized, their equality proclaimed." *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris, 1867), I, 248.

⁷ Quoted in A. C. F. Beales, *A Short History of English Liberalism*, p. 195.

⁸ *New York Times*, November 19, 1943, p. 1.

⁹ *House of Commons Debates* (Fifth Series, 1946), Vol. 419, p. 1262.

¹⁰ See Part Eight.

power is universal in time and space and is an undeniable fact of experience. It cannot be denied that throughout historic time, regardless of social, economic, and political conditions, states have met each other in contests for power. Even though anthropologists have shown that certain primitive peoples seem to be free from the desire for power, nobody has yet shown how their state of mind and the conditions under which they live can be recreated on a world-wide scale so as to eliminate the struggle for power from the international scene.¹¹ It would be useless and even self-destructive to free one or the other of the peoples of the earth from the desire for power while leaving it extant in others. If the desire for power cannot be abolished everywhere in the world, those who might be cured would simply fall victims to the power of others.

The position taken here might be criticized on the ground that conclusions drawn from the past are unconvincing, and that to draw such conclusions has always been the main stock-in-trade of the enemies of progress and reform. Though it is true that certain social arrangements and institutions have always existed in the past, it does not necessarily follow that they must always exist in the future. The situation is, however, different when we deal, not with social arrangements and institutions created by man, but with those elemental bio-psychological drives by which in turn society is created. The drives to live, to propagate, and to dominate are common to all men.¹² Their relative strength is dependent upon social conditions which may favor one drive, and tend to repress another, or which may withhold social approval from certain manifestations of these drives, while they encourage others. Thus, to take examples only from the sphere of power, most societies condemn killing as a means of attaining power within the society, but all societies encourage the killing of enemies in that struggle for power which is called war. Dictators look askance at the aspirations for political power among their fellow citizens, but democracies consider active participation in the competition for political power a civic duty. Where a monopolistic organization of economic activities exists, competition for economic power is absent, and in competitive economic systems certain manifestations of the struggle for economic power are outlawed, while others are encouraged.

Regardless of particular social conditions, the decisive argument against the opinion that the struggle for power on the international scene is a mere historic accident can, however, be derived from the nature of domestic politics. The essence of international politics is identical with its domestic counterpart. Both domestic and international politics are a struggle for power, modified only by the different conditions under which this struggle takes place in the domestic and in the international spheres.

The desire to dominate in particular is a constitutive element of all human associations, from the family through fraternal and professional asso-

¹¹ For an illuminating discussion of this problem, see Malcolm Sharp, "Aggression: A Study of Values and Law," *Ethics*, Vol. 57, No. 4, Part II (July 1947).

¹² Zoologists have shown that the drive to dominate is to be found even in animals, such as chickens and monkeys, who create social hierarchies on the basis of the will and the ability to dominate; see, e.g., Warder Allee, *Animal Life and Social Growth* (Baltimore: The Williams and Wilkins Company, 1932) and *The Social Life of Animals* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1938).

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ciations and local political organizations to the state. On the family level, the typical conflict between the mother-in-law and her child's spouse is in its essence a struggle for power, the defense of an established power position against the attempt to establish a new one. As such it foreshadows the conflict on the international scene between the policies of the status quo and the policies of imperialism. Social clubs, fraternities, faculties, and business organizations are scenes of continuous struggles for power between groups which either want to keep what power they already have or desire to attain greater power. Competitive contests between business enterprises as well as labor disputes between employers and employees are frequently fought not only, and sometimes not even primarily, for economic advantages, but for influence over each other and over others, that is, for power. Finally, the whole political life of a nation, particularly of a democratic nation, from the local to the national level, is a continuous struggle for power. In periodical elections, in voting in legislative assemblies, in law suits before courts, in administrative decisions and executive measures—in all these activities men try to maintain or to establish their power over other men. The processes by which legislative, judicial, executive, and administrative decisions are reached are subject to pressures and counterpressures by "pressure groups" trying to defend and expand their positions of power.

In view of this ubiquity of the struggle for power in all social relations and on all levels of social organization, is it surprising that international politics is of necessity power politics? And would it not be rather surprising if the struggle for power were but an accidental and ephemeral attribute of international politics when it is a permanent and necessary element of all branches of domestic politics?

3. TWO ROOTS OF THE DEPRECIATION OF POLITICAL POWER

The depreciation of the role power plays on the international scene grows from two roots. One is the philosophy of international relations which dominated the better part of the nineteenth century and still holds sway over much of our thinking on international affairs. The other is the particular political and intellectual circumstances which have determined the relations of the United States of America to the rest of the world.

The nineteenth century was led to its depreciation of power politics by its domestic experience. The distinctive characteristic of this experience was the domination of the middle classes by the aristocracy. By identifying this domination with political domination of any kind, the political philosophy of the nineteenth century came to identify the opposition to aristocratic politics with hostility to any kind of politics. After the defeat of aristocratic government, the middle classes developed a system of indirect domination. They replaced the traditional division into the governing and governed classes, and the military method of open violence, characteristic of aristocratic rule, with the invisible chains of economic dependence. This economic system operated through a network of seemingly equalitarian legal rules which con-

cealed the very existence of power relations. The nineteenth century was unable to see the political nature of these legalized relations. They seemed to be essentially different from what had gone, so far, under the name of politics. Therefore, politics in its aristocratic, that is, open and violent form was identified with politics as such. The struggle, then, for political power—in domestic as well as in international affairs—appeared to be only a historic accident, coincident with autocratic government and bound to disappear with the disappearance of autocratic government.

This identification of power politics with aristocratic government found support in the American experience. It can be traced to three elements in that experience: the uniqueness of the American experiment, the actual isolation of the American continent from the centers of world conflict during the nineteenth century, and the humanitarian pacifism and anti-imperialism of American political ideology.

That the severance of constitutional ties with the British crown was meant to signify the initiation of an American foreign policy distinct from what went under the name of foreign policy in Europe is clearly stated in Washington's Farewell Address. "Europe has a set of primary interests, which to us have none, or a very remote relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves, by artificial ties, in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics, or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or enmities." In 1796, European politics and power politics were identical; there was no other power politics but the one engaged in by the princes of Europe. "The toils of European ambition, rivalry, interest, humor or caprice" were the only manifestations of the struggle for international power before the American eye. The retreat from European politics, as proclaimed by Washington, could, therefore, be taken to mean retreat from power politics as such.

Yet American aloofness from the European tradition of power politics was more than a political program. Certain sporadic exceptions notwithstanding, it was an established political fact until the end of the nineteenth century. The actuality of this fact was a result of deliberate choice as well as of the objective conditions of geography. Popular writers might see in the uniqueness of America's geographic position the hand of God which had unalterably prescribed the course of American expansion as well as isolation. But more responsible observers, from Washington on, have been careful to emphasize the conjunction of geographic conditions and of a foreign policy choosing its ends in the light of geography, using geographic conditions to attain those ends. Washington referred to "our detached and distant situation" and asked, "Why forego the advantages of so peculiar a situation?" When this period of American foreign policy drew to a close, John Bright wrote to Alfred Love: "On your continent we may hope your growing millions may henceforth know nothing of war. None can assail you; and you are anxious to abstain from mingling with the quarrels of other nations."¹⁸

¹⁸ Merle Curti, *Peace and War: The American Struggle 1636-1936* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1936), p. 122.

Politics among Nations

From the shores of the North American continent, the citizens of the new world watched the strange spectacle of the struggle for international power unfolding on the distant scenes of Europe, Africa, and Asia. Since for the better part of the nineteenth century their foreign policy enabled them to retain the role of spectators, what was actually the result of a passing historic constellation appeared to Americans as a permanent condition, self-chosen as well as naturally ordained. At worst they would continue to watch the game of power politics played by others. At best the time was close at hand when, with democracy established everywhere, the final curtain would fall and the game of power politics would no longer be played.

To aid in the achievement of this goal was conceived to be part of America's mission. Throughout the nation's history, the national destiny of the United States has been understood in antimilitaristic, libertarian terms. Where that national mission finds a nonaggressive, abstentionist formulation, as in the political philosophy of John C. Calhoun, it is conceived as the promotion of domestic liberty. Thus we may "do more to extend liberty by our example over this continent and the world generally, than would be done by a thousand victories." When the United States, in the wake of the Spanish-American War, seemed to desert this anti-imperialist and democratic ideal, William Graham Sumner restated its essence: "Expansion and imperialism are a grand onslaught on democracy . . . expansion and imperialism are at war with the best traditions, principles, and interests of the American people."¹⁴ Comparing the tendencies of European power politics with the ideals of the American tradition, Sumner thought with Washington that they were incompatible. Yet, as a prophet of things to come, he saw that with the conclusion of the Spanish-American War America was irrevocably committed to the same course which was engulfing Europe in revolution and war.

Thus the general conception which the nineteenth century had formed of the nature of foreign affairs combined with specific elements in the American experience to create the belief that involvement in power politics is not inevitable, but only a historic accident, and that nations have a choice between power politics and other kinds of foreign policy not tainted by the desire for power.

¹⁴ "The Conquest of the United States by Spain," *Essays of William Graham Sumner* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), II, 295.