IR Theory, Historical Analogy, and Major Power War

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palgrave
macmillan

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Cover design by Tom Howey

For Isabel encore! For Celine and Francesca: May their generation, and that which is soon to be born, surmount the dangerous legacy left before them!

PREFACE

Chapters 1 through 6 develop theoretical basis for understanding Cold War and post-Cold War dynamics from an "alternative realist" and "critical comparative historical" perspective. These chapters set forth the basic themes of the book: the inadequacy of concepts of polarity and indivisible sovereignty to explicate actual interstate behavior; the traditional realist and neorealist misinterpretations of concepts derived from the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia and 1713 Treaty of Utrecht (indivisible sovereignty, religious tolerance, national self-determination, and balance of power); the significant role that intergovernmental, non-state, and alt-state actors play in state decision-making processes; the critical need for engaged diplomacy to work to prevent, transform, resolve, or at least attempt to manage violent revolutions and wars so that they do not become even more destructive. The book argues that engaged alternative realist diplomacy needs to seek out a range of practical alternatives to perpetual conflict, including power-sharing, multilateral security guarantees, international peacekeeping, joint sovereignty, and confederation, among other options.

Chapters 7 and 8 more closely examine the causes and consequences of the transition from the bicentric Cold War system to a highly uneven post-Cold War global system from a more empirical perspective, with a methodological focus on NATO enlargement and global alliance formation during the transition period from Mikhail Gorbachev in the former Soviet Union to Boris Yeltsin in the new Russian Federation. These two chapters examine: the gradual breakdown of the collaborative aspects of

the US–Soviet "double-containment" during the Cold War and the subsequent post-Cold War development of a polycentric global system consisting of actors with highly uneven power capabilities and influence; the new post-Cold War games of "encirclement" and "counter-encirclement" involving the rise of a new "polarizing" or "counter-positioning" system of alliances, which pits the USA and its allies against a new Russia–China "axis" and its allies. Most importantly, Chapter 8 examines the failure to seize the opportunity, in the sense of Machiavelli, to reach a new entente or alliance with Moscow. Instead, the USA would opt to seize the "unipolar moment"—in a risky effort to sustain global hegemony.

After having developed a critical comparative historical approach in Chapters 2 and 6 in particular, Chapter 9 compares and contrasts the geostrategic constellation of the alliance systems and global political-economic crises before both World War I and World War II with the nature of the geostrategic constellation of the alliance systems and global political-economic crises today. It argues why even early stages of the Cold War are not entirely relevant to today's circumstances even if there are some similarities. The final Chapter 10 looks back into history since the Franco-Prussian War to see if there are any previous strategies that might be relevant in the effort to prevent the post-Cold War global system from once again degenerating into major power conflict—after "containment" had failed to prevent war with Imperial Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire before World War I and "appeasement" (meaning capitulation) had failed to prevent war with Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Imperial Japan before World War II.

While the predominant literature on the subject has argued against the possibility, major power wars have been recurrent throughout history, and the forces, such as alliance formations, arms races, and financial crises, that have generally preceded those titanic conflicts, appear to possess enough significant parallels that the similarities can override the differences between eras and their particular systemic and structural contexts. While it appears nearly impossible to prevent all forms of socio-political conflict both within and between states, it appears absolutely crucial to find new ways and creative policy approaches to prevent future major power wars from ever occurring again.

Paris, France   Hall Gardner
October 2018

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As the intent of *IR Theory, Historical Analogy, and Major Power War* is to develop a new approach to IR theory, with an express focus on theoretically and empirically explaining the transition from the essentially bicentric Cold War period to the highly uneven polycentrism of the post-Cold War period, the book relies on a number of my previous books and articles for a closer empirical analysis. The Cold War and early Cold War period are examined in *Surviving the Millennium: American Global Strategy, the Collapse of the Soviet Empire and the Question of Peace* (1994). Post-Cold War Clinton, Bush, and Obama administration policies are discussed in *American Global Strategy and the War on Terrorism* 2005/2007; *Averting Global War: Regional Challenges, Overextension, and Options for American Strategy* (2007/2010); in *NATO Expansion and the US Strategy in Asia: Surmounting the Global Crisis* (2013); and in *Dangerous Crossroads: Europe, Russia, and the Future of NATO* (1997). The Trump administration is critiqued in *World War Trump:*

Contents

CHAPTER 1

The Cold War Is Dead! Long Live the Cold War!

Journalistic references to a "new Cold War" or "Cold War 2.0"[1] in the aftermath of the Russian annexation of Crimea and its political-military interference in eastern Ukraine since February–March 2014 are misleading. Instead, the post-Cold War era best resembles a mix of the pre-World War I and interwar periods—particularly following the disaggregation of the Soviet Empire—more so than the Cold War in which the global constellation of powers had been dominated by the US and Soviet Union.[2]

This is not to argue that the Cold War—which directly or indirectly killed an estimated 20–25 million people in interstate conflicts and as much as seventy-six million deaths if one included innerstate "genocide" and "democide" in the period 1947–1987[3] in what can be considered a quasi-global war that was fought by surrogate forces primarily in semi-peripheral and peripheral regions—was not dangerous. In fact, the Cold War almost exploded into a nuclear conflict during the Cuban Missile Crisis and during NATO's Able Archer Exercises, as discussed in this book, and on several other occasions despite the belief that mutual assured destruction (MAD)—what was also called the "delicate balance of terror"[4]—would prevent a nuclear war. Yet, in contemporary circumstances, it is no longer as certain (as it at least *appeared* to be during the Cold War) that nuclear weaponry possessed by major (or by emerging regional) powers will necessarily serve as a deterrent against other nuclear powers.

The post-1945 atomic age has often been depicted as if it is a totally unique period in human history. And yet, major and regional powers, as well as lesser states, with or without nuclear weaponry, continue to interact in ways that are similar to the pre-atomic age, but manipulating different kinds of tools in differing geostrategic, political-economic, and normative circumstances and contexts. This raises the question as to whether atomic weapons will necessarily deter or prevent direct wars fought between nuclear capable states as neorealists have argued. In the age of asymmetrical and hybrid and cyber-warfare, it is not at all certain that the threat of a nuclear counterstrike will necessarily prevent a catastrophic attack by an anti-state partisan group, or even by a state leadership—particularly if it is believed that it is possible to get away with a first strike without being struck back.

As major powers begin to involve themselves in domestic civil wars or in regional conflicts, it is possible for the major and regional powers to support opposing factions, thus risking being drawn into a conventional, if not nuclear, confrontation. In such a situation, what if an ally of one nuclear weapons state purposely or inadvertently provokes a conflict with another nuclear weapons state or its ally? Or what if that state is made to look as if it provoked that conflict? What might be the response of those nuclear weapons states? Would the nuclear power then risk the "threat that leaves something to chance" in Thomas Schelling's words—as if one is already certain of an uncertain outcome?[5]

The question thus arises as to whether the significant differences between the global system now, such as state possession of nuclear weapons, will necessarily outweigh the similarities of past state behavior—and hence prevent the possibility of yet another major power war? Will proclaimed US nuclear superiority and "peace through strength" really make a difference in deterring the outbreak of a potential conflict in the post-Cold War era under President Trump or future US administrations as compared to the period before the Cold War "ended" when President Ronald Reagan had previously called for "peace through strength"? What if American global hegemony is challenged in specific regional circumstances in which the rival believes it can seize the advantage?

In the post-Cold War period, nuclear weapons have done nothing to prevent what the French call *guéguerres* (or relatively limited regional wars) that now take place in very different structural and systemic circumstances than they did during the Cold War. Nor is it certain that nuclear weaponry will necessarily prevent a major power war, nor a

war fought by regional states with differing forms of weapons of mass destruction, that is nevertheless backed by the major nuclear powers—in which the threat to use nuclear weaponry remains in the background. Given the miniaturization of nuclear weaponry, which makes tactical nuclear weaponry more usable, coupled with new military tactics of "hybrid" or "non-linear" warfare enhanced by cyber technologies,[6] plus the development of hypersonic weaponry, which could make missile defense systems obsolete, the possibility of war between major nuclear powers cannot be ruled out so easily as it appeared to be in the Cold War.

The point is that the myth of nuclear deterrence did nothing to stop a number of seemingly intractable regional wars that had been initiated during the Cold War and that continue to impact post-Cold War relations. More than that, given the fact that the US and Soviet Union did come close to a nuclear war on several occasions, it was not so much the doctrine of mutual assured destruction that prevented the real possibility of nuclear conflict during the Cold War. More crucially, nuclear war was prevented by the fact that the US and Soviet Union possessed a number of common interests and in fact collaborated to a significant degree with mutual respect and rough parity as the Cold War progressed in keeping potential political-economic and military rivals, Germany, Japan, and China, among other potential "threats," from upsetting the US–Soviet dominated status quo.

What makes the possibilities of major power conflict more likely today than during the Cold War is the fact that the formerly collaborative aspects of the US–Soviet relationship are now in the process of thoroughly fracturing in the aftermath of German unification, Soviet disaggregation, and NATO and European Union enlargement, and the Russian annexation of Crimea and political-military intervention in eastern Ukraine, coupled with a renewed conventional and nuclear weapons buildup since 2009. Moreover, the rise of China, at least tacitly aligned with Russia, as a major political-economic and military actor, has risked conflict in the South and East China Seas.

In the aftermath of the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, the US and NATO have strengthened financial and military supports for Kiev particularly after the 2017 collapse of the 2014 Minsk II accords that were intended to bring peace to eastern Ukraine. This conflict has risked undermining the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act which sought to gain Russian acceptance for NATO enlargement into

post-Soviet spheres of security and influence. And in the Indo-Pacific, in addition to the real threat of a nuclear war with North Korea, the US since has generally increased its diplomatic and military support for Taiwanese independence in Beijing's eyes—at the risk of breaking Henry Kissinger's "constructive ambiguity" of the 1972 Shanghai Agreement or "One China" policy that was the basis of US–Chinese cooperation since the Vietnam War. In essence, both the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act and 1972 Shanghai Agreement—which represent the fundamental accords that permit positive US–Russia and US–China collaboration—appear to be in the process of disintegration. This is not to overlook the partial, if not complete, breakdown of international treaties, such as ABM treaty, the CFE treaty, and the INF treaty. One can also mention the general impotence of the UN Security Council, and even the possibility that states will no longer engage in the multilateral Contact Group approach to conflict management and conflict resolution after President Trump dropped out of the 2017 Iran Nuclear Accord (The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) that had been negotiated by the members of the UN Security Council, plus Germany and the European Union in an effort to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapons capability.

While the Cold War was certainly "dangerous," the contemporary global polycentric system appears even more "dangerous" due to the reality that there are more actual and potential state-supported and anti-state "threats" that could provoke regional and major power conflicts. The greater number of potential threats, which now involve major powers, is combined with the fact that even lesser militant groups can obtain and utilize differing forms of highly destructive technologies and weapons of mass destruction for purposes of attack or blackmail. This is not to overlook ongoing underground wars involving anti-state "terrorist" groups, drug traffickers, and new forms of cyber-sabotage and cyber-warfare taking place in the "dark web" that are engaged in by state security organizations of differing countries, in addition to anti-state organizations and alt-state individual and group "hackers."

The primary theoretical concern raised in this book is that the nature of global geostrategic, military-technological-industrial, political-economic/financial, and socio-cultural/ideological rivalry does not appear to be moving in the direction of a general self-sustaining regional and global equipoise. Nor do the geo-economic and technological dimensions of this rivalry operate in close and careful interaction with the

natural environment. Instead, contemporary interstate rivalry—involving relatively new tactics of strategic leveraging plus new technologies capable of extensive exploitation of the earth's precious and ultimately limited natural resources—appears to be in the process of forging two potentially countervailing military and political-economic alliances that are in conflict for control over key continental focal points and littoral resources regardless of the potential human and ecological costs including the indirect impact on global warming.

According to the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in October 2018, the world has only about 12 years to control global warming or else risk rising sea levels, floods, cyclones, and extreme heat and drought that could lead to species extinction and destruction of ecosystems as well as to loss of property and greater poverty and poor health conditions for hundreds of millions of people, plus the spread of lethal pollution and disease. In effect, "Climate-related risks to health, livelihoods, food security, water supply, human security, and economic growth are projected to increase with global warming of 1.5°C and increase further with 2°C."[7] These extreme climate changes could consequently exacerbate the possibilities of both domestic and interstate socio-political conflict through their indirect cascading impact on states and their societies—but depending in part upon the latter's resilience and ability to cope with potential scarcities, resource depletion, rising costs, and other potentially negative effects of global warming.

In an effort to protect themselves against their rivals by means of controlling spheres of security and influence and lines of communication that seek to secure access to valuable mineral, energy, and agricultural resources that may be impacted negatively by global warming, states have begun to forge both political-economic pacts and tighter military alliances. These militarized proto-alliances have begun to draw rival core states together in geostrategic and political-economic games of "encirclement" and "counter-encirclement"—which appear to mimic the ancient Chinese Game of Go or even behave largely in accord with the friend-enemy-neutral categories established by Indian political philosopher Kautilya in Arthashastra ("The Science of Material Gain"), but in which the "neutral" categories begin to break down.[8] Games of encirclement and counter-encirclement played by rival alliances—which polarized over time—represented a major factor leading to both World War I and World War II—while the threat by *pivotal* states (such as Tsarist Russia and Italy before and during World War I and by the Soviet Union

before and during World War II) to shift sides or move into neutrality impacted the origins and outcomes of both wars as well.

Neither World War I nor World War II was initiated by the globally hegemonic power, Great Britain, but by the major challengers to British hegemony, Imperial Germany, and Nazi Germany, respectively. Great Britain was, for the most part, drawn into both conflicts in accord with its alliance obligations in situations in which it can be argued that both Imperial Germany and Nazi Germany were, at least to a certain extent, provoked into attacking by the geostrategic, military, and political-economic policies and actions of London's own allies that sought to isolate Imperial Germany and then keep Weimar Germany as economically weak and divided as possible after World War I. In this perspective, the challenge for the contemporary globally hegemonic-core power, the US—in working with both allies and rivals—is how to mitigate the regional and global tensions that can potentially lead to wasteful arms races and wider regional conflicts and *guéguerres*, for it is these perilous situations that can draw the major core and regional powers into the fray due to their alliance obligations or due to multiple "threats" to their "vital" interests. The point is that Great Britain failed to take effective global diplomatic leadership far enough in advance so as to prevent both World War I and World War II; the US must not fail to do so in the near future.

In short, *homo geopoliticus* is in the midst of a dangerous crisis that appears more reminiscent of the polycentric, pluri-state, alliance formations, and military buildups that took place in both the pre-World War I and pre-World War II eras—than during the US–Soviet dominated Cold War period. The danger is that any number of regional conflicts could draw the major and regional powers into direct conflict against each other. This danger is magnified by the fact that a number of differing pan-nationalist, secessionist, independence, irredentist, politico-religious, and democratic socio-political movements that the US–Soviet dominated Cold War had directly or indirectly repressed have begun to re-emerge thereby impacting contemporary state leaderships in conflicting ways—albeit in new forms and in differing post-Cold War structural and systemic circumstances.

If the USA, as the still leading global hegemonic power, does not fully engage in significant bilateral and multilateral efforts to implement peaceful settlements through engaged diplomacy to disputes in Eastern Europe, Northern Africa, the wider Middle East, and Central Asia, as

well as in the Indo-Pacific, or if peace talks fail between North and South Korea, or the conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran does not begin to wind down, for example, then the major core and regional powers could soon find themselves drawn once again into a vortex of widening regional conflicts. It thus may not be too long before some of the "unconscious" demons of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—which were not completely sealed off by the US–Soviet dominated Cold War—begin to break out of their tombs resurrected in new shapes and sizes.

Notes

1. Patrick Wintour, Luke Harding, and Julian Borger, "Cold War 2.0: How Russia and the West Reheated a Historic Struggle," *The Guardian*, October 24, 2016, accessed August 20, 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/oct/24/cold-war-20-how-russia-and-the-west-reheated-a-historic-struggle.
2. At the end of the Cold, John Mearsheimer, among others, warned that the post-Cold War period would be somewhere in-between the pre-World War I period, John J. Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe After the Cold War," *International Security* 15, no. 1 (Summer 1990), https://doi.org/10.2307/2538981. Charles Krauthammer warned of missile threats from rogue states and "Weimar Russia." Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment," *Foreign Affairs* 70, no. 1 (1990), accessed January 18, 2009, https://doi.org/10.2307/20044692. See also, Hall Gardner, *Surviving the Millennium: American Global Strategy, the Collapse of the Soviet Empire and the Question of Peace* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1994).
3. Communist governments and the communist guerrillas they supported in other countries account for about 66,000,000 of the 76,000,000 murdered since World War II. Other regimes murdered about 10,000,000 people. See R. J. Rummel, "Democide Since World War II," 1998, accessed August 20, 2018, https://www.hawaii.edu/powerkills/POSTWWII.HTM.
4. Albert Wohlstetter, "The Delicate Balance of Terror," 1959, accessed August 20, 2018, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/1959-01-01/delicate-balance-terror. But even Wohlstetter considered the concept of deterrence as inadequate, but nevertheless still "necessary." See also Hall Gardner, "From Balance to Imbalance of Terror," in *NATO and the European Union: New World New Europe New Threats*, ed. Hall Gardner (Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2004).

5. See the argument that Schelling confounds risk and uncertainty as if they were the same concept. Benoit Pelopidas, "The Book That Leaves Nothing to Chance: How the Strategy of Conflict and His Legacy Normalized the Practice of Nuclear Threats," October 24, 2016, accessed August 20, 2018, https://pacs.einaudi.cornell.edu/sites/pacs/files/Pelopidas.The-Book-That-Leaves-Nothing-To-Chance.short-draft-for-website.pdf.

6. Hall Gardner, "Hybrid Warfare: Iranian and Russian Versions of 'Little Green Men' and Contemporary Conflict," NATO Research Paper 123 (December 2015), accessed September 13, 2018, http://www.ndc.nato.int/news/news.php?icode=885. See also, Hall Gardner, on the impact of information technology on society and war, "War and the New Media Paradox," in *Cyber Conflict and Global Politics*, ed. Athina Karatzogianni (Routledge, 2008).

7. 48th Session of the IPCC, Incheon, Republic of Korea (6 October 2018) *Global Warming of 1.5°C.* http://www.ipcc.ch/report/sr15/; http://report.ipcc.ch/sr15/pdf/sr15_headline_statements.pdf. Summary for Policy Makers: http://report.ipcc.ch/sr15/pdf/sr15_spm_final.pdf. See also, IPCC, 2014: Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II, and III to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [Core Writing Team, R. K. Pachauri and L. A. Meyer (eds.)]. IPCC, Geneva, Switzerland, 151 pp. http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/syr/AR5_SYR_FINAL_All_Topics.pdf.

8. Kautilya. *The Arthashastra* (New Delhi: Penguin Classics, 1992).

CHAPTER 2

Alternative Realism and a Critical Comparative Historical Method

When questioned about the relevance of history for understanding the present and the determining the future, philosophers and theorists of history tend to divide into two contending perspectives. The first is the view that nothing of contemporary relevance can be derived from the study of history or that the post-World War II era and the atomic age is so different from the past that history possesses no "lessons" that can be learned and that could prove helpful in contemporary circumstances. A relatively recent offshoot of this position is the view that humankind is moving toward the "end of history"[1] that will establish a new, more peaceful, socio-political-ideological context than that of the past despite the fact that limited wars, revolutions, and acts of terrorism might continue in the transition period. The state-by-state process in which authoritarian states begin to democratize—in that the "idea" or concept of democracy (even with its imperfections) has ostensibly superseded all other forms of governance—will eventually lead to some form of a global federation of democracies, thereby putting an end to major power war.[2] The "end of history" argument accordingly argues that the possibility of wars among major democratic and ostensibly liberalizing and democratizing authoritarian powers is "waning" or has been made "obsolete"—even if major power war had already been proclaimed obsolete just before the outbreak of World War I.[3]

The second perspective is that history, if carefully examined, does possess meaning and significance for the present, if not for the future as well. This perspective argues that history is doomed to repeat itself in somewhat similar ways—but only if the "lessons" presumably learned from

history are not fully understood and contemporary policies changed accordingly. In this view, major power war is still possible—unless states, regardless of their socio-political ideologies and the domestic nature of their regimes, democratic, or non-democratic—begin to negotiate their differences. In essence, this school argues that socio-political interpretations of history precondition and mold the very ways in which political leaderships and populations understand their own government and society and those of others—so that a greater awareness of socio-political and historical influences upon elites and populations can help minimize the possibility of socio-psychological bias and misperception.

A more pessimistic offshoot of this perspective can be called the *mortmain* position: The argument that the behavior of political elites and their societies has not changed substantially over the centuries—so that the past weighs so heavily upon the present that it can effectively channel the direction of the future. In this perspective, not all societies will necessarily choose democratic forms of governance as an ideal to emulate and those societies that do struggle to achieve greater degrees of effective participation and power-sharing in society and government face a long-term uphill struggle. And while differing alliance combinations can be forged among democratic and non-democratic states, the possibility of a global federation of democracies does not appear feasible in the near future.

Both these perspectives possess valid points. Yet as *IR Theory, Historical Analogy, and Major Power War* argues, there is a third position which seeks a synthesis of the above perspectives and their variants. The "end of history" and "global democratic peace" arguments do possess some validity in that it is relatively rare for democratic states (however "democracy" is defined) to engage in major wars (however "major war" is defined) with one another. It is also true that a number of essentially democratic states have appeared to be forging closer political-economic ties and geostrategic relationships. And while socio-political interpretations of history do precondition the ways in which one observes the world, it is possible to transcend historical misunderstanding and mis- and dis-interpretations of past behavior.

In this view, the global system does not appear ripe enough to achieve a *universal* federation of democracies in which *all* states and their societies can participate in governance. Instead, the global constellation of powers appears to be once again polarizing or counter-positioning into two rival systems of states that could forge opposing alliances as has

taken place in previous epochs of history. One system of alliances is made up of essentially liberal- or social-democratic states of differing kinds, but that could be joined by some Arab Gulf monarchies, for example, among other dubiously democratic countries. The second countervailing system of alliances, which is made up of differing kinds of authoritarian regimes, essentially led by China and Russia, appears to be forming as well—but such an alliance might include some democratic governments, such as India, among other possibilities to be discussed.

IR Theory, Historical Analogy, and Major Power War argues that if two alliance systems do begin to "polarize" or "counter-position" the global constellation of states—much as contending alliances did before both World War I and World War II—then the world would then be thrown back into the horrors of historical repetition in both idea and reality. In this scenario, the threat to use nuclear weaponry (what can be called the Cold War myth of mutual assured destruction) will not necessarily prevent such a regional and major power conflict that would be fought with entirely different tactics and military technologies than previous major power wars. In many ways, such a conflict has already begun in a series of *guéguerres*, but that are being fought by means of political-economic sanctions, surrogate forces, cyber-sabotage, and other forms of hybrid warfare. The dilemma is to prevent these still proxy wars and cyber conflicts from becoming a more overt major power war.

ARGUMENTS FOR THE RELEVANCE OF HISTORY

In arguing that history does possess relevance for contemporary politics, Edmund Burke, George Santayana, Winston Churchill have all been frequently quoted as affirming variants of the same theme: "Those who cannot learn (or who fail to learn) from history are doomed to repeat it." In his *Reflections on the French Revolution*, Burke similarly stated: "In history a great volume is unrolled for our instruction, drawing the materials of future wisdom from the past errors and infirmities of mankind."[4]

In his historical narrative on the Peloponnesian wars, Thucydides had hoped that his work, given that human nature does not change, would help to explicate "the events which happened in the past and which will, at some time or other and in much the same ways, be repeated in the future."[5] Likewise, in his opus on the Byzantine wars with Persia, Procopius of Caesarea stated his hope that his study would benefit those who are preparing themselves for any kind of struggle or war "in a

similar situation in history" in that the final result could foreshadow "at least for those who are most prudent in planning what outcome present events will probably have."[6]

A similar point of view was later expressed by Machiavelli who argued that men have always been guided by the same passions so that the diligent study of the past will permit one to ascertain what might happen in any republic in the future. The policy dilemma is then "to apply those remedies that were used by the ancients, or, not finding any that were employed by them, to devise new ones from the similarity of the events."[7] Unfortunately, for Machiavelli, elites of differing states generally do not study the past very diligently and thus have responded to relatively similar events in very similar ways throughout human history. At the same time, in positing the basis for alternative realism, Machiavelli did assert, more optimistically, that it was possible to devise new remedies—but once again based upon the apparent similarity of the present to past events.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE RELEVANCE OF HISTORY

By contrast, many other philosophers and observers have expressed a less positive perspective as to the relevance of history—which is perceived to be rife with conflicting interpretations and narratives. George Bernard Shaw has been repeatedly cited for his more cynical outlook: "We learn from history that we learn nothing from history." The contemporary American comedian, Stephen Colbert, was even more despondent when it comes to the very possibility of historical memory: he couldn't remember the "old saying" about people "who forget history… but it's good."[8] From a more academic perspective, empiricists and quantitative number crunchers have always been skeptical about historical explanations. J. David Singer has argued that: "History, experience, introspection, common sense, and logic do not in themselves generate evidence," they are, rather, "ideas which must then be examined in the light of evidence."[9]

Even Hegel, who argued for the interacting historical dialectic of ideas, did not argue that history could provide a relevant understanding. In his *Philosophy of History*, in his section on pragmatic history, Hegel stated that: "… that people and governments never have learned anything from history…. Each period is involved in such peculiar circumstances… that its conduct must be regulated by considerations connected with itself, and itself alone." Hegel concluded the passage by saying:

"The pallid shades of memory struggle in vain with the life and freedom of the Present."[10]

Yet despite his downplaying of the relevance of learning principles from history, Hegel's point is nevertheless crucial in that in each period of history states and other significant actors interact in specific domestic structural contexts and within a larger systemic context. This key point is very relevant to the argument of this book: Even if each period of history is very different and involves differing sets of socio-political actors, inter-relationships, and interactions, it is nevertheless possible for differing historical systems to be thoroughly compared and contrasted in terms of roughly similar categories that can be said to characterize each epoch (see Chapter 6).

Hegel, Marx, and De Tocqueville: Mortmain Perspectives

Hegel's argument additionally leads to the observation that Marx's viewpoint on world history was not that different than Hegel's own. Marx claimed that Hegel believed that all great historical events occur twice, but that Hegel had forgotten to add: "the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce."[11] Marx made this statement in reference to the rise of power of Napoleon III in France—an observation that appears to contradict his own ideological assertion that the dialectics of class struggle will lead to a more positive future from capitalism to socialism and then to pure communism. Yet by contrast with his more propagandist position taken in the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx's comment on Hegel raises questions as to whether that history actually possesses a dynamic *telos* that is actually "progressing" toward an "end" in which intra-state domestic conflict and interstate wars might eventually reach a peaceful conclusion that involves what Marx called a "classless society" in which "the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all." Such a vague and undefined classless society could result in some form of participatory governance, power-sharing, pluri-cultural and pluri-national world confederation, that would link together the divergent societies of differing localities, states, regions—depending on the outcome of the struggle.

Yet while Marx may have believed that such a "classless" society was eventually possible to establish, he himself recognized that there were

numerous obstacles that seek to block the dialectical "progress" toward such a society. He argued that in the struggle to achieve this potential goal, men and women make their own history, but that they do not engage in social and political change in conditions of their own making. Men and women make history, "but they… do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances… given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living."[12] In this regard, despite his revolutionary outlook, Marx's own analysis tends to emphasize the negative *mortmain* (dead hand) socio-historical conditions that have been forged by competing domestic socio-political groups over time and that often actively seek to thwart not just revolutions, but mere reforms—as demanded by differing socio-political movements, for better or worse.[13]

Another analyst of socio-historical dynamics, Alexis de Tocqueville, also takes a *mortmain* position. De Tocqueville emphasized the dangers that would take place when governments with a history of corruption and poor governance began to reform themselves: "the most critical moment for bad governments is the one which witnesses their first steps toward reform."[14] The point raised here is that both Marx and de Tocqueville tended to focus on primarily *domestic* socio-historical "conditions" that make it very difficult to make substantial reforms that were believed to be necessary at the time, but neither thinker appears to place as much methodological emphasis on international conditions and forces that actually lie *outside* any particular sovereign state territory and that likewise impact reforms and revolutions.

The point is that *mortmain* domestic structures and socio-political groups and factions that limit the possibility that reforms or revolutions can substantially transform power relationships that are often intertwined with the international geostrategic and political-economic interests and socio-ideological influence of rival states. Here, for example, French influence in the American revolution (role of Lafayette and the Battle of Saratoga); Imperial German influence in the Russian revolution (Imperial German support for Lenin); Hitler's and Mussolini's support for Franco; Soviet, Chinese, European, American influence in supporting or opposing different factions in Cold War revolutions and even in contemporary "democracy movements" as to be discussed, have all shaped the course of history.

The fact that domestic state power structures are impacted by external geostrategic and political-economic interests and sociocultural–ideological forces makes national socio-political-economic change even more

difficult to achieve, while it is never clear which socio-political-ideological movements or factions will "win" in national struggles, and exactly who, from the inside or outside, will support them. It is also not certain how the policies implemented by those factions might then interact in the local, national, regional, and global equipoise of geostrategic and political-economic forces.

Braudel and "Unconscious" History

Not only does the tradition of dead generations weigh upon the brains of the leadership and the populations, but so too does the impact and influence of actors and forces, both dead and living, outside a particular society. Here lies the importance of Braudel's concepts of "mass" or "unconscious" history and of the "long durée"—in which history cannot be seen as mere events, but as an outgrowth of subconsciously linked, but not always clearly articulated, demands and actions. In Braudel's formulation, mass or unconscious history "is clearly visible more frequently than one would willingly admit" but we are "more conscious of its power and impetus than of its laws or direction."[15] That "unconscious" or "mass" history is simultaneously domestic and international.

The decisions and actions of leaderships and socio-political movements are accordingly pushed and pulled by unconscious historical forces that are simultaneously local, national, regional, and international. These forces impact the nature of perceptions, ideas, beliefs, values, norms, justifications, and well as different interpretations of historical memory and the history of differing societies and cultures (see Chapter 9). In effect, these unconscious geo-historical forces transcend the individual and often press interacting leaderships, societies, and identity groups as a whole to choose certain courses of behavior and actions in response to somewhat similar reoccurrences in history over the long *durée*. At the same time, leaderships, societies, identity groups, and socio-political factions cannot guarantee promised outcomes due to the wide range of variables that impact their strategic decisions and given situations that impact those strategic decisions in turn.

These "unconscious" domestic and international forces that impact socio-political behavior include the consequences of *coup d'etats*, civil wars, foreign military interventions, and peace treaties (as emphasized in this book). They also include the impact of global market forces that impact localities and regions very differently regardless of previous socio-historical conditions given the fact that transnational investments

and global finance appear to be increasingly disconnected from local and national productive processes and systems of exchange, and from even local and national governance; the influence of national and international social norms, values, ideologies; and the social influence of differing forms of media and education, among many other factors. Depending upon the nature of *both* domestic and *international* circumstances and forces, efforts to engage in socio-political change can lead to either greater social and political freedoms and power-sharing modes of participatory governance or else to differing modes of repression, and authoritarianism, or to arbitrary socio-political violence and permanent instability and corruption.[16] There appears to be no guarantees as to which option might eventually "win" out.

In addition to conflicts among domestic elites and socio-political movements that may seek to change the nature of the society and its governance, the elites and societies of third states may seek to intervene in the domestic affairs of other states because they oppose the efforts of conflicting social classes or political factions within those states to change the *status quo* or else they may support the efforts of some groups or socio-political movements and factions to more fully participate in governance, but not others. Or even without the direct intervention of third parties, market forces and lack of finance may prevent the implementation of much needed reforms.

In this sense, socio-political transformations seeking to alter the structural and power relationships between states and their societies can only take place if there are also significant systemic geostrategic and political-economic transformations as well—particularly among the predominant or hegemonic-core states. In some cases, external political or military interventions of differing kinds can stimulate socio-political reforms and even force revolutionary changes inside states that do lead to greater participation of differing classes or identity groups in domestic, if not international, governance.

In other cases, however, external political-economic intervention can retard or repress possible reforms or revolutions that impact governance or else resort in wider conflicts and war. Yet at the global level, if the major hegemonic powers themselves do not fundamentally alter their own interstate relationships and interstate interactions, then significant reforms within and between lesser powers will generally remain limited. In essence, for reforms to be implemented effectively, they must take into consideration both international and domestic forces and influences (see Chapter 3).

Liberal-Democratic "End of History" and the New Nationalism

As an offshoot of the first perspective that history has no significance for the present or future is the argument that world society has somehow reached the "end of history" (both in idea and reality) and that the forces of "liberal democratization" make traditional geopolitical games and wars among major powers obsolete. This argument largely assumes that authoritarian regimes will eventually begin to "liberalize" and "democratize" (without clearly stating what that process entails given the *mortmain* dilemmas that both de Tocqueville and Marx recognized) and that major power wars will become less likely as more and more states concurrently begin to democratize—in the argument that "democracies" (however defined) are purportedly less likely to fight one another than are democracies and non-democracies.

On the one hand, it has been argued that "democracies" do not go to "war" with one another—but without clearly defining what is meant by either "war" or "democracy." On the other hand, transnational democratic peace movements, given efforts to universalize their own conceptions of human rights and democracy, do not appear to provide much help as to how to prevent or limit the possibility of wars between democracies and non-democracies, and to resolve disputes and conflicts between states that may or may not possess a culture of compromise—whether those states can be considered "democratic" or not.

The "end of history" argument had postulated the idea (in the singular as if there were only one form of "democracy") that some form of liberal-democratic form of governance would soon begin to transcend all authoritarian systems of governance. In this view, the prospects for totalitarian "solutions" will not prove successful in the post-Cold War era—in the face of burgeoning transnational socio-political demands to achieve greater degrees of participatory governance, at local, domestic, regional, and international levels—and within the workplace as well.

In this view, authoritarian leaderships will eventually be overthrown by either more or less spontaneous transnational "radical democratic"[17] movements or by state-manipulated "democracy engineering"[18]—much as took place in Eastern Europe, South Africa, Central and Latin America, the Philippines, and the former Soviet Union toward the end of the Cold War, and then in Ukraine after the Cold War in 2013–2014, and during the so-called Arab Spring in 2011–2013.

At roughly the same time as the "Arab Spring", a cluster of socio-political protests took place in 2009–2011 in Iran in support of the opposition Green Movement; in Tunisia against the government in 2010–2011; in Libya and Syria against Qaddafy and Al-Assad in 2011; on Tahrir Square in Egypt in 2011–2013 against Hosni Mubarak; and as well as in Istanbul's Taksim Gezi Park in 2013. There were also protests in Israel in 2011 in the name of the "Social Justice" opposition to the high cost of living (particularly housing) and the deterioration of public services such as health and education. In the US, the "Occupy Wall Street" movements began in September 2011. These alt-state and anti-state movements can be compared and contrasted with social movements going back to the 1968 and 1989 global protests, if not further back to the 1848–1849 revolutions in central Europe. Yet, in contemporary circumstances, each relatively spontaneous social movement came to a different end due to the differing socio-political circumstances in each state.

Neo-conservatives, radical democrats, and particularly neoliberals have all argued that true regional and global peace will not be established unless authoritarian regimes are in some way overthrown or transformed—for it does not appear possible for democracies and authoritarian regimes to co-exist side-by-side in the long term without eventually coming into conflict.

Both neo-conservatives and particularly neoliberals have argued that the US and other democratic countries need to more strongly support, with greater diplomatic and financial assistance, a number of ostensibly universalistic socio-political movements that have begun to struggle against various authoritarian regimes, even if official government pronouncements in favor of those movements appears to represent an attempt to undermine the legitimacy of the regime in power. The dilemma, however, is that perceived US and foreign support for democratic movements and reforms in human rights policy *within* differing authoritarian countries has tended to antagonize many of those same regimes, including China, Russia, Belarus, Iran, Bahrain, Syria, while destabilizing other regimes, including Ukraine, Georgia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Tunisia, Venezuela, among others.

To what degree these movements represent a genuine expression of popular grievances and to what degree each of these movements was manipulated by domestic elites and supported by external powers, such as the US and other states whether democratic or not, behind those