Theory of International Politics

KENNETH N. WALTZ
University of California, Berkeley

Addison-Wesley Publishing Company
Reading, Massachusetts
Menlo Park, California
London • Amsterdam
Don Mills, Ontario • Sydney

or if the government controls prices. Perfect competition, complete collusion, absolute control: These different causes produce identical results. From uniformity of outcomes one cannot infer that the attributes and the interactions of the parts of a system have remained constant. Structure may determine outcomes aside from changes at the level of the units and aside from the disappearance of some of them and the emergence of others. Different "causes" may produce the same effects; the same "causes" may have different consequences. Unless one knows how a realm is organized, one can hardly tell the causes from the effects.

The effect of an organization may predominate over the attributes and the interactions of the elements within it. A system that is independent of initial conditions is said to display equifinality. If it does, *"the system is then its own best explanation,* and the study of its present organization the appropriate methodology" (Watzlawick, *et al.*, 1967, p. 129; cf. p. 32). If structure influences without determining, then one must ask how and to what extent the structure of a realm accounts for outcomes and how and to what extent the units account for outcomes. Structure has to be studied in its own right as do units. To claim to be following a systems approach or to be constructing a systems theory requires one to show how system and unit levels can be distinctly defined. Failure to mark and preserve the distinction between structure, on the one hand, and units and processes, on the other, makes it impossible to disentangle causes of different sorts and to distinguish between causes and effects. Blurring the distinction between the different levels of a system has, I believe, been the major impediment to the development of theories about international politics. The next chapter shows how to define political structures in a way that makes the construction of a systems theory possible.

5

Political Structures

We learned in Chapters 2, 3, and 4 that international-political outcomes cannot be explained reductively. We found in Chapter 3 that even avowedly systemic approaches mingle and confuse systems-level with unit-level causes. Reflecting on theories that follow the general-systems model, we concluded at once that international politics does not fit the model closely enough to make the model useful and that only through some sort of systems theory can international politics be understood. To be a success, such a theory has to show how international politics can be conceived of as a domain distinct from the economic, social, and other international domains that one may conceive of. To mark international-political systems off from other international systems, and to distinguish systems-level from unit-level forces, requires showing how political structures are generated and how they affect, and are affected by, the units of the system. How can we conceive of international politics as a distinct system? What is it that intervenes between interacting units and the results that their acts and interactions produce? To answer these questions, this chapter first examines the concept of social structure and then defines structure as a concept appropriate for national and for international politics.

I

A system is composed of a structure and of interacting units. The structure is the system-wide component that makes it possible to think of the system as a whole. The problem, unsolved by the systems theorists considered in Chapter 3, is to contrive a definition of structure free of the attributes and the interactions of units. Definitions of structure must leave aside, or abstract from, the characteristics of units, their behavior, and their interactions. Why must those obviously important matters be omitted? They must be omitted so that we can distinquish between variables at the level of the units and variables at the level of the system.

The problem is to develop theoretically useful concepts to replace the vague and varying systemic notions that are customarily employed—notions such as environment, situation, context, and milieu. Structure is a useful concept if it gives clear and fixed meaning to such vague and varying terms.

We know what we have to omit from any definition of structure if the definition is to be useful theoretically. Abstracting from the attributes of units means leaving aside questions about the kinds of political leaders, social and economic institutions, and ideological commitments states may have. Abstracting from relations means leaving aside questions about the cultural, economic, political, and military interactions of states. To say what is to be left out does not indicate what is to be put in. The negative point is important nevertheless because the instruction to omit attributes is often violated and the instruction to omit interactions almost always goes unobserved. But if attributes and interactions are omitted, what is left? The question is answered by considering the double meaning of the term "relation." As S. F. Nadel points out, ordinary language obscures a distinction that is important in theory. "Relation" is used to mean both the interaction of units and the positions they occupy vis-à-vis each other (1957, pp. 8–11). To define a structure requires ignoring how units relate with one another (how they interact) and concentrating on how they stand in relation to one another (how they are arranged or positioned). Interactions, as I have insisted, take place at the level of the units. How units stand in relation to one another, the way they are arranged or positioned, is not a property of the units. The arrangement of units is a property of the system.

By leaving aside the personality of actors, their behavior, and their interactions, one arrives at a purely positional picture of society. Three propositions follow from this. First, structures may endure while personality, behavior, and interactions vary widely. Structure is sharply distinguished from actions and interactions. Second, a structural definition applies to realms of widely different substance so long as the arrangement of parts is similar (cf. Nadel, pp. 104–109). Third, because this is so, theories developed for one realm may with some modification be applicable to other realms as well.

A structure is defined by the arrangement of its parts. Only changes of arrangement are structural changes. A system is composed of a structure and of interacting parts. Both the structure and the parts are concepts, related to, but not identical with, real agents and agencies. Structure is not something we see. The anthropologist Meyer Fortes put this well. "When we describe structure," he said, "we are in the realm of grammar and syntax, not of the spoken word. We discern structure in the 'concrete reality' of social events only by virtue of having first established structure by abstraction from 'concrete reality' " (Fortes 1949, p. 56). Since structure is an abstraction, it cannot be defined by enumerating material characteristics of the system. It must instead be defined by the arrangement of the system's parts and by the principle of that arrangement.

This is an uncommon way to think of political systems, although structural notions are familiar enough to anthropologists, to economists, and even to political scientists who deal not with political systems in general but with such of their parts as political parties and bureaucracies. In defining structures, anthropologists do not ask about the habits and the values of the chiefs and the Indians; economists do not ask about the organization and the efficiency of particular firms and the exchanges among them; and political scientists do not ask about the personalities and the interests of the individuals occupying various offices. They leave aside the qualities, the motives, and the interactions of the actors, not because those matters are uninteresting or unimportant, but because they want to know how the qualities, the motives, and the interactions of tribal units are affected by tribal structure, how decisions of firms are influenced by their market, and how people's behavior is molded by the offices they hold.

II

The concept of structure is based on the fact that units differently juxtaposed and combined behave differently and in interacting produce different outcomes. I first want to show how internal political structure can be defined. In a book on international-political theory, domestic political structure has to be examined in order to draw a distinction between expectations about behavior and outcomes in the internal and external realms. Moreover, considering domestic political structure now will make the elusive international-political structure easier to catch later on.

Structure defines the arrangement, or the ordering, of the parts of a system. Structure is not a collection of political institutions but rather the arrangement of them. How is the arrangement defined? The constitution of a state describes some parts of the arrangement, but political structures as they develop are not identical with formal constitutions. In defining structures, the first question to answer is this: What is the principle by which the parts are arranged?

Domestic politics is hierarchically ordered. The units—institutions and agencies—stand vis-à-vis each other in relations of super- and subordination. The ordering principle of a system gives the first, and basic, bit of information about how the parts of a realm are related to each other. In a polity the hierarchy of offices is by no means completely articulated, nor are all ambiguities about relations of super- and subordination removed. Nevertheless, political actors are formally differentiated according to the degrees of their authority, and their distinct functions are specified. By "specified" I do not mean that the law of the land fully describes the duties that different agencies perform, but only that broad agreement prevails on the tasks that various parts of a government are to undertake and on the extent of the power they legitimately wield. Thus Congress supplies the military forces; the President commands them. Congress makes the

laws; the executive branch enforces them; agencies administer laws; judges interpret them. Such specification of roles and differentiation of functions is found in any state, the more fully so as the state is more highly developed. The specification of functions of formally differentiated parts gives the second bit of structural information. This second part of the definition adds some content to the structure, but only enough to say more fully how the units stand in relation to one another. The roles and the functions of the British Prime Minister and Parliament, for example, differ from those of the American President and Congress. When offices are juxtaposed and functions are combined in different ways, different behaviors and outcomes result, as I shall shortly show.

The placement of units in relation to one another is not fully defined by a system's ordering principle and by the formal differentiation of its parts. The standing of the units also changes with changes in their relative capabilities. In the performance of their functions, agencies may gain capabilities or lose them. The relation of Prime Minister to Parliament and of President to Congress depends on, and varies with, their relative capabilities. The third part of the definition of structure acknowledges that even while specified functions remain unchanged, units come to stand in different relation to each other through changes in relative capability.

A domestic political structure is thus defined, first, according to the principle by which it is ordered; second, by specification of the functions of formally differentiated units; and third, by the distribution of capabilities across those units. Structure is a highly abstract notion, but the definition of structure does not abstract from everything. To do so would be to leave everything aside and to include nothing at all. The three-part definition of structure includes only what is required to show how the units of the system are positioned or arranged. Everything else is omitted. Concern for tradition and culture, analysis of the character and personality of political actors, consideration of the conflictive and accommodative processes of politics, description of the making and execution of policy—all such matters are left aside. Their omission does not imply their unimportance. They are omitted because we want to figure out the expected effects of structure on process and of process on structure. That can be done only if structure and process are distinctly defined.

Political structures shape political processes, as can best be seen by comparing different governmental systems. In Britain and America legislative and executive offices are differently juxtaposed and combined. In England they are fused; in America they are separated and in many ways placed in opposition to each other. Differences in the distribution of power and authority among formal and informal agencies affect the chief executives' power and help to account for persistent differences in their performance. I have shown elsewhere how structural differences explain contrasts in the patterns of British and American political behavior. Repeating a few points in summary form will make preceding definitional statements politically concrete. I shall take just political leadership as an example and concentrate more on Britain than on America so as to be able to go into some small amount of detail (1967a; I draw mainly on Chapters 3 and 11).

Prime Ministers have been described, at least since the late nineteenth century, as gaining ever more power to the point where one should no longer refer to parliamentary or even to cabinet government. The Prime Minister alone now carries the day, or so one is told. One must then wonder why these increasingly strong Prime Ministers react so slowly to events, do the same ineffective things over and over again, and in general govern so weakly. The answers are not found in the different personalities of Prime Ministers, for the patterns I refer to embrace all of them and extend backward to the 1860s, that is, to the time when the discipline of parties began to emerge as a strong feature of British governance. The formal powers of Prime Ministers appear to be ample, and yet their behavior is more closely constrained than that of American Presidents. The constraints are found in the structure of British government, especially in the relation of leader to party. Two points are of major importance: the way leaders are recruited and the effect of their having to manage their parties so carefully.

In both countries, directly or indirectly, the effective choice of a chief executive lies between the leaders of two major parties. How do they become the two from whom the choice is made? An MP becomes leader of his party or Prime Minister by long service in Parliament, by proving his ability in successive steps up the ministerial ladder, and by displaying the qualities that the House of Commons deems important. The members of the two major parliamentary parties determine who will rise to the highest office. They select the person who will lead their party when it is out of power and become Prime Minister when it is triumphant. The MP who would be Prime Minister must satisfy his first constituents, the members of his party who sit in the Commons, that he would be competent and, according to the lights of the party, safe and reliable in office. They will look for someone who has shown over the years that he will displease few of his fellow MPs. Given no limits on length of service as Prime Minister, MPs will, moreover, be reluctant to support a younger person, whose successful candidacy might block the road to the highest office for decades.

Like most countries of settled political institutions, the British apprentice their rulers. The system by which Britain apprentices her rulers is more likely than America's quite different system to produce not only older chief executives but also ones who are safer and surer. Since the Second Reform Act, in 1867, Britain has had 20 Prime Ministers. Their average age in office is 62 years. Their average service in Parliament prior to becoming Prime Minister is 28 years, during which time they served their apprenticeships in various high Cabinet posts. In England the one way of attaining the highest office is to climb the minis-

terial ladder.* Since the Civil War, America has had 22 Presidents. Their average age in office is 56 years.† Since Congress is not a direct route to executive preferment, it is pointless to compare congressional with parliamentary service. It is, however, safe and significant to say that the Presidency draws on a wider field of experience, occasionally—as with Grant and Eisenhower—on a field not political at all.

The British mode of recruitment creates a condition that serves as a gross restraint on executive power. The Prime Minister, insofar as he has great powers, is likely to be of an age and experience, a worldly wisdom if you like, that makes his exercising them with force and vigor improbable. If it is true that England muddles through, here is part of the explanation, a bigger part than the oft-cited national character to which ideological commitment and programmatic politics are supposedly alien.

The limitations that come to bear on Prime Ministers in the very process by which they are selected are as important as they are subtle, elusive, and generally overlooked. These qualities also characterize the limitations that derive from the Prime Minister's relation to his party and to Parliament, where his strength is often thought to be greatest. The situation in the two countries can be put as follows: The President can lead but has trouble getting his party to follow; the Prime Minister has the followers but on condition that he not be too far in front of, or to the side of, his party, which makes it difficult for him to lead. The requisite art for a Prime Minister is to manage the party in ways that avoid the defiance of the many or the rebellion of the few, if those few are important, rather than to levy penalties after rebellion has occurred. Most often the Prime Minister's worry is less that some members will defy him than that his real and effective support will dwindle in the years between general elections, as happened to Churchill and Macmillan in their last governments, and even more obviously to Eden and Heath. It is wrong to see the parliamentary party as a brake on the government only when the party is split and the Prime Minister faces an unruly faction, for a party is never monolithic. A well-managed party will appear to be almost passively obedient, but the managerial arts are difficult to master. The effective Prime Minister or party leader moves in ways that avoid dissent, if possible, by anticipating it. Concessions are made; issues are postponed and at times evaded entirely. If we think of the two parties as disciplined armies marching obediently at their leaders' commands, we not only ignore much important history but we also overlook the infinite care and calculation that goes into getting

*The exception, which does not disprove the rule, is Ramsay MacDonald, who, absent from the wartime coalition and with his party not previously in power, had never served in a ministerial position.

†All calculations as of July 1978.

groups, be they armies, football teams, or political parties, to act in concert. The Prime Minister can ordinarily count on his party to support him, but only within limits that are set in part by the party members collectively. The Prime Minister can only ask for what his party will give. He cannot say: "The trade unions must be disciplined." He cannot say: "The relations of labor and management must be recast." He cannot say: "Industry must be rationalized." He cannot make such statements, even if he believes them. He can give a bold lead only if he is sure that his party will come around without a major faction splitting off. But by the time a Prime Minister is sure of that, any lead given is no longer a bold one. One can be a bold Prime Minister only at the cost of being a bad party manager. "A Party has to be managed, and he who can manage it best, will probably be its best leader. The subordinate task of legislation and of executive government may well fall into the inferior hands of less astute practitioners."* Such were the reflections of Anthony Trollope on the career of Sir Timothy Beeswax, a party manager of near magical skills (1880, III, 169; cf. I, 216). The roles of leader of the country and manager of a party easily come into conflict. In the absence of formal checks and balances of the American sort, the party that would act can do so. Because the party in power acts on the word of its leader, the leader must be cautious about the words he chooses to utter.

The leadership problem coupled with the apprenticeship factor goes far to describe the texture of British politics. The Prime Minister must preserve the unity of his party, for it is not possible for him to perpetuate his rule by constructing a series of majorities whose composition varies from issue to issue. Prime Ministers must be, and must take pains to remain, acceptable to their parliamentary parties. By the political system within which he operates, the Prime Minister is impelled to seek the support of his entire party, at the cost of considerably reducing his freedom of action. He is constrained to crawl along cautiously, to let situations develop until the near necessity of decision blunts inclinations to quarrel about just what the decision should be. Leadership characteristics are built into the system. The typical Prime Minister is a weak national leader but an expert party manager—characteristics that he ordinarily must have in order to gain office and retain it.

In contrast, consider Presidents. Because their tenure does not depend on securing majority support in Congress, because they can be defeated on policies and still remain in office, and because obstruction is an ordinary and accepted part of the system, they are encouraged to ask for what at the moment may well

*In some respects a century brings little change. Despite the many harsh comments made about Callaghan by Crossman, Wilson, and others, Crossman thought of him as "easily the most accomplished politician in the Labour Party"; and apparently because of that distinction, Callaghan gained Wilson's help in succeeding him as Prime Minister (1977, III, 627–28 *et passim*).

not be granted. Presidents are expected to educate and inform, to explain that the legislation Congress refuses to pass is actually what the interest of the country requires; they may, indeed, ask for more than they want, hoping that the half-loaf they often get will conform roughly to their private estimate of need. The gap between promise and performance, between presidential request and congressional acquiescence is thus often illusory. Prime Ministers get all that they ask, and yet major social and economic legislation in Britain is ordinarily a long time maturing. Presidents ask for much that they do not get, and yet the pace of reform is not slower, the flexibility and response of American government are not less, than those of Great Britain.

Appearances are often deceptive. Prime Ministers are thought to be strong leaders because they are in public so ineffectively opposed. The fusion of powers, however, tempts the Prime Minister to place his concern for the unity of the party above his regard for the public interest and in rendering the party responsible in the eyes of the voter makes the government unresponsive to the needs of the nation. "A public man is responsible," as a character in one of Disraeli's novels once said, "and a responsible man is a slave" (1880, p. 156). To be clearly responsible is to be highly visible. In America, the congressional show detracts in some measure from the attention the President receives; in Britain, the public concentrates its gaze with single-minded intensity on the Prime Minister. Fairly or not, he is praised or blamed for the good or ill health of the polity. Responsibility is concentrated rather than diffused. The leader who is responsible then has to husband his power; the onus for the risky policy that fails to come off falls entirely on him.

Americans, accustomed to rule by strong Presidents, naturally think only in terms of limits that are institutionally imposed and overlook the structural constraints on British government. Indeed in the two countries, the term "leadership" has different political meanings: in the United States, that strong men occupy the Presidency; in Britain, that the will of the Prime Minister becomes the law of the land. To say that the will of the leader becomes law should not be taken to mean that the system is one of strong leadership in the American sense; instead everything depends on the leader's identity and on the forces that shape his decisions. The British system goes far to ensure that the leader is moderate and will behave with propriety. This is not seen by simply observing political processes. One has first to relate political structure to process, to consider the ways in which political offices and institutions are juxtaposed and combined. Power is concentrated in the hands of the Prime Minister and yet with great, though informal, checks against its impetuous use: the apprentice system by which parliamentarians rise to office; the subtle restraints of party that work upon the Prime Minister; the habit, institutionally encouraged, of moving slowly with events and of postponing changes in policy until their necessity is widely accepted.

The endurance of patterns over the decades is striking. Think of the Prime Ministers Britain has known since the turn of the century. They are Balfour, Campbell-Bannerman, Asquith, Lloyd George, Bonar Law, Baldwin, MacDonald, Chamberlain, Churchill, Attlee, Eden, Macmillan, Home, Wilson, Heath, and Callaghan. Two failed to fit the pattern—Lloyd George and Winston Churchill. Both had long sat in the Commons. Both had worked their ways up the ladder. They had served their apprenticeships, but doing so had not tamed them. In normal times each of them appeared unreliable at best, and perhaps downright dangerous, to fractions of their parties large enough to deny them the highest office. Back benchers in large number thought of them as being unlikely to balance the interests and convictions of various groups within the party, to calculate nicely whose services and support merited higher or lower ministerial positions, and to show a gentlemanly respect for the opinions of others even when they were thought to be ill-founded. A few comments on Winston Churchill will show what I mean. Member of Parliament since 1900 and the holder of more ministerial posts than any politician in British history, he was richly qualified for the highest office. But he had been a maverick for most of his political life. A Conservative at the outset of his political career, he became a Liberal in 1906 and did not return to the Conservative fold until the middle 1920s. In the 1930s, he was at odds with his party on great matters of state policy, first on Indian and then on European affairs. Nothing less than a crisis big enough to turn his party liabilities into national assets could elevate him to the highest office. The events required to raise him to prime ministerial office, by virtue of their exceptional quality, cause the normal practice to stand out more clearly. Accidents do occur, but it takes great crises to produce them. To pull someone from outside the normal lines of succession is not easily done.

Political structure produces a similarity in process and performance so long as a structure endures. Similarity is not uniformity. Structure operates as a cause, but it is not the only cause in play. How can one know whether observed effects are caused by the structure of national politics rather than by a changing cast of political characters, by variations of nonpolitical circumstances, and,by a host of other factors? How can one separate structural from other causes? One does it by extending the comparative method that I have just used. Look, for example, at British political behavior where structure differs. Contrast the behavior of the Labour movement with that of the Parliamentary Labour Party. In the Labour movement, where power is checked and balanced, the practice of politics, especially when the party is out of power, is strikingly similar to the political conduct that prevails in America. In the face of conflict and open dissension, the leaders of the party are stimulated actually to lead, to explore the ground and try to work out compromises, to set a line of policy, to exhort and persuade, to threaten and cajole, to inform and educate, all with the hope that the parts of the

party—the National Executive Committee, the trade unions, and the constituency parties, as well as the Members of Parliament—can be brought to follow the leader.

Within a country one can identify the effects of structure by noticing *differences* of behavior in differently structured parts of the polity. From one country to another, one can identify the effects of structure by noticing *similarities* of behavior in polities of similar structure. Thus Chihiro Hosoya's description of the behavior of Prime Ministers in postwar Japan's parliamentary system exactly fits British Prime Ministers (1974, pp. 366–69). Despite cultural and other differences, similar structures produce similar effects.

III

I defined domestic political structures first by the principle according to which they are organized or ordered, second by the differentiation of units and the specification of their functions, and third by the distribution of capabilities across units. Let us see how the three terms of the definition apply to international politics.

1. ORDERING PRINCIPLES

Structural questions are questions about the arrangement of the parts of a system. The parts of domestic political systems stand in relations of super- and subordination. Some are entitled to command; others are required to obey. Domestic systems are centralized and hierarchic. The parts of international-political systems stand in relations of coordination. Formally, each is the equal of all the others. None is entitled to command; none is required to obey. International systems are decentralized and anarchic. The ordering principles of the two structures are distinctly different, indeed, contrary to each other. Domestic political structures have governmental institutions and offices as their concrete counterparts. International politics, in contrast, has been called "politics in the absence of government" (Fox 1959, p. 35). International organizations do exist, and in ever-growing numbers. Supranational agents able to act effectively, however, either themselves acquire some of the attributes and capabilities of states, as did the medieval papacy in the era of Innocent III, or they soon reveal their inability to act in important ways except with the support, or at least the acquiescence, of the principal states concerned with the matters at hand. Whatever elements of authority emerge internationally are barely once removed from the capability that provides the foundation for the appearance of those elements. Authority quickly reduces to a particular expression of capability. In the absence of agents with system-wide authority, formal relations of super- and subordination fail to develop.

The first term of a structural definition states the principle by which the system is ordered. Structure is an organizational concept. The prominent characteristic of international politics, however, seems to be the lack of order and of organization. How can one think of international politics as being any kind of an order at all? The anarchy of politics internationally is often referred to. If structure is an organizational concept, the terms "structure" and "anarchy" seem to be in contradiction. If international politics is "politics in the absence of government," what are we in the presence of? In looking for international structure, one is brought face to face with the invisible, an uncomfortable position to be in.

The problem is this: how to conceive of an order without an orderer and of organizational effects where formal organization is lacking. Because these are difficult questions, I shall answer them through analogy with microeconomic theory. Reasoning by analogy is helpful where one can move from a domain for which theory is well developed to one where it is not. Reasoning by analogy is permissible where different domains are structurally similar.

Classical economic theory, developed by Adam Smith and his followers, is microtheory. Political scientists tend to think that microtheory is theory about small-scale matters, a usage that ill accords with its established meaning. The term "micro" in economic theory indicates the way in which the theory is constructed rather than the scope of the matters it pertains to. Microeconomic theory describes how an order is spontaneously formed from the self-interested acts and interactions of individual units—in this case, persons and firms. The theory then turns upon the two central concepts of the economic units and of the market. Economic units and economic markets are concepts, not descriptive realities or concrete entities. This must be emphasized since from the early eighteenth century to the present, from the sociologist Auguste Comte to the psychologist George Katona, economic theory has been faulted because its assumptions fail to correspond with realities (Martineau 1853, II, 51–53; Katona 1953). Unrealistically, economic theorists conceive of an economy operating in isolation from its society and polity. Unrealistically, economists assume that the economic world is the whole of the world. Unrealistically, economists think of the acting unit, the famous "economic man," as a single-minded profit maximizer. They single out one aspect of man and leave aside the wondrous variety of human life. As any moderately sensible economist knows, "economic man" does not exist. Anyone who asks businessmen how they make their decisions will find that the assumption that men are economic maximizers grossly distorts their characters. The assumption that men behave as economic men, which is known to be false as a descriptive statement, turns out to be useful in the construction of theory.

Markets are the second major concept invented by microeconomic theorists. Two general questions must be asked about markets: How are they formed? How do they work? The answer to the first question is this: The market of a decen-

tralized economy is individualist in origin, spontaneously generated, and unintended. The market arises out of the activities of separate units—persons and firms—whose aims and efforts are directed not toward creating an order but rather toward fulfilling their own internally defined interests by whatever means they can muster. The individual unit acts for itself. From the coaction of like units emerges a structure that affects and constrains all of them. Once formed, a market becomes a force in itself, and a force that the constitutive units acting singly or in small numbers cannot control. Instead, in lesser or greater degree as market conditions vary, the creators become the creatures of the market that their activity gave rise to. Adam Smith's great achievement was to show how self-interested, greed-driven actions may produce good social outcomes if only political and social conditions permit free competition. If a laissez-faire economy is harmonious, it is so because the intentions of actors do *not* correspond with the outcomes their actions produce. What intervenes between the actors and the objects of their action in order to thwart their purposes? To account for the unexpectedly favorable outcomes of selfish acts, the concept of a market is brought into play. Each unit seeks its own good; the result of a number of units simultaneously doing so transcends the motives and the aims of the separate units. Each would like to work less hard and price his product higher. Taken together, all have to work harder and price their products lower. Each firm seeks to increase its profit; the result of many firms doing so drives the profit rate downward. Each man seeks his own end, and, in doing so, produces a result that was no part of his intention. Out of the mean ambition of its members, the greater good of society is produced.

The market is a cause interposed between the economic actors and the results they produce. It conditions their calculations, their behaviors, and their interactions. It is not an agent in the sense of *A* being the agent that produces outcome *X*. Rather it is a structural cause. A market constrains the units that comprise it from taking certain actions and disposes them toward taking others. The market, created by self-directed interacting economic units, selects behaviors according to their consequences (cf. Chapter 4, part III). The market rewards some with high profits and assigns others to bankruptcy. Since a market is not an institution or an agent in any concrete or palpable sense, such statements become impressive only if they can be reliably inferred from a theory as part of a set of more elaborate expectations. They can be. Microeconomic theory explains how an economy operates and why certain effects are to be expected. It generates numerous "if-then" statements that can more or less easily be checked. Consider, for example, the following simple but important propositions. If the money demand for a commodity rises, then so will its price. If price rises, then so will profits. If profits rise, then capital will be attracted and production will increase. If production increases, then price will fall to the level that returns profits to the producers of

the commodity at the prevailing rate. This sequence of statements could be extended and refined, but to do so would not serve my purpose. I want to point out that although the stated expectations are now commonplace, they could not be arrived at by economists working in a pre-theoretic era. All of the statements are, of course, made at an appropriate level of generality. They require an "other things being equal" stipulation. They apply, as do statements inferred from any theory, only to the extent that the conditions contemplated by the theory obtain. They are idealizations, and so they are never fully borne out in practice. Many things—social customs, political interventions—will in fact interfere with the theoretically predicted outcomes. Though interferences have to be allowed for, it is nevertheless extraordinarily useful to know what to expect in general.

International-political systems, like economic markets, are formed by the coaction of self-regarding units. International structures are defined in terms of the primary political units of an era, be they city states, empires, or nations. Structures emerge from the coexistence of states. No state intends to participate in the formation of a structure by which it and others will be constrained. International-political systems, like economic markets, are individualist in origin, spontaneously generated, and unintended. In both systems, structures are formed by the coaction of their units. Whether those units live, prosper, or die depends on their own efforts. Both systems are formed and maintained on a principle of self-help that applies to the units. To say that the two realms are structurally similar is not to proclaim their identity. Economically, the self-help principle applies within governmentally contrived limits. Market economies are hedged about in ways that channel energies constructively. One may think of pure food-and-drug standards, antitrust laws, securities and exchange regulations, laws against shooting a competitor, and rules forbidding false claims in advertising. International politics is more nearly a realm in which anything goes. International politics is structurally similar to a market economy insofar as the self-help principle is allowed to operate in the latter.

In a microtheory, whether of international politics or of economics, the motivation of the actors is assumed rather than realistically described. I assume that states seek to ensure their survival. The assumption is a radical simplification made for the sake of constructing a theory. The question to ask of the assumption, as ever, is not whether it is true but whether it is the most sensible and useful one that can be made. Whether it is a useful assumption depends on whether a theory based on the assumption can be contrived, a theory from which important consequences not otherwise obvious can be inferred. Whether it is a sensible assumption can be directly discussed.

Beyond the survival motive, the aims of states may be endlessly varied; they may range from the ambition to conquer the world to the desire merely to be left alone. Survival is a prerequisite to achieving any goals that states may have,

other than the goal of promoting their own disappearance as political entities. The survival motive is taken as the ground of action in a world where the security of states is not assured, rather than as a realistic description of the impulse that lies behind every act of state. The assumption allows for the fact that no state always acts exclusively to ensure its survival. It allows for the fact that some states may persistently seek goals that they value more highly than survival; they may, for example, prefer amalgamation with other states to their own survival in form. It allows for the fact that in pursuit of its security no state will act with perfect knowledge and wisdom—if indeed we could know what those terms might mean. Some systems have high requirements for their functioning. Traffic will not flow if most, but not all, people drive on the proper side of the road. If necessary, strong measures have to be taken to ensure that everyone does so. Other systems have medium requirements. Elevators in skyscrapers are planned so that they can handle the passenger load if most people take express elevators for the longer runs and locals only for the shorter ones. But if some people choose locals for long runs because the speed of the express makes them dizzy, the system will not break down. To keep it going, most, but not all, people have to act as expected. Some systems, market economies and international politics among them, make still lower demands. Traffic systems are designed on the knowledge that the system's requirements will be enforced. Elevators are planned with extra capacity to allow for human vagaries. Competitive economic and international-political systems work differently. Out of the interactions of their parts they develop structures that reward or punish behavior that conforms more or less nearly to the system's requirements. Recall my description of the constraints of the British parliamentary system. Why should a would-be Prime Minister not strike out on a bold course of his own? Why not behave in ways markedly different from those of typical British political leaders? Anyone can, of course, and some who aspire to become Prime Ministers do so. They rarely come to the top. Except in deepest crisis, the system selects others to hold the highest office. One may behave as one likes to. Patterns of behavior nevertheless emerge, and they derive from the structural constraints of the system.

Actors may perceive the structure that constrains them and understand how it serves to reward some kinds of behavior and to penalize others. But then again they either may not see it or, seeing it, may for any of many reasons fail to conform their actions to the patterns that are most often rewarded and least often punished. To say that "the structure selects" means simply that those who conform to accepted and successful practices more often rise to the top and are likelier to stay there. The game one has to win is defined by the structure that determines the kind of player who is likely to prosper.

Where selection according to behavior occurs, no enforced standard of behavior is required for the system to operate, although either system may work better if some standards are enforced or accepted. Internationally, the environment of states' action, or the structure of their system, is set by the fact that some states prefer survival over other ends obtainable in the short run and act with relative efficiency to achieve that end. States may alter their behavior because of the structure they form through interaction with other states. But in what ways and why? To answer these questions we must complete the definition of international structure.

2. THE CHARACTER OF THE UNITS

The second term in the definition of domestic political structure specifies the functions performed by differentiated units. Hierarchy entails relations of super- and subordination among a system's parts, and that implies their differentiation. In defining domestic political structure the second term, like the first and third, is needed because each term points to a possible source of structural variation. The states that are the units of international-political systems are not formally differentiated by the functions they perform. Anarchy entails relations of coordination among a system's units, and that implies their sameness. The second term is not needed in defining international-political structure, because so long as anarchy endures, states remain like units. International structures vary only through a change of organizing principle or, failing that, through variations in the capabilities of units. Nevertheless I shall discuss these like units here, because it is by their interactions that international-political structures are generated.

Two questions arise: Why should states be taken as the units of the system? Given a wide variety of states, how can one call them "like units"? Questioning the choice of states as the primary units of international-political systems became popular in the 1960s and '70s as it was at the turn of the century. Once one understands what is logically involved, the issue is easily resolved. Those who question the state-centric view do so for two main reasons. First, states are not the only actors of importance on the international scene. Second, states are declining in importance, and other actors are gaining, or so it is said. Neither reason is cogent, as the following discussion shows.

States are not and never have been the only international actors. But then structures are defined not by all of the actors that flourish within them but by the major ones. In defining a system's structure one chooses one or some of the infinitely many objects comprising the system and defines its structure in terms of them. For international-political systems, as for any system, one must first decide which units to take as being the parts of the system. Here the economic analogy will help again. The structure of a market is defined by the number of firms competing. If many roughly equal firms contend, a condition of perfect competition is approximated. If a few firms dominate the market, competition is said to be oli-

gopolistic even though many smaller firms may also be in the field. But we are told that definitions of this sort cannot be applied to international politics because of the interpenetration of states, because of their inability to control the environment of their action, and because rising multinational corporations and other nonstate actors are difficult to regulate and may rival some states in influence. The importance of nonstate actors and the extent of transnational activities are obvious. The conclusion that the state-centric conception of international politics is made obsolete by them does not follow. That economists and economically minded political scientists have thought that it does is ironic. The irony lies in the fact that all of the reasons given for scrapping the state-centric concept can be restated more strongly and applied to firms. Firms competing with numerous others have no hope of controlling their market, and oligopolistic firms constantly struggle with imperfect success to do so. Firms interpenetrate, merge, and buy each other up at a merry pace. Moreover, firms are constantly threatened and regulated by, shall we say, "nonfirm" actors. Some governments encourage concentration; others work to prevent it. The market structure of parts of an economy may move from a wider to a narrower competition or may move in the opposite direction, but whatever the extent and the frequency of change, market structures, generated by the interaction of firms, are defined in terms of them.

Just as economists define markets in terms of firms, so I define international-political structures in terms of states. If Charles P. Kindleberger were right in saying that "the nation-state is just about through as an economic unit" (1969, p. 207), then the structure of international politics would have to be redefined. That would be necessary because economic capabilities cannot be separated from the other capabilities of states. The distinction frequently drawn between matters of high and low politics is misplaced. States use economic means for military and political ends; and military and political means for the achievement of economic interests.

An amended version of Kindleberger's statement may hold: Some states may be nearly washed up as economic entities, and others not. That poses no problem for international-political theory since international politics is mostly about inequalities anyway. So long as the major states are the major actors, the structure of international politics is defined in terms of them. That theoretical statement is of course borne out in practice. States set the scene in which they, along with nonstate actors, stage their dramas or carry on their humdrum affairs. Though they may choose to interfere little in the affairs of nonstate actors for long periods of time, states nevertheless set the terms of the intercourse, whether by passively permitting informal rules to develop or by actively intervening to change rules that no longer suit them. When the crunch comes, states remake the rules by which other actors operate. Indeed, one may be struck by the ability of

weak states to impede the operation of strong international corporations and by the attention the latter pay to the wishes of the former.

It is important to consider the nature of transnational movements, the extent of their penetration, and the conditions that make it harder or easier for states to control them (see Chapter 7). But the adequate study of these matters, like others, requires finding or developing an adequate approach to the study of international politics. Two points should be made about latter-day transnational studies. First, students of transnational phenomena have developed no distinct theory of their subject matter or of international politics in general. They have drawn on existing theories, whether economic or political. Second, that they have developed no distinct theory is quite proper, for a theory that denies the central role of states will be needed only if nonstate actors develop to the point of rivaling or surpassing the great powers, not just a few of the minor ones. They show no sign of doing that.

The study of transnational movements deals with important factual questions, which theories can help one to cope with. But the help will not be gained if it is thought that nonstate actors call the state-centric view of the world into question. To say that major states maintain their central importance is not to say that other actors of some importance do not exist. The "state-centric" phrase suggests something about the system's structure. Transnational movements are among the processes that go on within it. That the state-centric view is so often questioned merely reflects the difficulty political scientists have in keeping the distinction between structures and processes clearly and constantly in mind.

States are the units whose interactions form the structure of international-political systems. They will long remain so. The death rate among states is remarkably low. Few states die; many firms do. Who is likely to be around 100 years from now—the United States, the Soviet Union, France, Egypt, Thailand, and Uganda? Or Ford, IBM, Shell, Unilever, and Massey-Ferguson? I would bet on the states, perhaps even on Uganda. But what does it mean to refer to the 150-odd states of today's world, which certainly form a motley collection, as being "like units"? Many students of international politics are bothered by the description. To call states "like units" is to say that each state is like all other states in being an autonomous political unit. It is another way of saying that states are sovereign. But sovereignty is also a bothersome concept. Many believe, as the anthropologist M. G. Smith has said, that "in a system of sovereign states no state is sovereign."* The error lies in identifying the sovereignty of states with

*Smith should know better. Translated into terms that he has himself so effectively used, to say that states are sovereign is to say that they are segments of a plural society (1966, p. 122; cf. 1956).

their ability to do as they wish. To say that states are sovereign is not to say that they can do as they please, that they are free of others' influence, that they are able to get what they want. Sovereign states may be hardpressed all around, constrained to act in ways they would like to avoid, and able to do hardly anything just as they would like to. The sovereignty of states has never entailed their insulation from the effects of other states' actions. To be sovereign and to be dependent are not contradictory conditions. Sovereign states have seldom led free and easy lives. What then is sovereignty? To say that a state is sovereign means that it decides for itself how it will cope with its internal and external problems, including whether or not to seek assistance from others and in doing so to limit its freedom by making commitments to them. States develop their own strategies, chart their own courses, make their own decisions about how to meet whatever needs they experience and whatever desires they develop. It is no more contradictory to say that sovereign states are always constrained and often tightly so than it is to say that free individuals often make decisions under the heavy pressure of events.

Each state, like every other state, is a sovereign political entity. And yet the differences across states, from Costa Rica to the Soviet Union, from Gambia to the United States, are immense. States are alike, and they are also different. So are corporations, apples, universities, and people. Whenever we put two or more objects in the same category, we are saying that they are alike not in all respects but in some. No two objects in this world are identical, yet they can often be usefully compared and combined. "You can't add apples and oranges" is an old saying that seems to be especially popular among salesmen who do not want you to compare their wares with others. But we all know that the trick of adding dissimilar objects is to express the result in terms of a category that comprises them. Three apples plus four oranges equals seven pieces of fruit. The only interesting question is whether the category that classifies objects according to their common qualities is useful. One can add up a large number of widely varied objects and say that one has eight million things, but seldom need one do that.

States vary widely in size, wealth, power, and form. And yet variations in these and in other respects are variations among like units. In what way are they like units? How can they be placed in a single category? States are alike in the tasks that they face, though not in their abilities to perform them. The differences are of capability, not of function. States perform or try to perform tasks, most of which are common to all of them; the ends they aspire to are similar. Each state duplicates the activities of other states at least to a considerable extent. Each state has its agencies for making, executing, and interpreting laws and regulations, for raising revenues, and for defending itself. Each state supplies out of its own resources and by its own means most of the food, clothing, housing, transportation, and amenities consumed and used by its citizens. All states, except the

smallest ones, do much more of their business at home than abroad. One has to be impressed with the functional similarity of states and, now more than ever before, with the similar lines their development follows. From the rich to the poor states, from the old to the new ones, nearly all of them take a larger hand in matters of economic regulation, of education, health, and housing, of culture and the arts, and so on almost endlessly. The increase of the activities of states is a strong and strikingly uniform international trend. The functions of states are similar, and distinctions among them arise principally from their varied capabilities. National politics consists of differentiated units performing specified functions. International politics consists of like units duplicating one another's activities.

3. THE DISTRIBUTION OF CAPABILITIES

The parts of a hierarchic system are related to one another in ways that are determined both by their functional differentiation and by the extent of their capabilities. The units of an anarchic system are functionally undifferentiated. The units of such an order are then distinguished primarily by their greater or lesser capabilities for performing similar tasks. This states formally what students of international politics have long noticed. The great powers of an era have always been marked off from others by practitioners and theorists alike. Students of national government make such distinctions as that between parliamentary and presidential systems; governmental systems differ in form. Students of international politics make distinctions between international-political systems only according to the number of their great powers. The structure of a system changes with changes in the distribution of capabilities across the system's units. And changes in structure change expectations about how the units of the system will behave and about the outcomes their interactions will produce. Domestically, the differentiated parts of a system may perform similar tasks. We know from observing the American government that executives sometimes legislate and legislatures sometimes execute. Internationally, like units sometimes perform different tasks. Why they do so, and how the likelihood of their doing so varies with their capabilities, are matters treated at length in the last three chapters. Meanwhile, two problems should be considered.

The first problem is this: Capability tells us something about units. Defining structure partly in terms of the distribution of capabilities seems to violate my instruction to keep unit attributes out of structural definitions. As I remarked earlier, structure is a highly but not entirely abstract concept. The maximum of abstraction allows a minimum of content, and that minimum is what is needed to enable one to say how the units stand in relation to one another. States are differently placed by their power. And yet one may wonder why only *capability*

is included in the third part of the definition, and not such characteristics as ideology, form of government, peacefulness, bellicosity, or whatever. The answer is this: Power is estimated by comparing the capabilities of a number of units. Although capabilities are attributes of units, the distribution of capabilities across units is not. The distribution of capabilities is not a unit attribute, but rather a system-wide concept. Again, the parallel with market theory is exact. Both firms and states are like units. Through all of their variations in form, firms share certain qualities: They are self-regarding units that, within governmentally imposed limits, decide for themselves how to cope with their environment and just how to work for their ends. Variation of structure is introduced, not through differences in the character and function of units, but only through distinctions made among them according to their capabilities.

The second problem is this: Though relations defined in terms of interactions must be excluded from structural definitions, relations defined in terms of groupings of states do seem to tell us something about how states are placed in the system. Why not specify how states stand in relation to one another by considering the alliances they form? Would doing so not be comparable to defining national political structures partly in terms of how presidents and prime ministers are related to other political agents? It would not be. Nationally as internationally, structural definitions deal with the relation of agents and agencies in terms of the organization of realms and not in terms of the accommodations and conflicts that may occur within them or the groupings that may now and then form. Parts of a government may draw together or pull apart, may oppose each other or cooperate in greater or lesser degree. These are the relations that form and dissolve within a system rather than structural alterations that mark a change from one system to another. This is made clear by an example that runs nicely parallel to the case of alliances. Distinguishing systems of political parties according to their number is common. A multiparty system changes if, say, eight parties become two, but not if two groupings of the eight form merely for the occasion of fighting an election. By the same logic, an international-political system in which three or more great powers have split into two alliances remains a multipolar system—structurally distinct from a bipolar system, a system in which no third power is able to challenge the top two. In defining market structure, information about the particular quality of firms is not called for, nor is information about their interactions, short of the point at which the formal merger of firms significantly reduces their number. In the definition of market structure, firms are not identified and their interactions are not described. To take the qualities of firms and the nature of their interactions as being parts of market structure would be to say that whether a sector of an economy is oligopolistic or not depends on how the firms are organized internally and how they deal with one another, rather than simply on how many major firms coexist. Market structure is defined by counting firms; international-political structure, by counting states. In the counting, distinctions are made only according to capabilities.

In defining international-political structures we take states with whatever traditions, habits, objectives, desires, and forms of government they may have. We do not ask whether states are revolutionary or legitimate, authoritarian or democratic, ideological or pragmatic. We abstract from every attribute of states except their capabilities. Nor in thinking about structure do we ask about the relations of states—their feelings of friendship and hostility, their diplomatic exchanges, the alliances they form, and the extent of the contacts and exchanges among them. We ask what range of expectations arises merely from looking at the type of order that prevails among them and at the distribution of capabilities within that order. We abstract from any particular qualities of states and from all of their concrete connections. What emerges is a positional picture, a general description of the ordered overall arrangement of a society written in terms of the placement of units rather than in terms of their qualities.

IV

I have now defined the two essential elements of a systems theory of international politics—the structure of the system and its interacting units. In doing so I have broken sharply away from common approaches. As we have seen, some scholars who attempt systems approaches to international politics conceive of a system as being the product of its interacting parts, but they fail to consider whether anything at the systems level affects those parts. Other systems theorists, like students of international politics in general, mention at times that the effects of the international environment must be allowed for; but they pass over the question of how this is to be done and quickly return their attention to the level of interacting units. Most students, whether or not they claim to follow a systems approach, think of international politics in the way Fig. 5.1 suggests. $N_{1,2,3}$ are states internally generating their external effects. $X_{1,2,3}$ are states acting externally and interacting with each other. No systemic force or factor shows up in the picture.

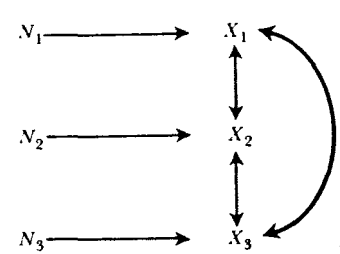

Figure 5.1

Because systemic effects are evident, international politics should be seen as in Fig. 5.2. The circle represents the structure of an international-political system. As the arrows indicate, it affects both the interactions of states and their attributes.* Although structure as an organizational concept has proved elusive, its meaning can be explained simply. While states retain their autonomy, each stands in a specifiable relation to the others. They form some sort of an order. We can use the term "organization" to cover this preinstitutional condition if we think of an organization as simply a constraint, in the manner of W. Ross Ashby (1956, p. 131). Because states constrain and limit each other, international politics can be viewed in rudimentary organizational terms. Structure is the concept that makes it possible to say what the expected organizational effects are and how structures and units interact and affect each other.

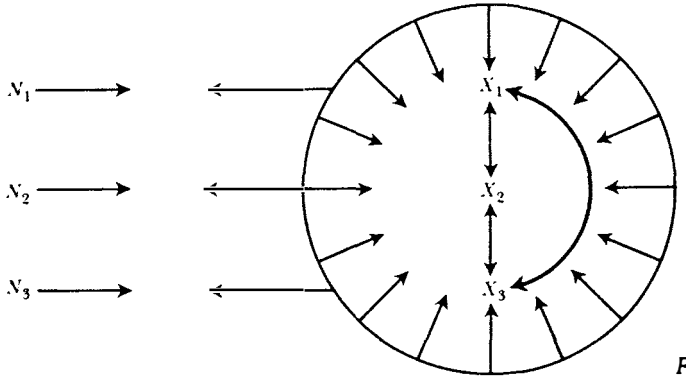

Figure 5.2

Thinking of structure as I have defined it solves the problem of separating changes at the level of the units from changes at the level of the system. If one is concerned with the different expected effects of different systems, one must be able to distinguish changes of systems from changes within them, something that would-be systems theorists have found exceedingly difficult to do. A three-part definition of structure enables one to discriminate between those types of changes:

- Structures are defined, first, according to the principle by which a system is ordered. Systems are transformed if one ordering principle replaces another. To move from an anarchic to a hierarchic realm is to move from one system to another.

*No essentials are omitted from Fig. 5.2, but some complications are. A full picture would include, for example, coalitions possibly forming on the right-hand side.

- Structures are defined, second, by the specification of functions of differentiated units. Hierarchic systems change if functions are differently defined and allotted. For anarchic systems, the criterion of systems change derived from the second part of the definition drops out since the system is composed of like units.
- Structures are defined, third, by the distribution of capabilities across units. Changes in this distribution are changes of system whether the system be an anarchic or a hierarchic one.

6

Anarchic Structures and Balances of Power

Two tasks remain: first, to examine the characteristics of anarchy and the expectations about outcomes associated with anarchic realms; second, to examine the ways in which expectations vary as the structure of an anarchic system changes through changes in the distribution of capabilities across nations. The second task, undertaken in Chapters 7, 8, and 9, requires comparing different international systems. The first, which I now turn to, is best accomplished by drawing some comparisons between behavior and outcomes in anarchic and hierarchic realms.

I

1. VIOLENCE AT HOME AND ABROAD

The state among states, it is often said, conducts its affairs in the brooding shadow of violence. Because some states may at any time use force, all states must be prepared to do so—or live at the mercy of their militarily more vigorous neighbors. Among states, the state of nature is a state of war. This is meant not in the sense that war constantly occurs but in the sense that, with each state deciding for itself whether or not to use force, war may at any time break out. Whether in the family, the community, or the world at large, contact without at least occasional conflict is inconceivable; and the hope that in the absence of an agent to manage or to manipulate conflicting parties the use of force will always be avoided cannot be realistically entertained. Among men as among states, anarchy, or the absence of government, is associated with the occurrence of violence.

The threat of violence and the recurrent use of force are said to distinguish international from national affairs. But in the history of the world surely most rulers have had to bear in mind that their subjects might use force to resist or

overthrow them. If the absence of government is associated with the threat of violence, so also is its presence. A haphazard list of national tragedies illustrates the point all too well. The most destructive wars of the hundred years following the defeat of Napoleon took place not among states but *within* them. Estimates of deaths in China's Taiping Rebellion, which began in 1851 and lasted 13 years, range as high as 20 million. In the American Civil War some 600 thousand people lost their lives. In more recent history, forced collectivization and Stalin's purges eliminated five million Russians, and Hitler exterminated six million Jews. In some Latin American countries, coups d'états and rebellions have been normal features of national life. Between 1948 and 1957, for example, 200 thousand Colombians were killed in civil strife. In the middle 1970s most inhabitants of Idi Amin's Uganda must have felt their lives becoming nasty, brutish, and short, quite as in Thomas Hobbes's state of nature. If such cases constitute aberrations, they are uncomfortably common ones. We easily lose sight of the fact that struggles to achieve and maintain power, to establish order, and to contrive a kind of justice within states, may be bloodier than wars among them.

If anarchy is identified with chaos, destruction, and death, then the distinction between anarchy and government does not tell us much. Which is more precarious: the life of a state among states, or of a government in relation to its subjects? The answer varies with time and place. Among some states at some times, the actual or expected occurrence of violence is low. Within some states at some times, the actual or expected occurrence of violence is high. The use of force, or the constant fear of its use, are not sufficient grounds for distinguishing international from domestic affairs. If the possible and the actual use of force mark both national and international orders, then no durable distinction between the two realms can be drawn in terms of the use or the nonuse of force. No human order is proof against violence.

To discover qualitative differences between internal and external affairs one must look for a criterion other than the occurrence of violence. The distinction between international and national realms of politics is not found in the use or the nonuse of force but in their different structures. But if the dangers of being violently attacked are greater, say, in taking an evening stroll through downtown Detroit than they are in picnicking along the French and German border, what practical difference does the difference of structure make? Nationally as internationally, contact generates conflict and at times issues in violence. The difference between national and international politics lies not in the use of force but in the different modes of organization for doing something about it. A government, ruling by some standard of legitimacy, arrogates to itself the right to use force—that is, to apply a variety of sanctions to control the use of force by its subjects. If some use private force, others may appeal to the government. A government has no monopoly on the use of force, as is all too evident. An effec-

tive government, however, has a monopoly on the *legitimate* use of force, and legitimate here means that public agents are organized to prevent and to counter the private use of force. Citizens need not prepare to defend themselves. Public agencies do that. A national system is not one of self-help. The international system is.

2. INTERDEPENDENCE AND INTEGRATION

The political significance of interdependence varies depending on whether a realm is organized, with relations of authority specified and established, or remains formally unorganized. Insofar as a realm is formally organized, its units are free to specialize, to pursue their own interests without concern for developing the means of maintaining their identity and preserving their security in the presence of others. They are free to specialize because they have no reason to fear the increased interdependence that goes with specialization. If those who specialize most benefit most, then competition in specialization ensues. Goods are manufactured, grain is produced, law and order are maintained, commerce is conducted, and financial services are provided by people who ever more narrowly specialize. In simple economic terms, the cobbler depends on the tailor for his pants and the tailor on the cobbler for his shoes, and each would be ill-clad without the services of the other. In simple political terms, Kansas depends on Washington for protection and regulation and Washington depends on Kansas for beef and wheat. In saying that in such situations interdependence is close, one need not maintain that the one part could not learn to live without the other. One need only say that the cost of breaking the interdependent relation would be high. Persons and institutions depend heavily on one another because of the different tasks they perform and the different goods they produce and exchange. The parts of a polity bind themselves together by their differences (cf. Durkheim 1893, p. 212).

Differences between national and international structures are reflected in the ways the units of each system define their ends and develop the means for reaching them. In anarchic realms, like units coact. In hierarchic realms, unlike units interact. In an anarchic realm, the units are functionally similar and tend to remain so. Like units work to maintain a measure of independence and may even strive for autarchy. In a hierarchic realm, the units are differentiated, and they tend to increase the extent of their specialization. Differentiated units become closely interdependent, the more closely so as their specialization proceeds. Because of the difference of structure, interdependence within and interdependence among nations are two distinct concepts. So as to follow the logicians' admonition to keep a single meaning for a given term throughout one's discourse, I shall use "integration" to describe the condition within nations and "interdependence" to describe the condition among them.

Although states are like units functionally, they differ vastly in their capabilities. Out of such differences something of a division of labor develops (see Chapter 9). The division of labor across nations, however, is slight in comparison with the highly articulated division of labor within them. Integration draws the parts of a nation closely together. Interdependence among nations leaves them loosely connected. Although the integration of nations is often talked about, it seldom takes place. Nations could mutually enrich themselves by further dividing not just the labor that goes into the production of goods but also some of the other tasks they perform, such as political management and military defense. Why does their integration not take place? The structure of international politics limits the cooperation of states in two ways.

In a self-help system each of the units spends a portion of its effort, not in forwarding its own good, but in providing the means of protecting itself against others. Specialization in a system of divided labor works to everyone's advantage, though not equally so. Inequality in the expected distribution of the increased product works strongly against extension of the division of labor internationally. When faced with the possibility of cooperating for mutual gain, states that feel insecure must ask how the gain will be divided. They are compelled to ask not "Will both of us gain?" but "Who will gain more?" If an expected gain is to be divided, say, in the ratio of two to one, one state may use its disproportionate gain to implement a policy intended to damage or destroy the other. Even the prospect of large absolute gains for both parties does not elicit their cooperation so long as each fears how the other will use its increased capabilities. Notice that the impediments to collaboration may not lie in the character and the immediate intention of either party. Instead, the condition of insecurity—at the least, the uncertainty of each about the other's future intentions and actions—works against their cooperation.

In any self-help system, units worry about their survival, and the worry conditions their behavior. Oligopolistic markets limit the cooperation of firms in much the way that international-political structures limit the cooperation of states. Within rules laid down by governments, whether firms survive and prosper depends on their own efforts. Firms need not protect themselves physically against assaults from other firms. They are free to concentrate on their economic interests. As economic entities, however, they live in a self-help world. All want to increase profits. If they run undue risks in the effort to do so, they must expect to suffer the consequences. As William Fellner says, it is "impossible to maximize joint gains without the collusive handling of all relevant variables." And this can be accomplished only by "complete disarmament of the firms in relation to each other." But firms cannot sensibly disarm even to increase their profits. This statement qualifies, rather than contradicts, the assumption that firms aim at maximum profits. To maximize profits tomorrow as well as today, firms first have to survive. Pooling all resources implies, again as Fellner puts it,

"discounting the future possibilities of all participating firms" (1949, p. 35). But the future cannot be discounted. The relative strength of firms changes over time in ways that cannot be foreseen. Firms are constrained to strike a compromise between maximizing their profits and minimizing the danger of their own demise. Each of two firms may be better off if one of them accepts compensation from the other in return for withdrawing from some part of the market. But a firm that accepts smaller markets in exchange for larger profits will be gravely disadvantaged if, for example, a price war should break out as part of a renewed struggle for markets. If possible, one must resist accepting smaller markets in return for larger profits (pp. 132, 217–18). "It is," Fellner insists, "not advisable to disarm in relation to one's rivals" (p. 199). Why not? Because "the potentiality of renewed warfare always exists" (p. 177). Fellner's reasoning is much like the reasoning that led Lenin to believe that capitalist countries would never be able to cooperate for their mutual enrichment in one vast imperialist enterprise. Like nations, oligopolistic firms must be more concerned with relative strength than with absolute advantage.

A state worries about a division of possible gains that may favor others more than itself. That is the first way in which the structure of international politics limits the cooperation of states. A state also worries lest it become dependent on others through cooperative endeavors and exchanges of goods and services. That is the second way in which the structure of international politics limits the cooperation of states. The more a state specializes, the more it relies on others to supply the materials and goods that it is not producing. The larger a state's imports and exports, the more it depends on others. The world's well-being would be increased if an ever more elaborate division of labor were developed, but states would thereby place themselves in situations of ever closer interdependence. Some states may not resist that. For small and ill-endowed states the costs of doing so are excessively high. But states that can resist becoming ever more enmeshed with others ordinarily do so in either or both of two ways. States that are heavily dependent, or closely interdependent, worry about securing that which they depend on. The high interdependence of states means that the states in question experience, or are subject to, the common vulnerability that high interdependence entails. Like other organizations, states seek to control what they depend on or to lessen the extent of their dependency. This simple thought explains quite a bit of the behavior of states: their imperial thrusts to widen the scope of their control and their autarchic strivings toward greater self-sufficiency.

Structures encourage certain behaviors and penalize those who do not respond to the encouragement. Nationally, many lament the extreme development of the division of labor, a development that results in the allocation of ever narrower tasks to individuals. And yet specialization proceeds, and its extent is a measure of the development of societies. In a formally organized realm a

premium is put on each unit's being able to specialize in order to increase its value to others in a system of divided labor. The domestic imperative is "specialize"! Internationally, many lament the resources states spend unproductively for their own defense and the opportunities they miss to enhance the welfare of their people through cooperation with other states. And yet the ways of states change little. In an unorganized realm each unit's incentive is to put itself in a position to be able to take care of itself since no one else can be counted on to do so. The international imperative is "take care of yourself"! Some leaders of nations may understand that the well-being of all of them would increase through their participation in a fuller division of labor. But to act on the idea would be to act on a domestic imperative, an imperative that does not run internationally. What one might want to do in the absence of structural constraints is different from what one is encouraged to do in their presence. States do not willingly place themselves in situations of increased dependence. In a self-help system, considerations of security subordinate economic gain to political interest.

What each state does for itself is much like what all of the others are doing. They are denied the advantages that a full division of labor, political as well as economic, would provide. Defense spending, moreover, is unproductive for all and unavoidable for most. Rather than increased well-being, their reward is in the maintenance of their autonomy. States compete, but not by contributing their individual efforts to the joint production of goods for their mutual benefit. Here is a second big difference between international-political and economic systems, one which is discussed in part I, section 4, of the next chapter.

3. STRUCTURES AND STRATEGIES

That motives and outcomes may well be disjoined should now be easily seen. Structures cause actions to have consequences they were not intended to have. Surely most of the actors will notice that, and at least some of them will be able to figure out why. They may develop a pretty good sense of just how structures work their effects. Will they not then be able to achieve their original ends by appropriately adjusting their strategies? Unfortunately, they often cannot. To show why this is so I shall give only a few examples; once the point is made, the reader will easily think of others.

If shortage of a commodity is expected, all are collectively better off if they buy less of it in order to moderate price increases and to distribute shortages equitably. But because some will be better off if they lay in extra supplies quickly, all have a strong incentive to do so. If one expects others to make a run on a bank, one's prudent course is to run faster than they do even while knowing that if few others run, the bank will remain solvent, and if many run, it will fail. In such cases, pursuit of individual interest produces collective results that nobody

wants, yet individuals by behaving differently will hurt themselves without altering outcomes. These two much used examples establish the main point. Some courses of action I cannot sensibly follow unless you do too, and you and I cannot sensibly follow them unless we are pretty sure that many others will as well. Let us go more deeply into the problem by considering two further examples in some detail.

Each of many persons may choose to drive a private car rather than take a train. Cars offer flexibility in scheduling and in choice of destination; yet at times, in bad weather for example, railway passenger service is a much wanted convenience. Each of many persons may shop in supermarkets rather than at corner grocery stores. The stocks of supermarkets are larger, and their prices lower; yet at times the corner grocery store, offering, say, credit and delivery service, is a much wanted convenience. The result of most people usually driving their own cars and shopping at supermarkets is to reduce passenger service and to decrease the number of corner grocery stores. These results may not be what most people want. They may be willing to pay to prevent services from disappearing. And yet individuals can do nothing to affect the outcomes. Increased patronage *would* do it, but not increased patronage by me and the few others I might persuade to follow my example.

We may well notice that our behavior produces unwanted outcomes, but we are also likely to see that such instances as these are examples of what Alfred E. Kahn describes as "large" changes that are brought about by the accumulation of "small" decisions. In such situations people are victims of the "tyranny of small decisions," a phrase suggesting that "if one hundred consumers choose option x, and this causes the market to make decision X (where X equals 100 x), it is not necessarily true that those same consumers would have voted for that outcome if that large decision had ever been presented for their explicit consideration" (Kahn 1966, p. 523). If the market does not present the large question for decision, then individuals are doomed to making decisions that are sensible within their narrow contexts even though they know all the while that in making such decisions they are bringing about a result that most of them do not want. Either that or they organize to overcome some of the effects of the market by changing its structure—for example, by bringing consumer units roughly up to the size of the units that are making producers' decisions. This nicely makes the point: So long as one leaves the structure unaffected it is not possible for changes in the intentions and the actions of particular actors to produce desirable outcomes or to avoid undesirable ones. Structures may be changed, as just mentioned, by changing the distribution of capabilities across units. Structures may also be changed by imposing requirements where previously people had to decide for themselves. If some merchants sell on Sunday, others may have to do so in order to remain competitive even though most prefer a six-day week. Most are able to do as they please only if all are required to keep comparable hours. The only remedies for strong structural effects are structural changes.

Structural constraints cannot be wished away, although many fail to understand this. In every age and place, the units of self-help systems—nations, corporations, or whatever—are told that the greater good, along with their own, requires them to act for the sake of the system and not for their own narrowly defined advantage. In the 1950s, as fear of the world's destruction in nuclear war grew, some concluded that the alternative to world destruction was world disarmament. In the 1970s, with the rapid growth of population, poverty, and pollution, some concluded, as one political scientist put it, that "states must meet the needs of the political ecosystem in its global dimensions or court annihilation" (Sterling 1974, p. 336). The international interest must be served; and if that means anything at all, it means that national interests are subordinate to it. The problems are found at the global level. Solutions to the problems continue to depend on national policies. What are the conditions that would make nations more or less willing to obey the injunctions that are so often laid on them? How can they resolve the tension between pursuing their own interests and acting for the sake of the system? No one has shown how that can be done, although many wring their hands and plead for rational behavior. The very problem, however, is that rational behavior, given structural constraints, does not lead to the wanted results. With each country constrained to take care of itself, no one can take care of the system.*

A strong sense of peril and doom may lead to a clear definition of ends that must be achieved. Their achievement is not thereby made possible. The possibility of effective action depends on the ability to provide necessary means. It depends even more so on the existence of conditions that permit nations and other organizations to follow appropriate policies and strategies. World-shaking problems cry for global solutions, but there is no global agency to provide them. Necessities do not create possibilities. Wishing that final causes were efficient ones does not make them so.

Great tasks can be accomplished only by agents of great capability. That is why states, and especially the major ones, are called on to do what is necessary for the world's survival. But states have to do whatever they think necessary for their own preservation, since no one can be relied on to do it for them. Why the advice to place the international interest above national interests is meaningless can be explained precisely in terms of the distinction between micro- and macro-

*Put differently, states face a "prisoners' dilemma." If each of two parties follows his own interest, both end up worse off than if each acted to achieve joint interests. For thorough examination of the logic of such situations, see Snyder and Diesing 1977; for brief and suggestive international applications, see Jervis, January 1978.

theories. Among economists the distinction is well understood. Among political scientists it is not. As I have explained, a microeconomic theory is a theory of the market built up from assumptions about the behavior of individuals. The theory shows how the actions and interactions of the units form and affect the market and how the market in turn affects them. A macrotheory is a theory about the national economy built on supply, income, and demand as systemwide aggregates. The theory shows how these and other aggregates are interconnected and indicates how changes in one or some of them affect others and the performance of the economy. In economics, both micro- and macrotheories deal with large realms. The difference between them is found not in the size of the objects of study, but in the way the objects of study are approached and the theory to explain them is constructed. A macrotheory of international politics would show how the international system is moved by system-wide aggregates. One can imagine what some of them might be—amount of world GNP, amount of world imports and exports, of deaths in war, of everybody's defense spending, and of migration, for example. The theory would look something like a macroeconomic theory in the style of John Maynard Keynes, although it is hard to see how the international aggregates would make much sense and how changes in one or some of them would produce changes in others. I am not saying that such a theory cannot be constructed, but only that I cannot see how to do it in any way that might be useful. The decisive point, anyway, is that a macrotheory of international politics would lack the practical implications of macroeconomic theory. National governments can manipulate system-wide economic variables. No agencies with comparable capabilities exist internationally. Who would act on the possibilities of adjustment that a macrotheory of international politics might reveal? Even were such a theory available, we would still be stuck with nations as the only agents capable of acting to solve global problems. We would still have to revert to a micropolitical approach in order to examine the conditions that make benign and effective action by states separately and collectively more or less likely.

Some have hoped that changes in the awareness and purpose, in the organization and ideology, of states would change the quality of international life. Over the centuries states have changed in many ways, but the quality of international life has remained much the same. States may seek reasonable and worthy ends, but they cannot figure out how to reach them. The problem is not in their stupidity or ill will, although one does not want to claim that those qualities are lacking. The depth of the difficulty is not understood until one realizes that intelligence and goodwill cannot discover and act on adequate programs. Early in this century Winston Churchill observed that the British-German naval race promised disaster *and* that Britain had no realistic choice other than to run it. States facing global problems are like individual consumers trapped by the "tyranny of small decisions." States, like consumers, can get out of the trap only by changing the structure of their field of activity. The message bears repeating: The only remedy for a strong structural effect is a structural change.

4. THE VIRTUES OF ANARCHY

To achieve their objectives and maintain their security, units in a condition of anarchy—be they people, corporations, states, or whatever—must rely on the means they can generate and the arrangements they can make for themselves. Self-help is necessarily the principle of action in an anarchic order. A self-help situation is one of high risk—of bankruptcy in the economic realm and of war in a world of free states. It is also one in which organizational costs are low. Within an economy or within an international order, risks may be avoided or lessened by moving from a situation of coordinate action to one of super- and subordination, that is, by erecting agencies with effective authority and extending a system of rules. Government emerges where the functions of regulation and management themselves become distinct and specialized tasks. The costs of maintaining a hierarchic order are frequently ignored by those who deplore its absence. Organizations have at least two aims: to get something done and to maintain themselves as organizations. Many of their activities are directed toward the second purpose. The leaders of organizations, and political leaders preeminently, are not masters of the matters their organizations deal with. They have become leaders not by being experts on one thing or another but by excelling in the organizational arts—in maintaining control of a group's members, in eliciting predictable and satisfactory efforts from them, in holding a group together. In making political decisions, the first and most important concern is not to achieve the aims the members of an organization may have but to secure the continuity and health of the organization itself (cf. Diesing 1962, pp. 198–204; Downs 1967, pp. 262–70).

Along with the advantages of hierarchic orders go the costs. In hierarchic orders, moreover, the means of control become an object of struggle. Substantive issues become entwined with efforts to influence or control the controllers. The hierarchic ordering of politics adds one to the already numerous objects of struggle, and the object added is at a new order of magnitude.

If the risks of war are unbearably high, can they be reduced by organizing to manage the affairs of nations? At a minimum, management requires controlling the military forces that are at the disposal of states. Within nations, organizations have to work to maintain themselves. As organizations, nations, in working to maintain themselves, sometimes have to use force against dissident elements and areas. As hierarchical systems, governments nationally or globally are disrupted by the defection of major parts. In a society of states with little coherence, attempts at world government would founder on the inability of an emerging cen-

tral authority to mobilize the resources needed to create and maintain the unity of the system by regulating and managing its parts. The prospect of world government would be an invitation to prepare for world civil war. This calls to mind Milovan Djilas's reminiscence of World War II. According to him, he and many Russian soldiers in their wartime discussions came to believe that human struggles would acquire their ultimate bitterness if all men were subject to the same social system, "for the system would be untenable as such and various sects would undertake the reckless destruction of the human race for the sake of its greater 'happiness' " (1962, p. 50). States cannot entrust managerial powers to a central agency unless that agency is able to protect its client states. The more powerful the clients and the more the power of each of them appears as a threat to the others, the greater the power lodged in the center must be. The greater the power of the center, the stronger the incentive for states to engage in a struggle to control it.

States, like people, are insecure in proportion to the extent of their freedom. If freedom is wanted, insecurity must be accepted. Organizations that establish relations of authority and control may increase security as they decrease freedom. If might does not make right, whether among people or states, then some institution or agency has intervened to lift them out of nature's realm. The more influential the agency, the stronger the desire to control it becomes. In contrast, units in an anarchic order act for their own sakes and not for the sake of preserving an organization and furthering their fortunes within it. Force is used for one's own interest. In the absence of organization, people or states are free to leave one another alone. Even when they do not do so, they are better able, in the absence of the politics of the organization, to concentrate on the politics of the problem and to aim for a minimum agreement that will permit their separate existence rather than a maximum agreement for the sake of maintaining unity. If might decides, then bloody struggles over right can more easily be avoided.

Nationally, the force of a government is exercised in the name of right and justice. Internationally, the force of a state is employed for the sake of its own protection and advantage. Rebels challenge a government's claim to authority; they question the rightfulness of its rule. Wars among states cannot settle questions of authority and right; they can only determine the allocation of gains and losses among contenders and settle for a time the question of who is the stronger. Nationally, relations of authority are established. Internationally, only relations of strength result. Nationally, private force used against a government threatens the political system. Force used by a state—a public body—is, from the international perspective, the private use of force; but there is no government to overthrow and no governmental apparatus to capture. Short of a drive toward world hegemony, the private use of force does not threaten the system of international politics, only some of its members. War pits some states against others in a

struggle among similarly constituted entities. The power of the strong may deter the weak from asserting their claims, not because the weak recognize a kind of rightfulness of rule on the part of the strong, but simply because it is not sensible to tangle with them. Conversely, the weak may enjoy considerable freedom of action if they are so far removed in their capabilities from the strong that the latter are not much bothered by their actions or much concerned by marginal increases in their capabilities.

National politics is the realm of authority, of administration, and of law. International politics is the realm of power, of struggle, and of accommodation. The international realm is preeminently a political one. The national realm is variously described as being hierarchic, vertical, centralized, heterogeneous, directed, and contrived; the international realm, as being anarchic, horizontal, decentralized, homogeneous, undirected, and mutually adaptive. The more centralized the order, the nearer to the top the locus of decisions ascends. Internationally, decisions are made at the bottom level, there being scarcely any other. In the vertical horizontal dichotomy, international structures assume the prone position. Adjustments are made internationally, but they are made without a formal or authoritative adjuster. Adjustment and accommodation proceed by mutual adaptation (cf. Barnard 1948, pp. 148–52; Polanyi 1941, pp. 428–56). Action and reaction, and reaction to the reaction, proceed by a piecemeal process. The parties feel each other out, so to speak, and define a situation simultaneously with its development. Among coordinate units, adjustment is achieved and accommodations arrived at by the exchange of "considerations," in a condition, as Chester Barnard put it, "in which the duty of command and the desire to obey are essentially absent" (pp. 150–51). Where the contest is over considerations, the parties seek to maintain or improve their positions by maneuvering, by bargaining, or by fighting. The manner and intensity of the competition is determined by the desires and the abilities of parties that are at once separate and interacting.

Whether or not by force, each state plots the course it thinks will best serve its interests. If force is used by one state or its use is expected, the recourse of other states is to use force or be prepared to use it singly or in combination. No appeal can be made to a higher entity clothed with the authority and equipped with the ability to act on its own initiative. Under such conditions the possibility that force will be used by one or another of the parties looms always as a threat in the background. In politics force is said to be the *ultima ratio*. In international politics force serves, not only as the *ultima ratio*, but indeed as the first and constant one. To limit force to being the *ultima ratio* of politics implies, in the words of Ortega y Gasset, "the previous submission of force to methods of reason" (quoted in Johnson 1966, p. 13). The constant possibility that force will be used limits manipulations, moderates demands, and serves as an incentive for the

settlement of disputes. One who knows that pressing too hard may lead to war has strong reason to consider whether possible gains are worth the risks entailed. The threat of force internationally is comparable to the role of the strike in labor and management bargaining. "The few strikes that take place are in a sense," as Livernash has said, "the cost of the strike option which produces settlements in the large mass of negotiations" (1963, p. 430). Even if workers seldom strike, their doing so is always a possibility. The possibility of industrial disputes leading to long and costly strikes encourages labor and management to face difficult issues, to try to understand each other's problems, and to work hard to find accommodations. The possibility that conflicts among nations may lead to long and costly wars has similarly sobering effects.

5. ANARCHY AND HIERARCHY

I have described anarchies and hierarchies as though every political order were of one type or the other. Many, and I suppose most, political scientists who write of structures allow for a greater, and sometimes for a bewildering, variety of types. Anarchy is seen as one end of a continuum whose other end is marked by the presence of a legitimate and competent government. International politics is then described as being flecked with particles of government and alloyed with elements of community—supranational organizations whether universal or regional, alliances, multinational corporations, networks of trade, and what not. International-political systems are thought of as being more or less anarchic.

Those who view the world as a modified anarchy do so, it seems, for two reasons. First, anarchy is taken to mean not just the absence of government but also the presence of disorder and chaos. Since world politics, although not reliably peaceful, falls short of unrelieved chaos, students are inclined to see a lessening of anarchy in each outbreak of peace. Since world politics, although not formally organized, is not entirely without institutions and orderly procedures, students are inclined to see a lessening of anarchy when alliances form, when transactions across national borders increase, and when international agencies multiply. Such views confuse structure with process, and I have drawn attention to that error often enough.

Second, the two simple categories of anarchy and hierarchy do not seem to accommodate the infinite social variety our senses record. Why insist on reducing the types of structure to two instead of allowing for a greater variety? Anarchies are ordered by the juxtaposition of similar units, but those similar units are not identical. Some specialization by function develops among them. Hierarchies are ordered by the social division of labor among units specializing in different tasks, but the resemblance of units does not vanish. Much duplication of effort continues. All societies are organized segmentally or hierarchically in greater or

lesser degree. Why not, then, define additional social types according to the mixture of organizing principles they embody? One might conceive of some societies approaching the purely anarchic, of others approaching the purely hierarchic, and of still others reflecting specified mixes of the two organizational types. In anarchies the exact likeness of units and the determination of relations by capability alone would describe a realm wholly of politics and power with none of the interaction of units guided by administration and conditioned by authority. In hierarchies the complete differentiation of parts and the full specification of their functions would produce a realm wholly of authority and administration with none of the interaction of parts affected by politics and power. Although such pure orders do not exist, to distinguish realms by their organizing principles is nevertheless proper and important.

Increasing the number of categories would bring the classification of societies closer to reality. But that would be to move away from a theory claiming explanatory power to a less theoretical system promising greater descriptive accuracy. One who wishes to explain rather than to describe should resist moving in that direction if resistance is reasonable. Is it? What does one gain by insisting on two types when admitting three or four would still be to simplify boldly? One gains clarity and economy of concepts. A new concept should be introduced only to cover matters that existing concepts do not reach. If some societies are neither anarchic nor hierarchic, if their structures are defined by some third ordering principle, then we would have to define a third system.* All societies are mixed. Elements in them represent both of the ordering principles. That does not mean that some societies are ordered according to a third principle. Usually one can easily identify the principle by which a society is ordered. The appearance of anarchic sectors within hierarchies does not alter and should not obscure the ordering principle of the larger system, for those sectors are anarchic only within limits. The attributes and behavior of the units populating those sectors within the larger system differ, moreover, from what they would be and how they would behave outside of it. Firms in oligopolistic markets again are perfect examples of this. They struggle against one another, but because they need not prepare to defend themselves physically, they can afford to specialize and to participate more fully in the division of economic labor than states can. Nor do the states that populate an anarchic world find it impossible to work with one another, to make agreements limiting their arms, and to cooperate in establishing organizations. Hierarchic elements within international structures limit and restrain the

*Emile Durkheim's depiction of solidary and mechanical societies still provides the best explication of the two ordering principles, and his logic in limiting the types of society to two continues to be compelling despite the efforts of his many critics to overthrow it (see esp. 1893). I shall discuss the problem at some length in a future work.

exercise of sovereignty but only in ways strongly conditioned by the anarchy of the larger system. The anarchy of that order strongly affects the likelihood of cooperation, the extent of arms agreements, and the jurisdiction of international organizations.

But what about borderline cases, societies that are neither clearly anarchic nor clearly hierarchic? Do they not represent a third type? To say that there are borderline cases is not to say that at the border a third type of system appears. All categories have borders, and if we have any categories at all, we have borderline cases. Clarity of concepts does not eliminate difficulties of classification. Was China from the 1920s to the 1940s a hierarchic or an anarchic realm? Nominally a nation, China looked more like a number of separate states existing alongside one another. Mao Tse-tung in 1930, like Bolshevik leaders earlier, thought that striking a revolutionary spark would "start a prairie fire." Revolutionary flames would spread across China, if not throughout the world. Because the interdependence of China's provinces, like the interdependence of nations, was insufficiently close, the flames failed to spread. So nearly autonomous were China's provinces that the effects of war in one part of the country were only weakly registered in other parts. Battles in the Hunan hills, far from sparking a national revolution, were hardly noticed in neighboring provinces. The interaction of largely self-sufficient provinces was slight and sporadic. Dependent neither on one another economically nor on the nation's center politically, they were not subject to the close interdependence characteristic of organized and integrated polities.

As a practical matter, observers may disagree in their answers to such questions as just when did China break down into anarchy, or whether the countries of Western Europe are slowly becoming one state or stubbornly remaining nine. The point of theoretical importance is that our expectations about the fate of those areas differ widely depending on which answer to the structural question becomes the right one. Structures defined according to two distinct ordering principles help to explain important aspects of social and political behavior. That is shown in various ways in the following pages. This section has explained why two, and only two, types of structure are needed to cover societies of all sorts.

II

How can a theory of international politics be constructed? Just as any theory must be. As Chapters 1 and 4 explain, first, one must conceive of international politics as a bounded realm or domain; second, one must discover some law-like regularities within it; and third, one must develop a way of explaining the observed regularities. The first of these was accomplished in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 so far has shown how political structures account for some recurrent aspects of

the behavior of states and for certain repeated and enduring patterns. Wherever agents and agencies are coupled by force and competition rather than by authority and law, we expect to find such behaviors and outcomes. They are closely identified with the approach to politics suggested by the rubric, *Realpolitik*. The elements of *Realpolitik*, exhaustively listed, are these: The ruler's, and later the state's, interest provides the spring of action; the necessities of policy arise from the unregulated competition of states; calculation based on these necessities can discover the policies that will best serve a state's interests; success is the ultimate test of policy, and success is defined as preserving and strengthening the state. Ever since Machiavelli, interest and necessity—and *raison d'état*, the phrase that comprehends them—have remained the key concepts of *Realpolitik*. From Machiavelli through Meinecke and Morgenthau the elements of the approach and the reasoning remain constant. Machiavelli stands so clearly as the exponent of *Realpolitik* that one easily slips into thinking that he developed the closely associated idea of balance of power as well. Although he did not, his conviction that politics can be explained in its own terms established the ground on which balance-of-power theory can be built.

Realpolitik indicates the methods by which foreign policy is conducted and provides a rationale for them. Structural constraints explain why the methods are repeatedly used despite differences in the persons and states who use them. Balance-of-power theory purports to explain the result that such methods produce. Rather, that is what the theory should do. If there is any distinctively political theory of international politics, balance-of-power theory is it. And yet one cannot find a statement of the theory that is generally accepted. Carefully surveying the copious balance-of-power literature, Ernst Haas discovered eight distinct meanings of the term, and Martin Wight found nine (1953, 1966). Hans Morgenthau, in his profound historical and analytic treatment of the subject, makes use of four different definitions (1973). Balance of power is seen by some as being akin to a law of nature; by others, as simply an outrage. Some view it as a guide to statesmen; others as a cloak that disguises their imperialist policies. Some believe that a balance of power is the best guarantee of the security of states and the peace of the world; others, that it has ruined states by causing most of the wars they have fought.*

To believe that one can cut through such confusion may seem quixotic. I shall nevertheless try. It will help to hark back to several basic propositions about theory. (1) A theory contains at least one theoretical assumption. Such assumptions are not factual. One therefore cannot legitimately ask if they are true, but

*Along with the explication of balance-of-power theory in the pages that follow, the reader may wish to consult a historical study of balance-of-power politics in practice. The best brief work is Wight (1973).

only if they are useful. (2) Theories must be evaluated in terms of what they claim to explain. Balance-of-power theory claims to explain the results of states' actions, under given conditions, and those results may not be foreshadowed in any of the actors' motives or be contained as objectives in their policies. (3) Theory, as a general explanatory system, cannot account for particularities.

Most of the confusions in balance-of-power theory, and criticisms of it, derive from misunderstanding these three points. A balance-of-power theory, properly stated, begins with assumptions about states: They are unitary actors who, at a minimum, seek their own preservation and, at a maximum, drive for universal domination. States, or those who act for them, try in more or less sensible ways to use the means available in order to achieve the ends in view. Those means fall into two categories: internal efforts (moves to increase economic capability, to increase military strength, to develop clever strategies) and external efforts (moves to strengthen and enlarge one's own alliance or to weaken and shrink an opposing one). The external game of alignment and realignment requires three or more players, and it is usually said that balance-of-power systems require at least that number. The statement is false, for in a two-power system the politics of balance continue, but the way to compensate for an incipient external disequilibrium is primarily by intensifying one's internal efforts. To the assumptions of the theory we then add the condition for its operation: that two or more states coexist in a self-help system, one with no superior agent to come to the aid of states that may be weakening or to deny to any of them the use of whatever instruments they think will serve their purposes. The theory, then, is built up from the assumed motivations of states and the actions that correspond to them. It describes the constraints that arise from the system that those actions produce, and it indicates the expected outcome: namely, the formation of balances of power. Balance-of-power theory is microtheory precisely in the economist's sense. The system, like a market in economics, is made by the actions and interactions of its units, and the theory is based on assumptions about their behavior.

A self-help system is one in which those who do not help themselves, or who do so less effectively than others, will fail to prosper, will lay themselves open to dangers, will suffer. Fear of such unwanted consequences stimulates states to behave in ways that tend toward the creation of balances of power. Notice that the theory requires no assumptions of rationality or of constancy of will on the part of all of the actors. The theory says simply that if some do relatively well, others will emulate them or fall by the wayside. Obviously, the system won't work if all states lose interest in preserving themselves. It will, however, continue to work if some states do, while others do not, choose to lose their political identities, say, through amalgamation. Nor need it be assumed that all of the competing states are striving relentlessly to increase their power. The possibility that force may be used by some states to weaken or destroy others does, however, make it difficult for them to break out of the competitive system.

The meaning and importance of the theory are made clear by examining prevalent misconceptions of it. Recall our first proposition about theory. A theory contains assumptions that are theoretical, not factual. One of the most common misunderstandings of balance-of-power theory centers on this point. The theory is criticized because its assumptions are erroneous. The following statement can stand for a host of others:

> If nations were in fact unchanging units with no permanent ties to each other, and if all were motivated primarily by a drive to maximize their power, except for a single balancer whose aim was to prevent any nation from achieving preponderant power, a balance of power might in fact result. But we have seen that these assumptions are not correct, and since the assumptions of the theory are wrong, the conclusions are also in error (Organski 1968, p. 292).

The author's incidental error is that he has compounded a sentence some parts of which are loosely stated assumptions of the theory, and other parts not. His basic error lies in misunderstanding what an assumption is. From previous discussion, we know that assumptions are neither true nor false and that they are essential for the construction of theory. We can freely admit that states are in fact not unitary, purposive actors. States pursue many goals, which are often vaguely formulated and inconsistent. They fluctuate with the changing currents of domestic politics, are prey to the vagaries of a shifting cast of political leaders, and are influenced by the outcomes of bureaucratic struggles. But all of this has always been known, and it tells us nothing about the merits of balance-of-power theory.

A further confusion relates to our second proposition about theory. Balance-of-power theory claims to explain a result (the recurrent formation of balances of power), which may not accord with the intentions of any of the units whose actions combine to produce that result. To contrive and maintain a balance may be the aim of one or more states, but then again it may not be. According to the theory, balances of power tend to form whether some or all states consciously aim to establish and maintain a balance, or whether some or all states aim for universal domination.* Yet many, and perhaps most, statements of balance-of-power theory attribute the maintenance of a balance to the separate states as a motive. David Hume, in his classic essay "Of the Balance of Power," offers "the maxim of preserving the balance of power" as a constant rule of prudent politics (1742, pp. 142–44). So it may be, but it has proved to be an unfortunately short

*Looking at states over a wide span of time and space, Dowty concludes that in no case were shifts in alliances produced "by considerations of an overall balance of power" (1969, p. 95).

step from the belief that a high regard for preserving a balance is at the heart of wise statesmanship to the belief that states must follow the maxim if a balance of power is to be maintained. This is apparent in the first of Morgenthau's four definitions of the term: namely, "a policy aimed at a certain state of affairs." The reasoning then easily becomes tautological. If a balance of power is to be maintained, the policies of states must aim to uphold it. If a balance of power is in fact maintained, we can conclude that their aim was accurate. If a balance of power is not produced, we can say that the theory's assumption is erroneous. Finally, and this completes the drift toward the reification of a concept, if the purpose of states is to uphold a balance, the purpose of the balance is "to maintain the stability of the system without destroying the multiplicity of the elements composing it." Reification has obviously occurred where one reads, for example, of the balance operating "successfully" and of the difficulty that nations have in applying it (1973, pp. 167–74, 202–207).

Reification is often merely the loose use of language or the employment of metaphor to make one's prose more pleasing. In this case, however, the theory has been drastically distorted, and not only by introducing the notion that if a balance is to be formed, somebody must want it and must work for it. The further distortion of the theory arises when rules are derived from the results of states' actions and then illogically prescribed to the actors as duties. A possible effect is turned into a necessary cause in the form of a stipulated rule. Thus, it is said, "the balance of power" can "impose its restraints upon the power aspirations of nations" only if they first "restrain themselves by accepting the system of the balance of power as the common framework of their endeavors." Only if states recognize "the same rules of the game" and play "for the same limited stakes" can the balance of power fulfill "its functions for international stability and national independence" (Morgenthau 1973, pp. 219–20).

The closely related errors that fall under our second proposition about theory are, as we have seen, twin traits of the field of international politics: namely, to assume a necessary correspondence of motive and result and to infer rules for the actors from the observed results of their action. What has gone wrong can be made clear by recalling the economic analogy (Chapter 5, part III, 1). In a purely competitive economy, everyone's striving to make a profit drives the profit rate downward. Let the competition continue long enough under static conditions, and everyone's profit will be zero. To infer from that result that everyone, or anyone, is seeking to minimize profit, and that the competitors must adopt that goal as a rule in order for the system to work, would be absurd. And yet in international politics one frequently finds that rules inferred from the results of the interactions of states are prescribed to the actors and are said to be a condition of the system's maintenance. Such errors, often made, are also often pointed out, though seemingly to no avail. S. F. Nadel has put the matter simply:

"an orderliness abstracted from behaviour cannot guide behaviour" (Nadel 1957, p. 148; cf. Durkheim 1893, pp. 366, 418; Shubik 1959, pp. 11, 32).

Analytic reasoning applied where a systems approach is needed leads to the laying down of all sorts of conditions as prerequisites to balances of power forming and tending toward equilibrium and as general preconditions of world stability and peace. Some require that the number of great powers exceed two; others that a major power be willing to play the role of balancer. Some require that military technology not change radically or rapidly; others that the major states abide by arbitrarily specified rules. But balances of power form in the absence of the "necessary" conditions, and since 1945 the world has been stable, and the world of major powers remarkably peaceful, even though international conditions have not conformed to theorists' stipulations. Balance-of-power politics prevail wherever two, and only two, requirements are met: that the order be anarchic and that it be populated by units wishing to survive.

For those who believe that if a result is to be produced, someone, or everyone, must want it and must work for it, it follows that explanation turns ultimately on what the separate states are like. If that is true, then theories at the national level, or lower, will sufficiently explain international politics. If, for example, the equilibrium of a balance is maintained through states abiding by rules, then one needs an explanation of how agreement on the rules is achieved and maintained. One does not need a balance-of-power theory, for balances would result from a certain kind of behavior explained perhaps by a theory about national psychology or bureaucratic politics. A balance-of-power theory could not be constructed because it would have nothing to explain. If the good or bad motives of states result in their maintaining balances or disrupting them, then the notion of a balance of power becomes merely a framework organizing one's account of what happened, and that is indeed its customary use. A construction that starts out to be a theory ends up as a set of categories. Categories then multiply rapidly to cover events that the embryo theory had not contemplated. The quest for explanatory power turns into a search for descriptive adequacy.

Finally, and related to our third proposition about theory in general, balance-of-power theory is often criticized because it does not explain the particular policies of states. True, the theory does not tell us why state X made a certain move last Tuesday. To expect it to do so would be like expecting the theory of universal gravitation to explain the wayward path of a falling leaf. A theory at one level of generality cannot answer questions about matters at a different level of generality. Failure to notice this is one error on which the criticism rests. Another is to mistake a theory of international politics for a theory of foreign policy. Confusion about the explanatory claims made by a properly stated balance-of-power theory is rooted in the uncertainty of the distinction drawn between national and international politics or in the denials that the distinction

should be made. For those who deny the distinction, for those who devise explanations that are entirely in terms of interacting units, explanations of international politics *are* explanations of foreign policy, and explanations of foreign policy *are* explanations of international politics. Others mix their explanatory claims and confuse the problem of understanding international politics with the problem of understanding foreign policy. Morgenthau, for example, believes that problems of predicting foreign policy and of developing theories about it make international-political theories difficult, if not impossible, to contrive (1970b, pp. 253–58). But the difficulties of explaining foreign policy work against contriving theories of international politics only if the latter reduces to the former. Graham Allison betrays a similar confusion. His three "models" purport to offer alternative approaches to the study of international politics. Only model I, however, is an approach to the study of international politics. Models II and III are approaches to the study of foreign policy. Offering the bureaucratic-politics approach as an alternative to the state-as-an-actor approach is like saying that a theory of the firm is an alternative to a theory of the market, a mistake no competent economist would make (1971; cf. Allison and Halperin 1972). If Morgenthau and Allison were economists and their thinking continued to follow the same pattern, they would have to argue that the uncertainties of corporate policy work against the development of market theory. They have confused and merged two quite different matters.*

Any theory covers some matters and leaves other matters aside. Balance-of-power theory is a theory about the results produced by the uncoordinated actions of states. The theory makes assumptions about the interests and motives of states, rather than explaining them. What it does explain are the constraints that confine all states. The clear perception of constraints provides many clues to the expected reactions of states, but by itself the theory cannot explain those reactions. They depend not only on international constraints but also on the characteristics of states. How will a particular state react? To answer that question we need not only a theory of the market, so to speak, but also a theory about the firms that compose it. What will a state have to react to? Balance-of-power theory can give general and useful answers to that question. The theory explains why a certain similarity of behavior is expected from similarly situated states. The expected behavior is similar, not identical. To explain the expected differences in national responses, a theory would have to show how the different internal structures of states affect their external policies and actions. A theory of

*The confusion is widespread and runs both ways. Thus Herbert Simon thinks the goal of classical economic theorists is unattainable because he wrongly believes that they were trying "to predict the behavior of rational man without making an empirical investigation of his psychological properties" (1957, p. 199).

foreign policy would not predict the detailed content of policy but instead would lead to different expectations about the tendencies and styles of different countries' policies. Because the national and the international levels are linked, theories of both types, if they are any good, tell us some things, but not the same things, about behavior and outcomes at both levels (cf. the second parts of Chapters 4 and 5).

III

In the previous chapter, I constructed a systems theory of international politics. In this chapter, I have stated balance-of-power theory as a further development of that theory. In the next three chapters, I shall refine the theory by showing how expectations vary with changes in the structure of international systems. At this point I pause to ask how good the theory so far developed is.

Before subjecting a theory to tests, one asks whether the theory is internally consistent and whether it tells us some things of interest that we would not know in its absence. That the theory meets those requirements does not mean that it can survive tests. Many people prefer tests that, if flunked, falsify a theory. Some people, following Karl Popper (1934, Chapter 1), insist that theories are tested only by attempting to falsify them. Confirmations do not count because, among other reasons, confirming cases may be offered as proof while consciously or not cases likely to confound the theory are avoided. This difficulty, I suggest later, is lessened by choosing hard cases—situations, for example, in which parties have strong reasons to behave contrary to the predictions of one's theory. Confirmations are also rejected because numerous tests that appear to confirm a theory are negated by one falsifying instance. The conception of theory presented in Chapter 1, however, opens the possibility of devising tests that confirm. If a theory depicts a domain, and displays its organization and the connections among its parts, then we can compare features of the observed domain with the picture the theory has limned (cf. Harris 1970). We can ask whether expected behaviors and outcomes are repeatedly found where the conditions contemplated by the theory obtain.

Structural theories, moreover, gain plausibility if similarities of behavior are observed across realms that are different in substance but similar in structure, and if differences of behavior are observed where realms are similar in substance but different in structure. This special advantage is won: International-political theory gains credibility from the confirmation of certain theories in economics, sociology, anthropology, and other such nonpolitical fields.

Testing theories, of course, always means inferring expectations, or hypotheses, from them and testing those expectations. Testing theories is a difficult and subtle task, made so by the interdependence of fact and theory, by the

elusive relation between reality and theory as an instrument for its apprehension. Questions of truth and falsity are somehow involved, but so are questions of usefulness and uselessness. In the end, one sticks with the theory that reveals most, even if its validity is suspect. I shall say more about the acceptance and rejection of theories elsewhere. Here I say only enough to make the relevance of a few examples of theory testing clear. Others can then easily be thought of. Many are provided in the first part of this chapter and in all parts of the next three, although I have not always labeled them as tests or put them in testable form.

Tests are easy to think up, once one has a theory to test, but they are hard to carry through. Given the difficulty of testing any theory, and the added difficulty of testing theories in such nonexperimental fields as international politics, we should exploit all of the ways of testing I have mentioned—by trying to falsify, by devising hard confirmatory tests, by comparing features of the real and the theoretical worlds, by comparing behaviors in realms of similar and of different structure. Any good theory raises many expectations. Multiplying hypotheses and varying tests are all the more important because the results of testing theories are necessarily problematic. That a single hypothesis appears to hold true may not be very impressive. A theory becomes plausible if many hypotheses inferred from it are successfully subjected to tests.

Knowing a little bit more about testing, we can now ask whether expectations drawn from our theory can survive subjection to tests. What will some of the expectations be? Two that are closely related arise in the above discussion. According to the theory, balances of power recurrently form, and states tend to emulate the successful policies of others. Can these expectations be subjected to tests? In principle, the answer is "yes." Within a given arena and over a number of years, we should find the military power of weaker and smaller states or groupings of states growing more rapidly, or shrinking more slowly, than that of stronger and larger ones. And we should find widespread imitation among competing states. In practice, to check such expectations against historical observations is difficult.

Two problems are paramount. First, though balance-of-power theory offers some predictions, the predictions are indeterminate. Because only a loosely defined and inconstant condition of balance is predicted, it is difficult to say that any given distribution of power falsifies the theory. The theory, moreover, does not lead one to expect that emulation among states will proceed to the point where competitors become identical. What will be imitated, and how quickly and closely? Because the theory does not give precise answers, falsification again is difficult. Second, although states may be disposed to react to international constraints and incentives in accordance with the theory's expectations, the policies and actions of states are also shaped by their internal conditions. The failure of balances to form, and the failure of some states to conform to the successful practices of other states, can too easily be explained away by pointing to effects produced by forces that lie outside of the theory's purview.

In the absence of theoretical refinements that fix expectations with certainty and in detail, what can we do? As I have just suggested, and as the sixth rule for testing theories set forth in Chapter 1 urges, we should make tests ever more difficult. If we observe outcomes that the theory leads us to expect even though strong forces work against them, the theory will begin to command belief. To confirm the theory one should not look mainly to the eighteenth-century heyday of the balance of power when great powers in convenient numbers interacted and were presumably able to adjust to a shifting distribution of power by changing partners with a grace made possible by the absence of ideological and other cleavages. Instead, one should seek confirmation through observation of difficult cases. One should, for example, look for instances of states allying, in accordance with the expectations the theory gives rise to, even though they have strong reasons not to cooperate with one another. The alliance of France and Russia, made formal in 1894, is one such instance (see Chapter 8, part I). One should, for example, look for instances of states making internal efforts to strengthen themselves, however distasteful or difficult such efforts might be. The United States and the Soviet Union following World War II provide such instances: the United States by rearming despite having demonstrated a strong wish not to by dismantling the most powerful military machine the world had ever known; the Soviet Union by maintaining about three million men under arms while striving to acquire a costly new military technology despite the terrible destruction she had suffered in war.

These examples tend to confirm the theory. We find states forming balances of power whether or not they wish to. They also show the difficulties of testing. Germany and Austria-Hungary formed their Dual Alliance in 1879. Since detailed inferences cannot be drawn from the theory, we cannot say just when other states are expected to counter this move. France and Russia waited until 1894. Does this show the theory false by suggesting that states may or may not be brought into balance? We should neither quickly conclude that it does nor lightly chalk the delayed response off to "friction." Instead, we should examine diplomacy and policy in the 15-year interval to see whether the theory serves to explain and broadly predict the actions and reactions of states and to see whether the delay is out of accord with the theory. Careful judgment is needed. For this, historians' accounts serve better than the historical summary I might provide.

The theory leads us to expect states to behave in ways that result in balances forming. To infer that expectation from the theory is not impressive if balancing is a universal pattern of political behavior, as is sometimes claimed. It is not. Whether political actors balance each other or climb on the bandwagon depends on the system's structure. Political parties, when choosing their presidential candidates, dramatically illustrate both points. When nomination time

approaches and no one is established as the party's strong favorite, a number of would-be leaders contend. Some of them form coalitions to check the progress of others. The maneuvering and balancing of would-be leaders when the party lacks one is like the external behavior of states. But this is the pattern only during the leaderless period. As soon as someone looks like the winner, nearly all jump on the bandwagon rather than continuing to build coalitions intended to prevent anyone from winning the prize of power. Bandwagoning, not balancing, becomes the characteristic behavior.*

Bandwagoning and balancing behavior are in sharp contrast. Internally, losing candidates throw in their lots with the winner. Everyone wants someone to win; the members of a party want a leader established even while they disagree on who it should be. In a competition for the position of leader, bandwagoning is sensible behavior where gains are possible even for the losers and where losing does not place their security in jeopardy. Externally, states work harder to increase their own strength, or they combine with others, if they are falling behind. In a competition for the position of leader, balancing is sensible behavior where the victory of one coalition over another leaves weaker members of the winning coalition at the mercy of the stronger ones. Nobody wants anyone else to win; none of the great powers wants one of their number to emerge as the leader.

If two coalitions form and one of them weakens, perhaps because of the political disorder of a member, we expect the extent of the other coalition's military preparation to slacken or its unity to lessen. The classic example of the latter effect is the breaking apart of a war-winning coalition in or just after the moment of victory. We do not expect the strong to combine with the strong in order to increase the extent of their power over others, but rather to square off and look for allies who might help them. In anarchy, security is the highest end. Only if survival is assured can states safely seek such other goals as tranquility, profit, and power. Because power is a means and not an end, states prefer to join the weaker of two coalitions. They cannot let power, a possibly useful means, become the end they pursue. The goal the system encourages them to seek is security. Increased power may or may not serve that end. Given two coalitions, for example, the greater success of one in drawing members to it may tempt the other to risk preventive war, hoping for victory through surprise before disparities widen. If states wished to maximize power, they would join the stronger side, and we would see not balances forming but a world hegemony forged. This does not happen because balancing, not bandwagoning, is the behavior induced by the system. The first concern of states is not to maximize power but to maintain their positions in the system.

*Stephen Van Evera suggested using "bandwagoning" to serve as the opposite of "balancing."

Secondary states, if they are free to choose, flock to the weaker side; for it is the stronger side that threatens them. On the weaker side, they are both more appreciated and safer, provided, of course, that the coalition they join achieves enough defensive or deterrent strength to dissuade adversaries from attacking. Thus Thucydides records that in the Peloponnesian War the lesser city states of Greece cast the stronger Athens as the tyrant and the weaker Sparta as their liberator (circa 400 B.C., Book v, Chapter 17). According to Werner Jaeger, Thucydides thought this "perfectly natural in the circumstances," but saw "that the parts of tyrant and liberator did not correspond with any permanent moral quality in these states but were simply masks which would one day be interchanged to the astonishment of the beholder when the balance of power was altered" (1939, I, 397). This shows a nice sense of how the placement of states affects their behavior and even colors their characters. It also supports the proposition that states balance power rather than maximize it. States can seldom afford to make maximizing power their goal. International politics is too serious a business for that.

The theory depicts international politics as a competitive realm. Do states develop the characteristics that competitors are expected to display? The question poses another test for the theory. The fate of each state depends on its responses to what other states do. The possibility that conflict will be conducted by force leads to competition in the arts and the instruments of force. Competition produces a tendency toward the sameness of the competitors. Thus Bismarck's startling victories over Austria in 1866 and over France in 1870 quickly led the major continental powers (and Japan) to imitate the Prussian military staff system, and the failure of Britain and the United States to follow the pattern simply indicated that they were outside the immediate arena of competition. Contending states imitate the military innovations contrived by the country of greatest capability and ingenuity. And so the weapons of major contenders, and even their strategies, begin to look much the same all over the world. Thus at the turn of the century Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz argued successfully for building a battleship fleet on the grounds that Germany could challenge Britian at sea only with a naval doctrine and weapons similar to hers (Art 1973, p. 16).

The effects of competition are not confined narrowly to the military realm. Socialization to the system should also occur. Does it? Again, because we can almost always find confirming examples if we look hard, we try to find cases that are unlikely to lend credence to the theory. One should look for instances of states conforming to common international practices even though for internal reasons they would prefer not to. The behavior of the Soviet Union in its early years is one such instance. The Bolsheviks in the early years of their power preached international revolution and flouted the conventions of diplomacy. They were saying, in effect, "we will not be socialized to this system." The atti-

tude was well expressed by Trotsky, who, when asked what he would do as foreign minister, replied, "I will issue some revolutionary proclamations to the peoples and then close up the joint" (quoted in Von Laue 1963, p. 235). In a competitive arena, however, one party may need the assistance of others. Refusal to play the political game may risk one's own destruction. The pressures of competition were rapidly felt and reflected in the Soviet Union's diplomacy. Thus Lenin, sending foreign minister Chicherin to the Genoa Conference of 1922, bade him farewell with this caution: "Avoid big words" (quoted in Moore 1950, p. 204). Chicherin, who personified the carefully tailored traditional diplomat rather than the simply uniformed revolutionary, was to refrain from inflammatory rhetoric for the sake of working deals. These he successfully completed with that other pariah power and ideological enemy, Germany.

The close juxtaposition of states promotes their sameness through the disadvantages that arise from a failure to conform to successful practices. It is this "sameness," an effect of the system, that is so often attributed to the acceptance of so-called rules of state behavior. Chiliastic rulers occasionally come to power. In power, most of them quickly change their ways. They can refuse to do so, and yet hope to survive, only if they rule countries little affected by the competition of states. The socialization of nonconformist states proceeds at a pace that is set by the extent of their involvement in the system. And that is another testable statement.

The theory leads to many expectations about behaviors and outcomes. From the theory, one predicts that states will engage in balancing behavior, whether or not balanced power is the end of their acts. From the theory, one predicts a strong tendency toward balance in the system. The expectation is not that a balance, once achieved, will be maintained, but that a balance, once disrupted, will be restored in one way or another. Balances of power recurrently form. Since the theory depicts international politics as a competitive system, one predicts more specifically that states will display characteristics common to competitors: namely, that they will imitate each other and become socialized to their system. In this chapter, I have suggested ways of making these propositions more specific and concrete so as to test them. In remaining chapters, as the theory is elaborated and refined, additional testable propositions will appear.

7

Structural Causes and Economic Effects

Chapter 6 compared national and international systems and showed how behavior and outcomes vary from one system to another. Chapter 7, 8, and 9 compare different international systems and show how behavior and outcomes vary in systems whose ordering principles endure but whose structures vary through changes in the distribution of capabilities across states. The question posed in this chapter is whether we should prefer larger or smaller numbers of great powers. Part I carries the theory further. Part II moves from theory to practice.*

I

1. COUNTING POLES AND MEASURING POWER

How should we count poles, and how can we measure power? These questions must be answered in order to identify variations of structure. Almost everyone agrees that at some time since the war the world was bipolar. Few seem to believe that it remains so. For years Walter Lippmann wrote of the bipolar world as being perpetually in the process of rapidly passing away (e.g., 1950 and 1963). Many others now carry on the tradition he so firmly established. To reach the conclusion that bipolarity is passing, or past, requires some odd counting. The inclination to count in funny ways is rooted in the desire to arrive at a particular answer. Scholars feel a strong affection for the balance-of-power world of Metternich and Bismarck, on which many of their theoretical notions rest. That was a world in which five or so great powers manipulated their neighbors and maneuvered for advantage. Great powers were once defined according to their capabilities. Students of international politics now seem to look at other conditions. The ability or inability of states to solve problems is said to raise or lower their rankings. The

*Some parts of this chapter and the next one were written as a study of interdependence for the Department of State, whose views may differ from mine.

relations of states may be examined instead of their capabilities, and since the former are always multilateral, the world is said to be multipolar. Thus the dissolution of blocs was said to signal the end of bipolarity even though to infer bipolarity from the existence of blocs in itself confuses the relations with the capabilities of states. The world was never bipolar because two blocs opposed each other, but because of the preeminence of bloc leaders.

In addition to confusion about what to count, one often finds that those who try to identify great powers by gauging their capabilities make their measurements strangely. Of all the ways of playing the numbers game the favorite is probably this: to separate the economic, military, and political capabilities of nations in gauging their ability to act. Henry Kissinger, for example, while Secretary of State, observed that although militarily "there are two superpowers," economically "there are at least five major groupings." Power is no longer "homogeneous." Throughout history, he added, "military, economic, and political potential were closely related. To be powerful a nation had to be strong in all categories." This is no longer so. "Military muscle does not guarantee political influence. Economic giants can be militarily weak, and military strength may not be able to obscure economic weakness. Countries can exert political influence even when they have neither military nor economic strength" (October 10, 1973, p. 7). If the different capabilities of a nation no longer reinforce each other, one can focus on a nation's strengths and overlook its weaknesses. Nations are then said to be superpowers even though they have only some of the previously required characteristics. China has more than 800 million people; Japan has a strong economy; Western Europe has the population and the resources and lacks only political existence. As commonly, the wanted number of great powers is reached by projecting the future into the present. When Europe unites . . . ; if Japan's economy continues to grow . . . ; once China's industrious people have developed their resources. . . . And then, although the imagined future lies some decades ahead, we hear that the world is no longer bipolar. A further variant is to infer another country's status from our policy toward it (cf. my comments on Hoffmann, above, Chapter 3, part II). Thus Nixon, when he was President, slipped easily from talking of China's becoming a superpower to conferring superpower status on her. In one of the statements that smoothed the route to Peking, he accomplished this in two paragraphs (August 5, 1971, p. 16). And the headlines of various news stories before, during, and after his visit confirmed China's new rank. This was the greatest act of creation since Adam and Eve, and a true illustration of the superpower status of the United States. A country becomes a superpower if we treat it like one. We create other states in our image.

Many of those who have recently hailed the world's return to multipolarity have not unexpectedly done so because they confuse structure and process. How are capabilities distributed? What are the likely results of a given distribution?

These are distinct questions. The difficulty of counting poles is rooted in the failure to observe the distinction. A systems theory requires one to define structures partly by the distribution of capabilities across units. States, because they are in a self-help system, have to use their combined capabilities in order to serve their interests. The economic, military, and other capabilities of nations cannot be sectored and separately weighed. States are not placed in the top rank because they excel in one way or another. Their rank depends on how they score on *all* of the following items: size of population and territory, resource endowment, economic capability, military strength, political stability and competence. States spend a lot of time estimating one another's capabilities, especially their abilities to do harm. States have different combinations of capabilities which are difficult to measure and compare, the more so since the weight to be assigned to different items changes with time. We should not be surprised if wrong answers are sometimes arrived at. Prussia startled most foreigners, and most Prussians, by the speed and extent of her victories over Austria in 1866 and over France in 1870. Ranking states, however, does not require predicting their success in war or in other endeavors. We need only rank them roughly by capability. Any ranking at times involves difficulties of comparison and uncertainties about where to draw lines. Historically, despite the difficulties, one finds general agreement about who the great powers of a period are, with occasional doubt about marginal cases. The recent inordinate difficulty of counting great powers arose not from problems of measurement but from confusion about how polarities should be defined.

Counting the great powers of an era is about as difficult, or as easy, as saying how many major firms populate an oligopolistic sector of an economy. The question is an empirical one, and common sense can answer it. Economists agree that, even when the total number of firms in a sector is large, their interactions can be understood, though not fully predicted, through theories about oligopoly if the number of consequential firms reduces to a small number by virtue of the preeminence of a few of them. International politics can be viewed in the same way. The 150-odd states in the world appear to form a system of fairly large numbers. Given the inequality of nations, however, the number of consequential states is small. From the Treaty of Westphalia to the present, eight major states at most have sought to coexist peacefully or have contended for mastery. Viewed as the politics of the powerful, international politics can be studied in terms of the logic of small-number systems.

2. THE VIRTUES OF INEQUALITY

The logic of small-number systems applies internationally because of the imbalance of capabilities between each of the few larger states and the many smaller ones. This imbalance of power is a danger to weak states. It may also be a danger

to strong ones. An imbalance of power, by feeding the ambition of some states to extend their control, may tempt them to dangerously adventurous activity. Safety for all states, one may conclude, depends on the maintenance of a balance among them. Ideally, in this view, the rough equality of states gives each of them the ability to fend for itself. Equality may then also be viewed as a morally desirable condition. Each of the states within the arena of balance will have at least a modest ability to maintain its integrity. Inequality, moreover, violates one's sense of justice and leads to national resentments that are in many ways troublesome. On such grounds, one may prefer systems having large numbers of great powers. Inequality, however, is inherent in the state system; it cannot be removed. At the pinnacle of power, no more than small numbers of states have ever coexisted as approximate equals; in relation to them, other states have always been of lesser moment.

The bothersome qualities of the inevitable inequality of states should not cause one to overlook its virtues. In an economy, in a polity, or in the world at large, extreme equality is associated with instability. To draw a domestic analogy: Where individualism is extreme, where society is atomistic, and where secondary organizations are lacking, governments tend either to break down into anarchy or to become highly centralized and despotic. Under conditions of extreme equality, the prospect of oscillation between those two poles was well described by de Tocqueville; it was illustrated by Hobbes; and its avoidance was earnestly sought by the authors of the *Federalist Papers.* In a collection of equals, any impulse ripples through the whole society. Lack of secondary groups with some cohesion and continuity of commitment, for example, turns elections into auctions with each party in its promises tempted to bid up the others. The presence of social and economic groups, which inevitably will not all be equal, makes for less volatility in society. Such durable propositions of political theory are lost sight of by those who believe that the larger the number of consequential states the more surely major wars will be prevented, the survival of states secured, and domination by one of them avoided (Deutsch and Singer 1964). Carried to its logical conclusion, this argument must mean that tranquility would prevail in a world of many states, all of them approximate equals in power. I reach a different conclusion. The inequality of states, though it provides no guarantee, at least makes peace and stability possible.

3. THE CHARACTER OF SMALL-NUMBER SYSTEMS

How do small- and large-number systems differ? I shall answer this question first by economic analogy. From perfect to duopolistic competition, market structures are the same in being individualistic in origin, spontaneous in generation, and homogeneous in composition. Variation of structure is introduced not by differences in the attributes and functions of units but only by distinctions among them according to capability. Because this is so, number becomes a factor of high explanatory power. Different results follow from significant variation in the number of producers. Among thousands of wheat farmers the effect of any one farmer on the market is negligible. As a wheat farmer I see the market as a tyrannical force scarcely affected by my own action. Subject to general and impersonal pressures, I am driven inward, making decisions in terms of my own enterprise. As one among thousands, I must define my goals in terms of myself. I think of the return on my own effort, with calculations, if any, made in terms of expected changes in price. Price is determined by the market and is not affected by how much I offer for sale. I therefore work to raise production and lower costs without considering the plans of competitors. If price falls and I along with others wish to maintain gross income, self-interest dictates that we all boost production. This works against our collective interest by driving prices still lower. Boosting production brings bad results, and yet any other course of action pursued individually will bring even worse ones. This is another example of the tyranny of small decisions, a tyranny to be overcome only by governments legislating such structural changes as those introduced in America by the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1936.

The independent variables are everybody's decisions about how much to produce. Since anybody's decision makes only an infinitesimal difference in the total that all will produce, the independent variables are inaccessible to those in the market. The sensible pursuit of individual interest makes all of the producers worse off. But because nobody's decision makes a noticeable difference in the outcome, the competition leads neither to the conflict that comes when parties believe that by influencing others they can improve their own lots nor to efforts to strike accommodations. One wheat farmer is free of the control of any other wheat farmer—is free of the pressures that develop when one's plans and activities may affect, and in turn be affected by, the calculations and operations of particular others. Unable to affect the market, each farmer is free to ignore competitors. Because the market dominates, farmers individually have to consider only how to plan and conduct their own operations. The economist, who would explain outcomes, looks at the market; the actors look to themselves.

Given perfect competition, the individual producer is free of tactical constraints and subject only to strategic ones. Given small numbers of major competitors, the individual producer is subject to a combination of both. Large firms are not dominated by impersonal market forces unalterable by their own actions. They are therefore not free to make their internal dispositions or set their external policies without regard for the effects their acts will have on other firms in the field. Because the market does not uniquely determine outcomes, all are impelled both to watch their competitors and to try to manipulate the market.

Each firm or farm, large or small, pursues its interest. To say only that much is not very interesting. It is like saying that both the Ford Motor Company and the individual wheat farmer seek to maximize expected returns. That tells us only what we already knew. From an assumed interest, no useful inferences can be made unless we can figure out what actions are required for its successful pursuit. How interests are appropriately pursued depends on the structure of the market in which one's enterprise is located. Similarly, to say that a state seeks its own preservation or pursues its national interest becomes interesting only if we can figure out what the national interest requires a country to do. States, especially the big ones, are like major corporations. They are at once limited by their situations and able to act to affect them. They have to react to the actions of others whose actions may be changed by the reaction. As in an oligopolistic market, the outcome is indeterminate. Both the situation and the actors exercise influence, but neither controls. By comparing nations and corporations, the elusive notion of the national interest is made clear. By assumption, economic actors seek to maximize expected returns, and states strive to secure their survival. Major firms are in a self-help situation, with their survival depending on their own efforts within limits established by law. Insofar as they are in a self-help situation, survival outranks profit as a goal, since survival is a prerequisite to the achievement of other ends. This corollary attaches to the economists' basic assumption whenever the situation of firms enables them to influence both the market and one another. Relative gains may be more important than absolute ones because one's gain measured against that of others affects the ability to shift for oneself. The interest of firms so placed requires them to put the imperatives of survival ahead of other aims.

Similarly, to say that a country acts according to its national interest means that, having examined its security requirements, it tries to meet them. That is simple; it is also important. Entailed in the concept of national interest is the notion that diplomatic and military moves must at times be carefully planned lest the survival of the state be in jeopardy. The appropriate state action is calculated according to the situation in which the state finds itself. Great powers, like large firms, have always had to allow for the reactions of others. Each state chooses its own policies. To choose effectively requires considering the ends of the state in relation to its situation. How do the problems of states, and the likely fate of their systems, change as the number of great powers varies? The number of great powers is always small, but not always the same. For the sake of stability, peacefulness, and the management of collective affairs, should we prefer some such number as ten, or five, or what?

4. WHY SMALLER IS MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN SMALL

What is best, and for what purposes—numbers that are small or still smaller? Again, I shall first look for economic answers. Economic stability increases as oligopolistic sectors narrow.* Other effects also follow. The likelihood of price wars lessens; the affairs of the competitors become more orderly because they can more easily be managed. These effects follow from a decline in the number of major competitors for nine main reasons. The first two show how one characteristic of firms—their size—promotes sectoral stability. The remaining seven show how variations in market structure affect behavior, how problems become easier or harder to solve as the number of those who participate in efforts to solve them varies. The basic proposition is this: As collusion and bargaining become easier, the fortunes of firms and the orderliness of their markets are promoted; and collusion and bargaining become easier as the number of parties declines. I shall state the points briefly, since their major implications are obvious, and then develop some of them further when considering political cases.

(i) Economists agree that more than any other factor relative size determines the survival of firms. Firms that are large in comparison to most others in their field find many ways of taking care of themselves—of protecting themselves against other large firms, of mounting research and development programs that enable them to keep pace with others' innovations, of amassing capital and generating borrowing power that enables them to ride through recessions.

(ii) Stability is further promoted by the difficulty newcomers have in competing with large and experienced firms operating in established markets. Oligopolistic sectors are most stable when barriers to entry are high. The larger the investment needed to compete with established firms, the more difficult entry becomes. Fewer firms means bigger ones, and bigger firms means higher barriers to entry. If the barriers are sufficiently high, few are likely to try to jump over them and fewer still to succeed.

(iii) The costs of bargaining increase at an accelerating rate as the number of parties becomes larger. As numbers increase each has to bargain with more others. Complications accelerate rapidly. The number of possible two-way relations within a group is given by the formula

$$\frac{(n-1)\,n}{2},$$

where n is the number of parties. Thus with three parties, three different pairs may form; with six, fifteen; with ten, forty-five.

(iv) As a group grows, each member has less incentive to bear the costs of bargaining. Each member of a pair expects to get about one-half of the benefits of a bargain made; each member of a trio, about one-third, and so on.

*A system is stable as long as its structure endures. In self-help systems, a structure endures as long as there is no consequential change in the number of principal units. For further discussion, see Chapter 8, part I.

(v) As a group shrinks, each remaining member acquires a larger stake in the system and has more incentive to help to maintain it.

(vi) The expected costs of enforcing agreements, and of collecting the gains they offer, increase disproportionately as the group becomes larger.

(vii) The diversity of parties increases the difficulty of reaching agreements, and expected diversity increases as numbers grow.

(viii) Because the effects of an agreement and the desirability of maintaining or amending it change over time, surveillance of all parties by each of them is called for. The problem of surveillance increases more than proportionately to the increase of numbers . . .

(ix) and so does the difficulty of predicting and detecting deals that other parties may make to one's own disadvantage.

These nine points strongly argue that smaller is better than small. Smaller systems are more stable, and their members are better able to manage affairs for their mutual benefit. Stable systems are self-reinforcing, moreover, because understanding others' behavior, making agreements with them, and policing the agreements become easier through continued experience. (Various of the above points are made by Bain 1956, Baumol 1952, Buchanan and Tullock 1962, Diesing 1962, Fellner 1949, Olson 1965, Shubik 1959, Simmel 1902, Stigler 1964, Williamson 1965).

I should emphasize two limitations of the argument so far made. First, to say that smaller is better is not to say that two, the smallest number possible in a self-help system, is best of all. We have not yet considered whether, say, five-member systems have advantages that outweigh those of still smaller ones. Second, smaller is better for specified ends, and they may not be ends that everyone seeks. Take stability as an example. Firms are interested in their survival; for them, stability has a high value. Over the years, larger firms perform better than smaller ones; that is, they make higher profits. Consumers' interests, however, may be better served if old firms feel the stimulation that comes from being constantly threatened by new ones. The narrowing of competition is better for the firms that survive; a wider competition may be better for the economy. The system-wide view may differ from that of the participants. Henry J. Kaiser would have wanted stability in the automobile industry only after Kaiser-Frazer became an established firm. Internationally, especially with present-day weapons, stability appears as an important end if the existing system offers the best hope for peaceful coexistence among great powers. If it provides other benefits as well, then stability is all the more wanted. Even so, it will not be everyone's highest value. One may believe that a bipolar world is best as a system and yet prefer a world with a larger number of powers. The unity of Europe, for example, or the ascendance of one's own country, may rank higher as goals than stability and peace.

In the economic realm, harmony is defined in terms of the quality and price of products, while their producers may be constantly in jeopardy. Harmony is taken to be not only consistent with, but also in part dependent on, the periodic disappearance of some of the constituent units of the system, only to have them replaced by others. In a system of economic competition, it is desirable that the inefficient be driven to the wall. Each firm seeks to promote its own interest, but the constructive results of competition transcend the interests of the separate units. Firms that are proficient survive, while others, less skillfully managed, go bankrupt. The disappearance of the inefficient, forced by the operation of the system, is a condition for the good performance of the economy. In international politics "efficiency" has little system-wide meaning. The producers, not the products, are of paramount concern. Two states competing for the favor of third parties may be led by the competition to provide more and better political, economic, and military goods and services for consumption by some part of the world. The competition, however, serves chiefly as incentive for each of the states to promote its own interest. Benefits others may gain are mainly by-products of this. Economic systems are judged more by the quantity and quality of their products than by the fate of the producers. International-political systems are judged more by the fate of the units than by the quantity and quality of their products.

Although the constructive purpose of economic competition is easily seen, it is hard to argue that states are better off because of the political competition they engage in. In the age of Social Darwinism, the invigoration of states that was thought to result from competition among them was applauded. The triumph of the strong was an indication of virtue; if the weak succumbed, it was because of their vices. Internationally, discord is said to prevail because we are no longer content that the system be perpetuated but are necessarily obsessed with the fate of the units that compose it. Differences in the incidence of destruction and "death" do not account for the reluctance to refer to international politics as a harmonious realm, while competitive economies are often so described. Instead, one may say that the standards of performance now applied to international-political systems are higher, or at least widely different. As John Maynard Keynes once remarked, those who believe that unhampered processes of natural selection lead to progress do not "count the cost of the struggle" (1926, p. 37). In international politics, we often count nothing but the costs of the struggle.

Internationally, if an aggressive state becomes strong or a strong state becomes aggressive, other states will presumably suffer. The death rate among states, however, is remarkably low. I can think of only four states that have met involuntary ends in the last half-century—Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Timor.

In the international system few states lose their lives; in a freely competitive economy many firms do. Economically, large numbers of competitors are wanted because free competition makes them try harder to supply what consumers want at good prices. To lessen their efforts places their survival in jeopardy. Big-number systems are stable if high death rates are matched by high birth rates. Internationally, large numbers of great powers are not wanted because we care more about the fate of states than about the efficiency with which they compete. Economists deplore small-number systems because they favor producers at the expense of consumers. What is deplored economically is just what is wanted politically. Rather than compare large- and small-number systems, I therefore compare international systems with few and with still fewer great powers.

II

How do the relations of nations vary as systems change? To answer that question, and to refine the theory further, I shall consider economic interdependence now and military interdependence in Chapter 8.

In a self-help system, interdependence tends to loosen as the number of parties declines, and as it does so the system becomes more orderly and peaceful. As with other international-political concepts, interdependence looks different when viewed in the light of our theory. Many seem to believe that a growing closeness of interdependence improves the chances of peace. But close interdependence means closeness of contact and raises the prospect of occasional conflict. The fiercest civil wars and the bloodiest international ones are fought within arenas populated by highly similar people whose affairs are closely knit. It is impossible to get a war going unless the potential participants are somehow linked. Interdependent states whose relations remain unregulated must experience conflict and will occasionally fall into violence. If interdependence grows at a pace that exceeds the development of central control, then interdependence hastens the occasion for war.

I am inclined to be sanguine because I believe that interdependence is low in the present bipolar system as compared to the previous multipolar one. The opposite belief, now commonly held, rests on four claims. First, the world of the nation state has given way to a world in which nations are no longer consistently and generally the most important of actors, with their standings and their fates determined mainly by their varied capabilities. Nonstate actors, multinational corporations prominent among them, grow in importance and become ever harder for states to control. Second, some countries have recently increased their capabilities more than America and Russia have done, thus reducing the margin of superiority. Status and fate are anyway more and more disjoined from capability; military power no longer brings political control. Third, common problems

can be solved only through the common efforts of a number, often a large number, of states. We shall all suffocate or sink into the sludge unless the polluters of the air and the sea are effectively regulated. We shall all starve if population continues to explode as in a chain reaction. We may all be blown up if nuclear weapons continue to spread. The four p's—pollution, poverty, population, and proliferation—pose problems so pressing that national interest must be subordinated to collective need. Fourth, nations have become so closely interdependent that all are tightly constrained. States steadily become more entangled in one another's affairs. They become more and more dependent on resources that lie outside of their borders.

These four points assert that great powers are no longer clearly set off from others. If that is true, then my definition of international structure has become inappropriate. We have seen that the first point is grossly misleading: Though multinational corporations are neither politically insignificant nor easily controlled, they do not call the international system's structure into question. The second and third points are examined in the next two chapters. The fourth I now turn to.

1. INTERDEPENDENCE AS SENSITIVITY

"Interdependence" is the catchword of the day. As is the way with catchwords, the term usually goes undefined. We all supposedly experience it, and thus we know what it is. As the introduction to an *International Economic Report of the President* put it: "The fact and character of worldwide economic interdependence has been established in the past decade with leaders of all sectors of society and with most of the people of the world" (CIEP, March 1976, p. 1). But "interdependence" is a concept before it is a fact, and unless the concept is defined, we cannot intelligibly discuss what the present condition of interdependence is, whether it has been increasing, and what its political implications may be. I shall first examine the conception of interdependence that is common: interdependence as sensitivity. I shall then offer a more useful definition of the term: interdependence as mutual vulnerability (cf. Waltz 1970).

As now used, "interdependence" describes a condition in which anything that happens anywhere in the world may affect somebody, or everybody, elsewhere. To say that interdependence is close and rapidly growing closer is to suggest that the impact of developments anywhere on the globe are rapidly registered in a variety of far-flung places. This is essentially an economist's definition. In some ways that is not surprising. Interdependence has been discussed largely in economic terms. The discussion has been led by Americans, whose ranks include nine-tenths of the world's living economists (Strange 1971, p. 223). Economists understandably give meaning to interdependence by defining it in market terms.

Producers and consumers may or may not form a market. How does one know when they do? By noticing whether changes in the cost of production, in the price of goods, and in the quality of products in some places respond to similar changes elsewhere. Parties that respond sensitively are closely interdependent. Thus Richard Cooper defines interdependence as "quick responsiveness to differential earning opportunities resulting in a sharp reduction in differences in factor rewards" (1968, p. 152).

This notion of interdependence calls to mind the freely interacting, self-adjusting markets described by liberal economists of the nineteenth century. Because England, by far the leading state, pursued a policy of free trade from the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 onward; because American borders were open to the free flow of people and capital; because the fragmented states of the German, Italian, and East European areas lacked the political ability to control economic movements whether within or beyond their boundaries; because no state had the knowledge and the instruments that permitted the exercise of economic control as fully before the First World War as after it: For these reasons among others the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries were, in the phrase of Asa Briggs, "the *belle époque* of interdependence" (1968, p. 47). Capital and labor moved freely, goods less so, and all moved in volumes that are immense when measured against domestic populations and products and when compared to present-day movements (see Appendix Tables I, II, and III at the rear of the book). For much of the century beginning with Napoleon's defeat, "the Atlantic Community of Nations" could be viewed "as a single economy made up of interdependent regions," with national boundaries disregarded (Thomas 1961, pp. 9–15).

So much did earlier economic activities sprawl across national boundaries that commentators on public affairs, whatever their ideological commitments, shared the belief that interdependence—developing rapidly, taking new forms, and drawing people closer together—was making those boundaries ever more porous and thus lowering their political as well as their economic significance. In the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels optimistically expressed the conviction that the development of a world market, by making economic conditions uniform across nations, was fast eliminating their differences and antagonisms (see above, p. 23). Nikolai Bukharin, in a book written in 1915 and published two years later with Lenin's imprimatur, inferred from the large and rapidly increasing movement of people, commodities, goods, money, and capital that "the various countries have become knitted" closely together and that "an ever-thickening network of international interdependence was being created" (1917, pp. 25, 41–42). Liberal publicist Norman Angell, in *The Great Illusion*, the most influential tract of the early 1900s, summed up a century of liberal economists' conviction that economic interests are personal and universal, rather than national and particular, and persuaded many that spurious political interests were fast being subdued by real economic interests in a world becoming ever more prosperous and peaceful. They were right about the unusual extent of interdependence, but wrong about its likely effects.

Old-fashioned liberals, those whose beliefs were rooted politically in John Locke and economically in Adam Smith, thought in global terms. From their standpoint, to speak of a world economy made sense. If economic adjustments were left to the market worldwide, everyone's interests would be best served in the long run. In the economists' view the uneven distribution of capabilities across nations could be ignored. It is not so surprising that earlier commentators overlooked the distorting effects of inequalities and wrote of a world economy as though it were all of a piece. Yet even for the good old days, that economic view was distorted. From E. H. Chamberlin and Joan Robinson onward, economists have been aware of the difference between "monopolistic" and perfect competition. To think of interdependence in simple market terms is appropriate where economic units interact without their mutual adjustment being affected by the ability of some of them to use their superior capabilities to influence the market or by the intervention of government. All economies work within orders that are politically contrived and maintained. One cannot understand an economy or explain its workings without consideration of the rules that are politically laid down and the economic inequalities that prevail. These statements apply internationally as well as nationally (cf. Robbins 1939, p. 6; Gilpin 1975).

It is surprising, then, that so much recent writing about interdependence reads as though it were written at the turn of the century. Economists and political scientists, like others, make free use of the clichés of our day: spaceship earth, the shrinking planet, our global village, international interdependence. These ubiquitous phrases assert that the world has to be taken whole. The world is treated as a unit and interpreted in market terms. For certain purposes that may be all right. The sensitivity of economic and other adjustments across national borders may never have been finer. In many parts of the world, although obviously not in all of the important ones, that is made true by more rapid communication and transport. Economic analysis must take account of that, but a different focus is required for some economic purposes and is indispensable for political understanding.

In defining interdependence as sensitivity of adjustment rather than as mutuality of dependence, Richard Cooper unwittingly reflects the lesser dependence of today's great powers as compared to those of earlier times. Data excerpted from Appendix Table I graphically show this.

Exports plus Imports as a Percentage of GNP

1909–13	U.K., France, Germany, Italy	33–52%
1975	U.S., Soviet Union	8–14%

To say that great powers then depended on one another and on the rest of the world much more than today's great powers do is not to deny that the adjustment of costs across borders is faster and finer now. Interdependence as sensitivity, however, entails little vulnerability. The more automatically, the more quickly, and the more smoothly factor costs adjust, the slighter the political consequences become. Before World War I, as Cooper says, large differences of cost meant that "trade was socially very profitable" but "less sensitive to small changes in costs, prices, and quality" (1968, p. 152). Minor variations of cost mattered little. Dependence on large quantities of imported goods and materials that could be produced at home only with difficulty, if they could be produced at all, mattered much. States that import and export 15 percent or more of their gross national products yearly, as most of the great powers did then and as most of the middle and smaller powers do now, depend heavily on having reliable access to markets outside their borders. Two or more parties involved in such relations are interdependent in the sense of being mutually vulnerable to the disruption of their exchanges. Sensitivity is a different matter.

As Cooper rightly claims, the value of a country's trade is more likely to vary with its magnitude than with its sensitivity. Sensitivity is higher if countries are able to move back and forth from reliance on foreign and on domestic production and investment "in response to relatively small margins of advantage." Under such conditions, the value of trade diminishes. If domestic substitutions for foreign imports cannot be made, or can be made only at high cost, trade becomes of higher value to a country and of first importance to those who conduct its foreign policy. The high value of Japan's trade, to use Cooper's example, "led Japan in 1941 to attack the Philippines and the United States fleet at Pearl Harbor to remove threats to its oil trade with the East Indies." His point is that high sensitivity reduces national vulnerability while creating a different set of problems. The more sensitive countries become, the more internal economic policies have to be brought into accord with external economic conditions. Sensitivity erodes the autonomy of states, but not of all states equally. Cooper's conclusion, and mine, is that even though problems posed by sensitivity are bothersome, they are easier for states to deal with than the interdependence of mutually vulnerable parties, and that the favored position of the United States enhances both its autonomy and the extent of its influence over others (1972, pp. 164, 176–80).

Defining interdependence as sensitivity leads to an economic interpretation of the world. To understand the foreign-policy implications of high or of low interdependence requires concentration on the politics of international economics, not on the economics of international politics. The common conception of interdependence omits inequalities, whether economic or political. And yet inequality is what much of politics is about. The study of politics, theories about politics, and the practice of politics have always turned upon inequalities, whether among interest groups, among religious and ethnic communities, among classes, or among nations. Internally, inequality is an important part of the political story, though far from being the whole of it. Internal politics is also the realm of authority and law, of established institutions, of socially settled and accepted ways of doing things. Internationally, inequality is more nearly the whole of the political story. Differences of national strength and power and of national capability and competence are what the study and practice of international politics are almost entirely about. This is so not only because international politics lacks the effective laws and the competent institutions found within nations but also because inequalities across nations are greater than inequalities within them (Kuznets 1951). A world of nations marked by great inequalities cannot usefully be taken as the unit of one's analysis.

Most of the confusion about interdependence follows from the failure to understand two points: first, how the difference of structure affects the meaning, the development, and the effects of the interactions of units nationally and internationally; and second, how the interdependence of nations varies with their capabilities. Nations are composed of differentiated parts that become integrated as they interact. The world is composed of like units that become dependent on one another in varying degrees. The parts of a polity are drawn together by their differences; each becomes dependent on goods and services that all specialize in providing. Nations pull apart as each of them tries to take care of itself and to avoid becoming dependent on others. How independent they remain, or how dependent they become, varies with their capabilities (recall Chapter 6, part I, section 2). To define interdependence as sensitivity, then, makes two errors. First, the definition treats the world as a whole, as reflected in the clichés cited earlier. Second, the definition compounds relations and interactions that represent varying degrees of independence for some, and of dependence for others, and lumps them all under the rubric of interdependence.

2. INTERDEPENDENCE AS MUTUAL VULNERABILITY

A politically more pertinent definition is found in everyday usage. Interdependence suggests reciprocity among parties. Two or more parties are interdependent if they depend on one another about equally for the supply of goods and services. They are interdependent if the costs of breaking their relations or of reducing their exchanges are about equal for each of them. Interdependence means that the parties are mutually dependent. The definition enables one to identify what is politically important about relations of interdependence that are looser or tighter. Quantitatively, interdependence tightens as parties depend on one another for larger supplies of goods and services; qualitatively, interdepen-

dence tightens as countries depend on one another for more important goods and services that would be harder to get elsewhere. The definition has two components: the aggregate gains and losses states experience through their interactions and the equality with which those gains and losses are distributed. States that are interdependent at high levels of exchange experience, or are subject to, the common vulnerability that high interdependence entails.

Because states are like units, interdependence among them is low as compared to the close integration of the parts of a domestic order. States do not interact with one another as the parts of a polity do. Instead, some few people and organizations in one state interact in some part of their affairs with people and organizations abroad. Because of their differences, the parts of a polity can do a lot for each other. Because of their similarity, states are more dangerous than useful to one another. Being functionally undifferentiated, they are distinguished primarily by their greater or lesser capabilities for performing similar tasks. This states formally what students of international politics have long noticed. The great powers of an era have always been marked off from others by both practitioners and theorists.

The structure of a system changes with changes in the distribution of capabilities across the system's units. As international structure changes, so does the extent of interdependence. As political systems go, the international-political one is loosely knit. With that proposition established, we want to know how interdependence varies in systems of different structure. Interdependence is a relation among equals. Interdependence is reduced by increases in the disparity of national capabilities. In the European-centered politics of the three centuries that ended with World War II, five or more great powers sought to coexist peacefully and at times contended for mastery. In the global politics of the three decades since that war, only two states have perched at the pinnacle of power. Economically as well as militarily, the United States and the Soviet Union act with an independence of the external world unknown to earlier great powers. When five or more great powers populated the world, most of them were geographically smaller than today's great powers are. They did a relatively high percentage of their business with one another and with the rest of the world. Interdependence decreased in the 1930s as countries strove for greater self-sufficiency. It decreased further and dramatically after World War II, for each of the superpowers that emerged from that war is vastly more self-sufficient than most of the previous great powers were. The United States and the Soviet Union are economically less dependent on each other and on other countries than great powers were in earlier days. If one is thinking of the international-political world, it is odd in the extreme that "interdependence" has become the word commonly used to describe it.

Why do I reach a conclusion so different from the accepted one? What one sees when looking at the world depends on one's theoretical perspective, which colors the meaning of concepts. When I say that interdependence is tighter or looser I am saying something about the international system, with systems-level characteristics defined, as ever, by the situation of the great powers. In any international-political system some of the major and minor states are closely interdependent; others are heavily dependent. The system, however, is tightly or loosely interdependent according to the relatively high or low dependence of the great powers. Interdependence is therefore looser now than it was before and between the two world wars of this century. Many who claim to measure economic interdependence find it closer in some or in all respects now than earlier in this century. The difference between us is conceptual, not empirical. They measure interdependence between certain countries or among all of them (see, e.g., Rosecrance and Stein, October 1973; Katzenstein, Autumn 1975; Rosecrance *et al.*, Summer 1977). They are concerned with interdependence as a unit-level phenomenon, as is to be expected since reduction dominates the field. Those who confine their analyses to the unit level infer from the growth of international business and the increased intensity of international activity that "international interdependence" has risen. They then dwell on the complex ways in which issues, actions, and policies have become intertwined and the difficulty everyone has in influencing or controlling them. They have discovered the complexity of processes and have lost sight of how processes are affected by structure. The growing complexity of public and private affairs is surely important, but so also is the effect of international-political structure on them. A systemic conception of interdependence is needed to answer such basic questions as these: What are the likely effects of complexity on the system? What is the likely response of the system's leading powers to it? How powers are placed in the system affects their abilities, their opportunities, and their inclinations to act. Their behaviors vary as the interdependence of the system changes, and the variations tell us something about the likely fate both of the system and of its parts—the great powers and the lesser ones as well.

Interdependence tends to decrease as the number of great powers diminishes; and two is the lowest possible number. The connection between change of system and extent of interdependence has to be carefully stated. The correlation is not perfect because economic interdependence varies with the size, and not necessarily with the number, of great powers. Though size tends to increase as numbers fall, one can imagine a world of four great powers, all of them at low levels of interdependence economically. The larger a country, the higher the proportion of its business it does at home. Bergsten and Cline point out that the West European Nine, if they began to play as a team, would import and export only about nine percent of GNP, which nicely shows both the political irrelevance of much writing about interdependence and how increased size would enhance the internal sector (1976, pp. 155–61). Western Europe with political unity achieved, and China with a modern economy, would be great powers and highly self-sufficient ones. To compete at the great-power level is now possible only for countries of

continental size. Economically, although not militarily, among three or four powers of such size interdependence would remain low.

III

What do we see if we turn from theory to practice? How closely or how loosely interdependent does the international system appear to be?

1. ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Even though the present great powers trade little of their product, do they not depend heavily on some essential imported raw materials? Consider the American rather than the Russian case, because we import more than they do. Three points should be made. First, in any international system the extent of interdependence varies. In the old multipolar world, economic interdependence peaked before and dropped after the First World War. In the new bipolar world, economic interdependence has increased from its low level at the end of the Second World War. Between those two systems the interdependence gap is considerable. Variations of interdependence within a system of low interdependence should not obscure the difference between systems.

Second, some raw materials will become scarcer, and we and others will become more dependent on their suppliers. The control of oil supplies and prices by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) triggered worries about future raw-material scarcities, whether contrived or natural. As more studies are done, the more surely the conclusion emerges: By worrying a bit and taking appropriate actions, the United States can be reasonably sure of securing sufficient supplies. We make about a quarter of the world's goods, and we have at least that proportion of the world's resources. With more money, better technology, and larger research budgets, we can synthesize, stockpile, and substitute for critical materials more readily than other countries can. A study completed in 1976 by a group of seven economists for the Experimental Technologies Incentive Program of the National Bureau of Standards examined the advisability of governmental funding for projects aimed at achieving greater independence in seven critical commodities that we now import heavily—bauxite, chromium, manganese, cobalt, platinum-palladium, copper, and petroleum. They concluded that we should worry over the next ten years about cutoffs or price increases only in the case of chromium. They advised against funding new technologies and in favor of stockpiling supplies sufficient for specified periods. In all cases, save oil and copper, stockpiles already exceed the amounts recommended, and copper is not much of a problem anyway. The problem of stockpiling has not been to build up to targeted amounts, but to avoid exceeding them—and this despite the high

targets that result from the Federal Preparedness Agency's planning on the basis of a three-year conventional war and the dislocations it would cause (Crittenden, December 31, 1976; Snyder 1966, p. 247; Finney, November 28, 1976; CIEP, December 1974, p. 16). Dependency, moreover, is a comparative matter. We have recently become more dependent, and so have many others. Our use of imported raw materials has increased, yet of 19 critical materials, the United States in 1973 imported 15 percent of the amount of its yearly use as compared to 75 percent for West European countries and 90 percent for Japan.* Of the American imports, two-thirds came from Canada, Australia, South Africa and other more developed countries, and over one-half from Canada alone (CIEP, December 1974, p. 4).

Third, although we trade a small percentage of our national product, this small percentage accounts for a large proportion of total world trade (see Appendix Table IV). The larger a country's trade, in absolute terms, the larger the number of its suppliers will be. As the world's largest trader, we draw on a multiplicity of sources of supply. Wayward political movements or revolutions or wars elsewhere in the world may shut off some of a country's supplies. Here, as in other matters, there is safety in numbers. As a big buyer, moreover, we enjoy the leverage that good customers have. We are also far and away the world's largest supplier of foodstuffs, of the technologically most advanced manufactures, and of capital. For the moment, consider the dependence of others on us for agricultural supplies alone. Throughout the 1960s and '70s, we accounted for 90 percent of world soybean exports, an important source of protein for people as well as for animals (Schneider 1976, p. 23). In 1975 we accounted for 48 percent of the world's wheat exports, 56 percent of feed grain exports, and 50 percent of oil seed exports (CIEP, March 1976, p. 16). The dependence of the Soviet Union on large, if sporadic, imports of American grain, of Europe on imports of American feed grains, of Japan and the less developed countries on imports of American food grains, has increased rapidly, and alarmingly, in the 1970s. Those who have what others want or badly need are in favored positions. States are the more independent if they have reliable access to important resources, if they have feasible alternatives, if they have the ability to do without, and if they have leverage to use against others. Dependency is a two-way street. Its extent varies both with how much we need them and with how much they need us.

Something should be said about American investments abroad. In 1974 we had about $265 billion in foreign assets of all sorts; in 1973 the sales of American firms operating abroad amounted to $292 billion, an amount exceeded only by the GNPs of the United States, the Soviet Union, Japan, and West Germany (CIEP, March 1976, p. 160, Table 42; *Survey of Current Business*, August 1975, p. 23). One may think that the vulnerability of American operations abroad is

*Oil, which is excluded, I shall discuss in a moment.

proportionate to the size of the stake. We do have plenty to lose, and other countries on occasion may want to take some of it from us. And yet, expropriations of American property have been of limited extent and are declining (UN Department of Economic Affairs, 1973, pp. 76–77; Barnet and Muller 1974, pp. 188–89). Again, three points should be made. First, we should separate the question of our vulnerability as a nation from the question of the vulnerability of American firms. How vulnerable are they? Measured by sales in 1971, eight of the top nine, and 52 of the top 90, multinational corporations (MNCs) are American. The percentage of profit earned abroad is shown for seven of the eight and for 22 of the 52. They earned, respectively, 34.4 and 33.5 percent of their profits abroad and made 29.2 percent of their total sales there (calculated from UN Department of Economic Affairs, 1973, pp. 130–32). Because foreign earnings account for large portions of their profits, firms use caution in deciding where to locate abroad. Though some risks are run, the larger firms gain safety through geographic diversification. The more important a firm is to the American economy, the less likely it is to suffer a fatal series of losses in various countries from their punitive regulations or expropriations. The diversity of American investment, in type of enterprise and in geographic location, provides ensurance against sudden and sharp reversals. Nations do not easily concert their policies, and that is a comfort for the nation whose operations are global. Some American firms may be vulnerable; America as a nation is not. Someone who has a lot to lose can afford to lose quite a bit of it. This maxim is a common proposition of oligopolistic economics. That a large and well-placed firm can afford to run at a loss for some years is taken not as a sign of weakness and vulnerability but as being a considerable strength. Where disparities are great, whether among firms or among states, the largest of them need worry least about the bothersome activities of others.

Second, the trend of American investments, away from extractive industries in less developed countries and toward manufacturing industries in more developed ones, makes investments safer. Data taken from Appendix Table V show

U.S. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

1950	In more developed countries (MDCs)	45%
	In less developed countries (LDCs)	55%
1975	In MDCs	68%
	In LDCs	32%
1950	U.S. FDI in extractive industries	38%
	of total U.S. FDI, of which	28% in LDCs
		10% in MDCs
1975	U.S. FDI in extractive industries	29%
	of total U.S. FDI, of which	10% in LDCs
		19% in MDCs

the trend. Investors in extractive industries have to put their money where the resources are. They are more vulnerable to pressures from host countries because they cannot easily move from less to more hospitable ones. In manufacturing sectors, "footloose corporations," to use Louis Turner's phrase, pick their countries with one eye to profitability and another to safety.

Third, in manufacturing sectors again the coin is biased in favor of American interests. On one side of the coin one sees that foreign countries are sensitive to the presence of American firms, many of which locate in fast-growing, high-technology, export-oriented sectors. Made wary by the depth of American penetration, foreign countries may try to reduce their dependence by barring American firms or by subsidizing their own to help them compete. At times during de Gaulle's rule France followed such policies, although at high cost and with little success. On the other side of the coin one sees the difficulties foreign countries have in resisting American firms. American firms have the technological lead, and it is hard for foreign firms to catch up. The size of the home market enables American firms to operate on a large scale and to generate resources that can be used abroad to compete with or to overwhelm native industries. In 1976, for example, IBM devoted about one billion dollars to research and development, an amount that exceeded the entire turnover of Britain's largest computer company and was four times greater than the money available to Britain's Science Research Council (*Economist*, August 13, 1977, pp. 64–65). The size of IBM's operations enables the company to spend money on a governmental scale.

The disadvantages of foreign firms relate directly to the smaller scale of their national economies. Although Britain, West Germany, and Japan now spend about as much on research and development, measured as a percentage of GNP, as we do, their absolute expenditures lag (see Appendix Table VI). Under these conditions, national governments are constrained to permit domestic firms to make arrangements with American companies. The smaller states' opportunities to maneuver are further limited by competition among them. If, say, France follows a policy of exclusion, American firms will locate in neighboring countries. Even one who believes that those countries become beholden to America cannot help but notice that they also become richer and better able to compete in foreign markets, including the markets of countries that exclude American firms. Lagging states only get weaker if American capital and technology are excluded. The American computer industry can get along without the assistance of French companies, but Machines Bull could not survive without American capital and technology. In 1962 the French government resisted the purchase by General Electric of 20 percent of Bull's shares. Unable to find another French or European partner, the French government was constrained in 1964 to accept a 50–50 arrangement with General Electric. By the middle 1960s GE's share in the company had grown to approximately two-thirds. GE's losses led it to quit challenging IBM in the European computer market. In 1970 GE sold out to

Honeywell. The story continues, but since it holds no surprises we can stop following it (see Tugendhat 1971, p. 36; *International Herald Tribune*, May 1977).

De Gaulle wanted to avoid American control and to maintain an independent French capability in the manufacturing of computers. Who wouldn't? The effective choice, however, was between a competitive American-controlled company and an uncompetitive French company technologically falling further and further behind. In France penetration of foreign capital is less than the West European average, but it is higher than average in fields using advanced technology. Notice what the averages for various fields are. A 1970 study by the EEC Commission showed American firms producing 95 percent of the EEC's integrated circuits, 80 percent of electronic computers, 40 percent of titanium, and 30 percent of cars and vehicles (Stephenson 1973, p. 27). The automotive industry does not operate at the technological frontier. American firms nevertheless command an impressive percentage of European markets. American firms have an edge not only in their technology and capital resources but also in their managerial skills and marketing networks.

General Electric, Honeywell, and other American firms may require foreign affiliations in order to compete with IBM. There may be genuine interdependence at the level of the firm. It is a mistake to identify interdependence at that level with the interdependence of states. Because of the technology they command, along with other advantages they offer, American firms are important to foreign firms. The attempts of foreign firms to band together are impeded by the greater attraction of establishing connections with American firms. Foreign countries as well feel the attraction because of the help American firms can give to their domestic economies and to their exports. In 1966 and 1970, seven countries were surveyed—Britain, France, West Germany, Belgium-Luxembourg, Canada, Mexico, and Brazil. In both years it was found that American-owned firms accounted on average for 13 percent of each country's gross fixed capital formation, and from 20 to 22 percent of capital formation in the vital machinery sector (see Appendix Table VII). Moreover, in those years American-owned firms generated 7 to 45 percent of the same countries' exports and accounted, respectively, for 21 and 24 percent of the world's total exports (see Appendix Table VIII; and for exports by manufacturing sector, Appendix Table IX).

The above figures and comments make clear why the urge to limit the intrusion of, or to exclude, American firms has given way to intense courting of them. In 1966 the Fairchild Corporation, when opening a new plant in de Gaulle's France, remarked that government officials had "moved heaven and earth to provide us with facilities" (Tugendhat 1971, p. 37). Competition for American firms has quickened. Britain won a Ford engine plant in 1977 after intense competition with other European states. The plant was worth competing for. It is expected to provide 2,500 jobs directly, another 5,000 indirectly, and a quarter of a billion dollars' worth of exports yearly (Collins, September 10, 1977). One may prefer domestic to foreign firms generally, but not lagging domestic firms to thriving foreign ones that will broadly stimulate the economy.

Multinational corporations are misnamed. They are nationally based firms that operate abroad, and more than one-half of the big ones are based in the United States. When the point is made that multinational corporations make their decisions on a global basis, one gets the impression that nations no longer matter. But that is grossly misleading. Decisions are made in terms of whole corporations and not just according to the condition and interest of certain subsidiaries. The picture usually drawn is one of a world in which economic activity has become transnational, with national borders highly permeable and businessmen making their decisions without even bearing them in mind. But most of the largest international corporations are based in America; most of their research and development is done there; most of their top personnel is American (Tugendhat 1971, pp. 17, 124). Under these conditions it is reasonable to suppose that in making corporate decisions the American perspective will be the prominent one. Similarly, although both American and foreign governments try to regulate the activities of these corporations, the fact that most of them are American based gives a big advantage to the latter government. We should not lightly conclude that decentralization of operations means that centers of control are lacking. From about the middle of the nineteenth century, the quicker transmission of ideas resulted, in the words of R. D. McKenzie, in "centralization of control and decentralization of operation." As he put it, "the modern world is integrated through information collected and distributed from fixed centers of dominance" (July 1927, pp. 34–35). Within the United States, when industry fanned out from the northeast, southern and western citizens complained that control remained in New York and Chicago where corporate decisions were made without regard for regional interests. Europeans and others now make similar complaints. One has to ask where most of the threads come together, and the answer is not in London, or Brussels, or Paris, but rather in New York City and Washington. The term "multinational corporation," like the term "interdependence," obscures America's special position—in this case, a position not shared by the Soviet Union.

2. POLITICAL EFFECTS

Interdependence has been low since the Second World War. Lately we have gained some sense of what dependence means by experiencing a bit more of it. We have gained no sense of how our, and the Soviet Union's, low interdependence compares with the high interdependence of previous powers and of the effects that has on behavior. Never in modern history have great powers been so

sharply set off from lesser states and so little involved in each other's economic and social affairs. What political consequences follow from interdependence being closer or looser?

I have dwelt on the distinction between internal and external orders. That there is much of a distinction is denied by those who claim that interdependence has changed the character of international politics. Many believe that the mere mutualism of international exchange is becoming a true economic-social-political integration. One point can be made in support of this formulation. The common conception of interdependence is appropriate only if the inequalities of nations are fast lessening and losing their political significance. If the inequality of nations is still the dominant political fact of international life, then interdependence remains low. Economic examples in this section, and military examples in the next one, make clear that it is.

In placid times, statesmen and commentators employ the rich vocabulary of clichés that cluster around the notion of global interdependence. Like a flash of lightning, crises reveal the landscape's real features. What is revealed by the oil crisis following the Arab-Israeli War in October of 1973? Because that crisis is familiar to all of us and will long be remembered, we can concentrate on its lessons without rehearsing the details. Does it reveal states being squeezed by common constraints and limited to applying the remedies they can mutually contrive? Or does it show that the unequal capabilities of states continue to explain their fates and to shape international-political outcomes?

Recall how Kissinger traced the new profile of power. "Economic giants can be militarily weak," he said, "and military strength may not be able to obscure economic weakness. Countries can exert political influence even when they have neither military nor economic strength" (see above, p. 130). Economic, military, and political capabilities can be kept separate in gauging the ability of nations to act. Low politics, concerned with economic and such affairs, has replaced military concerns at the top of the international agenda. Within days the Arab-Israeli War proved that reasoning wrong. Such reasoning had supported references made in the early 1970s to the militarily weak and politically disunited countries of Western Europe as constituting "a great civilian power." Recall the political behavior of the great civilian power in the aftermath of the war. Not Western Europe as any kind of a power, but the separate states of Western Europe, responded to the crisis—in the metaphor of *The Economist*—by behaving at once like hens and ostriches. They ran around aimlessly, clucking loudly while keeping their heads buried deeply in the sand. How does one account for such behavior? Was it a failure of nerve? Is it that the giants of yesteryear—the Attlees and Bevins, the Adenauers and de Gaulles—have been replaced by men of lesser stature? Difference of persons explains some things; difference of situations explains more. In 1973 the countries of Western Europe depended on oil for 60

percent of their energy supply. Much of that oil came from the Middle East (see Appendix Table X). Countries that are highly dependent, countries that get much of what they badly need from a few possibly unreliable suppliers, must do all they can to increase the chances that they will keep getting it. The weak, lacking leverage, can plead their cause or panic. Most of the countries in question unsurprisingly did a little of each.

The behavior of nations in the energy crisis that followed the military one revealed the low political relevance of interdependence defined as sensitivity. Instead, the truth of the propositions I made earlier was clearly shown. Smooth and fine economic adjustments cause little difficulty. Political interventions that bring sharp and sudden changes in prices and supplies cause problems that are economically and politically hard to cope with. The crisis also revealed that, as usual, the political clout of nations correlates closely with their economic power and their military might. In the winter of 1973–74 the policies of West European countries had to accord with economic necessities. The more dependent a state is on others, and the less its leverage over them, the more it must focus on how its decisions affect its access to supplies and markets on which its welfare or survival may depend. This describes the condition of life for states that are no more than the equal of many others. In contrast, the United States was able to make its policy according to political and military calculations. Importing but two percent of its total energy supply from the Middle East, we did not have to appease Arab countries as we would have had to do if our economy had depended heavily on them and if we had lacked economic and other leverage. The United States could manipulate the crisis that others made in order to promote a balance of interests and forces holding some promise of peace. The unequal incidence of shortages led to the possibility of their manipulation. What does it mean then to say that the world is an increasingly interdependent one in which all nations are constrained, a world in which all nations lose control? Very little. To trace the effects that follow from inequalities, one has to unpack the word "interdependent" and identify the varying mixtures of relative dependence for some nations and of relative independence for others. As one should expect in a world of highly unequal nations, some are severely limited while others have wide ranges of choice; some have little ability to affect events outside of their borders while others have immense influence.

The energy crisis should have made this obvious, but it did not. Commentators on public affairs continue to emphasize the world's interdependence and to talk as though all nations are losing control and becoming more closely bound. Transmuting concepts into realities and endowing them with causal force is a habit easily slipped into. Public officials and students of international affairs once wrote of the balance of power causing war or preserving peace. They now attribute a comparable reality to the concept of interdependence and endow it

with strong causal effect. Thus Secretary Kissinger, who can well represent both groups, wondered "whether interdependence would foster common progress or common disaster" (January 24, 1975, p. 1). He described American Middle-East policy as being to reduce Europe's and Japan's vulnerability, to engage in dialogue with the producers, and "to give effect to the principle of interdependence on a global basis" (January 16, 1975, p. 3). Interdependence has become a thing in itself: a "challenge" with its own requirements, "a physical and moral imperative" (January 24, 1975, p. 2; April 20, 1974, p. 3).

When he turned to real problems, however, Kissinger emphasized America's special position. The pattern of his many statements on such problems as energy, food, and nuclear proliferation was first to emphasize that our common plight denies all possibility of effective national action and then to place the United States in a separate category. Thus, two paragraphs after declaring our belief in interdependence, we find this query: "In what other country could a leader say, 'We are going to solve energy; we're going to solve food; we're going to solve the problem of nuclear war,' and be taken seriously?" (October 13, 1974, p. 2)

In coupling his many statements about interdependence with words about what we can do to help ourselves and others, was Kissinger not saying that we are much less dependent than most countries are? We are all constrained but, it appears, not equally. Gaining control of international forces that affect nations is a problem for all of them, but some solve the problem better than others. The costs of shortages fall on all of us, but in different proportion. Interdependence, one might think, is a euphemism used to obscure the dependence of most countries (cf. Goodwin 1976, p. 63). Not so, Kissinger says. Like others, we are caught in the web because failure to solve major resource problems would lead to recession in other countries and ruin the international economy. That would hurt all of us. Indeed it would, but again the uneven incidence of injuries inflicted on nations is ignored. Recession in some countries hurts others, but some more and some less so. An unnamed Arab oil minister's grip on economics appeared stronger than Kissinger's. If an oil shortage should drive the American economy into recession, he observed, all of the world would suffer. "Our economies, our regimes, our very survival, depend on a healthy U.S. economy" (*Newsweek*, March 25, 1974, p. 43). How much a country will suffer depends roughly on how much of its business is done abroad. As Chancellor Schmidt said in October of 1975, West Germany's economy depends much more than ours does on a strong international economic recovery because it exports 25 percent of its GNP yearly (October 7, 1975). The comparable figure for the United States was seven percent.

No matter how one turns it, the same answer comes up: We depend somewhat on the external world, and most other countries depend on the external world much more so. Countries that are dependent on others in important respects work to limit or lessen their dependence if they can reasonably hope to do so.* From late 1973 onward, in the period of oil embargo and increased prices, Presidents Nixon and Ford, Secretary Kissinger, and an endless number of American leaders proclaimed both a new era of interdependence and the goal of making the United States energy-independent by 1985. This is so much the natural behavior of major states that not only the speakers but seemingly also their audiences failed to notice the humor. Because states are in a self-help system, they try to avoid becoming dependent on others for vital goods and services. To achieve energy independence would be costly. Economists rightly point out that by their definition of interdependence the cost of achieving the goal is a measure of how much international conditions affect us. But that is to think of interdependence merely as sensitivity. Politically the important point is that only the few industrial countries of greatest capability are able to think seriously of becoming independent in energy supply. As Kissinger put it: "We have greater latitude than the others because we can do much on our own. The others can't" (January 13, 1975, p. 76).

And yet, though we may be able to "solve energy," we have not done so. Our dependence on foreign oil has increased in recent years, and because the price of oil multiplied by five between 1973 and 1977, we are inclined to believe that the cost of imported oil fueled inflation and impeded economic growth. We are more dependent than we used to be, but others continue to be more dependent still. In 1973 we imported 17 percent of our annual energy consumption; in 1976, about 20 percent. Meanwhile, Italy, France, Germany, and Japan continued to depend on imported resources for most of the energy they use. Data from Appendix Table X reveal the difference in dependency between the United States and others (see also Appendix Table XI).

Oil Imports as % of Energy Supply (col. 1) and Oil Imports from Middle East as % of Energy Supply (col. 2)

	W. Europe		Japan		U.S.	
	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)
1967	50%	25%	62%	52%	9%	0.7%
1970	57	28	73	60	10	0.5
1973	60	41	80	61	17	2
1976	54	37	74	55	20	5

*Notice the implication of the following statement made by Leonid Brezhnev: "Those who think that we need ties and exchanges in the economic and scientific-technical fields more than elsewhere are mistaken. The entire volume of USSR imports from capitalist countries comes to less than 1.5% of our gross social product. It is clear that this does not have decisive importance for the Soviet economy's development" (October 5, 1976, p. 3).

Several points need to be made. Although we are in a better position than most countries, we have been slow to take steps to limit or reduce our dependency further, as Appendix Table XII suggests. Since we continue to use two to three times more energy per capita than the other industrial democracies do, and since we have more adequate energy resources than most of them have, we can lessen our dependency if we wish to. President Ford's goals, whether or not they were sensible, were not beyond our reach. As he described them they were to "end vulnerability to economic disruption by foreign suppliers by 1985" and to "develop our energy technology and resources so that the United States has the ability to supply a significant share of the energy needs of the free world by the end of this century" (January 16, 1975, p. 24). By turning coal into liquids and gases, by extracting oil from shale, and by building more nuclear power plants, we can place ourselves in the position of relying more on our own energy sources and of drawing less from others. But we need not rush into making such efforts. Having imposed quotas against foreign oil for decades to make sure, in the name of resource development, that we would use our own oil first, it makes sense now to rely more on imports. Given America's present situation, it may be wise to do the following: take steps to conserve energy; concentrate on research about, rather than on development of, our own energy sources; and build a petroleum stockpile sufficient for riding through, say, a six-month embargo.* A six-month stockpile would provide a comfortable margin of safety. Most OPEC countries, their oil riches aside, are weak economically as well as militarily and politically. All the more so because many of their interests diverge, one can safely bet on their inability to sustain punitive policies for more than a short time against the great and major power of this world.

The conclusion is inescapable, or so one would think: The country that makes much of the world's goods finds many more ways of taking care of itself than most other countries can hope to. This is not to say that we depend on other countries not at all. This is not to say that some of the choices we may wish to make have not become costlier. This *is* to say that we, better than any other country, can afford to pay a higher price for choices we wish to make.

The tension between America's condition and the claim that the world is an interdependent one is obvious. How is the tension relaxed? Two ways stand out. First, those who find it pleasing to use words of current fashion turn "interdependence" into a protean term by endlessly varying the adjectives that precede it.

*The 1976 Strategic Petroleum Reserve Plan calls for 500 million barrels of oil to be stored by 1982, an amount that would carry us for four months at 1977 rates of consumption. The Carter administration in its first year decided to aim for one billion barrels to be stored by 1985. The International Energy Agency, moreover, requires its members to maintain emergency reserves equal to 70 days' imports, a requirement that will rise to 90 days' in 1980.

Psychological, sectoral, political, asymmetric: These words and others are used as modifiers of "interdependence." So used, they all convey this meaning: Parties that are not generally interdependent may in limited and particular ways be so. Asymmetric interdependence refers to parties that are not mutually dependent but in some ways affect each other. As compared to other nations, the United States is more independent than dependent. The term "asymmetric interdependence" suggests that one notices this but wishes to avoid blunt reference to the unequal condition of nations. "Sectoral" suggests that we know we are not locked into relations of mutual dependence, although in some few respects our dependence may be high. Varying the adjectives used to modify "interdependence" adapts the concept to different situations. The concept, then, does not illuminate the situations but instead is made to conform to them descriptively. The variety of adjectives used reflects the fashion of the word they modify. But conforming to fashion makes analytically useful distinctions all the more difficult to discern. Everything affects everything else. Interdependence usually suggests little more than that. The thought may be the beginning of wisdom, but not its end. One wants to know how, and how much, who is affected by and depends on whom.

Second, those who think of America as being entangled along with nearly everyone else shift the meaning of interdependence away from the condition of nations and toward the policies they follow. The game is ultimately given away by those who refer to psychological and political interdependence and thereby suggest that the United States is entangled, and thus constrained, because it cares about the well-being of many other nations and chooses to act to influence what happens to them.* To give that meaning to interdependence indicates that we are a great power and not simply one of the parts of an interdependent world. Nations that have the luxury of being able to care about, and the freedom to choose to act for, the presumed good of others are seen to be in a highly special position. The economics of interdependence gives way to the politics of our concern for others. Whatever we may say, we are not on the same economic footing as most countries. We cannot practice the economics of interdependence, as we are often advised to do, because unlike many other states we are not caught in the web. Nor can we adopt policies of interdependence since interdependence is a condition, not a policy. Dependent parties conform their behavior to the preferences of those they depend on. We, instead, make use of a favorable economic position to support national political ends. The economics of

*Cf. this statement, which appears in a Federal Energy Office Paper: The United States, by achieving independence in energy, would "benefit other importing nations by relieving strains on world oil supplies. In this sense, 'Project Independence' might better be called 'Project Interdependence' " (US Senate, Committee on Government Operations, 1974, p. 14).

*in*dependence makes possible the pursuit of American goals, just as one would expect (cf. Nau 1975).

IV

When the great powers of the world were small in geographic compass, they did a high proportion of their business abroad. The narrow concentration of power in the present and the fact that the United States and the Soviet Union are little dependent on the rest of the world produce a very different international situation. The difference between the plight of great powers in the new bipolar world and the old multipolar one can be seen by contrasting America's condition with that of earlier great powers. When Britain was the world's leading state economically, the portion of her wealth invested abroad far exceeded the portion that now represents America's stake in the world. In 1910 the value of total British investment abroad was one-and-one-half times larger than her national income. In 1973 the value of total American investments abroad was one-fifth as large as her national income. In 1910 Britain's return on investment abroad amounted to eight percent of national income; in 1973 the comparable figure for the United States was 1.6 percent (British figures computed from Imlah 1958, pp. 70–75, and Woytinsky and Woytinsky 1953, p. 791, Table 335; American figures computed from CIEP, March 1976, pp. 160–62, Tables 42, 47, and *US Bureau of the Census*, 1975, p. 384, and *Survey of Current Business*, October 1975, p. 48). Britain in its heyday had a huge stake in the world, and that stake loomed large in relation to her national product. From her immense and far-flung activities, she gained a considerable leverage. Because of the extent to which she depended on the rest of the world, wise and skillful use of that leverage was called for. Great powers in the old days depended on foodstuffs and raw materials imported from abroad much more heavily than the United States and the Soviet Union do now. Their dependence pressed them to make efforts to control the sources of their vital supplies.

Today the myth of interdependence both obscures the realities of international politics and asserts a false belief about the conditions that promote peace, as World War I conclusively showed. "The statistics of the economic interdependence of Germany and her neighbors," John Maynard Keynes remarked, "are overwhelming." Germany was the best customer of six European states, including Russia and Italy; the second best customer of three, including Britain; and the third best customer of France. She was the largest source of supply for ten European states, including Russia, Austria-Hungary, and Italy; and the second largest source of supply for three, including Britain and France (Keynes 1920, p. 17). And trade then was proportionately much higher than now. Then governments were more involved internationally than they were in their national economies. Now governments are more involved in their national economies than they are internationally. This is fortunate.

Economically, the low dependence of the United States means that the costs of, and the odds on, losing our trading partners are low. Other countries depend more on us than we do on them. If links are cut, they suffer more than we do. Given this condition, sustained economic sanctions against us would amount to little more than economic self-mutilation. The United States can get along without the rest of the world better than most of its parts can get along without us. But, someone will hasten to say, if Russia, or anyone, should be able to foreclose American trade and investment in successively more parts of the world, we could be quietly strangled to death. To believe that, one has to think not in terms of politics but in terms of the apocalypse. If some countries want to deal less with us, others will move economically closer to us. More so than any other country, the United States can grant or withhold a variety of favors, in matters of trade, aid, loans, the supply of atomic energy for peaceful purposes, and military security. If peaceful means for persuading other countries to comply with preferred American policies are wanted, the American government does not have to look far to find them. The Soviet Union is even less dependent economically on the outside world than we are, but has less economic and political leverage on it. We are more dependent economically on the outside world than the Soviet Union is, but have more economic and political leverage on it.

The size of the two great powers gives them some capacity for control and at the same time insulates them with some comfort from the effect of other states' behavior. The inequality of nations produces a condition of equilibrium at a low level of interdependence. This is a picture of the world quite different from the one that today's transnationalists and interdependers paint. They cling to an economic version of the domino theory: Anything that happens anywhere in the world may damage us directly or through its repercussions, and therefore we have to react to it. This assertion holds only if the politically important nations are closely coupled. We have seen that they are not. Seldom has the discrepancy been wider between the homogeneity suggested by "interdependence" and the heterogeneity of the world we live in. A world composed of greatly unequal units is scarcely an interdependent one. A world in which a few states can take care of themselves quite well and most states cannot hope to do so is scarcely an interdependent one. A world in which the Soviet Union and China pursue exclusionary policies is scarcely an interdependent one. A world of bristling nationalisms is scarcely an interdependent one. The confusion of concepts works against clarity of analysis and obscures both the possibilities and the necessities of action. Logically it is wrong, and politically it is obscurantist, to consider the world a unit and call it "interdependent." The intricacies of diplomacy are sometimes

compared to those of chess. Neither game can be successfully played unless the chessboard is accurately described.

So far I have shown that smaller are better than larger numbers, at least for those states at the top. Defining the concept, and examining the economics, of interdependence did not establish just which small number is best of all. We could not answer that question because economic interdependence varies with the size of great powers and their size does not correlate perfectly with their number. In the next chapter, examination of military interdependence leads to an exact answer.

8

Structural Causes and Military Effects

Chapter 7 showed why smaller is better. To say that few are better than many is not to say that two is best of all. The stability of pairs—of corporations, of political parties, of marriage partners—has often been appreciated. Although most students of international politics probably believe that systems of many great powers would be unstable, they resist the widespread notion that two is the best of small numbers. Are they right to do so? For the sake of stability, peace, or whatever, should we prefer a world of two great powers or a world of several or more? Chapter 8 will show why two is the best of small numbers. We reached some conclusions, but not that one, by considering economic interdependence. Problems of national security in multi- and bipolar worlds do clearly show the advantages of having two great powers, and only two, in the system.

I

To establish the virtues of two-party systems requires comparing systems of different number. Because the previous chapter was concerned only with systems of small and of still smaller numbers, we did not have to consider differences made by having two, three, four, or more principal parties in a system. We must do so now. By what criteria do we determine that an international-political system changes, and conversely, by what criteria do we say that a system is stable? Political scientists often lump different effects under the heading of stability. I did this in 1964 and 1967 essays, using stability to include also peacefulness and the effective management of international affairs, which are the respective concerns of this chapter and the next one. It is important, I now believe, to keep different effects separate so that we can accurately locate their causes.

Anarchic systems are transformed only by changes in organizing principle and by consequential changes in the number of their principal parties. To say that an international-political system is stable means two things: first, that it remains

anarchic; second, that no consequential variation takes place in the number of principal parties that constitute the system. "Consequential" variations in number are changes of number that lead to different expectations about the effect of structure on units. The stability of the system, so long as it remains anarchic, is then closely linked with the fate of its principal members. The close link is established by the relation of changes in number of great powers to transformation of the system. The link does not bind absolutely, however, because the number of great powers may remain the same or fail to vary consequentially even while some powers fall from the ranks of the great ones only to be replaced by others. International-political systems are remarkably stable, as Table 8.1 graphically shows. The multipolar system lasted three centuries because as some states fell from the top rank others rose to it through the relative increase of their capabilities. The system endured even as the identity of its members changed. The bipolar system has lasted three decades because no third state has been able to develop capabilities comparable to those of the United States and the Soviet Union. The system appears robust, although unlikely to last as long as its predecessor—a matter to be considered in the fourth part of this chapter.

Table 8.1 *GREAT POWERS, 1700–1979*

	1700	*1800*	*1875*	*1910*	*1935*	*1945*
Turkey	x					
Sweden	x					
Netherlands	x					
Spain	x					
Austria (Austria-Hungary)	x	x	x	x		
France	x	x	x	x	x	
England (Great Britain)	x	x	x	x	x	
Prussia (Germany)		x	x	x	x	
Russia (Soviet Union)		x	x	x	x	x
Italy			x	x	x	
Japan				x	x	
United States				x	x	x

Adapted from Wright, 1965, Appendix 20, Table 43.

The link between the survival of particular great powers and the stability of systems is also weakened by the fact that not all changes of number are changes of system. That bipolar and multipolar systems are distinct is widely accepted. Systems of two have qualities distinct from systems of three or more. What is the defining difference? The answer is found in the behavior required of parties in self-help systems: namely, balancing. Balancing is differently done in multi- and bipolar systems. Though many students of international politics believe that the balance-of-power game requires at least three or four players, we saw in Chapter 6 that two will do. Where two powers contend, imbalances can be righted only by their internal efforts. With more than two, shifts in alignment provide an additional means of adjustment, adding flexibility to the system. This is a crucial difference between multi- and bipolar systems. Beyond two, what variations of number are consequential? Three and four are threshold numbers. They mark the transition from one system to another because the opportunities offered for balancing through combining with others vary in ways that change expected outcomes. Systems of three have distinctive and unfortunate characteristics. Two of the powers can easily gang up on the third, divide the spoils, and drive the system back to bipolarity. In multipolar systems four is then the lowest acceptable number, for it permits external alignment and promises considerable stability. Five is thought of as another threshold number, being the lowest number that promises stability while providing a role for a balancer; and I shall examine that claim. Beyond five no threshold appears. We know that complications accelerate as numbers grow because of the difficulty everyone has in coping with the uncertain behavior of many others and because of the ever larger number and variety of coalitions that can be made, but we have no grounds for saying that complications pass a threshold as we move, say, from seven to eight. Luckily, as a practical matter, no increase in the number of great powers is in prospect.

Until 1945 the nation-state system was multipolar, and always with five or more powers. In all of modern history the structure of international politics has changed but once. We have only two systems to observe. By inference and analogy, however, some conclusions can be drawn about international systems with smaller or larger numbers of great powers. The next part of this chapter shows that five parties do not constitute a distinct system and considers the different implications of systems of two and of four or more.

II

With only two great powers, a balance-of-power system is unstable; four powers are required for its proper functioning. For ease and nicety of adjustment a fifth power, serving as balancer, adds a further refinement. This is the conventional

wisdom. Should we accept it? Is five a nice compromise between the simplest possible system of two and numbers so large as to make anarchic systems hopelessly complex?

The notion of a balancer is more a historical generalization than a theoretical concept. The generalization is drawn from the position and behavior of Britain in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. British experience shows what conditions have to prevail if the role of balancer is to be effectively played. The first of these was that the margin of power on the side of the aggressor not be so large that British strength added to the weaker side would be insufficient to redress the balance. When the states of the continent were nearly in balance, Britain could act with effect. The second condition was that Britain's ends on the continent remain negative, for positive ends help to determine alignments. A state that wishes to secure a piece of territory ordinarily has to ally with states that do not already have it. The goals of the state then lessen the scope of its diplomatic maneuver. Finally, to be effective in the role of balancer, Britain required a status in power at least equal to that of the mightiest. British weakness vis-à-vis European countries has to the present day meant entanglement with them. Only when continental powers were nearly in balance or when Britain was impressively strong was she able to remain aloof until the moment arrived when her commitment could be diplomatically decisive. These are highly special conditions, made more so by the fact that political preferences must not lead the balancer to identify with any actual or potential grouping of states. Balance-of-power theory cannot incorporate the role of balancer because the playing of the role depends on such narrowly defined and historically unlikely conditions. The number five has no special charm, for there is no reason to believe that the odd party will be able and willing to serve as balancer.

Such considerations lead to more general doubts about the vaunted advantages of flexible alliances. To be helpful, flexibility has to mean that, where one or more states threaten others, some state will join one side or defect from the other in order to tilt the balance against the would-be aggressors. The old balance-of-power system here looks suspiciously like the new collective-security system of the League and the United Nations. Either system depends for its maintenance and functioning on neutrality of alignment at the moment of serious threat. To preserve the system, at least one powerful state must overcome the pressure of ideological preference, the pull of previous ties, and the conflict of present interests in order to add its weight to the side of the peaceful. It must do what the moment requires.

Since one of the interests of each state is to avoid domination by other states, why should it be difficult for one or a few states to swing to the side of the threatened? The answer has two parts. First, the members of a group sharing a common interest may well not act to further it. *A* and *B*, both threatened by *C*, may unite to oppose the latter. After all, they experience a common danger. But *A* may instead say to *B*: "Since the threat is to you as well as to me, I'll stand aside and let you deal with the matter." If *B* acts effectively, *A* gains free benefits. If *B*, having become resentful, does not, *A* and *B* both lose. Contemplation of a common fate may not lead to a fair division of labor—or to any labor at all. Whether or not it does depends on the size of the group and the inequalities within it, as well as on the character of its members (cf. Olson 1965, pp. 36, 45).

One sees the difficulties in any multipolar system where some states threaten others while alignments are uncertain. French Foreign Minister Flandin told British Prime Minister Baldwin that Hitler's military occupation of the Rhineland in 1936 provided the occasion for Britain to take the lead in opposing Germany. As the German threat grew, some British and French leaders could hope that if their countries remained aloof, Russia and Germany would balance each other off or fight each other to the finish (Nicolson 1966, pp. 247–49; Young 1976, pp. 128–30). Uncertainties about who threatens whom, about who will oppose whom, and about who will gain or lose from the actions of other states accelerate as the number of states increases. Even if one assumes that the goals of most states are worthy, the timing and content of the actions required to reach them become more and more difficult to calculate. Rather than making the matter simpler, prescribing general rules for states to follow simply illustrates the impossibility of believing that states can reconcile two conflicting imperatives—to act for their own sakes, as required by their situations, and to act for the system's stability or survival, as some scholars advise them to do. Political scientists who favor flexibility of national alignment have to accept that flexibility comes only as numbers increase and thus also as complexities and uncertainties multiply.

With more than two states, the politics of power turn on the diplomacy by which alliances are made, maintained, and disrupted. Flexibility of alignment means both that the country one is wooing may prefer another suitor and that one's present alliance partner may defect. Flexibility of alignment narrows one's choice of policies. A state's strategy must please a potential or satisfy a present partner. A comparable situation is found where political parties compete for votes by forming and re-forming electoral coalitions of different economic, ethnic, religious, and regional groups. The strategy, or policy, of a party is made for the sake of attracting and holding voters. If a party is to be an electoral success, its policy cannot simply be the one that its leaders believe to be best for the country. Policy must at least partly be made for the sake of winning elections. Similarly, with a number of approximately equal states, strategy is at least partly made for the sake of attracting and holding allies. If alliances may form, states will want to look like attractive partners. Suitors alter their appearance and adapt their behavior to increase their eligibility. Those who remain unattractive, finding that they compete poorly, are likely to try all the harder to change their

appearance and behavior. One has to become attractive enough in personality and policy to be considered a possible choice. The alliance diplomacy of Europe in the years before World War I is rich in examples of this. Ever since the Napoleonic Wars, many had believed that the "Republican" and the "Cossack" could never become engaged, let alone contract a marriage. The wooing of France and Russia, with each adapting somewhat to the other, was nevertheless consummated in the alliance of 1894 and duly produced the Triple Entente as its progeny when first France and England and then Russia and England overcame their long-standing animosities in 1904 and 1907, respectively.

If pressures are strong enough, a state will deal with almost anyone. Litvinov remarked in the 1930s that to promote its security in a hostile world the Soviet Union would work with any state, even with Hitler's Germany (Moore 1950, pp. 350–55). It is important to notice that states will ally with the devil to avoid the hell of military defeat. It is still more important to remember that the question of who will ally with which devil may be the decisive one. In the end Hitler's acts determined that all of the great powers save Italy and Japan would unite against him.*

In the quest for security, alliances may have to be made. Once made, they have to be managed. European alliances beginning in the 1890s hardened as two blocs formed. The rigidity of blocs, it is thought, contributed strongly to the outbreak of the First World War. The view is a superficial one. Alliances are made by states that have some but not all of their interests in common. The common interest is ordinarily a negative one: fear of other states. Divergence comes when positive interests are at issue. Consider two examples. Russia would have preferred to plan and prepare for the occasion of war against Austria-Hungary. She could hope to defeat her, but not Germany, and Austria-Hungary stood in the way of Russia's gaining control of the Straits linking the Mediterranean and the Black Seas. France, however, could regain Alsace-Lorraine only by defeating Germany. Perception of a common threat brought Russia and France together. Alliance diplomacy, and a large flow of funds from France to Russia, helped to hold them together and to shape an alliance strategy more to the taste of France than of Russia. Alliance strategies are always the product of compromise since the interests of allies and their notions of how to secure them are never identical. In a multipolar system, moreover, despite the formation of blocs, one's allies may edge toward the opposing camp. If a member of one alliance tries to settle differences, or to cooperate in some ways, with a member of another alliance, its own allies become uneasy. Thus British-German cooperation in 1912 and 1913 to

*As Winston Churchill said to his private secretary the night before Germany's invasion of Russia, "If Hitler invaded Hell I would make at least a favourable reference to the Devil in the House of Commons" (Churchill 1950, p. 370).

dampen Balkan crises, and the settling of some colonial questions between them, may have been harmful. The reactions of their allies dissuaded Britain and Germany from playing similar roles in Southeastern Europe in 1914, yet gave each of them some hope that the other's alliance would not hold firm (Jervis 1976, p. 110). Greater cohesion of blocs would have permitted greater flexibility of policy. But then the cohesion of blocs, like the discipline of parties, is achieved through expert and careful management; and the management of blocs is exceedingly difficult among near-equals since it must be cooperatively contrived.

If competing blocs are seen to be closely balanced, and if competition turns on important matters, then to let one's side down risks one's own destruction. In a moment of crisis the weaker or the more adventurous party is likely to determine its side's policy. Its partners can afford neither to let the weaker member go to the wall nor to advertise their disunity by failing to back a venture even while deploring its risks. The prelude to World War I provides striking examples. The approximate equality of alliance partners made them closely interdependent. The interdependence of allies, plus the keenness of competition between the two camps, meant that while any country could commit its associates, no one country on either side could exercise control. If Austria-Hungary marched, Germany had to follow; the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire would have left Germany alone in the middle of Europe. If France marched, Russia had to follow; a German victory over France would be a defeat for Russia. And so it was all around the vicious circle. Because the defeat or the defection of a major ally would have shaken the balance, each state was constrained to adjust its strategy and the use of its forces to the aims and fears of its partners. In one sense the unstable politics of the Balkans carried the world into war. But that statement rather misses the point. Internationally, destabilizing events and conditions abound. The important questions to ask are whether they are likely to be managed better, and whether their effects are absorbed more readily, in one system than in another (see below, pp. 208–209).

The game of power politics, if really played hard, presses the players into two rival camps, though so complicated is the business of making and maintaining alliances that the game may be played hard enough to produce that result only under the pressure of war. Thus the six or seven great powers of the interwar period did not move into a two-bloc formation until more than two years after World War II began. The forming of two blocs, moreover, did not make the multipolar system into a bipolar one any more than the forming of opposing coalitions for the purpose of fighting an election turns a multiparty into a two-party system. Even with the greatest of external pressure, the unity of alliances is far from complete. States or parties in wartime or in electoral alliance, even as they adjust to one another, continue to jockey for advantage and to worry about the constellation of forces that will form once the contest is over.

In multipolar systems there are too many powers to permit any of them to draw clear and fixed lines between allies and adversaries and too few to keep the effects of defection low. With three or more powers flexibility of alliances keeps relations of friendship and enmity fluid and makes everyone's estimate of the present and future relation of forces uncertain. So long as the system is one of fairly small numbers, the actions of any of them may threaten the security of others. There are too many to enable anyone to see for sure what is happening, and too few to make what is happening a matter of indifference. Traditionally students of international politics have thought that the uncertainty that results from flexibility of alignment generates a healthy caution in everyone's foreign policy (cf. Kaplan 1957, pp. 22–36; Morgenthau 1961, part 4). Conversely they have believed that bipolar worlds are doubly unstable—that they easily erode or explode. This conclusion is based on false reasoning and scant evidence. Military interdependence varies with the extent to which, and the equality with which, great powers rely on others for their security. In a bipolar world, military interdependence declines even more sharply than economic interdependence. Russia and America depend militarily mainly on themselves. They balance each other by "internal" instead of "external" means, relying on their own capabilities rather than on the capabilities of allies. Internal balancing is more reliable and precise than external balancing. States are less likely to misjudge their relative strengths than they are to misjudge the strength and reliability of opposing coalitions. Rather than making states properly cautious and forwarding the chances of peace, uncertainty and miscalculation cause wars (cf. Blainey 1970, pp. 108–19). In a bipolar world uncertainty lessens and calculations are easier to make.

Much of the skepticism about the virtues of bipolarity arises from thinking of a system as being bipolar if two blocs form within a multipolar world. A bloc unskillfully managed may indeed fall apart. In a multipolar world the leaders of both blocs must be concerned at once with alliance management, since the defection of an ally may be fatal to its partners, and with the aims and capabilities of the opposing bloc. The prehistory of two world wars dramatically displays the dangers. The fair amount of effort that now goes into alliance management may obscure the profound difference between old-style and new-style alliances. In alliances among equals, the defection of one party threatens the security of the others. In alliances among unequals, the contributions of the lesser members are at once wanted and of relatively small importance. Where the contributions of a number of parties are highly important to all of them, each has strong incentive both to persuade others to its views about strategy and tactics and to make concessions when persuasion fails. The unity of major partners is likely to endure because they all understand how much they depend on it. Before World War I, Germany's acceptance of Italy's probable defection from the Triple Alliance signaled her relative unimportance. In alliances among unequals, alliance leaders need worry little about the faithfulness of their followers, who usually have little choice anyway. Contrast the situation in 1914 with that of the United States and Britain and France in 1956. The United States could dissociate itself from the Suez adventure of its two principal allies and subject them to heavy financial pressure. Like Austria-Hungary in 1914, they tried to commit or at least immobilize their alliance partner by presenting a *fait accompli*. Enjoying a position of predominance, the United States could continue to focus its attention on the major adversary while disciplining its allies. The ability of the United States, and the inability of Germany, to pay a price measured in intra-alliance terms is striking. It is important, then, to distinguish sharply between the formation of two blocs in a multipolar world and the structural bipolarity of the present system.

In bipolar as in multipolar worlds, alliance leaders may try to elicit maximum contributions from their associates. The contributions are useful even in a bipolar world, but they are not indispensable. Because they are not, the policies and strategies of alliance leaders are ultimately made according to their own calculations and interests. Disregarding the views of an ally makes sense only if military cooperation is fairly unimportant. This is the case both in the Warsaw Treaty Organization and in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. In 1976, for example, the Soviet Union's military expenditures were well over 90 percent of the WTO total, and those of the United States were about 75 percent of the NATO total. In fact if not in form, NATO consists of guarantees given by the United States to its European allies and to Canada. The United States, with a preponderance of nuclear weapons and as many men in uniform as the West European states combined, may be able to protect them; they cannot protect her. Because of the vast differences in the capabilities of member states, the roughly equal sharing of burdens found in earlier alliance systems is no longer possible.

Militarily, interdependence is low in a bipolar world and high in a multipolar one. Great powers in a multipolar world depend on one another for political and military support in crises and war. To assure oneself of steadfast support is vital. This cannot be the case in a bipolar world, for third parties are not able to tilt the balance of power by withdrawing from one alliance or by joining the other. Thus two "losses" of China in the postwar world—first by the United States and then by the Soviet Union—were accommodated without disastrously distorting, or even much affecting, the balance between America and Russia. Nor did France, in withdrawing her forces from NATO, noticeably change the bipolar balance. That American policy need not be made for the sake of France helps to explain her partial defection. The gross inequality between the two superpowers and the members of their respective alliances makes any realignment of the latter fairly insignificant. The leader's strategy can therefore be flexible. In balance-of-power politics old style, flexibility of alignment made for rigidity of strategy or the limitation of freedom of decision. In balance-of-power politics new style, the ob-

verse is true: Rigidity of alignment in a two-power world makes for flexibility of strategy and the enlargement of freedom of decision. Although concessions to allies are sometimes made, neither the United States nor the Soviet Union alters its strategy or changes its military dispositions simply to accommodate associated states. Both superpowers can make long-range plans and carry out their policies as best they see fit, for they need not accede to the demands of third parties.

In a multipolar world, states often pool their resources in order to serve their interests. Roughly equal parties engaged in cooperative endeavors must look for a common denominator of their policies. They risk finding the lowest one and easily end up in the worst of all possible worlds. In a bipolar world, alliance leaders make their strategies mainly according to their own calculations of interests. Strategies can be designed more to cope with the main adversary and less to satisfy one's allies. Alliance leaders are free to follow their own line, which may of course reflect their bad as well as their good judgment, their imaginary as well as their realistic fears, their ignoble as well as their worthy ends. Alliance leaders are not free of constraints. The major constraints, however, arise from the main adversary and not from one's own associates.

III

Neither the United States nor the Soviet Union has to make itself acceptable to other states; they do have to cope with each other. In the great-power politics of multipolar worlds, who is a danger to whom, and who can be expected to deal with threats and problems, are matters of uncertainty. In the great-power politics of bipolar worlds, who is a danger to whom is never in doubt. This is the first big difference between the politics of power in the two systems. The United States is the obsessing danger for the Soviet Union, and the Soviet Union for the United States, since each can damage the other to an extent no other state can match. Any event in the world that involves the fortunes of either automatically elicits the interest of the other. President Truman, at the time of the Korean invasion, could not very well echo Neville Chamberlain's words in the Czechoslovakian crisis by claiming that the Koreans were a people far away in the East of Asia of whom Americans knew nothing. We had to know about them or quickly find out. In the 1930s France lay between England and Germany. The British could believe, and we could too, that their frontier and ours lay on the Rhine. After World War II no third great power could lie between the United States and the Soviet Union, for none existed. The statement that peace is indivisible was controversial, indeed untrue, when it was made by Litvinov in the 1930s. Political slogans express wishes better than realities. In a bipolar world the wish becomes reality. A war or threat of war anywhere is a concern to both of the

superpowers if it may lead to significant gains or losses for either of them. In a two-power competition a loss for one appears as a gain for the other. Because this is so, the powers in a bipolar world promptly respond to unsettling events. In a multipolar world dangers are diffused, responsibilities unclear, and definitions of vital interests easily obscured. Where a number of states are in balance, the skillful foreign policy of a forward power is designed to gain an advantage over one state without antagonizing others and frightening them into united action. At times in modern Europe, possible gains seemed greater than likely losses. Statesmen could hope to push an issue to the limit without causing all of the potential opponents to unite. When possible enemies are several in number, unity of action among them is difficult to arrange. National leaders could therefore think—or desperately hope as did Bethmann Hollweg and Adolf Hitler before two World Wars—that no united opposition would form. Interdependence of parties, diffusion of dangers, confusion of responses: These are the characteristics of great-power politics in multipolar worlds.

If interests and ambitions conflict, the absence of crises is more worrisome than their recurrence. Crises are produced by the determination of a state to resist a change that another state tries to make. The situation of the United States and of the Soviet Union disposes them to do the resisting, for in important matters they cannot hope that others will do it for them. Political action in the postwar world has reflected this condition. Communist guerrillas operating in Greece prompted the Truman Doctrine. The tightening of the Soviet Union's control over the states of Eastern Europe led to the Marshall Plan and the Atlantic Defense Treaty, and these in turn gave rise to the Cominform and the Warsaw Pact. The plan to form a West German government produced the Berlin Blockade. And so on through the 1950s, '60s, and '70s. Our responses are geared to the Soviet Union's actions, and theirs to ours, which has produced an increasingly solid bipolar balance.

In a bipolar world there are no peripheries. With only two powers capable of acting on a world scale, anything that happens anywhere is potentially of concern to both of them. Bipolarity extends the geographic scope of both powers' concern. It also broadens the range of factors included in the competition between them. Because allies add relatively little to the superpowers' capabilities, they concentrate their attention on their own dispositions. In a multipolar world, who is a danger to whom is often unclear; the incentive to regard all disequilibrating changes with concern and respond to them with whatever effort may be required is consequently weakened. In a bipolar world changes may affect each of the two powers differently, and this means all the more that few changes in the world at large or within each other's national realm are likely to be thought irrelevant. Competition becomes more comprehensive as well as more widely extended. Not just military preparation but also economic growth and technological development become matters of intense and constant concern. Self-dependence of

parties, clarity of dangers, certainty about who has to face them: These are the characteristics of great-power politics in a bipolar world.

Miscalculation by some or all of the great powers is the source of danger in a multipolar world; overreaction by either or both of the great powers is the source of danger in a bipolar world. Bipolarity encourages the United States and the Soviet Union to turn unwanted events into crises, while rendering most of them relatively inconsequential. Each can lose heavily only in war with the other; in power and in wealth, both gain more by the peaceful development of internal resources than by wooing and winning—or by fighting and subduing—other states in the world. A five-percent growth rate sustained for three years increases the American gross national product by an amount exceeding one-half of West Germany's GNP, and all of Great Britain's (base year 1976). For the Soviet Union, with one-half of our GNP, imaginable gains double in weight. They would still be of minor importance. Only Japan, Western Europe, and the Middle East are prizes that if won by the Soviet Union would alter the balance of GNPs and the distribution of resources enough to be a danger.

Yet since World War II the United States has responded expensively in distant places to wayward events that could hardly affect anyone's fate outside of the region. Which is worse: miscalculation or overreaction? Miscalculation is more likely to permit the unfolding of a series of events that finally threatens a change in the balance and brings the powers to war. Overreaction is the lesser evil because it costs only money and the fighting of limited wars.

The dynamics of a bipolar system, moreover, provide a measure of correction. In a hot war or a cold war—as in any close competition—the external situation dominates. In the middle 1950s John Foster Dulles inveighed against the immoral neutralists. Russian leaders, in like spirit, described neutralists as either fools themselves or dupes of capitalist countries. But ideology did not long prevail over interest. Both Russia and America quickly came to accept neutralist states and even to lend them encouragement. The Soviet Union aided Egypt and Iraq, countries that kept their communists in jail. In the late 1950s and throughout the '60s, the United States, having already given economic and military assistance to communist Yugoslavia, made neutralist India the most favored recipient of economic aid.* According to the rhetoric of the Cold War, the root cleavage in the world was between capitalist democracy and godless communism. But by the size of the stakes and the force of the struggle, ideology was subordinated to interest in the policies of America and Russia, who behaved more like traditional great powers than like leaders of messianic movements. In a world in which two

*From 1960 to 1967 our economic aid to India exceeded our combined economic and military aid to any other country (US Agency for International Development, various years).

states united in their mutual antagonism far overshadow any other, the incentives to a calculated response stand out most clearly, and the sanctions against irresponsible behavior achieve their greatest force. Thus two states, isolationist by tradition, untutored in the ways of international politics, and famed for impulsive behavior, soon showed themselves—not always and everywhere, but always in crucial cases—to be wary, alert, cautious, flexible, and forbearing.

Some have believed that a new world began with the explosion of an atomic bomb over Hiroshima. In shaping the behavior of nations, the perennial forces of politics are more important than the new military technology. States remain the primary vehicles of ideology. The international brotherhood of autocrats after 1815, the cosmopolitan liberalism of the middle nineteenth century, international socialism before World War I, international communism in the decades following the Bolshevik revolution: In all of these cases international movements were captured by individual nations, adherents of the creed were harnessed to the nation's interest, international programs were manipulated by national governments, and ideology became a prop to national policy. So the Soviet Union in crisis became Russian, and American policy, liberal rhetoric aside, came to be realistically and cautiously constructed. By the force of events, they and we were impelled to behave in ways belied both by their words and by ours. Political scientists, drawing their inferences from the characteristics of states, were slow to appreciate the process. Inferences drawn from the characteristics of small-number systems are better borne out politically. Economists have long known that the passage of time makes peaceful coexistence among major competitors easier. They become accustomed to one another; they learn how to interpret one another's moves and how to accommodate or counter them. "Unambiguously," as Oliver Williamson puts it, "experience leads to a higher level of adherence" to agreements made and to commonly accepted practices (1965, p. 227). Life becomes more predictable.

Theories of perfect competition tell us about the market and not about the competitors. Theories of oligopolistic competition tell us quite a bit about both. In important ways, competitors become like one another as their competition continues. As we noticed in Chapter 6, this applies to states as to firms. Thus William Zimmerman found not only that the Soviet Union in the 1960s had abandoned its Bolshevik views of international relations but also that its views had become much like ours (1969, pp. 135, 282). The increasing similarity of competitors' attitudes, as well as their experience with one another, eases the adjustment of their relations.

These advantages are found in all small-number systems. What additional advantages do pairs enjoy in dealing with each other? As a group shrinks, its members face fewer choices when considering whom to deal with. Partly because they eliminate the difficult business of choosing, the smallest of groups manages

its affairs most easily. With more than two parties, the solidarity of a group is always at risk because the parties can try to improve their lots by combining. Interdependence breeds hostility and fear. With more than two parties, hostility and fear may lead *A* and *B* to seek the support of *C*. If they both court *C*, their hostility and fear increase. When a group narrows to just two members, choice disappears. On matters of ultimate importance each can deal only with the other. No appeal can be made to third parties. A system of two has unique properties. Tension in the system is high because each can do so much for and to the other. But because no appeal can be made to third parties, pressure to moderate behavior is heavy (cf. Simmel 1902; Bales and Borgatta 1953). Bargaining among more than two parties is difficult. Bargainers worry about the points at issue. With more than two parties, each also worries about how the strength of his position will be affected by combinations he and others may make. If two of several parties strike an agreement, moreover, they must wonder if the agreement will be disrupted or negated by the actions of others.

Consider the problem of disarmament. To find even limited solutions, at least one of the following two conditions must be met. First, if the would-be winner of an arms race is willing to curtail its program, agreement is made possible. In the 1920s the United States—the country that could have won a naval arms race—took the lead in negotiating limitations. The self-interest of the would-be losers carried them along. Such was the necessary, though not the only, condition making the Washington Naval Arms Limitation Treaty possible. Second, if two powers can consider their mutual interests and fears without giving much thought to how the military capabilities of others affect them, agreement is made possible. The 1972 treaty limiting the deployment of antiballistic missiles is a dramatic example of this. Ballistic missile defenses, because they promise to be effective against missiles fired in small numbers, are useful against the nuclear forces of third parties. Because of their vast superiority, the United States and the Soviet Union were nevertheless able to limit their defensive weaponry. To the extent that the United States and the Soviet Union have to worry about the military strength of others, their ability to reach bilateral agreements lessens. So far those worries have been small.*

The simplicity of relations in a bipolar world and the strong pressures that are generated make the two great powers conservative. Structure, however, does not by any means explain everything. I say this again because the charge of structural determinism is easy to make. To explain outcomes one must look at the capabilities, the actions, and the interactions of states, as well as at the structure of their systems. States armed with nuclear weapons may have stronger incentives to avoid war than states armed conventionally. The United States and the Soviet Union may have found it harder to learn to live with each other in the 1940s and '50s than more experienced and less ideological nations would have. Causes at both the national and the international level make the world more or less peaceful and stable. I concentrate attention at the international level because the effects of structure are usually overlooked or misunderstood and because I am writing a theory of international politics, not of foreign policy.

*Richard Burt has carefully considered some of the ways in which the worries are growing (1976).

In saying that the United States and the Soviet Union, like duopolists in other fields, are learning gradually how to cope with each other, I do not imply that they will interact without crises or find cooperation easy. The quality of their relations did, however, perceptibly change in the 1960s and '70s. Worries in the 1940s and '50s that tensions would rise to intolerable levels were balanced in the 1960s and '70s by fears that America and Russia would make agreements for their mutual benefit at others' expense. West Europeans—especially in Germany and France—have fretted. Chinese leaders have sometimes accused the Soviet Union of seeking world domination through collaboration with the United States. Worries and fears on any such grounds are exaggerated. The Soviet Union and the United States influence each other more than any of the states living in their penumbra can hope to do. In the world of the present, as of the recent past, a condition of mutual opposition may require rather than preclude the adjustment of differences. Yet first steps toward agreement do not lead to second and third steps. Instead they mingle with other acts and events that keep the level of tension quite high. This is the pattern set by the first major success enjoyed by the Soviet Union and the United States in jointly regulating their military affairs—the Test Ban Treaty of 1963. The test ban was described in the United States as possibly a first big step toward wider agreements that would increase the chances of maintaining peace. In the same breath it was said that we cannot lower our guard, for the Soviet Union's aims have not changed (cf. Rusk, August 13, 1963). Because they must rely for their security on their own devices, both countries are wary of joint ventures. Since they cannot know that benefits will be equal, since they cannot be certain that arrangements made will reliably bind both of them, each shies away from running a future risk for the sake of a present benefit. Between parties in a self-help system, rules of reciprocity and caution prevail. Their concern for peace and stability draws them together; their fears drive them apart. They are rightly called *frère ennemi* and adversary partners.

But may not the enmity obliterate the brotherhood and the sense of opposition obscure mutual interests? A small-number system can always be disrupted by the actions of a Hitler and the reactions of a Chamberlain. Since this is true, it may seem that we are in the uncomfortable position of relying on the moderation, courage, and good sense of those holding positions of power. Given human vagaries and the unpredictability of the individual's reaction to events, one may

feel that the only recourse is to lapse into prayer. We can nonetheless take comfort from the thought that, like others, those who direct the activities of great states are by no means free agents. Beyond the residuum of necessary hope that leaders will respond sensibly, lies the possibility of estimating the pressures that encourage them to do so. In a world in which two states united in their mutual antagonism far overshadow any other, the incentives to a calculated response stand out most clearly, and the sanctions against irresponsible behavior achieve their greatest force. The identity as well as the behavior of leaders is affected by the presence of pressures and the clarity of challenges. One may lament Churchill's failure to gain control of the British government in the 1930s, for he knew what actions were required to maintain a balance of power. Churchill was not brought to power by the diffused threat of war in the '30s but only by the stark danger of defeat after war began. If a people representing one pole of the world now tolerates inept rulers, it runs clearly discernible risks. Leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union are presumably chosen with an eye to the tasks they will have to perform. Other countries, if they wish to, can enjoy the luxury of selecting leaders who will most please their peoples by the way in which internal affairs are managed. The United States and the Soviet Union cannot.

It is not that one entertains the utopian hope that all future American and Russian rulers will combine in their persons a complicated set of nearly perfect virtues, but rather that the pressures of a bipolar world strongly encourage them to act internationally in ways better than their characters may lead one to expect. I made this proposition in 1964; Nixon as president confirmed it. It is not that one is serenely confident about the peacefulness, or even about the survival, of the world, but rather that cautious optimism is justified so long as the dangers to which each must respond are so clearly present. Either country may go berserk or succumb to inanation and debility. That necessities are clear increases the chances that they will be met, but gives no guarantees. Dangers from abroad may unify a state and spur its people to heroic action. Or, as with France facing Hitler's Germany, external pressures may divide the leaders, confuse the public, and increase their willingness to give way. It may also happen that the difficulties of adjustment and the necessity for calculated action simply become too great. The clarity with which the necessities of action can now be seen may be blotted out by the blinding flash of nuclear explosions. The fear that this may happen strengthens the forces and processes I have described.

IV

A system of two has many virtues. Before explaining any more of them, the question of the durability of today's bipolar world should be examined. The system is

dynamically stable, as I have shown. I have not, however, examined the many assertions that America and Russia are losing, or have lost, their effective edge over other states, as has happened to previous great powers and surely may happen again. Let us first ask whether the margin of American and Russian superiority *is* seriously eroding, and then examine the relation between military power and political control.

Surveying the rise and fall of nations over the centuries, one can only conclude that national rankings change slowly. War aside, the economic and other bases of power change little more rapidly in one major nation than they do in another. Differences in economic growth rates are neither large enough nor steady enough to alter standings except in the long run. France and her major opponents in the Napoleonic Wars were also the major initial participants in World War I, with Prussia having become Germany and with the later addition of the United States. Even such thorough defeats as those suffered by Napoleonic France and Wilhelmine Germany did not remove those countries from the ranks of the great powers. World War II did change the cast of great-power characters; no longer could others compete with the United States and the Soviet Union, for only they combine great scale in geography and population with economic and technological development. Entering the club was easier when great powers were larger in number and smaller in size. With fewer and bigger ones, barriers to entry have risen. Over time, however, even they can be surmounted. How long a running start is needed before some third or fourth state will be able to jump over the barriers? Just how high are they?

Although not as high as they once were, they are higher than many would have us believe. One of the themes of recent American discourse is that we are a "declining industrial power." C.L. Sulzberger, for example, announced in November of 1972 that "the U.S. finds itself no longer the global giant of twenty years ago." Our share of global production, he claimed, "has slipped from 50 to 30 percent" (November 15, 1972, p. 47). Such a misuse of numbers would be startling had we not become accustomed to hearing about America's steady decline. In the summer of 1971 President Nixon remarked that 25 years ago "we were number one in the world militarily" and "number one economically" as well. The United States, he added, "was producing more than 50 percent of all the world's goods." But no longer. By 1971, "instead of just America being number one in the world from an economic standpoint, the preeminent world power, and instead of there being just two superpowers, when we think in economic terms and economic potentialities, there are five great power centers in the world today" (July 6, 1971).

The trick that Sulzberger and Nixon played on us, and no doubt on themselves, should be apparent. In 1946, Nixon's year of comparison, most of the industrial world outside of the United States lay in ruins. By 1952, Sulzberger's

year of comparison, Britain, France, and Russia had regained their prewar levels of production but the German and Japanese economic miracles had not been performed. In the years just after the war, the United States naturally produced an unusually large percentage of the world's goods.* Now again, as before the war, we produce about one quarter of the world's goods, which is two and three times as much as the two next-largest economies—namely, the Soviet Union's and Japan's. And that somehow means that rather than being number one, we have become merely one of five?

A recovery growth rate is faster than a growth rate from a normal base. The recovery rates of other economies reduced the huge gap between America and other industrial countries to one still huge, but less so. No evidence suggests further significant erosion of America's present position. Much evidence suggests that we became sufficiently accustomed to our abnormal postwar dominance to lead us now to an unbecoming sensitivity to others' advances, whether or not they equal our own. In the economic/technological game, the United States holds the high cards. Economic growth and competitiveness depend heavily on technological excellence. The United States has the lead, which it maintains by spending more than other countries on research and development. Here again recent statements mislead. The *International Economic Report of the President*, submitted in March of 1976, warned the Congress that "the United States has not been keeping pace with the growth and relative importance of R&D efforts of some of its major foreign competitors, especially Germany and Japan" (CIEP, p. 119). This should be translated to read as follows: Germany's and Japan's increases in R&D expenditures brought them roughly to the American level of spending by 1973 (see Appendix Table II). Much of America's decline in expenditure over the decade reflects reduced spending on space and defense-related research and development, which have little to do with economic standing anyway. Since expenditure is measured as a percentage of GNP, moreover, America's national expenditure is still disproportionately large. The expenditure is reflected in results, as several examples suggest. In 29 years following the 1943 resumption of Nobel Prize awards in science Americans won 86 of the 178 given (Smith and Karlesky 1977, p. 4). In 1976 we became the first country ever to sweep the Nobel Prizes. (This of course led to articles in the press warning of an approaching decline in America's scientific and cultural eminence, partly because other countries are catching up in research expenditures in ways that I have just summarized. One suspects the warning is merited; we can scarcely do better.)

*Nixon and Sulzberger do, however, overestimate American postwar economic dominance. W. S. and E. S. Woytinsky credit the United States with 40.7 percent of world income in 1948, compared to 26 percent in 1938. Theirs seems to be the better estimate (1953, pp. 389, 393–95).

Between 1953 and 1973 the United States produced 65 percent of 492 major technological innovations. Britain was second with 17 percent (*ibid.*). In 1971, of every ten thousand employees in the American labor force, 61.9 were scientists and engineers. The comparable figures for the next ranking noncommunist countries were 38.4 for Japan, 32.0 for West Germany, and 26.2 for France. Finally, our advantage in the export of manufactured goods has depended heavily on the export of high technology products. In the three years from 1973 through 1975 those exports grew at an annual average rate of 28.3 percent (IERP, 1976, p. 120).

However one measures, the United States is the leading country. One may wonder whether the position of leader is not a costly one to maintain. Developing countries, Russia and Japan for example, have gained by adopting technology expensively created in countries with more advanced economies. For four reasons this is no longer easily possible. First, the complexity of today's technology means that competence in some matters can seldom be separated from competence in others. How can a country be in the forefront of any complicated technology without full access to the most sophisticated computers? Countries as advanced as the Soviet Union and France have felt the difficulties that the question suggests. Second, the pace of technological change means that lags lengthen and multiply. "The countries only a little behind," as Victor Basiuk has said, "frequently find themselves manufacturing products already on the threshold of obsolescence" (n.d., p. 489). Third, even though the United States does not have an internal market big enough to permit the full and efficient exploitation of some possible technologies, it nevertheless approaches the required scale more closely than anyone else does. The advantage is a big one since most projects will continue to be national rather than international ones. Fourth, economic and technological leads are likely to become more important in international politics. This is partly because of the military stalemate. It is also because in today's world, and more so in tomorrow's, adequate supplies of basic materials are not easily and cheaply available. To mine the seabeds, to develop substitutes for scarce resources, to replace them with synthetics made from readily available materials: These are the abilities that will become increasingly important in determining the prosperity, if not the viability, of national economies.

I have mentioned a number of items that have to be entered on the credit side of the American ledger. Have I not overlooked items that should appear as debit entries? Have I not drawn a lopsided picture? Yes, I have; but then, it's a lopsided world. It is hard to think of disadvantages we suffer that are not more severe disadvantages for other major countries. The Soviet Union enjoys many of the advantages that the United States has and some that we lack, especially in natural resource endowments. With half of our GNP, she nevertheless has to run hard to stay in the race. One may think that the question to ask is not whether a third or

fourth country will enter the circle of great powers in the foreseeable future but rather whether the Soviet Union can keep up.

The Soviet Union, since the war, has been able to challenge the United States in some parts of the world by spending a disproportionately large share of her smaller income on military means. Already disadvantaged by having to sustain a larger population than America's on one-half the product, she also spends from that product proportionately more than the United States does on defense—perhaps 11 to 13 percent as compared to roughly 6 percent of GNP that the United States spent in the years 1973 through 1975.* The burden of such high military spending is heavy. Only Iran and the confrontation states of the Middle East spend proportionately more. Some have worried that the People's Republic of China may follow such a path, that it may mobilize the nation in order to increase production rapidly while simultaneously acquiring a large and modern military capability. It is doubtful that she can do either, and surely not both, and surely not the second without the first. As a future superpower, the People's Republic of China is dimly discernible on a horizon too distant to make speculation worthwhile.

Western Europe is the only candidate for the short run—say, by the end of the millennium. Its prospects may not be bright, but at least the potential is present and needs only to be politically unfolded. Summed, the nine states of Western Europe have a population slightly larger than the Soviet Union's and a GNP that exceeds hers by 25 percent. Unity will not come tomorrow, and if it did, Europe would not instantly achieve stardom. A united Europe that developed political competence and military power over the years would one day emerge as the third superpower, ranking probably between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Unless Europe unites, the United States and the Soviet Union will remain economically well ahead of other states. But does that in itself set them apart? In international affairs, force remains the final arbiter. Thus some have thought that by acquiring nuclear weapons third countries reduce their distance from the great powers. "For, like gunpowder in another age," so one argument goes, "nuclear weapons must have the ultimate result of making the small the equal of the great" (Stillman and Pfaff 1961, p. 135). Gunpowder did not blur the distinction between the great powers and the others, however, nor have nuclear weapons done so. Nuclear weapons are not the great equalizers they were sometimes thought to be. The world was bipolar in the late 1940s, when the United States had few atomic bombs and the Soviet Union had none. Nuclear weapons did not cause the condition of bipolarity; other states by acquiring them cannot change the condition. Nuclear weapons do not equalize the power of nations because they do not

*Some estimates of the Soviet Union's spending are higher. Cf. Brennan 1977.

change the economic bases of a nation's power. Nuclear capabilities reinforce a condition that would exist in their absence: Even without nuclear technology the United States and the Soviet Union would have developed weapons of immense destructive power. They are set apart from the others not by particular weapons systems but by their ability to exploit military technology on a large scale and at the scientific frontiers. Had the atom never been split, each would far surpass others in military strength, and each would remain the greatest threat and source of potential damage to the other.

Because it is so research-intensive, modern weaponry has raised the barriers that states must jump over if they are to become members of the superpower club. Unable to spend on anywhere near the American or Russian level for research, development, and production, middle powers who try to compete find themselves constantly falling behind.* They are in the second-ranking powers' customary position of imitating the more advanced weaponry of their wealthier competitors, but their problems are now much bigger. The pace of the competition has quickened. If weaponry changes little and slowly, smaller countries can hope over time to accumulate weapons that will not become obsolete. In building a nuclear force, Britain became more dependent on the United States. Contemplating the example, de Gaulle nevertheless decided to go ahead with France's nuclear program. He may have done so believing that missile-firing submarines were the world's first permanently invulnerable force, that for them military obsolescence had ended. The French are fond of invulnerability. Given the small number of submarines France has planned, however, only one or two will be at sea at any given time. Continuous trailing makes their detection and destruction increasingly easy. And France's 18 land-based missiles can be blanketed by Russia's intermediate-range ballistic missiles, which she has in abundant supply. French officials continue to proclaim the invulnerability of their forces, as I would do if I were they. But I would not find my words credible. With the United States and the Soviet Union, each worries that the other may achieve a first-strike capability, and each works to prevent that. The worries of lesser nuclear powers are incomparably greater, and they cannot do much to allay them.

In the old days weaker powers could improve their positions through alliance, by adding the strength of foreign armies to their own. Cannot some of the middle states do together what they are unable to do alone? For two decisive reasons, the answer is no. Nuclear forces do not add up. The technology of warheads, of delivery vehicles, of detection and surveillance devices, of command

*Between 1955 and 1965, Britain, France, and Germany spent 10 percent of the American total on military R&D; between 1970 and 1974, 27 percent. As Richard Burt concludes, unless European countries collaborate on producing and procuring military systems and the United States buys European, exploitation of new technology will widen the gap in the capabilities of allies (1976, pp. 20–21; and see Appendix Table VI).

and control systems, count more than the size of forces. Combining separate national forces is not much help. To reach top technological levels would require complete collaboration by, say, several European states. To achieve this has proved politically impossible. As de Gaulle often said, nuclear weapons make alliances obsolete. At the strategic level he was right. That is another reason for calling NATO a treaty of guarantee rather than an old-fashioned alliance. To concert their power in order to raise their capabilities to the level of the superpowers, states would have to achieve the oligopolists' unachievable "collusive handling of all relevant variables." Recalling Fellner, we know that this they cannot do. States fear dividing their strategic labors fully—from research and development through production, planning and deployment. This is less because one of them might in the future be at war with another, and more because anyone's decision to use the weapons against third parties might be fatal to all of them. Decisions to use nuclear weapons may be decisions to commit suicide. Only a national authority can be entrusted with the decision, again as de Gaulle always claimed. The reasons Europeans fear American unwillingness to retaliate on their behalf are the reasons middle states cannot enhance their power to act at the global and strategic levels through alliances compounded among themselves.* I leave aside the many other impediments to nuclear cooperation. These are impediments enough. Only by merging and losing their political identities can middle states become superpowers. The nonadditivity of nuclear forces shows again that in our bipolar world efforts of lesser states cannot tilt the strategic balance.

Saying that the spread of nuclear weapons leaves bipolarity intact does not imply indifference to proliferation. It will not make the world multipolar; it may have other good or bad effects. The bad ones are easier to imagine. Bipolarity has been proof against war between the great powers, but enough wars of lesser scale have been fought. The prospect of a number of states having nuclear weapons that may be ill-controlled and vulnerable is a scary one, not because proliferation would change the system, but because of what lesser powers might do to one another. In an influential 1958 article, Albert Wohlstetter warned of the dangers of a "delicate balance of terror." Those dangers may plague countries having small nuclear forces, with one country tempted to fire its weapons preemptively against an adversary thought to be momentarily vulnerable. One must add that these dangers have not in fact appeared. Reconsideration of nuclear proliferation is called for, but not here since I want only to make the point that an increase in the number of nuclear states does not threaten the world's bipolar structure.

*For the same reasons, a lagging superpower cannot combine with lesser states to compensate for strategic weakness.

Limitations of technology and scale work decisively against middle states competing with the great powers at the nuclear level. The same limitations put them ever further behind in conventional weaponry. Increasingly, conventional weaponry has become unconventional. Weapons systems of high technology may come to dominate the battlefield. One American officer describes an escort plane, under development for tactical strike missions, that "will throw an electronic blanket over their air defenses that will allow our aircraft to attack without danger from anything more than lucky shots." Another describes electronic-warfare capability as "an absolute requirement for survival in any future conflicts" (Middleton, September 13, 1976, p. 7). Though the requirement may be an absolute one, it is a requirement that only the United States and, belatedly, the Soviet Union will be able to meet. From rifles to tanks, from aircraft to missiles, weapons have multiplied in cost. To buy them in numbers and variety sufficient for military effectiveness exceeds the economic capability of most states. From about 1900 onward, only great powers, enjoying economies of scale, could deploy modern fleets. Other states limited their ships to older and cheaper models, while their armies continued to be miniatures of the armies of great powers. Now armies, air forces, and navies alike can be mounted at advanced levels of technology only by great powers. Countries of German or British size enjoy economies of scale in manufacturing steel and refrigerators, in providing schools, health services, and transportation systems. They no longer do so militarily. Short of the electronic extreme, the cost and complication of conventional warfare exclude middle states from developing the full range of weapons for land, air, and sea warfare.*

Great powers are strong not simply because they have nuclear weapons but also because their immense resources enable them to generate and maintain power of all types, military and other, at strategic and tactical levels. The barriers to entering the superpower club have never been higher and more numerous. The club will long remain the world's most exclusive one.

V

No one doubts that capabilities are now more narrowly concentrated than ever before in modern history. But many argue that the concentration of capabilities does not generate effective power. Military power no longer brings political control. Despite its vast capability, is the United States "a tied Gulliver, not a master

*Vital has made these points nicely for small states. They apply to middle states as well (1967, pp. 63–77).

with free hands" (Hoffmann, January 11, 1976, sec. iv, p. 1)? And does the Soviet Union also fit the discription? The two superpowers, each stalemated by the other's nuclear force, are for important political purposes effectively reduced to the power of lesser states. That is a common belief. The effective equality of states emerges from the very condition of their gross inequality. We read, for example, that the "change in the nature of the mobilizable potential has made its actual use in emergencies by its unhappy owners quite difficult and self-defeating. As a result, nations endowed with infinitely less can behave in a whole range of issues as if the difference in power did not matter." The conclusion is driven home by adding that the United States thinks in "cataclysmic terms," lives in dread of all-out war, and bases its military calculations on the forces needed for the ultimate but unlikely crisis rather than on what might be needed in the less spectacular cases that are in fact more likely to occur (Hoffmann, Fall 1964, pp. 1279, 1287–88; cf. Knorr 1966).

In the widely echoed words of John Herz, absolute power equals absolute impotence, at least at the highest levels of force represented by the American and Russian nuclear armories (1959, pp. 22, 169). At lesser levels of violence many states can compete as though they were substantially equal. The best weapons of the United States and the Soviet Union are useless, and the distinct advantage of those two states is thus negated. But what about American or Russian nuclear weapons used against minor nuclear states or against states having no nuclear weapons? Here again the "best" weapon of the most powerful states turns out to be the least usable. The nation that is equipped to "retaliate massively" is not likely to find the occasion to use its capability. If amputation of an arm were the only remedy available for an infected finger, one would be tempted to hope for the best and leave the ailment untreated. The state that can move effectively only by commiting the full power of its military arsenal is likely to forget the threats it has made and acquiesce in a situation formerly described as intolerable. Instruments that cannot be used to deal with small cases—those that are moderately dangerous and damaging—remain idle until the big case arises. But then the use of major force to defend a vital interest would run the grave risk of retaliation. Under such circumstances the powerful are frustrated by their strength; and although the weak do not thereby become strong, they are, it is said, able to behave as though they were.

Such arguments are repeatedly made and have to be taken seriously. In an obvious sense, part of the contention is valid. When great powers are in a stalemate, lesser states acquire an increased freedom of movement. That this phenomenon is now noticeable tells us nothing new about the strength of the weak or the weakness of the strong. Weak states have often found opportunities for maneuver in the interstices of a balance of power. In a bipolar world, leaders are free to set policy without acceding to the wishes of lesser alliance members. By the same logic, the latter are free not to follow the policy that has been set. As we once did, they enjoy the freedom of the irresponsible since their security is mainly provided by the efforts that others make. To maintain both the balance and its by-product requires the continuing efforts of America and Russia. Their instincts for self-preservation call forth such efforts. The objective of both states must be to perpetuate an international stalemate as a minimum basis for the security of each of them—even if this should mean that the two big states do the work while the small ones have the fun.

Strategic nuclear weapons deter strategic nuclear weapons (though they may also do more than that). Where each state must tend to its own security as best it can, the means adopted by one state must be geared to the efforts of others. The cost of the American nuclear establishment, maintained in peaceful readiness, is functionally comparable to the cost incurred by a government in order to maintain domestic order and provide internal security. Such expenditure is not productive in the sense that spending to build roads is, but it is not unproductive either. Its utility is obvious, and should anyone successfully argue otherwise, the consequences of accepting the argument would quickly demonstrate its falsity. Force is least visible where power is most fully and most adequately present (cf. Carr 1946, pp. 103, 129–32). Power maintains an order; the use of force signals a possible breakdown. The better ordered a society and the more competent and respected its government, the less force its policemen are required to employ. Less shooting occurs in present-day Sandusky than did on the western frontier. Similarly, in international politics states supreme in their power have to use force less often. "Non-recourse to force"—as both Eisenhower and Khrushchev seem to have realized—is the doctrine of powerful states. Powerful states need to use force less often then their weaker neighbors because the strong can more often protect their interests or work their wills in other ways—by persuasion and cajolery, by economic bargaining and bribery, by the extension of aid, and finally by posing deterrent threats. Since states with large nuclear armories do not actually "use" them, force is said to be discounted. Such reasoning is fallacious. Possession of power should not be identified with the use of force, and the usefulness of force should not be confused with its usability. To introduce such confusions into the analysis of power is comparable to saying that the police force that seldom if ever employs violence is weak or that a police force is strong only when policemen are shooting their guns. To vary the image, it is comparable to saying that a man with large assets is not rich if he spends little money or that a man is rich only if he spends a lot of it.

But the argument, which we should not lose sight of, is that just as the miser's money may depreciate grossly in value over the years, so the great powers' military strength has lost much of its usability. If military force is like currency that cannot be spent or money that has lost much of its worth, then is

not forbearance in its use merely a way of disguising its depreciated value? Conrad von Hötzendorf, Austrian Chief of Staff prior to the First World War, looked at military power as though it were a capital sum, useless unless invested. In his view, to invest military force is to commit it to battle.* In the reasoning of Conrad, military force is most useful at the moment of its employment in war. Depending on a country's situation, it may make much better sense to say that military force is most useful when it dissuades other states from attacking, that is, when it need not be used in battle at all. When the strongest state militarily is also a status-quo power, nonuse of force is a sign of its strength. Force is most useful, or best serves the interests of such a state, when it need not be used in the actual conduct of warfare. Throughout a century that ended in 1914, the British navy was powerful enough to scare off all comers, while Britain carried out occasional imperial ventures in odd parts of the world. Only as Britain's power weakened were her military forces used to fight a full-scale war. In being used, her military power surely became less useful.

Force is cheap, especially for a status-quo power, if its very existence works against its use. What does it mean, then, to say that the cost of using force has increased while its utility has lessened? It is highly important, indeed useful, to think in "cataclysmic terms," to live in dread of all-out war, and to base military calculations on the forces needed for the ultimate but unlikely crisis. That the United States does so, and that the Soviet Union apparently does too, makes the cataclysm less likely to occur. The web of social and political life is spun out of inclinations and incentives, deterrent threats and punishments. Eliminate the latter two, and the ordering of society depends entirely on the former—a utopian thought impractical this side of Eden. Depend entirely on threat and punishment, and the ordering of society is based on pure coercion. International politics tends toward the latter condition. The daily presence of force and recurrent reliance on it mark the affairs of nations. Since Thucydides in Greece and Kautilya in India, the use of force and the possibility of controlling it have been the preoccupations of international-political studies (Art and Waltz 1971, p. 4).

John Herz coined the term "security dilemma" to describe the condition in which states, unsure of one anothers' intentions, arm for the sake of security and in doing so set a vicious circle in motion. Having armed for the sake of security, states feel less secure and buy more arms because the means to anyone's security is a threat to someone else who in turn responds by arming (1950, p. 157). Whatever the weaponry and however many states in the system, states have to live with their security dilemma, which is produced not by their wills but by their situations. A dilemma cannot be solved; it can more or less readily be dealt with. Force cannot be eliminated. How is peace possible when force takes its awesome nuclear form? We have seen in this chapter that two can deal with the dilemma better than three or more. Second-strike nuclear forces are the principal means used. Those means look almost entirely unusable. Is that a matter of regret? Why is "usable" force preferred—so that the United States and the Soviet Union would be able to fight a war such as great powers used to do on occasion? The whole line of reasoning implied in assertions that the United States and the Soviet Union are hobbled by the unusability of their forces omits the central point. Great powers are best off when the weapons they use to cope with the security dilemma are ones that make the waging of war among them unlikely. Nuclear forces are useful, and their usefulness is reinforced by the extent to which their use is forestalled. The military forces of great powers are most useful and least costly if they are priced only in money and not also in blood.

Odd notions about the usability and usefulness of force result from confused theory and a failure of historical recall. Great powers are never "masters with free hands." They are always "Gullivers," more or less tightly tied. They usually lead troubled lives. After all, they have to contend with one another, and because great powers have great power, that is difficult to do. In some ways their lot may be enviable; in many ways it is not. To give a sufficient example, they fight more wars than lesser states do (Wright 1965, pp. 221–23 and Table 22; Woods and Baltzly 1915, Table 46). Their involvement in wars arises from their position in the international system, not from their national characters. When they are at or near the top, they fight; as they decline, they become peaceful. Think of Spain, Holland, Sweden, and Austria. And those who have declined more recently enjoy a comparable benefit.* Some people seem to associate great power with great good fortune, and when fortune does not smile, they conclude that power has evaporated. One wonders why.

As before, great powers find ways to use force, although now not against each other. Where power is seen to be balanced, whether or not the balance is nuclear, it may seem that the resultant of opposing forces is zero. But this is misleading. The vectors of national force do not meet at a point, if only because the

*"The sums spent for the war power is money wasted," he maintained, "if the war power remains unused for obtaining political advantages. In some cases the mere threat will suffice and the war power thus becomes useful, but others can be obtained only through the warlike use of the war power itself, that is, by war undertaken in time; if this moment is missed, the capital is lost. In this sense, war becomes a great financial enterprise of the State" (quoted in Vagts 1956, p. 361).

*Notice how one is misled by failing to understand how a state's behavior is affected by its placement. With Thucydides (see above, p. 127), contrast this statement of A.J.P. Taylor's: "For years after the second world war I continued to believe that there would be another German bid for European supremacy and that we must take precautions against it. Events have proved me totally wrong. I tried to learn lessons from history, which is always a mistake. The Germans have changed their national character" (June 4, 1976, p. 742).

power of a state does not resolve into a single vector. Military force is divisible, especially for states that can afford a lot of it. In a nuclear world, contrary to some assertions, the dialectic of inequality does not produce the effective equality of strong and weak states. Nuclear weapons deter nuclear weapons; they also serve to limit escalation. The temptation of one country to employ increasingly larger amounts of force is lessened if its opponent has the ability to raise the ante. Force can be used with less hesitation by those states able to parry, to thrust, and to threaten at varied levels of military endeavor. For more than three decades, power has been narrowly concentrated; and force has been used, not orgiastically as in the world wars of this century, but in a controlled way and for conscious political purposes, albeit not always the right ones. Power may be present when force is not used, but force is also used openly. A catalogue of examples would be both complex and lengthy. On the American side of the ledger it would contain such items as the garrisoning of Berlin, its supply by airlift during the blockade, the stationing of troops in Europe, the establishment of bases in Japan and elsewhere, the waging of war in Korea and Vietnam, and the "quarantine" of Cuba. Seldom if ever has force been more variously, more persistently, and more widely applied; and seldom has it been more consciously used as an instrument of national policy. Since World War II we have seen the political organization and pervasion of power, not the cancellation of force by nuclear stalemate.

Plenty of power has been used, although at times with unhappy results. Just as the state that refrains from applying force is said to betray its weakness, so the state that has trouble in exercising control is said to display the defectiveness of its power. In such a conclusion the elementary error of identifying power with control is evident. If power is identical with control, then those who are free are strong; and their freedom has to be taken as an indication of the weakness of those who have great material strength. But the weak and disorganized are often less amenable to control than those who are wealthy and well disciplined. Here again old truths need to be brought into focus. One old truth, formulated by Georg Simmel, is this: When one "opposes a diffused crowd of enemies, one may oftener gain isolated victories, but it is very hard to arrive at decisive results which definitely fix the relationships of the contestants" (1904, p. 675).

A still older truth, formulated by David Hume, is that "force is always on the side of the governed." "The soldan of Egypt or the emperor of Rome," he went on to say, "might drive his harmless subjects like brute beasts against their sentiments and inclination. But he must, at least, have led his *mamalukes* or *praetorian bands*, like men, by their opinion" (1741, p. 307). The governors, being few in number, depend for the exercise of their rule on the more or less willing assent of their subjects. If sullen disregard is the response to every command, no government can rule. And if a country, because of internal disorder and lack of coherence, is unable to rule itself, no body of foreigners, whatever the military force at its command, can reasonably hope to do so. If insurrection is the problem, then it can hardly be hoped that an alien army will be able to pacify a country that is unable to govern itself. Foreign troops, though not irrelevant to such problems, can only be of indirect help. Military force, used internationally, is a means of establishing control over a territory, not of exercising control within it. The threat of a nation to use military force, whether nuclear or conventional, is preeminently a means of affecting another state's external behavior, of dissuading a state from launching a career of aggression and of meeting the aggression if dissuasion should fail.

Dissuasion, whether by defense or by deterrence, is easier to accomplish than "compellence," to use an apt term invented by Thomas C. Schelling (1966, pp. 70–71). Compellence is more difficult to achieve, and its contrivance is a more intricate affair. In Vietnam, the United States faced not merely the task of compelling a particular action but of promoting an effective political order. Those who argue from such a case that force has depreciated in value fail in their analyses to apply their own historical and political knowledge. The master builders of imperial rule, such men as Bugeaud, Galliéni, and Lyautey, played both political and military roles. In like fashion, successful counterrevolutionary efforts have been directed by such men as Templer and Magsaysay, who combined military resources with political instruments (cf. Huntington 1962, p. 28). Military forces, whether domestic or foreign, are insufficient for the task of pacification, the more so if a country is rent by faction and if its people are politically engaged and active. Some events represent change; others are mere repetition. The difficulty experienced by the United States in trying to pacify Vietnam and establish a preferred regime is mere repetition. France fought in Algeria between 1830 and 1847 in a similar cause. Britain found Boers terribly troublesome in the war waged against them from 1898 to 1903. France, when she did the fighting, was thought to have the world's best army, and Britain, an all powerful navy (Blainey 1970, p. 205). To say that militarily strong states are feeble because they cannot easily bring order to minor states is like saying that a pneumatic hammer is weak because it is not suitable for drilling decayed teeth. It is to confuse the purpose of instruments and to confound the means of external power with the agencies of internal governance. Inability to exercise *political* control over others does not indicate *military* weakness. Strong states cannot do everything with their military forces, as Napoleon acutely realized; but they are able to do things that militarily weak states cannot do. The People's Republic of China can no more solve the problems of governance in some Latin American country than the United States can in Southeast Asia. But the United States can intervene with great military force in far quarters of the world while wielding an effective deterrent against escalation. Such action exceeds the capabilities of all but the strongest of states.

Differences in strength do matter, although not for every conceivable purpose. To deduce the weakness of the powerful from this qualifying clause is a misleading use of words. One sees in such a case as Vietnam not the *weakness* of

great military power in a nuclear world but instead a clear illustration of the *limits* of military force in the world of the present as always.

Within the repeated events, an unmentioned difference lurks. Success or failure in peripheral places now means less in material terms than it did to previous great powers. That difference derives from the change in the system. Students of international politics tend to think that wars formerly brought economic and other benefits to the victors and that in contrast the United States cannot now use its military might for positive accomplishment (e.g., Morgenthau 1970, p. 325; Organski 1968, pp. 328–29). Such views are wrong on several counts. First, American successes are overlooked. Buttressing the security of Western Europe is a positive accomplishment; so was defending South Korea, and one can easily lengthen the list. Second, the profits of past military ventures are overestimated. Before 1789, war may have been "good business"; it has seldom paid thereafter (Schumpeter 1919, p. 18; cf. Sorel, pp. 1–70, and Osgood and Tucker 1967, p. 40). Third, why the United States should be interested in extending military control over others when we have so many means of nonforceful leverage is left unspecified. America's internal efforts, moreover, add more to her wealth than any imaginable gains scored abroad. The United States, and the Soviet Union as well, have more reason to be satisfied with the status quo than most earlier great powers had. Why should we think of using force for positive accomplishment when we are in the happy position of needing to worry about using force only for the negative purposes of defense and deterrence? To fight is hard, as ever; to refrain from fighting is easier because so little is at stake. Léon Gambetta, French premier after France's defeat by Prussia, remarked that because the old continent is stifling, such outlets as Tunis are needed. This looks like an anticipation of Hobson. The statement was merely expediential, for as Gambetta also said, Alsace-Lorraine must always be in Frenchmen's hearts, although for a long time it could not be on their lips (June 26, 1871). Gains that France might score abroad were valued less for their own sake and more because they might strengthen France for another round in the French-German contest. Jules Ferry, a later premier, argued that France needed colonies lest she slip to the third or fourth rank in Europe (Power 1944, p. 192). Such a descent would end all hope of retaking Alsace-Lorraine. And Ferry, known as *Le Tonkinoise,* fell from power in 1885 when his southeast Asian ventures seemed to be weakening France rather than adding to the strength she could show in Europe. For the United States in the same part of the world, the big stake, as official statements described it, was internally generated—our honor and credibility, although the definition of those terms was puzzling. As some saw early in that struggle, and as most saw later on, in terms of global politics little was at stake in Vietnam (Stoessinger 1976, Chapter 8, shows that this was Kissinger's view). The international-political insignificance of Vietnam can be understood only in terms of the world's structure.

America's failure in Vietnam was tolerable because neither success nor failure mattered much internationally. Victory would not make the world one of American hegemony. Defeat would not make the world one of Russian hegemony. No matter what the outcome, the American-Russian duopoly would endure.

Military power no longer brings political control, but then it never did. Conquering and governing are different processes. Yet public officials and students alike conclude from the age-old difficulty of using force effectively that force is now obsolescent and that international structures can no longer be defined by the distribution of capabilitites across states.

How can one account for the confusion? In two ways. The first, variously argued earlier, is that the usefulness of force is mistakenly identified with its use. Because of their favored positions, the United States and the Soviet Union need to use force less than most earlier great powers did. Force is more useful than ever for upholding the status quo, though not for changing it, and maintaining the status quo is the minimum goal of any great power. Moreover, because the United States has much economic and political leverage over many other states, and because both the United States and the Soviet Union are more nearly self-sufficient than most earlier great powers were, they need hardly use force to secure ends other than their own security. Nearly all unfavorable economic and political outcomes have too little impact to call for their using force to prevent them, and strongly preferred economic and political outcomes can be sufficiently secured without recourse to force. For achieving economic gains, force has seldom been an efficient means anyway. Because the United States and the Soviet Union are secure in the world, except in terms of each other, they find few international-political reasons for resorting to force. Those who believe that force is less useful reach their conclusion without asking whether there is much reason for today's great powers to use force to coerce other states.

The second source of confusion about power is found in its odd definition. We are misled by the pragmatically formed and technologically influenced American definition of power—a definition that equates power with control. Power is then measured by the ability to get people to do what one wants them to do when otherwise they would not do it (cf. Dahl 1957). That definition may serve for some purposes, but it ill fits the requirements of politics. To define "power" as "cause" confuses process with outcome. To identify power with control is to assert that only power is needed in order to get one's way. That is obviously false, else what would there be for political and military strategists to do? To use power is to apply one's capabilities in an attempt to change someone else's behavior in certain ways. Whether A, in applying its capabilities, gains the wanted compliance of B depends on A's capabilities and strategy, on B's capabilities and counterstrategy, and on all of these factors as they are affected by the situation at hand. Power is one cause among others, from which it cannot be iso-

lated. The common relational definition of power omits consideration of how acts and relations are affected by the structure of action. To measure power by compliance rules unintended effects out of consideration, and that takes much of the politics out of politics.

According to the common American definition of power, a failure to get one's way is proof of weakness. In politics, however, powerful agents fail to impress their wills on others in just the ways they intend to. The intention of an act and its result will seldom be identical because the result will be affected by the person or object acted on and conditioned by the environment within which it occurs. What, then, can be substituted for the practically and logically untenable definition? I offer the old and simple notion that an agent is powerful to the extent that he affects others more than they affect him. The weak understand this; the strong may not. Prime Minister Trudeau once said that, for Canada, being America's neighbor "is in some ways like sleeping with an elephant. No matter how friendly or even tempered is the beast . . . one is affected by every twitch and grunt" (quoted in Turner 1971, p. 166). As the leader of a weak state, Trudeau understands the meaning of our power in ways that we overlook. Because of the weight of our capabilities, American actions have tremendous impact whether or not we fashion effective policies and consciously put our capabilities behind them in order to achieve certain ends.

How is power distributed? What are the effects of a given distribution of power? These two questions are distinct, and the answer to each of them is extremely important politically. In the definition of power just rejected, the two questions merge and become hopelessly confused. Identifying power with control leads one to see weakness wherever one's will is thwarted. Power is a means, and the outcome of its use is necessarily uncertain. To be politically pertinent, power has to be defined in terms of the distribution of capabilities; the extent of one's power cannot be inferred from the results one may or may not get. The paradox that some have found in the so-called impotence of American power disappears if power is given a politically sensible definition. Defining power sensibly, and comparing the plight of present and of previous great powers, shows that the usefulness of power has increased.

VI

International politics is necessarily a small-number system. The advantages of having a few more great powers is at best slight. We have found instead that the advantages of subtracting a few and arriving at two are decisive. The three-body problem has yet to be solved by physicists. Can political scientists or policymakers hope to do better in charting the courses of three or more interacting

states? Cases that lie between the simple interaction of two entities and the statistically predictable interactions of very many are the most difficult to unravel. We have seen the complications in the military affairs of multipolar worlds. The fates of great powers are closely linked. The great powers of a multipolar world, in taking steps to make their likely fates happier, at times need help from others. Friedrich Meinecke described the condition of Europe at the time of Frederick the Great this way: "A set of isolated power-States, alone yet linked together by their mutually grasping ambitions—that was the state of affairs to which the development of the European State-organism had brought things since the close of the Middle Ages" (1924, p. 321). Militarily and economically, interdependence developed as the self-sufficient localities of feudal Europe were drawn together by modern states. The great powers of a bipolar world are more self-sufficient, and interdependence loosens between them. This condition distinguishes the present system from the previous one. Economically, America and Russia are markedly less interdependent and noticeably less dependent on others than earlier great powers were. Militarily, the decrease of interdependence is more striking still, for neither great power can be linked to any other great power in "their mutually grasping ambitions."

Two great powers can deal with each other better than more can. Are they also able to deal with some of the world's common problems better than more numerous great powers can? I have so far emphasized the negative side of power. Power does not bring control. What does it bring? The question is considered in the next chapter, where the possibilities of, and the need for, international management and control are considered.