How Realists and Liberals Learned to Love the Bomb

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Speaking of the atomic bomb's effect on international relations, Henry Kissinger writes that "Many familiar assumptions about war, diplomacy and the nature of peace will have to be modified before we have developed a theory adequate to the perils and opportunities of the atomic age.[1]" When Col. Paul Tibbets and his crew dropped their payload on Hiroshima, they fundamentally altered the international landscape. Outside of policy making circles, intellectuals waged their own struggle to make sense of the new world order and the adjustments it demanded in their models. International relations theory, in particular, had to recalibrate itself to the nuclear age. What is the meaning of collective security when atomic bombs are in play? What of the balance of power? How should states react in an anarchic international system made even murkier by mutual assured destruction?

The atomic bomb can be expected to have an effect on both liberal and realist international relations (IR) theory. One might expect that Liberals, already agitating for peace and world government, would find their cause strengthened by the fear of nuclear annihilation; their arguments would then take on an urgency not previously seen. The Realists, on the other hand, while retaining their notions of the inevitability of conflict, will find said annihilation an issue powerful enough to rein in systemic tendencies for war. In fact, a survey of IR theory in the inter-war and immediate post-war periods shows that Liberals tend to lose their idealist fervor and advocate policies more in line with Realist views. Realists often supports a less hard-line stance than before, but, as befits a paradigm as diverse as Realism,

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1Kissinger, Henry. Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy. New York: Published for the Council on Foreign Relations by Harper, 1957. p. xi-xii,

effects vary greatly from scholar to scholar, often in relation to his orientation as a Structural or Classical Realist.

This paper takes a systematic look at IR theory from roughly 1930-1960 in an attempt to uncover the fundamental changes introduced by the atomic bomb. In some cases, scholars wrote on either side of World War II and the shifts are easy to see. In many others, we are forced to compare writers within the same paradigm on either side of the war to determine the evolution of IR theory. The changes wrought by the bomb can be seen in the basic tenets of each paradigm: ideas of collective security, balance of power, the inevitably of conflict, interdependence, and others. The individual focus of each intellectual means that, while each person's reaction to the nuclear age is different, a survey of sufficient breadth can reveal general trends. That said, we will see disparate and surprising developments: Liberals writing of the necessity of power politics, Realists advocating collective security, and at least one scholar favoring nuclear proliferation. IR theory, however, remains elastic enough that, even today, presidents call for a nuclear-free world even as specialists blithely predict an inevitable hegemonic conflict with nuclear China.[2]

The balance of the paper proceeds as follows. First, I provide an extremely condensed summary of the two major theoretical paradigms in international relations, then the historical background of the inter-war and immediate post-war periods necessary to provide context for the second and third sections. Following that is a discussion of two influential inter-war Idealists. Next is a survey of several Realist scholars covering the inter-war, post-war, and early Cold War periods. Finally, the conclusion will summarize the common themes of each writer and clarify the far-reaching effects that events in Hiroshima and Nagasaki have had on

2 Mearsheimer, John J. "China's Unpeaceful Rise." CURRENT HISTORY -NEW YORK THEN PHILADELPHIA-. 105. 690 (2006): 160-162.

intellectuals in international relations.

The Background

Paradigmatic

The Liberal paradigm (also called Idealist, Utopian and Functionalist, with varying levels of respect and disdain) maintains three broad positions based on a single concept[3]. Like Realists, Liberals generally accept the concept of anarchy in the international system. This anarchy is an impediment to peace and something that should be overcome through human efforts; the most obvious proposal for attenuating anarchy is that of world government. Liberals maintain that a combination of international law and world government will tame the international system and bring peace. They are thus goals that all nations should strive for, and will, once enough people realize the ultimate futility of war. This rather idealistic endeavor is aided by the second and third of the Liberal positions. First is free trade and the interdependence that it brings. Globalization is not a new concept – Adam Smith, Jeremy Bentham and Joseph Schumpeter made the connection between increased trade and peace long before the WTO appeared. Thus arguments made in the 19th century about Pax Britannica could be repeated nearly word for word in a debate over, for example, NAFTA or anti-dumping regulations. The final Liberal position is what has come to be known as the Democratic Peace Theory. One of Woodrow Wilson's ultimate goals was the worldwide spread of democracy, since democracies allegedly don't go to war with each other. The Democratic Peace Theory has yet to lose its seductive allure, as recent American adventures in the Middle East will attest. These three ideals: world government, free trade and democracy remain at

3 Doyle, Michael W. Ways of War and Peace: Realism, Liberalism, and Socialism. New York: Norton, 1997. p. 205-212 Doyle provides a more in depth summary of the Liberal tradition.

the core of Liberal theory.

Realism is rather like Christianity. There are countless varieties within Realism, often at odds with each other, and occasionally heated debate over what is and isn't Realism. Just as one can't stop at "Christian" in a self description, a Realist has to clarify whether he is a Structural or Classical Realist, from the English School or an American Realist, defensive or offensive, and many other small distinctions. Despite a tradition as varied and rich as Realism, certain generalizations can be made. Again, systemic anarchy is the foundation upon which the other proposals are constructed. Unlike Liberals, however, anarchy is to be endured, not overcome. Realists reject the possibility of world government and the effect of international law, claiming instead that states will act in their own self-interest regardless of societal norms. Any attempt at world government will become merely another arena for power politics, not a forum to bring about peace. As such, conflict is inevitable. Though not warmongers, Realists have no expectation of peace and focus instead on maintenance of the system. The primary instrument in this maintenance is the balance of power, where states employ an ever shifting array of alliances to prevent any one state from gaining an unassailable position of power.[4]

Historical

At the end of World War I, Realism found itself in a weakened position. Wilson's exuberant and ambitious attempts to remake the world brought Idealists (as Liberals were called at the time) into prominence, both in theory and practice. The apocalyptic destruction wrought upon Europe by The War to End All Wars provided a scathing condemnation of the alliances and intrigue that dragged an unwilling Europe into a war that easily could have been

4 Doyle, Ways, p. 41-48. As with Liberalism, Doyle provides a detailed and nuanced overview. He divides the Realists differently than I, but the basic tenets remain constant.

prevented, or so claimed the Idealists. People proved ready to listen as self-determination, collective security and free trade were loudly proclaimed.[5] The League of Nations was formed, empires were humbled, democracy was granted and protected, war was outlawed, and the balance of power was condemned to the dustbin of history. The days of the Idealists would, however, be short lived.

The end of the 1920s brought the Great Depression. Free trade was the first casualty as many countries turned to isolationism. Empire building continued apace as self-determination was applied only selectively. The League of Nations, never ratified in the United States, found itself incapable of action as Japan made a mockery of collective security on its way to an ill-advised caper in mainland China. Democracy brought a demagogue to power in Germany; Hitler promptly self-determined that much of Europe was actually German territory and annexed it accordingly. Realists watched unsurprised as the Idealist world order crumbled, then quietly took back their positions of prominence and castigated the Idealist position as hopeless Utopianism. By the time World War II was underway, the Realists were firmly ensconced in both government and academia, where they would remain after the war ended and the nuclear age altered the landscape of international conflict.[6]

Despite the fact that IR theorists trace their tradition back to Renaissance lawyers and philosophers like Grotius, Machiavelli and Kant, or even as far back as 431 B.C., when Thucydides wrote *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, the establishment of international relations as a discipline dates to the inter-war period. Universities in the United States opened departments in international politics during the 1920s and 30s. The University of Chicago, for

5 Kleinschmidt, Harald. The Nemesis of Power: A History of International Relations Theories. Globalities. London: Reaktion Books, 2000. p. 184-190.
6 Kleinschmidt, Nemesis, p. 194-198.

example, began accepting students in 1931 and hosted a string of influential thinkers: Quincy Wright, Hans Morgenthau, and John Mearsheimer to name a few. European universities followed suit: E.H. Carr held the Woodrow Wilson Chair in International Politics at The University of Wales in Aberystwyth in the 1930s (ironic, considering Carr's position on Wilsonian Idealism). American schools remained at the pinnacle of IR scholarship both on the strength of first-mover advantage and because their colleagues in Europe were still digging out from under the rubble of WWI in the 1920s.[7] This trend was strengthened in the days before World War II, as a steady trickle of intellectuals fled Hitler's Germany and made their way into American universities.

By the end of the war, Realists occupied the dominant positions in most universities. Influential Realists like George F. Kennan had the ear of policy-makers. The discrepancy in numbers is reflected clearly in this paper, where the Realists surveyed far outnumber the Liberals. Many of the pre-war Liberals had been, not international relations theorists, but historians or writers. After Realism reasserted itself, the Liberal voice in the discipline was nearly silent for two decades. In a bizarre twist of fate, however, Realists watched from their impregnable position in academia as the United States carried out the most comprehensive post-war Liberal agenda imaginable: the establishment of both the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions, the Marshall Plan in Europe, and the Occupation of Japan.

The Liberals

Sir Norman Angell

Whether prophetic or hopelessly idealistic, Norman Angell's *The Great Illusion* is a

7 Kleinschmidt, Nemesis, p. 204-207.

powerful pacifist tract. He published an updated edition in 1933, noting the "continued prevalence in the public mind of just that group of fallacies which this book was written, twenty-five years ago, to expose[8]." Angell's vision of international relations hinges on just that: the public mind. There is no place for an unchanging, untouchable systemic anarchy in *The Great Illusion, 1933,* for Angell puts as his foundation the will of the masses and the root of conflict the ignorance and apathy thereof.[9] This ignorance creates and perpetuates the system that leads inexorably to war. Thus for Angell, the solution is education. He "denies that such failures of understanding by the multitude are inevitable.[10]" The purpose of his book is to convince the public of their current folly, to the extent that the resultant outcry becomes sufficient to force political change.

Angell's arguments cover two broad points. First, that free trade is positive-sum and benefits everyone. Second, that any gains, territorial or otherwise, taken in war are far outweighed by the economic damage caused. In elaborating these points, Angell hopes to convince the median voter, so to speak, that many popularly held opinions, influenced unduly by a nationalism that fails to take into account the true costs and benefits of conflict, are doing far more harm than good. In *The Great Illusion,* Angell doesn't address issues of world governance, instead relying on the society-driven model to influence the course of world events. His optimistic faith in humanity is also notable – a position antithetical to the often dour Realists who follow.

A more obscure text, *Defence and the English-Speaking World,* shows a very different side of Norman Angell. Published in 1958, *Defence* highlights the strains put on Liberalism by the

8 Angell, Norman. The Great Illusion, 1933. World affairs: national and international viewpoints. New York: Arno Press, 1972. p. 3.
9 Angell, Great Illusion, p. 29.
10 Angell, Great Illusion, p. 19.

Cold War. Angell opens the book noting that "the Hitlerian threat would not have been disposed of ... by announcing that we would abolish our army and navy[11]" and follows that with an exhortation to remain resolute in the face of the Communist threat. Angell admits that what we want most is not peace, but defense and security.[12] He is visibly troubled by the nuclear threat, however, fearing that the world is "drifting into a nuclear war despite our conscious and determined intention to avoid it.[13]"

A more bullish attitude aside, Angell holds firm in his belief that educating the masses is one key to victory in the Cold War. Education is important because, as in *The Great Illusion*, educated voters make for educated policies. Education further plays a part because the Cold War was as much a battleground of ideas as armies. Technology naturally plays a major role in a conflict like the Cold War, but the mental contest is not limited to scientific prowess. In an ideological war, a society that cannot compete for hearts and minds is every bit defeated as a society with a beaten army. It is for all of these reasons that Angell places education at an equivalent, or even superior, role as military security.

Finally, Angell "believes that we must ultimately establish a world government or stand in constant danger of annihilation." The problem is not if, but how, he says, since world government would be achieved with "relative ease by the wholesale surrender to a Russo-Chinese totalitarian communism.[14]" Indeed, the path to an international regime is fraught with difficulty. Fears of an authoritarian world government are valid, admits Angell, and popular opinion remains divided. Further, Angell is pessimistic, as he sees evidence of massive incompetence and failure at a national level – how can we hope to govern internationally if we

11 Angell, Norman. Defence and the English-Speaking Role. London: Pall Mall Press, 1958. p. 7.
12 Angell, Defense, p. 14.
13 Angell, Defense, p. 4.
14 Angell, Defense, p. 49.

can't keep even a single country under control?[15] Nonetheless, a world government is something we must struggle towards, no matter how gradually, says Angell.

Norman Angell's idealism survived World War II, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the coming of the Cold War, but it did not escape unscathed. Clearly evident in *Defence and the English-Speaking World* is a determination to resist tyranny that is never addressed in *The Great Illusion*. Though still believing in pacifism and the ultimate avoidability of war, Angell admits the difficulty of unilateral disarmament. He remains a dedicated Liberal, however, in his analysis of the international system, advocacy of a world government, and general belief in the inherent good of human nature.

Arnold J. Toynbee

Historian Arnold J. Toynbee left a published body of work so vast as to make any sort of summation a daunting task. Fortunately, his writings related to first, international relations, and second, the atomic bomb, are a bit more manageable. Toynbee was a prominent inter-war Idealist and a tireless advocate of world government. His writing in particular was a target of E.H. Carr, as Toynbee's steady stream of criticism directed at those who failed to rely on the League of Nations made Carr and others "especially impatient at the time. [16]" Kenneth W. Thompson attempts to remake Toynbee as a Realist in his article "Toynbee and the Theory of International Politics," comparing pre- and post-World War II writings to make his point. A further look at Toynbee's work, however, undermines this idea that the war and the atomic bomb could turn such a flamboyant supporter of Idealism into a calculating and rational Realist.

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15 Angell, Defense, p. 51.
16 Hoffmann, Stanley. Contemporary Theory in International Relations. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1960. p. 97.

Thompson, a protégé of Hans Morgenthau, looks at a number of Toynbee's publications from a thirty year time period, roughly 1920 to 1950. He cites a number of post-war writings than seem to admit the existence of the balance of power, concede the more or less constant nature of power politics, and the interdependence of domestic and external factors in international relations.[17] (The first, of course, are standard fare for Realists, but the last was generally accepted among Liberals, thus, not necessarily an indication of a Realist bent.)

Considering, instead, Toynbee's 1948 publication *Civilization on Trial*, a slightly different picture emerges. Toynbee may indeed have grudgingly come to accept the reality of power politics, but his zeal for world government remains undimmed. Regardless of the nature of the United Nations, Toynbee writes that "I believe it is a foregone conclusion that the world is in any event going to be unified politically in the near future. [18]" This is a bold claim. He attributes this inevitability to the combined power of international interdependence and the danger of nuclear war. Toynbee points to the development of first the League of Nations and later the United Nations as, at the very least, a significant departure from the usual path towards world government: that of conquering all available territory by force. He admits the "length and the roughness of the road that lies between our goal and the point we stand today.[19]" Toynbee is firm in his exhortation, however, as he perceives the likely alternative to striving for a world government to be a continuation of power politics tending almost irresistably towards war.[20]

Like Angell, Toynbee was forced to reevaluate his position in the wake of World War II and the beginning of the Cold War. Also like Angell, Toynbee accepted certain facts of the

17 Hoffman, Contemporary Theory, p. 94-100.
18 Toynbee, Arnold Joseph. Civilization on Trial: [Essays]. New York: Oxford University Press, 1948. p. 127.
19 Toynbee, Civilization, p. 128.
20 Toynbee, Civilization, p. 129, 135.

international system – power politics, the difficulties inherent in world government – while maintaining his optimistic worldview. He sees the atomic bomb as an enticement to peace, an elephant in the room that, in concert with interdependence and the spread of democracy, pushes inevitably toward a stable world government. He is philosophical, however. "If mankind is going to run amok with atom bombs, I personally should look to the Negrito Pygmies of Central Africa to salvage some fraction of the present heritage of mankind.[21]"

The Realists

E.H. Carr

E.H. Carr published *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-39* in 1939. Carr caused a firestorm among Idealists, but it became a book that "the emerging field of IR was soon to revere as one of its founding texts.[22]" If nothing else, Carr's early contention that the act of critical thinking about international relations "marks the end of its specifically utopian period, [and] is commonly called realism[23]" would give the paradigm its name. What follows, however, is a "devastating" critique of Idealism on the eve of World War II.[24] Utopianism, Carr's pejorative for the Liberal paradigm, is comparable to alchemy and implied to be the belief system of primitives. He sees the dominance of Utopian policies in the inter-war period to be the crisis named in the title and a direct cause of the challenges to the world order that were ominously mounting at the time of writing. It is this paper's loss that Carr lost interest in international relations after the war and focused his efforts instead on a definitive history of the Soviet

21 Toynbee, Civilization, p. 161.
22 Cox, Michael. E.H. Carr: A Critical Appraisal. Houndsmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2000. p. 2.
23 Carr, Edward Hallett. The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations. London: Macmillan & Co, 1946. p.10.
24 Cox, E.H. Carr, p. 165.

Union.[25] With no post-war texts to further the ideas presented in *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, direct comparisons are impossible. Carr does, however, provide a benchmark with which to examine post-war Realism.

Carr's Realism follows in the Machiavellian tradition: the personal leads to the systemic. Power, and the pursuit of it, is the theme of *The Twenty Years' Crisis*. All politics is power, he writes, a conclusion that naturally leads to his claims about world government, international law and the role of morals in international relations. World government is doomed to failure simply because not everybody wants it. The League of Nations, he continues, is simply another venue for power politics anyway. International law exists solely for the strong; the weak have little say in the events swirling around them. Finally, in this Hobbesian world, morals have no place. States must do as they must, with questions or right or wrong subordinated to survival. Peace, needless to say, is little more than utopian fantasy, since it takes but one power hungry leader to start a war. The Realism that Carr outlines is less of a predictive model than an attack on Liberals. He is less concerned with creating a parsimonious theory than debunking a worldview he finds dangerous. In spite of this, the arguments in *The Twenty Years' Crisis* form a foundation that later writers would elaborate on.

John Herz

John Herz was born in Germany, but like many other Jewish intellectuals, he wisely left in the 1930s. He made his way eventually to the United States and found a job teaching at Howard University. (In this he was one of a number of Jewish scholars who found themselves teaching at traditionally black universities.) Herz wrote several influential books during and

25 Cox, E.H. Carr, p. 2.

immediately after the war which demonstrate a clear intellectual evolution as the realities of the nuclear age developed. The ideas in several of his books are distilled into a series of essays titled *The Nation-State and the Crisis of World Politics*; three of these essays, published in 1942, 1957 and 1962 form the crux of this discussion.

Herz's signature contribution to IR theory is the "Security Dilemma." Country A is unsure of Country B's true motivations. The world being what it is (anarchic, dangerous), Country A assumes the worst and takes appropriate precautions. Country B sees these precautions and, not knowing the reasoning behind them and with the world being what it is, assumes the worst and responds in kind. Country A is further alarmed by Country B's actions, increases its defensive posture; Country B follows, and events develop along predictable and unfortunate lines.

The implications of the security dilemma on the possibility of world government are clearly laid out in "Power Politics and World Organization (1942)." Herz builds his model on a systemic base. Power is still the modus operandi, but states are constrained by the international system and forced to think first of survival. (The final outcome is the same in Carr's model, but the causal arrow points in a different direction.) The system and the security dilemma it causes result in the balance of power, which fulfills the dual function of allowing states to coexist and develop as independent nations.[26] War, in this system, is the final arbiter when diplomacy fails and, though hardly desirable, remains inevitable - "engendered by the system.[27]" Herz concludes that the only international organization that is not either a utopian impossibility or a renaming of the status quo is collective security. He is far from hopeful that

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26 Herz, John H. The Nation-State and the Crisis of World Politics: Essays on International Politics in the Twentieth Century. New York: D. McKay, 1976. p. 59.
27 Herz, The Nation-State, p. 66.

it would ever work, but remarks that once World War II is over, the Allies may be able to impose it on the world and it may eventually gain grudging acceptance. Herz is, at this time, also skeptical that a collective security system would find a way to attenuate traditional power politics and the conflict that naturally stems from it.

Fifteen years later, John Herz published "Rise and Demise of the Territorial State (1957)," an elegant deconstruction of the puzzles facing international relations. Looking back at the (seemingly) stable inter-war era, he bemoans the disappearance of "the 'givens,' the basic structure and the basic phenomena of international studies." The atomic age has removed all assurance "about the functions of war and peace.[28]" Nuclear weapons have opened up what he calls "the hard shell," the physical boundaries and fortifications that used to define nation-states. Aerial warfare provided a prelude to the decline of the territorial state, as enemies could now literally fly over castles, moats and trenches and carry the war directly to the vulnerable homeland. Nuclear bombs represent the logical conclusion – nothing and nobody anywhere is safe.

Herz is not convinced that, in this profoundly changed international landscape, international relations as a discipline can maintain relevance.[29] He is further disillusioned by the persistence of the security dilemma, now conflated with the dilemma of mutual assured destruction. Herz is clearly shaken – he has little hope that solutions which failed so spectacularly in the past will magically succeed now that global survival is at stake, sees no way to escape the dual dilemma which seems to lead inexorably towards extinction, and fears that his own chosen discipline will prove inadequate to the task ahead.

"International Politics and the Nuclear Dilemma (1962)" finds Herz in a more proactive

28 Herz, The Nation-State, p. 99.
29 Herz, The Nation-State, p. 119.

mood. In this paper, he attacks the issues of the nuclear age head on and searches valiantly for solutions. Considering his Realist background, the answers he finds are surprising. First, Herz reintroduces morals to the discussion. Alarmed at the increasing dehumanization of the decisions surrounding the start of nuclear war, he fears that the unthinkable will happen if a touch of humanity isn't brought back into the discussion.[30] Second, Herz advocates an increase of international law, if only to regulate issues like non-proliferation and arms races. As before, he is not hopeful that international law actually commands sufficient respect, but sees it as the only way to prevent an already unstable situation from spiraling further out of control. Finally, he sees an increase of "universalist" sentiment as the only ultimate solution to the problem - "universalism" being defined as a global, not national perspective. With no escape anywhere in the event of a nuclear exchange, Herz admits that it is "perhaps permissible to concede at least some chance to the ultimate spread of an attitude through which rational foreign policies would at last become possible.[31]" These are hardly hopeful words, but such is the intellectual journey of one prominent Realist in the aftermath of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Though Herz would possibly deny any sort of paradigmatic shift, Liberals may gleefully point out that many of his solutions, though offered with small expectation of success, are ideas that Wilson and other Liberals presented after World War I.

Hans Morgenthau

More than any other author surveyed in this paper, Hans Morgenthau seems least affected by the atom bomb. He has been called the "preeminent modern Fundamentalist Realist,[32]" and his *Politics Among Nations* is widely considered to be a landmark in the

30 Herz, The Nation-State, p. 129.
31 Herz, The Nation-State, p. 147.
32 Doyle, Ways, p. 106.

discipline. Like Herz and Henry Kissinger, Morgenthau emigrated to the United States from Germany when Hitler came to power. Delfiner wonders to what extent the experience of fleeing their homeland in advance of what would become genocide influenced the Realism of the German intellectuals. Delfiner quotes Morgenthau as saying, "survival is the supreme moral act.[33]" It would stand to reason that men with this background would feel differently about war and peace than those born in England and America.

Morgenthau, like Carr, keeps his Realism at a personal level. Power is the driving independent variable in Morgenthau's model. The international system is present, but only to be acted upon by states in their quest for increased power. This could be one reason why power politics in the nuclear age differs little from that in any other time period: nuclear weapons change the game only in degree, not in any fundamental way. In *Politics Among Nations*, the bomb makes appearances only to show that we can now kill a greater number of people simultaneously. The fundamental change for Morgenthau came long before Trinity – it came with total war, nationalism, and universalism. The atomic bomb, then, is just the next step after the machine gun, the airplane and poison gas. To clarify, Morgenthau's universalism is the unshakable faith the universality of one's beliefs, not the globalism that Herz encourages.

Morgenthau looks back on the past with rosy nostalgia, clearly yearning for the days when war was fought by mercenaries in a chess-like fashion, with a gentleman's code and minimal collateral damage.[34] (How accurate this picture may be is a debate for another paper.) War today is ruled by nationalism and universalism; nuclear weapons represent the apex of the contemporary philosophical climate that excuses the destruction of entire nations.

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33 Delfiner, Henry. "Realism Reconsidered: The Legacy of Hans Morgenthau in International Relations." Society. 45. 5 (2008): p. 47.

34 Morgenthau, Hans J. Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace. New York: Knopf, 1962. p. 365-367.

These feelings, both positively for the past and negatively for total war theories, are echoed later in Henry Kissinger's writing. Despite the powerful prose contained in *Politics Among Nations*, Morgenthau makes no suggestions for ameliorating the situation. As a Realist, he naturally has no faith in international law (including disarmament) or institutions, seeing both as merely an arena for the great powers to continue their game. For Morgenthau, the only thing holding the system in check is, as it has ever been, the balance of power. Nuclear weapons and the attendant bipolar system have forced an evolution of the balance of power, but it remains as an "invisible hand," to borrow a phrase from economics, steadying the international system.

Henry Kissinger

Henry Kissinger is often held up, fairly or not, as the archetypal, amoral Realist. Indeed, his first book was a survey of the golden age of balance of power politics: the Europe of Metternich and Castlereagh. His second, in 1957, was *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*. The question at hand for Kissinger is how to use power effectively when peace is the only policy option. Like Angell, Kissinger is careful to say that peace is attainable at any time, but at a cost we should be unwilling to bear – subjugation to Communism. The challenge, then, is to demonstrate resolve and a willingness to back that resolve with force to the Soviets, but in such a way that force never actually becomes necessary. Kissinger finds the biggest shortcoming in US policy to be that "we added the atomic bomb to our arsenal without integrating its implications into our thinking.[35]" The bomb renders total war impossible, but all US policy is centered on total war. The bomb thus calls for a reorientation of American

35 Kissinger, Nuclear Weapons, p.12.

strategy towards limited war – a strategy that fits nicely with the containment doctrine.

Kissinger's realism seems more resilient in the face of nuclear weapons than does Herz, but more responsive than Morgenthau. The system remains in place, in Kissinger's model, requiring tactical adjustments in response to nuclear weapons, but not wholesale moves towards a more Liberal agenda. Despite the shift to a bipolar, containment-oriented world, the balance of power still figures heavily into Kissinger's thinking. He explains that the US has been drawn into a more European style of balancing, now that nuclear missiles have rendered oceans irrelevant.[36] The basic nature of the balance of power has been altered by technology, claims Kissinger, because domestic advances in science can alter this balance.[37] Finally, force and power remain constant. The threat of annihilation fazes him not a bit – rather than seeking peace, the US must determine appropriate threat responses. There is a discernible touch of Dr. Strangelove present in Kissinger's comprehensive descriptions of the destructive power at our command and the appropriate ways we might use it.

The Cold War, then, for Kissinger, is the next level in the international game. With a model centered on human nature, not an anarchic system, Kissinger does not see the atomic bomb as a threat to the foundation of international relations. The balance of power and the strategy of the players require recalibration in the face of new technology, not reconstruction. Force remains central to Kissinger. The US must be prepared to use it and use it in ways that don't lead to a nuclear exchange.

George F. Kennan

George F. Kennan provides a counterpoint to Henry Kissinger. By reputation, Kennan is

36 Kissinger, Nuclear Weapons, p.8.
37 Kissinger, Nuclear Weapons, p.9.

a hard-hitting Realist, the author of containment, ready to meet the Soviet threat "by adroit and vigilant application of counter-force at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points.[38]" A closer reading of both the infamous X-article and *Russia, the Atom and the West*, from 1957, show a more nuanced and less aggressive understanding of the conflict than stereotypes might suggest. Kennan focuses much more on facing the Soviet threat domestically, rather than the conventional, military dependent views of his contemporaries. This manifests itself in the advice he gives concerning ultimate victory over the Soviets – both what to do, and what not to do.

Kennan's Cold War response is determined by his view of what the Cold War truly represents. The contest with Soviet Russia is not an apocalyptic struggle to the death, but is "in essence a test of the over-all worth of the United States as a nation among nations." He continues that to win out, "the United States need only measure up to its own best traditions and prove itself worthy of preservation as a great nation.[39]" Because the Cold War is, at its heart, a battle of ideology, Kennan proposes to check the expansion, and eventually cause the fall of the USSR by demonstrating to the world that the American system is better. The most effective way of accomplishing this is not on the field of battle, either conventional or strategic, but to "create among the peoples of the world generally the impression of a country which knows what it wants, which is coping successfully with the problems of its internal life and with the responsibilities of a world power.[40]" Communism predicts the ultimate failure of capitalism, Soviet communism made American capitalism the ultimate enemy. Nothing stymies Soviet power like US success, nothing brings allies to the capitalist side like the appeal

38 X. "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," Foreign Affairs Vol. 25, No. 4 (Jul., 1947): 576.
39 X., "Sources" p. 582.
40 X., "Sources" p. 581.

of living in that system, rather than the alternative. The views of Norman Angell, an unlikely ally, are refracted in Kennan's writing.

This strategy stems directly from Kennan's view of nuclear deterrent. In *Russia, the Atom and the West,* Kennan concedes that "never in history have nations been faced with a danger greater" than that caused by nuclear weapons.[41] In the time since the X-article was published, the USSR rebuilt itself from the rubble of World War II, successfully industrialized, and tested its own nuclear bomb. At the same time, relations with the West disintegrated to the point that that "belief in the inevitability of war ... has grown unchecked.[42]" In this environment, Kennan is scathing in his attack on those who advocate deterrence. He credits the bomb with "a certain sorry value to us today as a deterrent" but maintains that this value is only temporary, until "we can evolve some better means of protection.[43]" Further, he gives little credence to the ultimate value of deterrence, postulating that the Soviet government not only has no rational justification to start a war, but little desire to do so.

The answer of what not to do, for Kennan, is entering an arms race. The atomic bomb is a "sterile and hopeless weapon[44]" that, in the end, has no true value in political diplomacy. If diplomacy is the art of winning others to support one's cause, nuclear weapons are a pointless exercise. They make no friends, win no true allies, and prove nothing about the superiority of Western ideology. In this he returns to the call of the X-article: the United States can only win the Cold War by conquering communism ideologically, not by making newer, more destructive, and more expensive bombs. He is careful to qualify his statements so that they are not misconstrued as a call to weak pacifism, but maintains that force is not the final

41 Kennan, George F. Russia, the Atom and the West. New York: Harper, 1958. p. 50.
42 Kennan, Russia, p. 51.
43 Kennan, Russia, p. 52.
44 Kennan, Russia, p. 55.

answer and the bomb's efficacy, only temporary.

Kenneth Waltz

Kenneth Waltz, like Kissinger, first published at the tail end of the time period under consideration (1959). He is included, however, both because *Man, the State and War* is one of the most influential IR texts of the 20th Century and because he comes to some unique conclusions about nuclear weapons. Doyle calls *Man, The State and War* "magisterial.[45]" Despite being based on a PhD dissertation and Waltz's first book, it almost single-handedly launched the dominant variant of Realism: alternately called Structuralism or Neo-Realism. Waltz wasn't the first to posit the international system as the most important independent variable (Herz and his security dilemma are also systemic), but Waltz built the strongest logical case for why this is so. The argument was powerful enough to form the bedrock of Realism for three decades. (Challenges to and failings of Structural Realism in the post-Cold War era is a fascinating, but ultimately tangential topic.)

Like Morgenthau, Waltz sees nuclear weapons as little more than the next step in technological development. He concedes that fear of nuclear annihilation "will produce a temporary truce" built on fear,[46] but then lists a great number of technological advances that supposedly heralded the end of war – dynamite, the hot-air balloon, and, he suggests in a further dig at the pacifists, undoubtedly the spear. Fear only brings international peace when all nations fear equally. In 1959, at least, Waltz suggests that sufficient fear is lacking[47]. War is still inevitable, no matter how threatening the nuclear age may be; even atomic weapons

45 Doyle, Ways, p. 28.
46 Waltz, Kenneth Neal. Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis. New York: Columbia University Press, 1959. p. 234.
47 Waltz, Man, p. 235.

cannot change the international system. He specifically names Norman Angell as an admirable rationalist who fails to take into account the true causes of war.[48]

Later in his career, however, Waltz writes that Angell's contention that "war doesn't pay" may finally have come true. "The Emerging Structure of International Politics," from a 1993 issue of *International Security* will suffice as an epilogue to the survey of Realist views. Nuclear weapons, according to Waltz, eliminate any sort of economic gain that might be had through strategic level warfare. Further, any tactical incursions invite nuclear retaliation, leaving states to compete economically rather than martially. In this way, the nuclear age that Angell feared has inadvertently brought about the peace he envisioned. The perverse corollary that accompanies Waltz in his deduction is that nothing would better serve peace than nuclear proliferation.

Conclusion

The nuclear bomb forced all of the scholars surveyed to rethink their theories, though to a varying extent. (Carr is the lone exception, as his international relations theorizing stopped during the war.) Both of the Liberals, Angell and Toynbee, moved along similar paths. They entered the 1930s with aggressive, pacifist opinions that were gradually molded by changes of the nuclear age. Both were compelled to confront the realities of power politics and containment. As their Liberal loyalties imply, however, both Angell and Toynbee remained committed to the idea of peace through world government and its underlying principles of democratic peace and economic interdependence brought about by free trade.

The Realists demonstrate an evolution along a spectrum. The Classical Realists, with their models based on fundamental aspects of human nature, tend to change less than the

48 Waltz, Man, p. 224.

Structuralists. Morgenthau represents one extreme: nuclear weapons represent a change of degree, but are separate from the true changes that total war and nationalism have introduced to the system. Kissinger discusses atomic bombs in primarily terms of the strategic adjustment that they demand of policy makers. With total war no longer an option, the state must now decide how much force to use and under what circumstance it is usable. Like Morgenthau, Kissinger sees no great change in the international system. Power and the pursuit of it remain at the heart of international relations, directly causing the anarchy inherent in the international system; no mere technological innovation can change that.

The Structuralists see the world from a different angle. States are constrained by systemic anarchy, thus a change to the system means a change in the state. Power is indeed important, but the terms of the pursuit of power are dictated by the international system. Thus for Waltz, nuclear weapons led to peace, through fear. Herz, writing much earlier and in the shadow of imminent nuclear conflict, found no such comfort. His opinion moved the furthest of those surveyed, maintaining his belief in the security dilemma while simultaneously, and pessimistically, advocating any sort of world government that would avert disaster.

Finally, George F. Kennan is perhaps a bridge between Realism and Liberalism. Though often named as a Realist, his writings early in the Cold War view the conflict differently. He doesn't address systems or world governments, instead focusing on the domestic situation. The bomb and the deterrence it provides are for him a worst-case scenario of sorts, a last resort to buy time while the ideological battle is underway. In the end, Kennan may have been the most accurate of any surveyed, despite a lack of predictive intention. Communism fell under its own weight, the international system changed again, and the nuclear bombs remained unused in their silos.

Bibliographic Essay

I saw this paper as an opportunity to read, or at least become familiar with, several of the standard IR texts. Since this dealt entirely with books published since 1930, it was natural to concentrate on primary sources. However, I did use two other types of secondary sources: commentary on various of the writers, and general histories of IR theory. The commentary provided some helpful background, especially concerning the German immigrants, and occasionally provided me with fodder to argue against. I found myself more dependent on the history texts and surveys to build the framework for my paper.

In particular, Doyle's book was quite helpful. I had read it before and I find Ways of War and Peace to be one of the best introductions to IR theory. The other, by Kleinschmidt, provided crucial historical information and was my biggest source for inter-war insights. The books also provided the names of several authors I hadn't read before - notably Herz and Angell. I had trouble with the Liberals, in particular, since the immediate post-war is a rather barren time for Liberalism. In this, Kleinschmidt was of assistance.

As far as primary texts go, I had read most of one before (Morgenthau), had heard of and read a bit of Waltz and Kissinger, but most of the others I knew by name only, if at all. As I said in my presentation, John Herz was the biggest discovery for me. Though I don't generally share much common ground with realists, especially the structural variety, I found his writing to be thoughtful and provocative. Due to time constraints, I couldn't read any one book in its entirety, but I am now familiar enough with several to have an educated summer reading list.

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