

BOUNDING POWER

REPUBLICAN SECURITY THEORY FROM THE POLIS TO THE GLOBAL VILLAGE



DANIEL H. DEUDNEY

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To my teachers

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THIS IS A WORK of theory and historical theoretical interpretation with a practical aim. It seeks to provide a 'usable past' to better meet the challenges of the next half century. It is animated by the fear that our existing conceptual frameworks are inadequate to cope with the intensifying processes of globalization, particularly concerning security, and the severe governance problems they are generating. This volume aims to offer a new view of our inherited political wisdom consonant with libertarian-liberal political values and applicable to our rapidly globalizing world. It does so by rereading the development of Western political thought about security-from-violence as one of simultaneously avoiding the extremes of hierarchy and anarchy in material contexts changing due to technological developments.

To read and write about old books while humanity tumbles along uncharted paths may seem irrelevant, indulgent, or at best another example of 'navigating through the rear-view mirror.' But, for better or worse, there is a deep-seated human tendency to look at the future as an extension of the past. Much of what we do now and think is possible for the future is molded by what we think happened in the past. As such, it is best to get this mirror wiped as clear as possible and pointed at an appropriate past.

As a reading of texts and reconstruction of arguments, this work is shaped and rendered imperfect in several ways by the commitments and limitations of its author. These should be acknowledged from the outset. In this sort of enterprise, there is no objective reader or objective vantage point, and the concerns of the interpreter indelibly stamp the interpretation. Within the crowded marketplace of contemporary political and international thought, the views and commitments of this author are, in simple terms, liberal-democratic and globalist.

The genesis of this project can be dated with some precision to my later undergraduate years, when I precociously dedicated my energies to the construction of a political theory to address science and technology and the global. My head was filled with political theory from the Western canon, but this all seemed terribly out of date. So I went down to Washington for most of a decade to learn about these emergent topics firsthand, as a junior policy analyst and occasional minor activist (mainly on nuclear, outer space, energy, and environmental issues). Immersed in these topics and problems, and further reading and reflecting on existing politi-

cal and international theory, I came slowly and unexpectedly to the realization that the problem was not that the ideas of the canon were obsolete, but rather that they had not been properly interpreted. I came to think of the canon, for all its baroque detail, as a succession of reinterpretations and reapplications of a very simple set of core ideas. And so I set about distilling these ideas and interpreting and applying them for the contemporary situation.

Closely observing the last several decades of political debates and conflicts over global issues in general and American policy toward them in particular, I also unexpectedly came to the view that for most problems there are fairly obvious solutions and that these solutions have been developed and actively promoted. I came to the view that a major barrier to problem solving was the fact that a great many well-intentioned and serious people seemed to be walking around experiencing reality through a thick set of filters. What seemed more or less obvious from a pragmatic liberal globalist perspective seemed to many people to be unthinkable and utopian. Conversely, practices that seemed patently absurd or baneful were widely seen as both sound and inevitable.

One of these distorting filters, which this work hopes to alter, is the odd amalgam of ideas known as 'Realism' in international relations theory and practice. Part of Realism's appeal is its claim to embody a long line of the best Western thinking about political order and security-from-violence. But, as many have pointed out, there are major weaknesses in Realism's construction of itself as a 'tradition.' Many have sought to abandon or overthrow Realism, but it contains far too many important insights for this to be either feasible or prudent. It is far harder, but more important, to fashion an alternative to the hegemony of Realism than to eliminate hegemony.

The other major distorting filter in contemporary thinking, particularly about international security and political liberty, that this work also hopes to ameliorate is a gross underappreciation or misappreciation of the importance of material-contextual factors, of nature, geography, ecology, and technology. Despite all the talk of geopolitics, the rampant materialism of much theory, and ambient breathless excitement about the marvels and perils of contemporary technologies, the role of material-contextual factors and arguments in actual international and international political theory is remarkably truncated and unsystematic. We think and act as if technologies are just our handy tools and as if nature has somehow been left behind.

This work is also shaped and limited by the fact that it is significantly American-centered. Such a focus, at this writing, requires more defense and justification than it once did, or should. The vision of America as the last best hope for humanity's universal aspirations for security from predatory violence and for political liberty may not be as compelling as

it once was. But it remains a historical fact of the first magnitude that throughout the late modern period, the United States of America has done more to advance the cause of human liberty and security from predatory violence than any other regime in history. And it is also a vital fact that the legacies of American-led twentieth-century international institution building are, for all their weaknesses and imperfections, the main basis for actually existing global governance. On these facts rests the justification for the narrative architecture of this reconstruction of republican security theory, in which there are two phases, the first beginning in antiquity and culminating in the American founding, and the second centered on the trajectory of theorizing about the United States writ large in the global-industrial and nuclear eras.

As an American writing about a significantly American topic, I am animated by American anxieties (shared by many non-Americans) about America. Specifically, I am troubled by the discrepancy between the historical American role in the world and the principles of the American political tradition on the one side and the role of American political thought in American international theory and aspects of contemporary American foreign policy on the other. International thought among Americans has become increasingly Europeanized, not to the security worldview of the contemporary new Europe of the Union but rather to the old Europe, which America was founded to escape and which the United States did so much to end. Many of the friends of freedom in America congratulate themselves on their role as the indispensable nation and as the agent chosen by History and Providence to spread political freedom in the world. But few seem much troubled by the massive globe-spanning American national security state and its implications for limited constitutional government, political liberty, and global security. Part of the Republican Party, posing as the keeper of the founders' flame of freedom, expends its formidable energies in an at-times hysterical (but not very seriously pursued) war against domestic public welfare government, but largely ignores (or even embraces) the far more ominous (at least from the founders' standpoint) national security state that necessity and opportunity led the Americans to construct over the last half century. The few who do warn of American empire offer no remedy beyond the unlikely and probably counterproductive strategy of global retrenchment. Meanwhile, American liberal progressives and globalists, while pushing on many worthy fronts, lack a well-articulated overall vision of the situation and appropriate solutions, are burdened with perpetual social scientific paradigm and category shifts, and need an overall narrative that discursively connects to the animating principles of the American political tradition. I believe the real lesson Americans should be drawing from our founding and its animating political tradition is that larger and more substantial unions are not intrinsic threats to liberty, nor merely beneficial

for realizing humane values, but rather are vital at times for the preservation of political liberty.

Despite its American-centric character, the argument advanced here undermines American triumphalism. The survival and success of political freedom has been a close run thing, and blind circumstance as well as vision and sacrifice have been part of the winning formula. The advances of the last two centuries are seriously incomplete, and ominous perils lie ahead. There is no guarantee that the Americans, even after all options have been pursued and exhausted, will get it right. Furthermore, to say that Americans have been at the lead in expanding liberty over recent centuries and that the innovations of the American founding mark a watershed development in republican security theory and practice does not mean that either the principles of the founding or republican security theory are primarily, inevitably, or permanently American. Like other inventions and arrangements (whether writing, the steam engine, or double-entry accounting), the insights of republican security theory are a possession of all humankind.

It should also be acknowledged plainly that the argument presented here, while broad in some ways, is quite narrow in at least six other significant ways. First, what I refer to as ‘republican security theory’ is narrowly focused on arguments about the interplay of material contexts, patterns of political authority, and security-from-violence. In reality, no complete security theory or even exegesis and reconstruction of all republican security theorizing could be complete without more extensive treatment of ideational factors as well as political economy. This narrow treatment seems justified, however, by the centrality of such variables and arguments in contemporary international theory, particularly concerning security, and the sheer difficulty of looking at everything at once. Second, the argument is very limited in its engagement with many contemporary international theory debates, most notably the one between ‘rational-choice’ and ‘constructivism.’ I have largely steered away from these battles because they are ongoing and intricate, and in order to better let the past speak to us more in its terms than ours. Third, the argument, while globalist in animation, does not address a wide range of global issues of major importance. This limited coverage is not intended to imply that these issues do not matter much either in practice or for theory.

Fourth, a great many arguments and claims made by earlier thinkers are here assembled and related to each other, but are not systematically assessed, are not systematically tested, and are not systematically evaluated against competitive ideas. Fifth, the number of texts, theorists, and events relevant to the argument of this book is staggeringly large, and so it has been necessary to be selective. Among the many figures deserving more attention are Locke and Morgenthau. Sixth, this is a very Western

story, in a time when scholars have finally been giving the rest of human thought and accomplishment long overdue treatment. But to recognize that the West has been a colossal global predator over much of modern history does not obviate the fact that Western (white male) thinkers have produced a powerful and intricate body of thought about political order, security, and liberty with enduring value for all peoples everywhere. Finally, much of this book is, annoyingly, mired in analysis of terms and labels. I have not attempted to provide new definitions for words already overloaded with meanings. When I have located a key concept that has not been clearly enough delineated, I have suggested a few new words and terms of art, thus aping in a limited way the practices of the easier sciences, such as physics and biology, where it does not seem at all odd to fashion a distinct word or term to stand for a distinct phenomenon.

Finally, this work cuts across the contemporary scholarly enterprises of international relations theory, political theory, and intellectual history. For the political theory reader, there are far too many simplifications of complexities, neglected nuances, and elisions of differences. For the international theory reader there is too much political theory and too little specificity about the actual historical events and contemporary issues. For historians of both ideas and events, there are gross violations of differences across time. It is hoped that seeing a new whole and old parts in a new light will make these deficiencies tolerable.

The exegesis, in chapters 3 through 9, covers several very complex historical periods and large literatures and my simple and quasi-revisionist treatments leave much unsaid and unaddressed. It is hoped that I will be able to revisit several of the episodes and periods, particularly the contemporary nuclear chapter at greater length. Similarly, the main theory reconstruction laid out in the first chapter deserves further exposition as a testable social science model.

This work has taken a long time to produce, perhaps longer than its potential contribution warrants. Over its long gestation I have been assisted by invaluable support from many institutions and individuals, without which this project would never have been undertaken or completed. My parents and teachers nurtured my interests in politics and history from the earliest age. I have also been privileged to have been educated, employed, and supported by a series of extraordinary research and educational institutions. I was especially fortunate to be taught by many outstanding and inspiring teachers in political theory and political science as an undergraduate at Yale College. During the 1980s Lester Brown and the Worldwatch Institute provided a stimulating home for thinking globally and publishing the first versions of parts of this argument. During the middle and late 1980s I also greatly benefited from my teachers and colleagues, first at the program in Science, Technology, and Public Policy at

the George Washington University, and then at the Department of Politics and Program in Nuclear Policy Alternatives at the Center for Energy and Environmental Studies at Princeton University. Since the early 1990s I have been further stimulated and supported by students and colleagues while a faculty member of the Political Science Departments at the University of Pennsylvania and Johns Hopkins University. Over these many years the argument has been advanced through conversations, some going on for many years, with Hayward Alker, Michael Barnett, Tom Biersteker, Lester Brown, Thomas Boudreau, Mlada Bukovansky, Barry Buzan, Ken Conca, Bill Connolly, Campbell Craig, Steven David, Ron Deibert, James der Derian, Michael Doyle, Richard Falk, Ben Frankel, Robert Gilpin, David Hendrickson, Thomas Homer-Dixon, John Ikenberry, Fritz Kratochwill, Richard Matthew, Ethan Nadelmann, Henry Nau, Nick Onuf, John Pike, Barry Posen, Hendrick Spruyt, Ole Waever, Steve Walt, Paul Wapner, Wesley Warren, Alex Wendt, and Bill Wohlforth. Chapter 8, a condensed version of my dissertation on global geopolitics, benefited greatly from the comments from the members of my committee, Robert Gilpin, Michael Doyle, and Richard Falk. Earlier versions of parts of this volume were presented at the following institutions and benefited from comments received: American University, Brown University, Columbia University, Cornell University, Dartmouth College, George Washington University, Harvard University, Johns Hopkins University, London School of Economics, Princeton University, Yale University, and the Universities of California (Berkeley, San Diego, and Santa Cruz), Chicago, Delaware, Pennsylvania, South California, Toronto, Washington, and Wisconsin, as well as at many annual conventions of the International Studies Association and the American Political Science Association. Ron Deibert, Ruth Deudney, Benjamin Frankel, David Hendrickson, Nicholas Onuf, David Welch, and Mark Zacker read earlier versions of the manuscript and offered valuable comments. Able research assistance in the final phases of the project has been provided by Joshua Horton, Vijay Phulwani, Jon Bateman, and especially Simon Glezos. Bill Brenner skillfully made the electronic versions of the figures. Ben Frankel made a hopeless stab at improving the prose. Early stages of research were supported by the MacArthur Foundation, the Hewlett Foundation, and the Bers Foundation. Invaluable financial support for the final lengthy stages of the project was provided by the Seth Feinstein Memorial Fund of Princeton, New Jersey. The patience and skills of Princeton Press editors Malcolm DeBevoise, Malcolm Litchfield, Chuck Myers, Jill Harris, and Cindy Crumrine are also much appreciated. This project would never have been completed without the support of my friends, neighbors, and family members, particularly Norman Nielson, Holly Pittman, Nadivah Greenberg, Heidi Pinkston, Holly McGarraugh, Horace Deudney, Ruth Deudney, and John Welch.

Bounding Power

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INTRODUCTION

Before Realism and Liberalism

I study power so as to understand the enemy.
—Stanley Hoffmann¹

THE GLOBAL VILLAGE AND THE LIBERAL ASCENT

Globalization is the first, most important fact about the human condition at the threshold of the third millennium. Globalization, the rising levels of interdependence on progressively larger spatial scales, has been the dominant trend in human history during the last five centuries, and it has operated in military, ecological, economic, and cultural dimensions. Over this period, all human political communities, initially isolated or loosely connected, have become more densely and tightly interconnected and subject to various mutual vulnerabilities in a manner previously experienced only on much smaller spatial scales. The creation of this villagelike proximity and density on a global scale has occurred through every means imaginable, from genocidal invasion and enslavement to cooperative exchange and progressive emulation. It has produced massive epidemics, world wars, ecological devastation, and cultural annihilation, as well as large populations of humans more secure, more free, and more prosperous than ever before in history. Looking ahead into the new century, globalization shows every indication of further intensifying as human population burgeons, weapons of mass destruction proliferate, lethal new plagues emerge, ecological destruction accelerates, economies further integrate, and information capacities advance.

In the face of these developments, theorists of international relations and world politics have a decidedly divided posture. On one side, numerous globalist and interdependence theorists have charted these realities for more than a century, and many have pointedly drawn the conclusion that increasingly substantive world governance and government are needed to satisfy basic human interests. On the other side, the still hegemonic tradition of Realist² international theory maintains a skeptical stance toward globalist claims about the world and doubts the need or the possibility of establishing robust world governance. Labeling these ambitions utopian or idealistic, Realists emphasize the long historical persistence of the fundamentally anarchic sovereign state system and expect