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## Security

### 1NC Dissident IR Fails

#### Dissident IR fails – it lacks a mechanism to convert theory into practice – maintains same violent structures.

Anna M. Agathangelou, Dir. Global Change Inst. And Women’s Studies Prof @ Oberlin, and L.H.M. Ling, Inst. For Social Studies @ Hague, Fall 1997, Studies in Political Economy, v. 54, p 7-8

Yet, ironically if not tragically, dissident IR also paralyzes itself into non-action. While it challenges the status quo, dissident IR fails to transform it. Indeed, dissident IR claims that a “coherent” paradigm or research program — even an alternative one — reproduces the stifling parochialism and hidden power-mongering of sovereign scholarship. “Any agenda of global politics informed by critical social theory perspectives,” writes Jim George “must forgo the simple, albeit self-gratifying, options inherent in ready-made alternative Realisms and confront the dangers, closures, paradoxes, and complicities associated with them. Even references to a “real world, dissidents argue, repudiate the very meaning of dissidence given their sovereign presumption of a universalizable, testable Reality. What dissident scholarship opts for, instead, is a sense of disciplinary crisis that “resonates with the effects of marginal and dissident movements in all sorts of other localities.” Despite its emancipatory intentions, this approach effectively leaves the prevailing prison of sovereignty intact. It doubly incarcerates when dissident IR highlights the layers of power that oppress without offering a heuristic, not to mention a program, for emancipatory action. Merely politicizing the supposedly non-political neither guides emancipatory action nor guards it against demagoguery. At best, dissident IR sanctions a detached criticality rooted (ironically) in Western modernity. Michael Shapiro, for instance, advises the dissident theorist to take “a critical distance” or “position offshore’ from which to “see the possibility of change.” But what becomes of those who know they are burning in the hells of exploitation, racism, sexism, starvation, civil war, and the like while the esoteric dissident observes “critically” from offshore? What hope do they have of overthrowing these shackles of sovereignty? In not answering these questions, dissident IR ends up reproducing despite avowals to the contrary, the sovereign outcome of discourse divorced from practice, analysis from policy, deconstruction from reconstruction, particulars from universals, and critical theory from problem-solving.

### 1NC Traditional Security Studies Good

#### Security scholars should engage in scenario planning to minimize violence

Ole Weaver, International relations theory and the politics of European integration, 2000 p. 284-285

The other main possibility is to stress' responsibility. Particularly in a field like security one has to make choices a nd deal with the challenges and risks that one confronts – and not shy away into long-range or principled trans-formations. The meta political line risks (despite the theoretical commit¬ment to the concrete other) implying that politics can be contained within large 'systemic questions. In line with he classical revolutionary tradition, after the change (now no longer the revolution but the meta-physical trans¬formation), there will be no more problems whereas in our situation (until the change) we should not deal with the 'small questions' of politics, only with the large one (cf. Rorty 1996). However, the ethical demand in post-structuralism (e.g. Derrida's 'justice') is of a kind that can never be instantiated in any concrete political order – It is an experience of the undecidable that exceeds any concrete solution and reinserts politics. Therefore, politics can never be reduced to meta-questions there is no way to erase the small, particular, banal conflicts and controversies. In contrast to the quasi-institutionalist formula of radical democracy which one finds in the 'opening' oriented version of deconstruction, we could with Derrida stress the singularity of the event. To take a position, take part, and 'produce events' (Derrida 1994: 89) means to get involved in specific struggles. Politics takes place 'in the singular event of engage¬ment' (Derrida 1996: 83). Derrida's politics is focused on the calls that demand response/responsi¬bility contained in words like justice, Europe and emancipation. Should we treat security in this manner? No, security is not that kind of call. 'Security' is not a way to open (or keep open) an ethical horizon. Security is a much more situational concept oriented to the handling of specifics. It belongs to the sphere of how to handle challenges – and avoid 'the worst' (Derrida 1991). Here enters again the possible pessimism which for the security analyst might be occupational or structural. The infinitude of responsibility (Derrida 1996: 86) or the tragic nature of politics (Morgenthau 1946, Chapter 7) means that one can never feel reassured that by some 'good deed', 'I have assumed my responsibilities ' (Derrida 1996: 86). If I conduct myself particularly well with regard to someone, I know that it is to the detriment of an other; of one nation to the detriment of my friends to the detriment of other friends or non-friends, etc. This is the infinitude that inscribes itself within responsibility; otherwise there would he no ethical problems or decisions. (ibid.; and parallel argumentation in Morgenthau 1946; Chapters 6 and 7) Because of this there will remain conflicts and risks - and the question of how to handle them. Should developments be securitized (and if so, in what terms)? Often, our reply will be to aim for de-securitization and then politics meet meta-politics; but occasionally the underlying pessimism regarding the prospects for orderliness and compatibility among human aspirations will point to scenarios sufficiently worrisome that responsibility will entail securitization in order to block the worst. As a security/securitization analyst, this means accepting the task of trying to manage and avoid spirals and accelerating security concerns, to try to assist in shaping the continent in a way that creates the least insecurity and violence - even if this occasionally means invoking/producing `structures' or even using the dubious instrument of securitization. In the case of the current European configuration, the above analysis suggests the use of securitization at the level of European scenarios with the aim of pre-empting and avoiding numerous instances of local securitization that could lead to security dilemmas and escalations, violence and mutual vilification.

### 2NC Ext: Dissident IR Fails

#### Critical IR stance fails to overwhelm status quo ideologies and institutions.

Terry O’Callaghan, Lecturer in International Studies at the University of South Australia, 2002, “International Relations and the “third debate,” ed: Jarvis, 81-82, gbooks

Recognizing such realities, however, does not explain George’s penchant for ignoring them entirely, especially in terms of the structural rigidities they pose for meaningful reform. Indeed, George’s desire to move to a new “space beyond International Relations” smacks of wishful idealism, ignoring the current configuration of global political relations and power distribution; of the incessant ideological power of hyperindividualism, consumerism, advertising, Hollywood images, and fashion icons; and of the innate power bestowed on the (institutional) barons of global finance, trade, and transnational production. George seems to have little appreciation of the structural impediments such institutions pose for radical change of the type he so fiercely advocates. Revolutionary change of the kind desired by George ignores that fact that many individuals are not disposed to concerns beyond their family, friends, and daily work lives. And institutional, structural transformation requires organized effort, mass popular support, and dogged single-mindedness if societal norms are to be challenged, institutional reform enacted, consumer tastes altered, and political sensibilities reformed. Convincing Nike that there is something intrinsically wrong with paying Indonesian workers a few dollars a week to manufacture shoes for the global market requires considerably more effort than postmodern platitudes and/or moral indignation. The cycle of wealth creation and distribution that sees Michael Jordan receive multimillion dollar contracts to inspire consumer demand for Nike products, while the foot soldiers in the factory eke out a meager existence producing these same products is not easily, or realistically, challenged by pronouncements of moving beyond International Relations to a new, nicer, gentler nirvana. More generally, of course, what George fails to consider is the problem of apathy and of how we get people to care about the plight of others. What do we do with the CEOs of multinational corporations, stockbrokers, accountants, factory workers, and the unemployed, who, by and large, fail to consider the homeless and destitute in their own countries, let alone in places they have never visited and are never likely to visit? Moral indignation rarely translates into action, and apathy about the plight of others is a structural impediment as strong as any idea., theory, or writing. What George’s treatise thus fails to consider is how we overcome this, and how we get others to listen. He needs to explain how the social, political, psychological, and moral structures that define the parameters of existence for the many millions of ordinary citizens in the first world, and that deflects attention from the marginalized and the oppressed can be broken down. Unfortunately, there is little to indicate that George has thought much about this, suggesting that his commitment to postmodern theory is not likely to make much difference. In fact, in the academy the postmodcm light is already beginning to dim in certain quarters, having registered scarcely a glimmer in the broader polity, where, if change was to ensue, it needed to burn brightly. Even among those versed in the nomenclature of scholarly debate, theorists of international politics remain skeptical of the value of postmodern discourse, by and large rejecting it. This does not portend well for postmodern visionaries and the future of posimodern discourse. But can George really be surprised by this? After all, his discourse indicts the “backward discipline” for complicity in crimes against humanity, calling for a repudiation of realism and with it a repudiation of the lifelong beliefs and writings of eminent theorists like Kenneth Waltz. Robert Gilpin, and Stephen Krasner who have otherwise defined the parameters of the discipline, its projects, and research agendas. Can George really expect discipline-wide capitulation to an intellectual diaspora that would see theorists repudiate their beliefs and works in order to take up the creed of postmodernism, as vague, open-ended, and indeterminate as it is? Without a clear and credible plan of how to get from “incarceration and closure” to intellectual freedom, creativity, and openness, George’s postmodern musings have understandably attracted few disciples.

### AT: Insecurity Inevitable/Dillion/Der Derian

#### Trying to end insecurity helps relieve unnecessary suffering – their politics leaves the same structures of oppression intact.

Ken Booth, Int’l Politics Prof @ Wales-Aberystwyth, 2005, Critical Security Studies and World Politics, p. 270-1

Postmodern/poststructural engagement with the subject of security in international relations has been characterized by some of the general problems of the genre, notably obscurantism, relativism, and faux radicalism.26 What has particularly troubled critics of the postmodern sensibility has been the latter's underlying conception of politics.27 Terry Eagleton, for one, has praised the "rich body of work" by postmodern writers in some areas but at the same time has contested the genre's "cultural relativism and moral conventionalism, its scepticism, pragmatism and localism, its distaste for ideas of solidarity and disciplined organization, [and] its lack of any adequate theory of political agency."28 Eagleton made these comments as part of a general critique of the postmodern sensibility, but I would argue that specific writing on security in international relations from postmodern and poststructuralist perspectives has generally done nothing to ease such concerns. Eagleton's fundamental worry was how postmodernism would "shape up" to the test of fascism as a serious political challenge. Other writers, studying particular political contexts, such as postapartheid South Africa, have shown similar worries; they have questioned the lack of concrete or specific resources that such theories can add to the repertoire of reconstruction strategies.29 Richard A. Wilson, an anthropologist interested in human rights, has generalized exactly the same concern, namely, that the postmodernist rejection of metanarratives and universal solidarities does not deliver a helpful politics to people in trouble. As he puts it, "Rights without a metanarrative are like a car without seat-belts; on hitting the first moral bump with ontological implications, the passenger's safety is jeopardised."30 The struggle within South Africa to bring down the institutionalized racism of apartheid benefited greatly from the growing strength of universal human rights values (which delegitimized racism and legitimized equality) and their advocacy by groups in different countries and cultures showing their political solidarity in material and other ways. Anxiety about the politics of postmodernism and poststructuralism is provoked, in part, by the negative conceptualization of security projected by their exponents. The poststructuralist approach seems to assume that security cannot be common or positive-sum but must always be zero-sum, with somebody's security always being at the cost of the insecurity of others. At the same time, security itself is questioned as a desirable goal for societies because of the assumption of poststructuralist writers that the search for security is necessarily conservative and will result in negative consequences for somebody. They tend also to celebrate insecurity, which I regard as a middle-class affront to the truly insecure.31

\*\*\*Footnote, p. 277\*\*\*

 31. Examples of the approach are Dillon, The Politics of Security; and Der Derian, “The Value of Security,” in Lipschutz (ed.), On Security. In the shadow of such views, it is not surprising that the postmodern/poststructuralist genre is sometimes seen as having affinities with realism. Political realists and poststructuralists seem to share a fatalistic view that humans are doomed to insecurity; regard the search for emancipation as both futile and dangerous; believe in a notion of the human condition; and relativize norms. Both leave power where it is in the world: deconstruction and deterrence are equally static theories.

### AT: Insecurity Inevitable

#### State, IR and security aren’t inevitably pre-disposed to violence – takes out your sweeping claims, but leaves room for our nuanced and specific claims.

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Our tendency to exaggerate the power of states owes a great deal to our dread of war. Although we overestimate the competence of states in all respects, it is their power to make war that most concerns us. The notion that the state has vast military potential leads directly to the proposition that the state is incorrigibly warlike; the myth of the almighty state has as its correlate the myth of the bloodthirsty state. Every sophisticated student of international politics must begin with Thucydides, Machiavelli and Hobbes. He can hardly avoid emerging from all that with the shrewd conviction that the international arena is the scene of the war of all against all. States have a lust for dominance, a ruthless disregard for any value except success in the endless struggle for power, and an ineradicable bellicosity. A system of states is a war system; it can be nothing else. Thus, we develop a picture of the state as a military machine, straining for action, itching for a fight, watching for an opportunity to demolish its rivals. One may associate this image especially with Realists, those inveterate and dedicated pessimists who can bear to confront a fact or a circumstance only if it is grim and foreboding. Indeed, Realists have delighted in assuring us that the struggle for power is the name of the only possible game in a multistate system, and many a young person has rested a pretension of intellectual superiority on his precocious understanding that domestic life is a rat-race and international life is a dog-fight. Naive cynicism of this sort, however, is no more typical of Realists than of Idealists. In undertaking to justify and to spread to others their zeal for reforming or for effecting the revolutionary transformation of the multistate system, Idealists vie with Realists in asserting the belligerent propensities of states in the existing system. The two groups have different views as to what can and should be done about the situation, but their depictions of the working of the international system as a war system are often indistinguishable. Most of us, in fact, whatever our labels, operate on the supposition that states are fundamentally warlike entities. Note the general acceptance of deterrence theory, with its underlying presumption that states are likely to attack each other unless strong incentives for restraint are created and conspicuously displayed. Let me suggest that the state as Roaring Tiger is frequently less in evidence than the state as Pussy Cat. Trigger-happiness shares the international stage with gun-shyness. Bellicosity is matched by various shades of pacifism. Clearly, these qualities vary from state to state, from time to time and from circumstance to circumstance. Some wars seem almost inevitable and will occur unless effective means are adopted to prevent them. Other wars are almost inconceivable and will not occur unless some extraordinary cause intrudes. Make no mistake about it: warlike tendencies are sufficiently widespread and strong to make the problem of maintaining world order a crucial one for us all, but we will not promote the solution of that problem by misstating the character of the states that constitute the global system.

### AT: Insecurity Inevitable

#### Insecurity and disorder aren’t inevitable—careful future planning has been enormously effective. Debates amongst citizens are key to assessing probability and effectively planning.

Fuyuki Kurasawa, Professor of Sociology, York University of Toronto, 2004, Constellations Volume 11, No 4.

Moreover, keeping in mind the sobering lessons of the past century cannot but make us wary about humankind’s supposedly unlimited ability for problemsolving or discovering solutions in time to avert calamities. In fact, the historical track-record of last-minute, technical ‘quick-fixes’ is hardly reassuring. What’s more, most of the serious perils that we face today (e.g., nuclear waste, climate change, global terrorism, genocide and civil war) demand complex, sustained, long-term strategies of planning, coordination, and execution. On the other hand, an examination of fatalism makes it readily apparent that the idea that humankind is doomed from the outset puts off any attempt to minimize risks for our successors, essentially condemning them to face cataclysms unprepared. An a priori pessimism is also unsustainable given the fact that long-term preventive action has had (and will continue to have) appreciable beneficial effects; the examples of medical research, the welfare state, international humanitarian law, as well as strict environmental regulations in some countries stand out among many others. The evaluative framework proposed above should not be restricted to the critique of misappropriations of farsightedness, since it can equally support public deliberation with a reconstructive intent, that is, democratic discussion and debate about a future that human beings would freely self-determine. Inverting Foucault’s Nietzschean metaphor, we can think of genealogies of the future that could perform a farsighted mapping out of the possible ways of organizing social life. They are, in other words, interventions into the present intended to facilitate global civil society’s participation in shaping the field of possibilities of what is to come. Once competing dystopian visions are filtered out on the basis of their analytical credibility, ethical commitments, and political underpinnings and consequences, groups and individuals can assess the remaining legitimate catastrophic scenarios through the lens of genealogical mappings of the future. Hence, our first duty consists in addressing the present-day causes of eventual perils, ensuring that the paths we decide upon do not contract the range of options available for our posterity.42 Just as importantly, the practice of genealogically inspired farsightedness nurtures the project of an autonomous future, one that is socially self-instituting. In so doing, we can acknowledge that the future is a human creation instead of the product of metaphysical and extra-social forces (god, nature, destiny, etc.), and begin to reflect upon and deliberate about the kind of legacy we want to leave for those who will follow us. Participants in global civil society can then take – and in many instances have already taken – a further step by committing themselves to socio-political struggles forging a world order that, aside from not jeopardizing human and environmental survival, is designed to rectify the sources of transnational injustice that will continue to inflict needless suffering upon future generations if left unchallenged.

### AT: Threat Con => War

#### Fear doesn’t lead to war – state interests can describe the causes of war – policymakers can counter fear spirals

Sandeep Baliga, Prof at the Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University, David O. Lucca, Federal Reserve Board, and Tomas Sjöström, Prof of Economics, Rutgers University, July 2010, Domestic Political Survival and International Conflict: Is Democracy Good for Peace?” Review of Economic Studies.

Determining the underlying motives behind conflicts, based on a subjective reading of history, will always leave scope for disagreement. Our theoretical model, building on Baliga and Sjöström [6], assumes conflicts can be sparked by fear (“Schelling’s dilemma”). Historians have uncovered many examples of such “fear-spirals”.3 For example, Thucydides ([71], 1.23, p. 49) argued that the Peloponnesian War was caused by “the growth of Athenian power and the fear which this caused in Sparta.”The period that preceded World War I was characterized by mutual distrust and fear (Tuchman [73], Wainstein [76] and Sontag [68]). A spiral of fear was evident during the Cold War arms race (Leffl er [48]). The India-Pakistan arms race is a current example of escalation fueled by mutual distrust, and Bobbitt ([11], p. 10) suggests a similar logic will continue to operate in the wars of the twenty-first century: “We think terrorists will attack; so they think we think the terrorists will attack; so they think we shall intervene; so they will attack; so we must.”Nevertheless, there is disagreement about the number of large-scale wars that can be said to have been triggered by fear (see Reiter [62] and Van Evera [74]). Reiter [61] argues that leaders who understand the spiraling logic can prevent conflict by communicating. Baliga and Sjöström [6] verify that, in theory at least, cheap-talk can sometimes prevent a conflict; but it cannot always do so. Our current model assumes leaders are partly motivated by domestic political concerns, and may behave hawkishly in order to maintain political support. Thus, fear is not the only reason for starting a war, and Reiter’s [61] argument that World War I was not a pure fear-spiral is consistent with our model: “Domestic politics in a number of nations set the stage for war, though some...have gone further to argue that Germany sought war... to shore up the threatened domestic political order at home”(Reiter [61], p. 22).

#### Necessary not sufficient

Stuart J Kaufman, Prof Poli Sci and IR – U Delaware, 2009, “Narratives and Symbols in Violent Mobilization: The Palestinian-Israeli Case,” Security Studies 18:3, 400 – 434)

Even when hostile narratives, group fears, and opportunity are strongly present, war occurs only if these factors are harnessed. Ethnic narratives and fears must combine to create signiﬁcant ethnic hostility among mass publics. Politicians must also seize the opportunity to manipulate that hostility, evoking hostile narratives and symbols to gain or hold power by riding a wave of chauvinist mobilization. Such mobilization is often spurred by prominent events (for example, episodes of violence) that increase feelings of hostility and make chauvinist appeals seem timely. If the other group also mobilizes and if each side’s felt security needs threaten the security of the other side, the result is a security dilemma spiral of rising fear, hostility, and mutual threat that results in violence. A virtue of this symbolist theory is that symbolist logic explains why ethnic peace is more common than ethnonationalist war. Even if hostile narratives, fears, and opportunity exist, severe violence usually can still be avoided if ethnic elites skillfully deﬁne group needs in moderate ways and collaborate across group lines to prevent violence: this is consociationalism. 17 War is likely only if hostile narratives, fears, and opportunity spur hostile attitudes, chauvinist mobilization, and a security dilemma.

### AT: Security – State Focus Good

#### Criticism of state-centric security studies sacrifice the most important international actor – loss of options outweighs the dangers of legitimization.

Olav. F. Knudsen, Prof @ Södertörn Univ College, 2001, Security Dialogue 32.3, “Post-Copenhagen Security Studies: Desecuritizing Securitization,” p. 360

I hesitate to say what I have to say on this subject because it seems to me to be so utterly obvious. States and state-like organizations – such as guerilla groups – are useful for many collective purposes, including making war and preparing for war. As IR specialists, we therefore need to study the state and take it seriously as a social phenomenon. However, I keep running across reminders that many don’t share this view. The best evidence is the way in which the term ‘state-centered approaches’ – a quick phrase with a subtle pe- jorative effect – is used. The debate of the 1990s has developed to the point where one understands immediately, without further reading, that the study of states is a ‘no-no’. I find this a major ingredient in a mindless fad. Consider its place in the work of the Copenhagen school. The ‘referent object’ is a key notion in the Copenhagen school’s conceptual apparatus – that ‘thing’ whose security is at stake. Buzan et al. pedagogically point out the need to break away from the traditional fixation upon the state as the referent object of security. However, as I read on in the book I get the impression that Buzan and his colleagues are not really that convinced of this themselves – they keep referring to the state nevertheless. Other Copenhagen writings confirm this impression. Indeed, studies of the state have not disap- peared even among researchers who style themselves as critical or who some- how subscribe to a ‘new security studies’ agenda. The upshot is that their views on the role of the state are inconsistent. The Copenhagen school will probably claim to have put this critique to rest. However, it is hard to read the argument in the 1997 article where the discus- sion is perhaps best presented, then absorb the text in the multi-authored 1997 book and still claim to have found consistency. On the one hand, the Copenhagen authors warn against ‘state-centrism’ and build a complicated reasoning on identity as a replacement for the state; on the other hand, they continue to reason quite conventionally about states (as, for instance, in the security-complex theory). Hence, their position on the state is at best mis- leading, at worst confused. In this, they reflect the general picture in the field of IR itself. After a long pe- riod of neglect, two very different things started happening – sometime be- tween 1975 and 1985 – with the idea of the state. What took place was a strange and deep bifurcation of research. On one side, there was what may be termed the ‘rediscovery of the state’, which began with the efforts of Charles Tilly and others but is perhaps best shown in the work of Theda Skocpol. On the other, there was the attack on state-centered thinking coming from the happy trashers of everything traditional in IR studies, the early post- modernists. Currently, the postmodernists seem – regrettably – to have won out, because there is continuing paranoia about the state in studies of international politics. To be politically correct these days, one must disavow state-centrism. At the same time, the state continues to be there, as it is in the work of people as di- verse as Buzan, Wendt, and Walt. Better than most of their work, however, is the research by Kal Holsti on the vagaries of the state and its relationship to war – a piece of mainstream work. Though hardly the first to make this ar-gument, Holsti shows convincingly that internal wars are now by far the most important kind of war. This point has been used to argue that interstate rela- tions have decreased in significance. If we compare two categories of relations, intrastate and interstate, that is of course true in relative quantitative terms. However, one must not overlook what those wars are about: the control of the state apparatus and its territory. Internal wars testify not to the disappearance of the state, but to its continuing importance. Hence, the state must continue to be a central object of our work in IR, not least in security studies. We should study the state – conceived as a penetrated state – specifically because it performs essential security functions that are rarely performed by other types of organization, such as being: • the major collective unit processing notions of threat; • the mantle that cloaks the exercise of elite power; • the organizational expression that gives shape to communal ‘identity’ and ‘culture’; • the chief agglomeration of competence to deal with issue areas crossing jurisdictional boundaries; • the manager of territory/geographical space – including functioning as a ‘receptacle’ for income; and • the legitimizer of authorized action and possession. Recognizing the problems of state-focused approaches belongs to the beginner’s lessons in IR. There is the danger of legitimizing the state as such by placing it at the center of research, and of legitimizing thereby the repression and injustice which on a massive scale have been and still are perpetrated in its name around the globe. Some draw the conclusion on this basis that states should not be studied, a stance which is obviously unwarranted and pointless. The state is an instrument of power on a scale beyond most other instruments of power. For this reason alone, keeping a watch on how it is used should be a top priority for social scientists. The mobilization – the assumption of the mantle – of state power by more or less arbitrarily chosen (or self-selected) individuals or groups, to act on behalf of all, is something which requires continual problematization, not least when it is done vis-à-vis other collectivities. The state is also the instrument of de- mocracy on a large scale in its most well-functioning forms. Surveying democ- racy’s state of health is a crucial responsibility for social scientists. Finally, when it comes to performing collective tasks on a large scale, the state is the most potentially effective organizing instrument across an almost limitless range of objectives. Security is among them.

### AT: Security – State Focus Good

#### A reconceptualization of security away from the state leads to political paralysis and ignores the most pressing problems of Third World states

Mohammed Ayoob, professor of International Relations at James Madison College, Michigan State University, 2003, Critical Security Studies, p. 126-127

It has also become fashionable these days to equate security with other values that some analysts consider intrinsically more important than, and morally superior to, the political-military phenomena and objectives traditionally encompassed by the concept of security. For example, Ken Booth has argued that security should be equated with “emancipation.” According to him, “emancipation is the freeing of people (as individuals and groups) from the physical and human constraints which stop them carrying out what they would freely choose to do….Security and emancipation are two sides of the same coin. Emancipation, not power or order, produces true security. Emancipation, theoretically, is security.” [17](http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=103390712) The problem with such semantic jugglery is that by a sleight of hand it totally obfuscates the meanings of both the concepts of security and emancipation. Booth’s definition refuses to acknowledge that a society or group can be emancipated without being secure and vice versa. The emancipation of Kurds in northern Iraq from the Iraqi regime or of the Chechen from Russian rule did not necessarily enhance the security of either population, even though it may have brought them closer to their cherished goal of independence or emancipation for which they may have been willing to sacrifice the security provided to them, in however imperfect a measure, by the Iraqi or the Russian state. Similarly, the citizens of Damascus under the repressive rule of the Assad regime may have felt more secure in the period from 1975 to 1990 than their emancipated brethren in Beirut next door, who suffered immensely during the Lebanese civil war because of the weakness of the Lebanese state and its inability to provide them with even a minimum degree of order and, consequently, of security. As the cases cited above demonstrate, such semantic acrobatics tend to impose a model of contemporary Western polities—of national states that have by and large solved their legitimacy problem and possess representative and responsive governments, which preside over socially mobile populations that are relatively homogeneous and usually affluent and free from want—that are far removed from Third World realities. It may therefore be possible to equate emancipation with security in Western Europe (although one has grave reservations even on that score), but it would be extremely farfetched and, indeed, intellectually disingenuous to do the same in the case of the Third World, where basic problems of state legitimacy, political order, and capital accumulation are not only far from being solved but may even be getting more acute. This is why to posit emancipation as synonymous with security and the panacea for all the ills plaguing Third World states can be the height of naïveté. Emancipation, interpreted as the right of every ethnic group to self-determination, can turn out to be a recipe for grave disorder and anarchy as far as most Third World states are concerned. This would result from a combination of two factors. First, ethnicity is a fluid and flexible concept and is subject to change depending on the context in which it operates at any point in time. Examples ranging from the secession of Bangladesh from the state of Pakistan to the failure of the state in Somalia bear adequate testimony to “the dynamic and changing character of contemporary ethnicity…[which] is in major respects contextual, situational, and circumstantial.” [18](http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=103390712) In the former case, Bangladesh seceded from Pakistan when the majority of its population decided to define their identity in ethnolinguistic terms as Bengalis rather than in ethno-religious terms as Indian Muslims, a definition that had led to the creation of Pakistan in 1947. In the latter case, Somalia, not so long ago considered to be the only nation-state in Africa, has fallen prey to interclan warfare that has led to the virtual disintegration of the state itself, thus exposing the mutable nature of Somalian ethno-national identity. Therefore, to link such a potent ideology as that of self-determination, which can be considered a major manifestation of emancipation, to a malleable idea like that of ethnicity and then legitimize this combination by reference to the principle of human rights of groups is bound to increase disorder in the Third World because of the multiethnic character of almost all Third World countries. Furthermore, the breakup of existing Third World states on the basis of the emancipation of ethnic groups is bound to increase rather than reduce ethnic strife and political intolerance because there are no pure ethnic homelands existing in the world today. As the example of the former Yugoslavia has demonstrated, minorities in ministates, which are dominated by one particular ethnic group that arrogates to itself the right to define the national identity of such a state, can be expected to receive much more brutal treatment—ranging from perpetual oppression to ethnic cleansing—than is the case with ethnic minorities in most Third World states that exist within their colonially determined boundaries. In the context of the Third World (which means the large majority of states), where the legitimacy of states and regimes is constantly challenged and where demands for economic redistribution and political participation perennially outrun state capacities and create major overloads on political systems, the concept of security should not be confused with that of emancipation, as Booth tends to argue. In such a context an explicitly state-centric definition of security is likely to provide an analytical tool of tremendous value that should not be sacrificed at the altar of Utopian thinking, even if Booth would prefer to call it “Utopian realism.”

### AT: Security – Identity Focus Bad

#### The alternatives’ reliance on identity politics results in a deeply essentialist, politically incoherent, counterproductive international relations.

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Problems of this nature, however, are really manifestations of a deeper, underlying ailment endemic to discourses derived from identity politics. At base, the most elemental question for identity discourse, as Zalewski and Enloe note, is "Who am I?" The personal becomes the political, evolving a discourse where self-identification, but also one's identification by others, presupposes multiple identities that are fleeting, overlapping, and changing at any particular moment in time or place. "We have multiple identities," argues V. Spike Peterson, "e.g., Canadian, homemaker, Jewish, Hispanic, socialist." And these identities are variously depicted as transient, polmorphic, interactive, discursive, and never fixed. As Richard Brown notes, "Identity is given neither institutionally nor biologically. It evolves as one orders continuities on one's conception of oneself." Yet, if we accept this, the analytical utility of identity politics seems problematic at best. Which identity, for example, do we choose from the many that any one subject might display affinity for? Are we to assume that all identities are of equal importance or that some are more important than others? How do we know which of these identities might be transient and less consequential to one's sense of self and, in turn, politically significant to understanding international politics? Why, for example, should we place gender identity ontologically prior to class, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, ideological perspective, or national identity?" As Zalewski and Enloe ask, "Why do we consider states to be a major referent? Why not men? Or women?""' But by the same token, why not dogs, shipping magnates, movie stars, or trade regimes? Why is gender more constitutive of global politics than, say, class, or an identity as a cancer survivor, laborer, or social worker? Most of all, why is gender essentialized in feminist discourse, reified into the most preeminent of all identities as the primary lens through which international relations must be viewed? Perhaps, for example, people understand difference in the context of identities outside of gender. As Jane Martin notes, "How do we know that difference ... does not turn on being fat or religious or in an abusive relationship?" The point, perhaps flippantly made, is that identity is such a nebulous concept, its meaning so obtuse and so inherently subjective, that it is near meaningless as a conduit for understanding global politics if only because it can mean anything to anybody. For others like Ann Tickner, however, identity challenges the assumption of state sovereignty. "Becoming curious about identity formation below the state and surrendering the simplistic assumption that the state is sovereign will," Tickner suggests, "make us much more realistic describers and explainers of the current international system. The multiple subjects and their identities that constitute the nation-state are, for Tickner, what are important. In a way, of course, she is correct. States are constitutive entities drawn from the amalgam of their citizens. But such observations are somewhat trite and banal and lead International Relations into a devolving and perpetually dividing discourse based upon ever-emergent and transforming identities. Surely the more important observation, however, concerns the bounds of this enterprise. Where do we stop? Are there limits to this exercise or is it a boundless project? And how do we theorize the notion of multiple levels of identities harbored in each subject person? If each of us is fractured into multiple identities, must we then lunge into commentaries specific to each group? Well we might imagine, for example, a discourse in International Relations between white feminist heterosexual women, white middle class heterosexual physically challenged men, working class gay Latinos, transgendered persons, ethnic Italian New York female garment workers, and Asian lesbian ecofeminists. Each would represent a self- constituted knowledge and nomenclature, a discourse reflective of specific identity-group concerns. Knowledge and understanding would suffer from a diaspora, becoming unattainable in any perspicacious sense except in localities so specific that its general understanding, or intergroup applicability, would be obviated. Identity groups would become so splintered and disparate that International Relations would approach a form of identity tribalism with each group forming a kind of intellectual territory, jealously policing its knowledge borders from intrusions by other groups otherwise seen as illegitimate, nonrepresentative, or opposed to the interests of the group. Nor is it improbable to suppose that identity politics in International Relations would evolve a realpolitik between groups, a realist power-struggle for intergroup legitimacy or hegemonic control over particular knowledges or, in the broader polity, situations of intergroup conflict. With what legitimacy, for example, do middle class, by and large white, affluent, feminist, women International Relations scholars speak and write for black, poor, illiterate, gay, working class, others who might object, resist, or denounce such empathetic musings? The legitimacy which Sylvester or Enloe write, for example, might be questioned on grounds of their identities as elite, educated, privileged women, unrepresentative of the experiences and realities of those at the coal face of international politics.

### AT: Threat Con

#### Threats aren’t arbitrary – focus on personal perceptions can’t prevent objective threats – only concrete strategies cope with perceptions and material reality

Olav. F. Knudsen, Prof @ Södertörn Univ College, 2001, Security Dialogue 32.3, “Post-Copenhagen Security Studies: Desecuritizing Securitization,” p. 360

 During the Cold War, peace research was struggling to gain the status of so- cial and intellectual respectability then only accorded strategic studies. The concept of securitization has helped to change that. A key aspect of the securitization idea is to create awareness of the (allegedly) arbitrary nature of ‘threats’, to stimulate the thought that the foundation of any national security policy is not given by ‘nature’ but chosen by politicians and decisionmakers who have an interest in defining it in just that way. That interest (according to this line of reasoning) is heavily embodied not just in each country’s military establishment, but also in the power and influence flowing from the military’s privileged position with respect to the network of decisionmakers and politi- cians serving that establishment. Hence, ‘securitization’ gave a name to the process, hitherto vaguely perceived, of raising security issues above politics and making them something one would never question. This argument is convincing as far as its description of the military estab- lishment and decisionmakers goes, but its heyday is gone. It was a Cold War phenomenon, and things just aren’t so anymore. In the post-Cold War period, agenda-setting has been much easier to influence than the securitization approach assumes. That change cannot be credited to the concept; the change in security politics was already taking place in defense ministries and parlia- ments before the concept was first launched. Indeed, securitization in my view is more appropriate to the security politics of the Cold War years than to the post-Cold War period. Moreover, I have a problem with the underlying implication that it is unim- portant whether states ‘really’ face dangers from other states or groups. In the Copenhagen school, threats are seen as coming mainly from the actors’ own fears, or from what happens when the fears of individuals turn into paranoid political action. In my view, this emphasis on the subjective is a misleading conception of threat, in that it discounts an independent existence for what- ever is perceived as a threat. Granted, political life is often marked by misper- ceptions, mistakes, pure imaginations, ghosts, or mirages, but such phenomena do not occur simultaneously to large numbers of politicians, and hardly most of the time. During the Cold War, threats – in the sense of plausible possibilities of danger – referred to ‘real’ phenomena, and they refer to ‘real’ phenomena now. The objects referred to are often not the same, but that is a different matter. Threats have to be dealt with both in terms of perceptions and in terms of the phenomena which are perceived to be threatening. The point of Wæver’s concept of security is not the potential existence of danger somewhere but the use of the word itself by political elites. In his 1997 PhD dissertation, he writes, ‘One can view “security” as that which is in language theory called a speech act: it is not interesting as a sign referring to something more real – it is the utterance itself that is the act.’ The deliberate disregard of objective factors is even more explicitly stated in Buzan & Wæver’s joint article of the same year. As a consequence, the phenomenon of threat is reduced to a matter of pure domestic politics. It seems to me that the security dilemma, as a central notion in security studies, then loses its founda- tion. Yet I see that Wæver himself has no compunction about referring to the security dilemma in a recent article. This discounting of the objective aspect of threats shifts security studies to insignificant concerns. What has long made ‘threats’ and ‘threat perceptions’ important phenomena in the study of IR is the implication that urgent action may be required. Urgency, of course, is where Wæver first began his argu- ment in favor of an alternative security conception, because a convincing sense of urgency has been the chief culprit behind the abuse of ‘security’ and the consequent ‘politics of panic’, as Wæver aptly calls it. Now, here – in the case of urgency – another baby is thrown out with the Wæverian bathwater. When real situations of urgency arise, those situations are challenges to democracy; they are actually at the core of the problematic arising with the process of making security policy in parliamentary democracy. But in Wæver’s world, threats are merely more or less persuasive, and the claim of urgency is just an- other argument. I hold that instead of ‘abolishing’ threatening phenomena ‘out there’ by reconceptualizing them, as Wæver does, we should continue paying attention to them, because situations with a credible claim to urgency will keep coming back and then we need to know more about how they work in the interrelations of groups and states (such as civil wars, for instance), not least to find adequate democratic procedures for dealing with them.

### AT: Threat Con

#### Literature and psychological bias runs towards threat deflation – they are the opposite of paranoid

Randall L. Schweller, Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at The Ohio State University, 2004, “Unanswered Threats A Neoclassical RealistTheory of Underbalancing,” International Security 29.2 (2004) 159-201, Muse

Despite the historical frequency of underbalancing, little has been written on the subject. Indeed, Geoffrey Blainey's memorable observation that for "every thousand pages published on the causes of wars there is less than one page directly on the causes of peace" could have been made with equal veracity about overreactions to threats as opposed to underreactions to them.92 Library shelves are filled with books on the causes and dangers of exaggerating threats, ranging from studies of domestic politics to bureaucratic politics, to political psychology, to organization theory. By comparison, there have been few studies at any level of analysis or from any theoretical perspective that directly explain why states have with some, if not equal, regularity underestimated dangers to their survival. There may be some cognitive or normative bias at work here. Consider, for instance, that there is a commonly used word, paranoia, for the unwarranted fear that people are, in some way, "out to get you" or are planning to do oneharm. I suspect that just as many people are afflicted with the opposite psychosis: the delusion that everyone loves you when, in fact, they do not even like you. Yet, we do not have a familiar word for this phenomenon. Indeed, I am unaware of any word that describes this pathology (hubris and overconfidence come close, but they plainly define something other than what I have described). That noted, international relations theory does have a frequently used phrase for the pathology of states' underestimation of threats to their survival, the so-called Munich analogy. The term is used, however, in a disparaging way by theorists to ridicule those who employ it. The central claim is that the naïveté associated with Munich and the outbreak of World War II has become an overused and inappropriate analogy because few leaders are as evil and unappeasable as Adolf Hitler. Thus, the analogy either mistakenly causes leaders [End Page 198] to adopt hawkish and overly competitive policies or is deliberately used by leaders to justify such policies and mislead the public. A more compelling explanation for the paucity of studies on underreactions to threats, however, is the tendency of theories to reflect contemporary issues as well as the desire of theorists and journals to provide society with policy- relevant theories that may help resolve or manage urgent security problems. Thus, born in the atomic age with its new balance of terror and an ongoing Cold War, the field of security studies has naturally produced theories of and prescriptions for national security that have had little to say about—and are, in fact, heavily biased against warnings of—the dangers of underreacting to or underestimating threats. After all, the nuclear revolution was not about overkill but, as Thomas Schelling pointed out, speed of kill and mutual kill.93 Given the apocalyptic consequences of miscalculation, accidents, or inadvertent nuclear war, small wonder that theorists were more concerned about overreacting to threats than underresponding to them. At a time when all of humankind could be wiped out in less than twenty-five minutes, theorists may be excused for stressing the benefits of caution under conditions of uncertainty and erring on the side of inferring from ambiguous actions overly benign assessments of the opponent's intentions. The overwhelming fear was that a crisis "might unleash forces of an essentially military nature that overwhelm the political process and bring on a war thatnobody wants. Many important conclusions about the risk of nuclear war, and thus about the political meaning of nuclear forces, rest on this fundamental idea."94 Now that the Cold War is over, we can begin to redress these biases in the literature. In that spirit, I have offered a domestic politics model to explain why threatened states often fail to adjust in a prudent and coherent way to dangerous changes in their strategic environment. The model fits nicely with recent realist studies on imperial under- and overstretch. Specifically, it is consistent with Fareed Zakaria's analysis of U.S. foreign policy from 1865 to 1889, when, he claims, the United States had the national power and opportunity to expand but failed to do so because it lacked sufficient state power (i.e., the state was weak relative to society).95 Zakaria claims that the United States did [End Page 199] not take advantage of opportunities in its environment to expand because it lacked the institutional state strength to harness resources from society that were needed to do so. I am making a similar argument with respect to balancing rather than expansion: incoherent, fragmented states are unwilling and unable to balance against potentially dangerous threats because elites view the domestic risks as too high, and they are unable to mobilize the required resources from a divided society. The arguments presented here also suggest that elite fragmentation and disagreement within a competitive political process, which Jack Snyder cites as an explanation for overexpansionist policies, are more likely to produce underbalancing than overbalancing behavior among threatened incoherent states.96 This is because a balancing strategy carries certain political costs and risks with few, if any, compensating short-term political gains, and because the strategic environment is always somewhat uncertain. Consequently, logrolling among fragmented elites within threatened states is more likely to generate overly cautious responses to threats than overreactions to them. This dynamic captures the underreaction of democratic states to the rise of Nazi Germany during the interwar period.97 In addition to elite fragmentation, I have suggested some basic domestic-level variables that regularly intervene to thwart balance of power predictions.

### AT: Threat Con – No Self Fulfilling Prophesy

#### Self-fulfilling prophecy is backwards – failure to express our fears causes them to occur

Joanna Macy, General Systems Scholar and Deep Ecologist, 1995, Ecopsychology

There is also the superstition that negative thoughts are self-fulfilling. This is of a piece with the notion, popular in New Age circles, that we create our own reality I have had people tell me that “to speak of catastrophe will just make it more likely to happen.” Actually, the contrary is nearer to the truth. Psychoanalytic theory and personal experience show us that it is precisely what we repress that eludes our conscious control and tends to erupt into behavior. As Carl Jung observed, “When an inner situation is not made conscious, it happens outside as fate.” But ironically, in our current situation, the person who gives warning of a likely ecological holocaust is often made to feel guilty of contributing to that very fate.

### AT: Threat Con – Alt Fails

#### Threats inevitable – once policy makers believe there to be a threat its impossible to reverse those perceptions.

Nikolai N. Sokov, Senior Research Associate @ the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, December 2008, “Prospects for Changing Strategic Doctrines,” *Nuclear Challenges and Policy Options for the Next U.S. Administration*, http://cns.miis.edu/opapers/pdfs/op14\_dupreez.pdf

As we consider these two points of view, we must keep in mind that in the world of policy making, perceptions are real. A threat does not have to exist; it is sufficient that policy makers and military professionals believe it does. Further, that threat might not require a nuclear response—it is sufficient that decision makers do not see a credible alternative. As long as a sufficiently large part of the public and/or sufficiently influential segment of the elite adhere to those perceptions, revision of strategy becomes very difficult.

### AT: Threat Con – Threat Con Key to Deterrence

#### Identification of threats is key to uphold deterrence – lack of preparation causes arms races and wars.

Charles F. Doran, Andrew W. Mellon Professor of International Relations at Johns Hopkins University, 1999 (“Is major war obsolete? An exchange,” *Survival*, Volume 41, Issue 2, Summer, Available Online via Proquest)

The conclusion, then, is that the probability of major war declines for some states, but increases for others. And it is very difficult to argue that it has disappeared in any significant or reliable or hopeful sense. Moreover, a problem with arguing a position that might be described as utopian is that such arguments have policy implications. It is worrying that as a thesis about the obsolescence of major war becomes more compelling to more people, including presumably governments, the tendency will be to forget about the underlying problem, which is not war per se, but security. And by neglecting the underlying problem of security, the probability of war perversely increases: as governments fail to provide the kind of defence and security necessary to maintain deterrence, one opens up the possibility of new challenges. In this regard it is worth recalling one of Clauswitz's most important insights: A conqueror is always a lover of peace. He would like to make his entry into our state unopposed. That is the underlying dilemma when one argues that a major war is not likely to occur and, as a consequence, one need not necessarily be so concerned about providing the defences that underlie security itself. History shows that surprise threats emerge and rapid destabilising efforts are made to try to provide that missing defence, and all of this contributes to the spiral of uncertainty that leads in the end to war.

### AT: Alternative Solves Backlash

#### Your radical act doesn’t change everyone’s mind along the way – naïve to think backlash will be wished-away.

James G. Blight –Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts – American Psychologist –Volume 42, Issue 1, 1987– obtained via CSA Illumina Database

The alternative view of the psychological transformarion of the superpower relationship is that it must occur from the top-down. The imagined scenario might unfold roughly as follows: For whatever reason, an American president makes an unprecedentedly bold move to halt the arms race, for example, by announcing the intention to make deep cuts in the American arsenal and/or to cancel deployment of certain systems regarded by the Soviets as suitable for a disarming first strike against them. The president then takes the proposals to the Soviet counterpart, who agrees to reciprocate. Faced with a nuclear fait accompli deriving from a historic summit meeting, the NATO allies and the American public and Congress, all notoriously fickle in matters of nuclear policy, agree to the radical change of course. In this scenario, therefore, the manner of thinking is altered by a radical action taken by the top leadership, which results eventually in a widely shared new way of thinking about superpower relations. Deutsch typifies advocates of the top-down tactic. In his view, the malignant social process could be completely transformed if only "a bold and courageous American leadership would take a risk for peace . . . [and] announce its determination to end the crazy arms race." If only a president would take charge, says Deutsch (1983), "we could replace the arms race with a peace race" (p. 23). But is it really true that even an extraordinarily bold move by an American president to seize an opportune moment is likely to initiate a chain reaction of political, military, and psychological events that results ultimately in the transcendence of the arms race and, eventually, a top-down cure for superpower psychopathology? There are no historical reasons for optimism on this question. For we are highly unlikely to experience in the foreseeable future anything like the peculiar circumstances that combined, during the late spring and summer of 1963, to produce the most opportune such moment so far in the nuclear age. During those few brief but eventful months, the American leader, together with his Soviet counterpart, did indeed labor mightily to accomplish what Mack (1985b) has called "a transformation in the quality of the Soviet-American relationship" (p. 53). And although some notable accomplishments marked these months, it is obvious, after nearly a quarter of a century, that they led to no fundamental changes in the superpower relationship. It is very far from obvious, therefore, why we should expect any top-down cure of the superpower relationship in the future. Let us review just a few of the salient facts in this limiting historical test case for the top-down cure. The first two years of John Kennedy's pr~idency constituted a crash course in nuclear learning for both him and Nikita Khrushchev, a course consisting mainly in a series of r isodes that were almost wholly unprecedented in intensity and danger. In early 1961, a military clash between Sovietsupplied and Soviet-advised forces and their Americanled counterparts was narrowly averted in Southeast Asia. In October 1961, American and Soviet tanks, poised to open fire, faced each other at point-blank range on either side of the newly constructed Berlin Wall. Ultimately and fortunately, neither side fired and the crisis abated. F'mally, during the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962, the superpowers came closer to a shooting war, thus closer to nuclear ~ar, than at any time before or since. The available evidence suggests that the leaders of the superpowers were profoundly affected by these events, especially by the missile crisis. Khrushchev, whose bellicosity and belligerence was by this time legendary, began to speak and act in a far more conciliatory manner than before. President Kennedy, the cold warrior, began to seek accommodation with his adversary. The moment seemed ripe for fundamental change.

## Realism

### 1NC Realism True – Empirics

#### Empirical evidence proves realism describes IR – change in academic or political ideologies won’t change it.

John Mearsheimer, The Tragedy of Great Power Politics, 2001, http://www.wwnorton.com/catalog/fall01/002025excerpt.htm, accessed 11/14/02

The optimists' claim that security competition and war among the great powers has been burned out of the system is wrong. In fact, all of the major states around the globe still care deeply about the balance of power and are destined to compete for power among themselves for the foreseeable future. Consequently, realism will offer the most powerful explanations of international politics over the next century, and this will be true even if the debates among academic and policy elites are dominated by non-realist theories. In short, the real world remains a realist world. States still fear each other and seek to gain power at each other's expense, because international anarchy—the driving force behind great-power behavior—did not change with the end of the Cold War, and there are few signs that such change is likely any time soon. States remain the principal actors in world politics and there is still no night watchman standing above them. For sure, the collapse of the Soviet Union caused a major shift in the global distribution of power. But it did not give rise to a change in the anarchic structure of the system, and without that kind of profound change, there is no reason to expect the great powers to behave much differently in the new century than they did in previous centuries. Indeed, considerable evidence from the 1990s indicates that power politics has not disappeared from Europe and Northeast Asia, the regions in which there are two or more great powers, as well as possible great powers such as Germany and Japan. There is no question, however, that the competition for power over the past decade has been low-key. Still, there is potential for intense security competition among the great powers that might lead to a major war. Probably the best evidence of that possibility is the fact that the United States maintains about one hundred thousand troops each in Europe and in Northeast Asia for the explicit purpose of keeping the major states in each region at peace.

### 1NC Realism True – Theory

#### States either behave in a self-interested fashion or they fall – we don’t need to win rationality.

Kenneth Waltz, bad-ass, Neorealism and its Critics, ed. by Robert Keohane, 1986, p. 117-118

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 se1f-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.

### 1NC Realism True – Human Nature

#### Realism is rooted in human nature – anarchic worlds from the dawn of time to today created an impetus for realist thought.

Thayer, a Fellow at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, 2004, Darwin and International Relations: On the Evolutionary Origins of War and Ethnic Conflict, University of Kentucky Press, pg. 75-76.

The central issue here is what causes states to behave as offensive realists predict. Mearsheimer advances a powerful argument that anarchy is the fundamental cause of such behavior. The fact that there is no world government compels the leaders of states to take steps to ensure their security, such as striving to have a powerful military, aggressing when forced to do so, and forging and maintaining alliances. This is what neorealists call a self-help system: leaders of states are forced to take these steps because nothing else can guarantee their security in the anarchic world of international relations. I argue that evolutionary theory also offers a fundamental cause for offensive realist behavior. Evolutionary theory explains why individuals are motivated to act as offensive realism expects, whether an individual is a captain of industry or a conquistador. My argument is that anarchy is even more important than most scholars of international relations recognize. The human environment of evolutionary adaptation was anarchic; our ancestors lived in a state of nature in which resources were poor and dangers from other humans and the environment were great—so great that it is truly remarkable that a mammal standing three feet high—without claws or strong teeth, not particularly strong or swift—survived and evolved to become what we consider human. Humans endured because natural selection gave them the right behaviors to last in those conditions. This environment produced the behaviors examined here: egoism, domination, and the in-group/out-group distinction. These specific traits are sufficient to explain why leaders will behave, in the proper circumstances, as offensive realists expect them to behave. That is, even if they must hurt other humans or risk injury to themselves, they will strive to maximize their power, defined as either control over others (for example, through wealth or leadership) or control over ecological circumstances (such as meeting their own and their family's or tribes need for food, shelter, or other resources).

### Realism True – Middle East

#### Realism describes Middle East IR – no international institutions, economic interdependence or stable democracies

Raymond Hinnebusch, director of the Centre for Syrian Studies and professor of International Relations and Middle East Studies at the University of St. Andrews, 2002, “The Foreign Policies of Middle East States,” https://www.rienner.com/uploads/47d59f4f705ef.pdf

Order and power politics. To the degree a state system is consolidated, geopolitics becomes, as realism expects, an increasingly important determinant of foreign policy. A state’s capabilities, plus the strategic importance or vulnerability of its location, shapes the main threats it faces and its likely ambitions: hence, small powers (Jordan, Gulf states) are more likely to seek the protection of greater ones and stronger powers are more likely to seek spheres of regional influence (e.g., Syria in the Levant, Saudi Arabia in the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] countries). Once ideological revisionism is replaced by geopolitics, the balance of power is more likely to be stable. This tendency is apparent across the Middle East, with the abnormal exception of Iraq, and is, so far, the main source of regional stability. Realist solutions to the problem of order remain more relevant in the Middle East than elsewhere because, as Yaniv argues, transnational norms restraining interstate conduct are the least-institutionalized there.45 This, in turn, is arguably because the conditions that pluralists expect to generate the norms that tame the power struggle—democratic cultures and economic interdependence—are absent or weak in the region. Economic dependence on the core states and autarky-seeking neomercantilist reactions against dependence have both stunted the regional economic interdependence that pluralism expects to generate shared interests in the peaceful resolution of conflicts. Moreover, not only do most regimes remain authoritarian but, against pluralist expectations, relative democratization does not necessarily lead to less risky or more status quo foreign policies because populations have remained mobilizable by transstate and irredentist ideology. Thus, democratic Israel has repeatedly attacked its semidemocratic neighbor, Lebanon. In the Gulf crisis, the more democratization permitted public opinion to express itself over foreign policy, the more pro-Saddam opinion forced leaders into distancing themselves from the anti-Iraq coalition. This is consistent with the findings of Mansfield and Snyder that established democratic regimes may be more pacific, but fragile democratizing regimes are actually more inclined to war than stable authoritarian ones since winning elections encourages resort to the nationalist card.46 With the end of the Cold War and the onset of U.S. hegemony and globalization, pluralists such as Etel Solingen argue that zones of peace are spreading. Economic interdependency, she argues, is associated with the rise of internationalist coalitions to power inside states that seek integration into the global economy. This requires moderating nationalist ideology and settling regional conflicts.47 Certainly, economic liberalization in the Middle East has led to the co-optation of internationalistminded infitah bourgeoisies into power and state attempts to demobilize masses susceptible to revisionist ideology. However, as realism argues, only when threat declines does the pursuit of economic gain displace security atop state agendas. In the Middle East, however, irredentism keeps the Arab-Israel conflict alive while Iraq’s defiance of the West manifests the continued resistance to Western penetration. As long as these conflicts continue to generate insecurity, the spread of “zones of peace” will not soon rewrite the dominant realist rules of Middle East international politics.48

#### Realism describes US ME decisions

Reuel Marc Gerecht, former Middle East specialist at the CIA's directorate of operations, 7-18-2011, “The Syrian Challenge,” The Weekly Standard, http://www.weeklystandard.com/articles/syrian-challenge\_576473.html?page=1

Further, the uncertainties of the Arab Spring and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s air war in Libya have spooked the administration. Its “realist” tendencies are well known, and “realism” powerfully comes to the fore when a president doesn’t know what to do​—​or believes that the United States can do little. The safest and easiest bet then is to do nothing​—​the essence of most “realist” policy.

### Realism True – Asia

#### Realism describes northeast Asia and China

Hochul Lee, Department of Political Science at the University of Incheon, 3-5-2005, “Realpolitik Swinging between Interdependence and Nationalism: China’s Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War Northeast Asia,” http://www.allacademic.com//meta/p\_mla\_apa\_research\_citation/0/6/9/9/7/pages69970/p69970-1.php

Realpolitik can be conceived of as general rules of state behavior motivated by system-level dynamics. It is steered by prudent calculus of cost and benefit of policy options. In a mulipolar system, it articulates into a balance of power politics. In the post-Cold War northeast Asia, where neither a system of collaboration nor any multilateral collective security is in existence, balance of power politics operates as inevitable state reactions to assure minimum level of security. China may well be considered as ‘the high church of realpolitik’ in the post-Cold War world (Christensen 1996). We could find a politics of power balancing evident in the post-Cold War northeast Asia, especially between China and Japan with their competitive increase in defense spending.

### Realism True – WTO

#### IR theory has reliable prescriptive utility, especially with the WTO and international institutions

Stephen Walt, Professor at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, June 2005, Annual Review of Political Science, accessed electronically

PRESCRIPTION  All policy actions rest on at least a crude notion of causality. Policy makers select policies A, B, and C because they believe these measures will produce some desired outcome. Theory thus guides prescription in several ways. First, theory affects the choice of objectives by helping the policy maker evaluate both desirability and feasibility. For example, the decision to expand NATO was based in part on the belief that it would stabilize the emerging democracies in Eastern Europe and enhance U.S. influence in an important region (cf. Goldgeier 1999, Reiter 20012002). Expansion was not an end in itself; it was a means to other goals. Similarly, the decision to establish the World Trade Organization arose from a broad multilateral consensus that a more powerful international trade regime was necessary to lower the remaining barriers to trade and thus foster greater global productivity (Preeg 1998, Lawrence 2002). Second, careful theoretical work can help policy makers understand what they must do to achieve a particular result. To deter an adversary, for example, deterrence theory tells us we have to credibly threaten something that the potential adversary values. Similarly, the arcane IR debate over the significance of absolute versus relative gains helped clarify the functions that international institutions must perform in order to work effectively. Instead of focusing on providing transparency and reducing transaction costs (as the original literature on international regimes emphasized), the debate on absolute versus relative gains highlighted the importance of side payments to eliminate gaps in gains and thus remove a potential obstacle to cooperation (Baldwin 1993). Third, theoretical work (combined with careful empirical testing) can identify the conditions that determine when particular policy instruments are likely to work. As discussed above, these works focus on "issue-oriented puzzles" (Lepgold 1998), or what is sometimes termed "middle-range" theory, and such works tend to produce "contingent" or "conditional" generalizations about the effects of different instruments (George & Smoke 1974, George 1993). It is useful to know that a particular policy instrument tends to produce a particular outcome, but it is equally useful to know what other conditions must be present in order for the instrument to work as intended. For example, the theoretical literature on economic sanctions explains their limitations as a tool of coercion and identifies the conditions under which they are most likely to be employed and most likely to succeed (Martin 1992, Pape 1997, Haass 1998, Drezner 1999). Pape's related work on coercive airpower shows that airpower achieves coercive leverage not by inflicting civilian casualties or by damaging industrial production but by directly targeting the enemy's military strategy. The theory is directly relevant to the design of coercive air campaigns because it identifies why such campaigns should focus on certain targets and not others (Pape 1996, Byman et al. 2002). Fourth, careful scrutiny of an alleged causal chain between actions and results can help policy makers anticipate how and why their policies might fail. If there is no well-verified theory explaining why a particular policy should work, then policy makers have reason to doubt that their goals will be achieved. Even worse, a well-established body of theory may warn that a recommended policy is very likely to fail. Theory can also alert policy makers to possible unintended or unanticipated consequences, and to the possibility that a promising policy initiative will fail because the necessary background conditions are not present. For example, current efforts to promote democracy in the Middle East may be appealing from a normative perspectivei.e., because we believe that democracy leads to better human rights conditionsbut we do not have well-verified theories explaining how to achieve the desired result. Indeed, what we do know about democracy suggests that promoting it in the Middle East will be difficult, expensive, and uncertain to succeed (Carothers 1999, Ottaway & Carothers 2004). This policy may still be the correct one, but scholars can warn that the United States and its allies are to a large extent "flying blind."

### Realism True – Human Nature

#### Prefer Thayer’s analysis – it’s the only one that’s falsifiable and proven through scientific fact – theories that are not shouldn’t even be considered.

Thayer, a Fellow at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, 2004, Darwin and International Relations: On the Evolutionary Origins of War and Ethnic Conflict, University of Kentucky Press, pg. 75-76.

Evolution provides a better ultimate causal foundation according to the D-N model because it tightly fits this model on two levels. First, it explains how life evolves through the evolutionary processes (natural selection, gene mutation, etc.) described in chapter 1 that provide the general laws of evolution and specific antecedent conditions affecting these laws. This theory of how nature evolves may be applied and tested against specific evidence, for example, about how early primates and humans lived and continue to do so, which may confirm evolutionary processes. Second, proximate causes of human (or other animal) behavior may be deduced from it. That is, if the evolutionary process is valid, then much of human behavior must have evolved because the behavior contributed to fitness in past environments. Accordingly, evolutionary theory provides an adequate causal explanation for realism because if the antecedent conditions are provided the ultimate cause logically produces the proximate causes (egoism and domination) of realism. Measured by Poppers method of falsification, evolutionary theory is also superior to the ultimate causes of Niebuhr and Morgenthau because it is fal-sifiable.41 That is, scholars know what evidence would not verify the theory. Popper argued that if a theory is scientific, then we may conceive of observations that would show the theory to be false. His intent was to make precise the idea that scientific theories should be subject to empirical test. In contrast to good scientific theories that can be falsified, Popper suggested that no pattern of human behavior could falsify Marxism or Freudian psychoanalytic theory. More formally, Poppers criterion of falsifiability requires that a theory contain "observation sentences," that is, "proposition P is falsifiable if and only if P deductively implies at least one observation sentence O"2 Falsifiable theories contain predictions that may be checked against empirical evidence. So according to Popper, scientists should accept a theory\* only if it is falsifiable and no observation sentence has falsified it.

### Realism True – Human Nature

#### Their epistemology arguments are wrong – realism is the most reliable predictor of international relations

Hussein Solomon, Senior Researcher, Human Security Project, Institute for Defence Policy, 1996, “In Defence of Realism,” African Security Review, Vol 5, No 2, http://www.iss.co.za/pubs/ASR/5No2/5No2/InDefence.html

The post-modern/critical theory challenge to realism has been tested, and proved wanting. Realism remains the single most reliable analytical framework through which to understand and evaluate global change. Post-modernism can provide no practical alternatives to the realist paradigm. We know what a realist world looks like (we are living in one!); but what does a post-modernist world look like? As long as humanity is motivated by hate, envy, greed and egotism, realism will continue to be invaluable to the policy-maker and the scholar. In this regard it has to be pointed out that from the end of World War II until 1992, hundreds of major conflicts around the world have left some twenty million human beings dead.109 Neither has the end of the Cold War showed any sign that such conflict will end. By the end of 1993 a record of 53 wars were being waged in 37 countries across the globe.110 Until a fundamental change in human nature occurs, realism will continue to dominate the discipline of international relations. The most fundamental problem with post-modernism is that it assumes a more optimistic view of human nature. Srebrenica, Bihac, Tuzla, Zeppa, Goma, Chechnya, Ogoniland, and KwaZulu-Natal all bear testimony to the folly of such a view.

### AT: Social Construction

#### Social construction doesn’t mean realism is malleable.

Alexander Wendt, Assistant Professor of Political Science at Chicago, International Organization, v46 n2, 1992

Let us assume that processes of identity- and interest-formation have created a world in which states do not recognize rights to territory or existence—a war of all against all. In this world, anarchy has a “realist” meaning for state action: be insecure and concerned with relative power. Anarchy has this meaning only in virtue of collective, insecurity-producing practices, but if those practices are relatively stable, they do constitute a system that may resist change. The fact that worlds of power politics are socially constructed, in other words, does not guarantee they are malleable, for at least two reasons. The first reason is that once constituted, any social system confronts each of its members as an objective social fact that reinforces certain behaviors and discourages others. Self-help systems, for example, tend to reward competition and punish altruism. The possibility of change depends on whether the exigencies of such competition leave room for actions that deviate from the prescribed script. If they do not, the system will be reproduced and deviant actors will not.” The second reason is that systemic change may also be inhibited by actors’ interests in maintaining., relatively stable role identities. Such interests are rooted not only in the desire to minimize uncertainty and anxiety, manifested in efforts to confirm existing-beliefs about the social world, but also in the desire to avoid the expected costs of breaking commitments made to others—notably domestic constituencies and foreign allies in the case of states—as part of past practices. The level of resistance that these commitments induce will depend on the “salience” of particular role identities to the actor. The United States, for example, is more likely to resist threats to its identity as “leader of anticommunist crusades” than to its identity as “promoter of human rights.” But for almost any role identity, practices and information that challenge it are likely to create cognitive dissonance and even perceptions of threat, and these may cause resistance to transformations of the self and thus to social change.” For both systemic and “psychological” reasons, then, intersubjective understandings and expectations may have a self-perpetuating quality, constituting path-dependencies that new ideas about self and other must transcend. This does not change the fact that through practice agents are continuously producing and reproducing identities and interests, continuously “choosing now the preferences [they] will have later.” But it does mean that choices may not be experienced with meaningful degrees of freedom. This could be a constructivist justification for the realist position that only simple learning is possible in self-help systems. The realist might concede that such systems are socially constructed and still argue that after the corresponding identities and in have become institutionalized, they are almost impossible to transform.

#### International actors rely on realism

Stefano Guzzini, Assistant Professor at Central European Univ., Realism in International Relations and International Political Economy, 1998, p. 227

The main line of critique can be summarized as follows: realism does not take its central concepts seriously enough. To start with, its critiques claim that realism is a sceptical practice which however, stops short of problematizing the inherent theory of the state. It is, second, a practice which informs an international community. Third, international politics is not power politics because it resembles realist precepts, but because the international community which holds a realist world‑view acts in such a way as to produce power politics: it is a social construction. Realist expectations might hold, not because they objectively correspond to something out there, but because agents make them the maxims that guide their actions. Finally, this can have very significant policy effects: even at the end of the Cold War which might have shattered realist world‑views, realist practices could mobilize old codes, such as to belittle the potential historical break of the post‑Berlin wall system. Realism still underlies major re‑conceptualization of the present international system, from Huntington's geocultural reification to `neomedievalism' ‑ and justifies the foreign policies which can be derived from them.

### AT: Social Construction

#### Reality outweighs representations – Montezuma proves

Alexander Wendt, Professor of International Security at Ohio State University, 1999, “Social theory of international politics,” gbooks

The effects of holding a relational theory of meaning on theorizing about world politics are apparent in David Campbell's provocative study of US foreign policy, which shows how the threats posed by the Soviets, immigration, drugs, and so on, were constructed out of US national security discourse.29 The book clearly shows that material things in the world did not force US decision-makers to have particular representations of them - the picture theory of reference does not hold. In so doing it highlights the discursive aspects of truth and reference, the sense in which objects are relationally "constructed."30 On the other hand, while emphasizing several times that he is not denying the reality of, for example, Soviet actions, he specifically eschews (p. 4) any attempt to assess the extent to which they caused US representations. Thus he cannot address the extent to which US representations of the Soviet threat were accurate or true (questions of correspondence). He can only focus on the nature and consequences of the representations.31 Of course, there is nothing in the social science rule book which requires an interest in causal questions, and the nature and consequences of representations are important questions. In the terms discussed below he is engaging in a constitutive rather than causal inquiry. However, I suspect Campbell thinks that any attempt to assess the correspondence of discourse to reality is inherently pointless. According to the relational theory of reference we simply have no access to what the Soviet threat "really" was, and as such its truth is established entirely within discourse, not by the latter's correspondence to an extra-discursive reality 32 The main problem with the relational theory of reference is that it cannot account for the resistance of the world to certain representations, and thus for representational failures or misinterpretations. Worldly resistance is most obvious in nature: whether our discourse says so or not, pigs can't fly. But examples abound in society too. In 1519 Montezuma faced the same kind of epistemological problem facing social scientists today: how to refer to people who, in his case, called themselves Spaniards. Many representations were conceivable, and no doubt the one he chose - that they were gods - drew on the discursive materials available to him. So why was he killed and his empire destroyed by an army hundreds of times smaller than his own? The realist answer is that Montezuma was simply wrong: the Spaniards were not gods, and had come instead to conquer his empire. Had Montezuma adopted this alternative representation of what the Spanish were, he might have prevented this outcome because that representation would have corresponded more to reality. The reality of the conquistadores did not force him to have a true representation, as the picture theory of reference would claim, but it did have certain effects - whether his discourse allowed them or not. The external world to which we ostensibly lack access, in other words. often frustrates or penalizes representations. Postmodernism gives us no insight into why this is so, and indeed, rejects the question altogether.33 The description theory of reference favored by empiricists focuses on sense-data in the mind while the relational theory of the postmoderns emphasizes relations among words, but they are similar in at least one crucial respect: neither grounds meaning and truth in an external world that regulates their content.34 Both privilege epistemology over ontology. What is needed is a theory of reference that takes account of the contribution of mind and language yet is anchored to external reality. The realist answer is the causal theory of reference. According to the causal theory the meaning of terms is determined by a two-stage process.35 First there is a "baptism/' in which some new referent in the environment (say, a previously unknown animal) is given a name; then this connection of thing-to-term is handed down a chain of speakers to contemporary speakers. Both stages are causal, the first because the referent impressed itself upon someone's senses in such a way that they were induced to give it a name, the second because the handing down of meanings is a causal process of imitation and social learning. Both stages allow discourse to affect meaning, and as such do not preclude a role for "difference" as posited by the relational theory. Theory is underdetermined by reality, and as such the causal theory is not a picture theory of reference. However, conceding these points does not mean that meaning is entirely socially or mentally constructed. In the realist view beliefs are determined by discourse and nature.36 This solves the key problems of the description and relational theories: our ability to refer to the same object even if our descriptions are different or change, and the resistance of the world to certain representations. Mind and language help determine meaning, but meaning is also regulated by a mind-independent, extra-linguistic world.

### AT: Discourse First

#### Discursive changes don’t matter – objective real world factors are key – they also influence discourse

John Mearsheimer, professor of political science at the University of Chicago, Winter 1995, “The False Promise of International Institutions.” International Security, Vol. 19, No. 3.

Nevertheless, critical theorists occasionally point to particular factors that might lead to changes in international relations discourse. In such cases, however, they usually end up arguing that changes in the material world drive changes in discourse. For example, when Ashley makes surmises about the future of realism, he claims that "a crucial issue is whether or not changing historical conditions have disabled longstanding realist rituals of power." Specifically, he asks whether "developments in late capitalist society," like the "fiscal crisis of the state," and the "internationalization of capital," coupled with "the presence of vastly destructive and highly automated nuclear arsenals [has] deprived statesmen of the latitude for competent performance of realist rituals of power?" (157) Similarly, Cox argues that fundamental change occurs when there is a "disjuncture" between "the stock of ideas people have about the nature of the world and the practical problems that challenge them." He then writes, "So many of us think the erstwhile dominant mental construct of neorealism is inadequate to confront the challenges of global politics today." (158) It would be understandable if realists made such arguments, since they believe there is an objective reality that largely determines which discourse will be dominant. Critical theorists, however, emphasize that the world is socially constructed, and not shaped in fundamental ways by objective factors. Anarchy, after all, is what we make of it. Yet when critical theorists attempt to explain why realism may be losing its hegemonic position, they too point to objective factors as the ultimate cause of change. Discourse, so it appears, turns out not to be determinative, but mainly a reflection of developments in the objective world. In short, it seems that when critical theorists who study international politics offer glimpses of their thinking about the causes of change in the real world, they make arguments that directly contradict their own theory, but which appear to be compatible with the theory they are challenging. (159)

### AT: Solves All War

#### Critical theory creates fascism not utopia – can’t prescribe new realities

John Mearsheimer, professor of political science at the University of Chicago, Winter 1995, “The False Promise of International Institutions.” International Security, Vol. 19, No. 3.

There is another problem with the application of critical theory to international relations. Although critical theorists hope to replace realism with a discourse that emphasizes harmony and peace, critical theory per se emphasizes that it is impossible to know the future. Critical theory according to its own logic, can be used to undermine realism and produce change, but it cannot serve as the basis for predicting which discourse will replace realism, because the theory says little about the direction change takes. In fact, Cox argues that although "utopian expectations may be an element in stimulating people to act...such expectations are almost never realized in practice." (160) Thus, in a sense, the communitarian discourse championed by critical theorists is wishful thinking, not an outcome linked to the theory itself. Indeed, critical theory cannot guarantee that the new discourse will not be more malignant than the discourse it replaces. Nothing in the theory guarantees, for example, that a fascist discourse far more violent than realism will not emerge as the new hegemonic discourse.

#### Abandoning realism doesn’t eliminate global violence — alternative worldviews provide no direction to dealing with real world security situations.

Terry O'Callaghan, lecturer in the school of International Relations at the University of South Australia, 2002, International Relations and the third debate, ed: Jarvis, p. 79-80

In fact, if we explore the depths of George's writings further, we find remarkable brevity in their scope, failing to engage with practical issues beyond platitudes and homilies. George, for example, is concerned about the violent, dangerous and war-prone character of the present international system. And rightly so. The world is a cruel and unforgiving place, especially for those who suffer the indignity of human suffering beneath tyrannous leaders, warrior states, and greedy self-serving elites. But surely the problem of violence is not banished from the international arena once the global stranglehold of realist thinking is finally broken? It is important to try to determine the levels of violence that might be expected in a nonrealist world. How will internecine conflict be managed? How do postmodernists like George go about managing conflict between marginalized groups whose "voices" collide? It is one thing to talk about the failure of current realist thinking, but there is absolutely nothing in George's statements to suggest that he has discovered solutions to handle events in Bosnia, the Middle East, or East Timor. Postmodern approaches look as impoverished in this regard as do realist perspectives. Indeed, it is interesting to note that George gives conditional support for the actions of the United States in Haiti and Somalia "because on balance they gave people some hope where there was none" (George, 1994:231). Brute force, power politics, and interventionism do apparently have a place in George's postmodem world. But even so, the Haitian and Somalian cases are hardly in the same intransigent category as those of Bosnia or the Middle East. Indeed, the Americans pulled out of Somalia as soon as events took a turn for the worse and, in the process, received a great deal of criticism from the international community. Would George have done the same thing? Would he have left the Taliban to their devices in light of their complicity in the events of September 11? Would he have left the Somalians to wallow in poverty and misery? Would he have been willing to sacrifice the lives of a number of young men and women (American, Australian, French, or whatever) to subdue Aidid and his minions in order to restore social and political stability to Somalia? To be blunt, I wonder how much better off the international community would be if Jim George were put in charge of foreign affairs. This is not a fatuous point. After all, George wants to suggest that students of international politics are implicated in the trials and tribulations of international politics. All of us should be willing, therefore, to accept such a role, even hypothetically. I suspect, however, that were George actually to confront some of the dilemmas that policymakers do on a daily basis, he would find that teaching the Bosnian Serbs about the dangers of modernism, universalism and positivism, and asking them to be more tolerant and sensitive would not meet with much success. True, it may not be a whole lot worse than current realist approaches, but the point is that George has not demonstrated how his views might make a meaningful difference. Saying that they will is not enough, especially given that the outcomes of such strategies might cost people their lives. Nor, indeed, am I asking George to develop a "research project" along positivist lines. On the contrary, I am merely asking him to show how his position can make a difference to the "hard cases" in international politics. My point is thus a simple one. Despite George's pronouncements, there is little in his work to show that he has much appreciation for the kind of moral dilemmas that Augustine wrestled with in his early writings and that confront human beings every day. Were this the case, George would not have painted such a black-and- white picture of the study of international politics.

### AT: Alternatives

#### It’s not enough for their alternative to have a GOAL – they have to have a MECHANISM to achieve it

Alastair Murray, Politics Department, University of Wales Swansea, Reconstructing Realism, 1997, p. 188-189

Ashley's critique thus boils down to a judgement as to the potentialities for change in the current situation and how best to exploit them. It amounts to the difference between a progressive philosophy which regards systemic transformation as imminent, and one which remains more sceptical. In `Political realism and human interests', for instance, realism's practical strategy ultimately appears illegitimate to Ashley only because his own agenda is emancipatory in nature. His disagreement with realism depends on a highly contestable claim ‑ based on Herz's argument that, with the development of global threats, the conditions which might produce some universal consensus have arisen ‑ that its `impossibility theorem' is empirically problematic, that a universal consensus is achievable, and that its practical strategy is obstructing its realisation. In much the same way, in ‘The poverty of neorealism’, realism's practical strategy is illegitimate only because Ashley's agenda is inclusionary. His central disagreement with realism arises out of his belief that its strategy reproduces a world order organised around sovereign states, preventing exploration of the indeterminate number of ‑ potentially less exclusionary ‑ alternative world orders. Realists, however, would be unlikely to be troubled by such charges. Ashley needs to do rather more than merely assert that the development of global threats will produce some universal consensus, or that any number of less exclusionary world orders are possible, to convince them. A universal threat does not imply a universal consensus, merely the existence of a universal threat faced by particularistic actors. And the assertion that indeterminate numbers of potentially less exclusionary orders exist carries little weight unless we can specify exactly what these alternatives are and just how they might be achieved. As such, realists would seem to be justified in regarding such potentialities as currently unrealisable ideals and in seeking a more proximate good in the fostering of mutual understanding and, in particular, of a stable balance of power. Despite the adverse side‑effects that such a balance of power implies, it at least offers us something tangible rather than ephemeral promises lacking a shred of support. Ultimately, Ashley's demand that a new, critical approach be adopted in order to free us from the grip of such 'false' conceptions depends upon ideas about the prospects for the development of a universal consensus which are little more than wishful thinking, and ideas about the existence of potentially less exclusionary orders which are little more than mere assertion. Hence his attempts, in 'Political realism and human interests', to conceal these ideas from view by claiming that the technical base of realism serves only to identify, and yet not to reform, the practical, and then, in 'The poverty of neorealism', by removing the technical from investigation altogether by an exclusive reliance on a problem of hermeneutic circularity. In the final analysis, then, Ashley's post‑structuralist approach boils down to little more than a critique ‑-and, at that, a critique which fails. It is predicated on the assumption that the constraints upon us are simply restrictive knowledge practices, such that it presumes that the entirety of the solution to our problems is little more than the removal of such false ways of thinking. It offers nothing by way of alternative ‑ no strategies, no proximate goals, indeed, little by way of goals at all. If, in constructivism, the progressive purpose leads to strategies divorced from an awareness of the problems confronting transformatory efforts, and, in critical theoretical perspectives, it produces strategies divorced from international politics in their entirety, in post‑structuralism it generates a complete absence of strategies altogether. Critique serves to fill the void, yet this critique ultimately proves unsustainable. With its defeat, post-structuralism is left with nothing. Once one peels away the layers of misconstruction, it simply fades away. If realism is, as Ashley puts it, 'a tradition forever immersed in the expectation of political tragedy', it at least offers us a concrete vision of objectives and ways in which to achieve them which his own position, forever immersed in the expectation of deliverance, is manifestly unable to provide."

### AT: Alternatives

#### Rejecting realism makes it worse – it constitutes the primary mode of thought practitioners use

Stefano Guzzini, Assistant Professor at Central European Univ., Realism in International Relations and International Political Economy, 1998, p. 235

Third, this last chapter has argued that although the evolution of realism has been mainly a disappointment as a general causal theory, we have to deal with it. On the one hand, realist assumptions and insights are used and merged in nearly all frameworks of analysis offered in International Relations or International Political Economy. One of the book's purposes was to show realism as a varied and variably rich theory, so heterogeneous that it would be better to refer to it only in plural terms. On the other hand, to dispose of realism because some of its versions have been proven empirically wrong, ahistorical, or logically incoherent, does not necessarily touch its role in the shared understandings of observers and practitioners of international affairs. Realist theories have a persisting power for constructing our understanding of the present. Their assumptions, both as theoretical constructs, and as particular lessons of the past translated from one generation of decision‑makers to another, help mobilizing certain understandings and dispositions to action. They also provide them with legitimacy. Despite realism's several deaths as a general causal theory, it can still powerfully enframe action. It exists in the minds, and is hence reflected in the actions, of many practitioners. Whether or not the world realism depicts is out there, realism is. Realism is not a causal theory that explains International Relations, but, as long as realism continues to be a powerful mind‑set, we need to understand realism to make sense of International Relations. In other words, realism is a still necessary hermeneutical bridge to the understanding of world politics. Getting rid of realism without having a deep understanding of it, not only risks unwarranted dismissal of some valuable theoretical insights that I have tried to gather in this book; it would also be futile. Indeed, it might be the best way to tacitly and uncritically reproduce it.

### AT: Alternatives

#### Critiques of realism fail to provide any guidance.

Alastair J.H. Murray, Politics Department, University of Wales Swansea, Reconstructing Realism, 1997, p. 185-6

Linklater seems to go some way towards acknowledging this in *Beyond Realism and Marxism*, recognising Morgenthau's commitment, in contrast to neorealism, to widening community beyond the nation‑state. What he now suggests, however, is that `[w]hat realism offers is an account of historical circumstances which human subjects have yet to bring under their collective control. What it does not possess is an account of the modes of political intervention which would enable human beings to take control of their international history."' The issue becomes less a matter of what realism does, than what it does not do, less the way it constructs the problem, than its failure to solve it. Yet Linklater concedes that `it is not at all clear that any strand of social and political thought provides a compelling account of "strategies of transition"'. Indeed, where he has attempted to engage with this issue himself, he has proved manifestly unable to provide such an account. Although he has put forward some ideas of what is needed ‑ a fundamental reorganisation of political relations, establishing a global legal order to replace the sovereign state, and a fundamental rearrangement of economic relations, establishing an order in which all individuals have the means as well as the formal rights of freedom ‑ his only suggestion as to how such objectives should be achieved seems to be that `[s]ocial development entails individuals placing themselves at odds with their societies as they begin to question conventional means of characterising outsiders and to criticise customary prohibitions upon individual relations with them'. His critical theoretical `transitional strategies' amount to little more than the suggestion that individuals must demand recognition for themselves as men as well as citizens, must demand the right to enter into complex interstate relations themselves, and must act in these relations as beings with fundamental obligations to all other members of the species." More recently, he has proposed a vision in which `subnational and transnational citizenship are strengthened and in which mediating between the different loyalties and identities present within modem societies is one central purpose of the post‑Westphalian state'. Such an objective is to be reached by a discourse ethics along the lines of that proposed by Habermas. Yet such an ethics amounts to little more than the suggestion `that human beings need to be reflective about the ways in which they include and exclude others from dialogue', scarcely going beyond Linklater's earlier emphasis on individuals acting as men as well as citizens. Realism does at least propose tangible objectives which, whilst perhaps lacking the visionary appeal of Linklater's proposals, ultimately offer us a path to follow, and it does at least suggest a strategy of realisation, emphasising the necessity of a restrained, moderate diplomacy, which, if less daring than Linklater might wish, provides us with some guidance. It is this inability to articulate practical strategies which suggests the central difficulty with such critical theoretical approaches. The progressive urge moves a stage further here, leading them to abandon almost entirely the problem of establishing some form of stable international order at this level in favour of a continuing revolution in search of a genuine cosmopolis. It generates such an emphasis on the pursuit of distant, ultimate objectives that they prove incapable of furnishing us with anything but the most vague and elusive of strategies, such an emphasis on moving towards a post‑Westphalian, boundary‑less world that they are incapable of telling us anything about the problems facing us today. If, for theorists such as Linklater, such a difficulty does not constitute a failure for critical theory within its own terms of reference, this position cannot be accepted uncritically. Without an ability to address contemporary problems, it is unable to provide strategies to overcome even the immediate obstacles in the way of its objective of a genuinely cosmopolitan society. And, without a guarantee that such a cosmopolitan society is even feasible, such a critical theoretical perspective simply offers us the perpetual redefinition of old problems in a new context and the persistent creation of new problems to replace old ones, without even the luxury of attempting to address them.

### AT: Alternatives

#### Criticism without an alternative theory ensures violence. Realism keeps the balance of power stable.

Alastair Murray, Politics Department, University of Wales Swansea, Reconstructing Realism, 1997, p. 188-189

Ashley's critique thus boils down to a judgement as to the potentialities for change in the current situation and how best to exploit them. It amounts to the difference between a progressive philosophy which regards systemic transformation as imminent, and one which remains more sceptical. In `Political realism and human interests', for instance, realism's practical strategy ultimately appears illegitimate to Ashley only because his own agenda is emancipatory in nature. His disagreement with realism depends on a highly contestable claim ‑ based on Herz's argument that, with the development of global threats, the conditions which might produce some universal consensus have arisen ‑ that its `impossibility theorem' is empirically problematic, that a universal consensus is achievable, and that its practical strategy is obstructing its realisation. In much the same way, in ‘The poverty of neorealism’, realism's practical strategy is illegitimate only because Ashley's agenda is inclusionary. His central disagreement with realism arises out of his belief that its strategy reproduces a world order organised around sovereign states, preventing exploration of the indeterminate number of ‑ potentially less exclusionary ‑ alternative world orders. Realists, however, would be unlikely to be troubled by such charges. Ashley needs to do rather more than merely assert that the development of global threats will produce some universal consensus, or that any number of less exclusionary world orders are possible, to convince them. A universal threat does not imply a universal consensus, merely the existence of a universal threat faced by particularistic actors. And the assertion that indeterminate numbers of potentially less exclusionary orders exist carries little weight unless we can specify exactly what these alternatives are and just how they might be achieved. As such, realists would seem to be justified in regarding such potentialities as currently unrealisable ideals and in seeking a more proximate good in the fostering of mutual understanding and, in particular, of a stable balance of power. Despite the adverse side‑effects that such a balance of power implies, it at least offers us something tangible rather than ephemeral promises lacking a shred of support. Ultimately, Ashley's demand that a new, critical approach be adopted in order to free us from the grip of such 'false' conceptions depends upon ideas about the prospects for the development of a universal consensus which are little more than wishful thinking, and ideas about the existence of potentially less exclusionary orders which are little more than mere assertion. Hence his attempts, in 'Political realism and human interests', to conceal these ideas from view by claiming that the technical base of realism serves only to identify, and yet not to reform, the practical, and then, in 'The poverty of neorealism', by removing the technical from investigation altogether by an exclusive reliance on a problem of hermeneutic circularity. In the final analysis, then, Ashley's post‑structuralist approach boils down to little more than a critique ‑-and, at that, a critique which fails. It is predicated on the assumption that the constraints upon us are simply restrictive knowledge practices, such that it presumes that the entirety of the solution to our problems is little more than the removal of such false ways of thinking. It offers nothing by way of alternative ‑ no strategies, no proximate goals, indeed, little by way of goals at all. If, in constructivism, the progressive purpose leads to strategies divorced from an awareness of the problems confronting transformatory efforts, and, in critical theoretical perspectives, it produces strategies divorced from international politics in their entirety, in post‑structuralism it generates a complete absence of strategies altogether. Critique serves to fill the void, yet this critique ultimately proves unsustainable. With its defeat, post-structuralism is left with nothing. Once one peels away the layers of misconstruction, it simply fades away. If realism is, as Ashley puts it, 'a tradition forever immersed in the expectation of political tragedy', it at least offers us a concrete vision of objectives and ways in which to achieve them which his own position, forever immersed in the expectation of deliverance, is manifestly unable to provide."

### AT: Realism Bad – Statist

#### Realism doesn’t prop up the state – its discusses the state strategically

Alastair Murray, Politics Department, University of Wales Swansea, Reconstructing Realism, 1997, p. 187-8

Ashley is left is that it actively seeks to avoid doing so. He suggests that, because the balance of power scheme involves what is effectively an acceptance of the traditional `rules of the game', it actively reproduces, by its very success, the traditional statist terms of the game, such that realism becomes complicit in a conservative perpetuation of an iniquitous statist order by its endorsement of it. Ashley would, of course, like to treat this as design, and end the matter there. Yet this is to equate implication with purpose. If the balance of power scheme implies the reproduction of the state, this does not prove its dedication to this objective. Realism advocated a scheme for an interstate balance of power not because of any concern to reproduce the state, but because its analysis of contemporary empirical conditions indicated that such a strategy offered the best available fulfilment of moral principles: if states represent the principal receptacles of power in the modern environment, the best level of justice can be achieved by establishing some equilibrium of power between states. Consequently, its position not only moves beyond the state, de-privileges it, and demands its compliance in principles which privilege the individual, but, furthermore, this position is open to the possibility of progress beyond it towards some more universal order. If the state must be employed as the principal agent of international justice and international change, it is only because of its current centrality to international politics.

### AT: You’re Not Realist

#### We access our realism turns because the 1AC is predicated on explaining IR in terms of states pursuing self-interest. The fact that it isn’t about pure power politics only proves that realism can be transformative.

Realism can explain interstate cooperation and isn’t predicated on perpetual violence

Alastair Murray, Politics Department, University of Wales Swansea, Reconstructing Realism, 1997, p. 180

Yet, with this point, Wendt's discussion of realism has become detached from its reality. Realism does not hold to a Hobbesian image of man `possessed by an inherent lust for power or glory ...'. Its account of human nature juxtaposes co‑operative and conflictual elements. Furthermore, even in terms of the conflictual elements, it does not hold all individuals to be inherently predatory power maximisers, but regards them to be sometimes predatory, power maintainer/maximisers. The difference is crucial. The former assumes persistently predatory actors, destined to perpetual conflict. The latter assumes actors animated primarily by a will to survive but liable, at times, to slip into a self‑contained lust for power. Such actors will merely tend to conflict, perpetrating acts of predation which are occasional, in that they are non‑pervasive, and yet inevitable, in that, given multiple actors and an infinite time span, such acts are an unavoidable element of the human condition. Ultimately, realism allows us to take account of the fact that actors are capable of both co‑operation and self‑regard, and are capable of defining this self‑regard in both status quo and revisionist ways. As such, Wendt's attempt to attribute it `a relentless pessimism' proves untenable.

### AT: Not Anarchic

#### The critique ignores the real problems of developing policy – whether or not the world is fundamentally anarchic, realism is the best way to deal with problems

Stefano **Guzzini**, Assistant Professor at Central European University, “The enduring dilemmas of realism in International Relations,” Copenhagen Peace Research Institute, December 2001, http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/gus02/gus02.pdf, accessed 8/13/02

Contrary to Waltz, Gunther Hellmann does not leave the debate at this unfinished stage. Starting from the same Friedmanian pragmatist grounding that a theory is good as long as it works or functions, he wants a return to the common language of academia and practice by pushing academia back to the language of the practitioner, yet by keeping the advantage of the outside observer. More openly than Waltz, he plays down the need for scientific respectability, but by offering a more philosophically grounded argument. The grounding is provided by the recourse to the philosophy of science, more particularly to modern versions of “pragmatism”, represented in particular, but not only, by Richard Rorty. For Hellmann, pragmatism has done the job in undermining the credentials of positivism and all what comes with it. This move takes the ground away for the need of any of the classical justifications in IR theory. Any version of the correspondence theory of truth, any version of scientific realism, any version of falsification is wrong-headed, if understood in a logical theoretical way. Such devices are just this: scholarly habits devised through the tradition of a scientific community. But pragmatism is also not succumbing to the sirens of poststructuralism whose theorising, according to him, is purely de-constructing and has lost any major connection with real problems.

### AT: Realism Bad – Threat Con

#### Realism doesn’t require worst case forecasting or “threat construction.” The critique sacrifices stability on the alter of uncertain transformation.

Alastair Murray, Politics Department, University of Wales Swansea, Reconstructing Realism, 1997, p. 182

This is not merely to indulge in yet another interminable discourse on the `lessons of Munich', rejecting all strategies of assurance for more familiar policies of deterrence. A realist perspective does not, as Wendt seems to assume, require worst‑case forecasting, nor does it adopt an ethic of `sauve qui peut'. But it is to suggest that, when realism emphasises the need for a cautious, gradual approach to attempts to transform the nature of the system, it has a point. In Wendt's analysis, change ultimately becomes as privileged as the status quo in rationalist perspectives. If he does not hold that history is progressive, he does hold that change is. If he is not idealistic about the possibilities of effecting a transformation of the system, he is with regard to the way in which it might be accomplished. Yet, even if we acknowledge that a transformation in the structure of international politics would be beneficial, this does not imply the acceptance of a desperate gamble to accomplish it. And, at the end of the day, if we can accept that the current structure of international politics contains many injustices, there is no guarantee that its transformation would remove such iniquities anyway. The only thing that the quest to overthrow the status quo does guarantee to do is to undermine those fragments of order that we currently possess. Ultimately, constructivism can be seen to rest upon a value judgment which sacrifices the safe option of remaining within the current situation for the attempt to explore its possibilities. It can be seen to rest on a progressive philosophy which privileges the possible over the extant and sacrifices stability on the altar of transformation. This is not to attempt to level a charge of utopianism, as Wendt complains that Mearsheimer does, by emphasising constructivism's normative rather than explanatory commitment. As Wendt responds: `Constructivists have a normative interest in promoting social change, but they pursue this by trying to explain how seemingly natural social structures, like self‑help or the Cold War, are effects of practice ... If critical theorists fail, this will be because they do not explain how the world works, not because of their values."' All theories ultimately have normative commitments; the fact of their existence does not allow us to question the validity of constructivism's explanatory power. What does, however, is the impact of these normative assumptions on its account of international politics. Just as reflectivists argue that the implicit conservatism of neorealism generates its ahistoricism, the implicit progressivism of constructivism generates its unwillingness to acknowledge even the possibility of elements of permanency. And, just as reflectivists argue that the implicit conservatism of neorealism generates strategies which threaten to become self‑perpetuating, so the implicit progressivism of constructivism generates strategies which threaten to become counter‑productive.

### AT: Realism Bad – Violence

#### Realism doesn’t produce violence – their analysis ignores real violence

D.S.L. Jarvis, Lecturer in IR at the University of Sydney, International Relations and the Challenges of Postmodernism, 2000, p. 129

Perhaps more alarming though is the outright violence Ashley recommends in response to what at best seem trite, if not imagined, injustices. Inculpating modernity, positivism, technical rationality, or realism with violence, racism, war, and countless other crimes not only smacks of anthropomorphism but, as demonstrated by Ashley's torturous prose and reasoning, requires a dubious logic to make such connections in the first place. Are we really to believe that ethereal entities like positivism, modernism, or realism emanate a "violence" that marginalizes dissidents? Indeed, where is this violence, repression, and marginalization? As self-professed dissidents supposedly exiled from the discipline, Ashley and Walker appear remarkably well integrated into the academy—vocal, published, and at the center of the Third Debate and the forefront of theoretical research. Likewise, is Ashley seriously suggesting that, on the basis of this largely imagined violence, global transformation (perhaps even revolutionary violence) is a necessary, let alone desirable, response? Has the rationale for emancipation or the fight for justice been reduced to such vacuous revolutionary slogans as "Down with positivism and rationality"? The point is surely trite. Apart from members of the academy, who has heard of positivism and who for a moment imagines that they need to be emancipated from it, or from modernity, rationality, or realism for that matter? In an era of unprecedented change and turmoil, of new political and military configurations, of war in the Balkans and ethnic cleansing, is Ashley really suggesting that some of the greatest threats facing humankind or some of the great moments of history rest on such innocuous and largely unknown nonrealities like positivism and realism? These are imagined and fictitious enemies, theoretical fabrications that represent arcane, self-serving debates superfluous to the lives of most people and, arguably, to most issues of importance in international relations. More is the pity that such irrational and obviously abstruse debate should so occupy us at a time of great global turmoil. That it does and continues to do so reflects our lack of judicious criteria for evaluating theory and, more importantly, the lack of attachment theorists have to the real world. Certainly it is right and proper that we ponder the depths of our theoretical imaginations, engage in epistemological and ontological debate, and analyze the sociology of our knowledge.37 But to suppose that [end page 128] this is the only risk of international theory, let alone the most important one, smacks of intellectual elitism and displays a certain contempt for those who search for guidance in their daily struggles as actors in international politics. What does Ashley's project, his deconstructive efforts, or valiant fight against positivism say to the truly marginalized, oppressed, and destitute! How does it help solve the plight of the poor, the displaced refugees, the casualties of war, or the emigres of death squads? Does it in any way speak to those whose actions and thoughts comprise the policy and practice of international relations? On all these questions one must answer no. This is not to say, of course, that all theory should be judged by its technical rationality and problem-solving capacity as Ashley forcefully argues. But to suppose that problem-solving technical theory is not necessary—or is in some way bad—is a contemptuous position that abrogates any hope of solving some of the nightmarish realities that millions confront daily. As Holsti argues, we need ask of these theorists and their theories the ultimate question, "So what!" To what purpose do they deconstruct, problematize, destabilize, undermine, ridicule, and belittle modernist and rationalist approaches? Does this get us any further, make the world any better, or enhance the human condition? In what sense can this "debate toward [a] bottomless pit of epistemology and metaphysics" be judged pertinent, relevant, helpful, or cogent to anyone other than those foolish enough to be scholastically excited by abstract and recondite debate.38 Contrary to Ashley's assertions, then, a poststructural approach fails to empower the marginalized and, in fact, abandons them. Rather than analyze the political economy of power, wealth, oppression, production, or international relations and render an intelligible understanding of these processes, Ashley succeeds in ostracizing those he portends to represent by delivering an obscure and highly convoluted discourse. If Ashley wishes to chastise structural realism for its abstractness and detachment, he must be prepared also to face similar criticism, especially when he so adamantly intends his work to address the real life plight of those who struggle at marginal places.