RISE AND DEMISE OF
THE TERRITORIAL STATE

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STUDENTS and practitioners of international politics are at present in a strange predicament. Complex though their problems have been in the past, there was then at least some certainty about the “givens,” the basic structure and the basic phenomena of international relations. Today one is neither here nor there. On the one hand, for instance, one is assured—or at least tempted to accept assurance—that for all practical purposes a nuclear stalemate rules out major war as a major means of policy today and in the foreseeable future. On the other hand, one has an uncanny sense of the practicability of the unabated arms race, and a doubt whether reliance can be placed solely on the deterrent purpose of all this preparation. We are no longer sure about the functions of war and peace, nor do we know how to define the national interest and what its defense requires under present conditions. As a matter of fact, the meaning and function of the basic protective unit, the “sovereign” nation-state itself, have become doubtful. On what, then, can policy and planning be built?

In the author’s opinion, many of these uncertainties have their more profound cause in certain fundamental changes which have taken place in the structure of international relations and, specifically, in the nature of the units among which these relations occur. This transformation in the “statehood” of nations will be the subject of this article.

I. Basic Features of the Modern State System

Traditionally, the classical system of international relations, or the modern state system, has been considered “anarchic,” because it was based on unequally distributed power and was deficient in higher—that is, supra-national—authority. Its units, the independent, sovereign nation-states, were forever threatened by stronger power and survived precariously through the balance-of-power system. Customarily, then, the modern state system has been contrasted with the medieval system, on the one hand, where units of international relations were under higher law and higher authority, and with those more recent international trends, on the other, which seemed to point toward a greater, “collec-
tive” security of nations and a “rule of law” that would protect them from the indiscriminate use of force characteristic of the age of power politics.

From the vantage point of the atomic age, we can probe deeper into the basic characteristics of the classical system. What is it that ultimately accounted for the peculiar unity, compactness, coherence of the modern nation-state, setting it off from other nation-states as a separate, independent, and sovereign power? It would seem that this underlying factor is to be found neither in the sphere of law nor in that of politics, but rather in that substratum of statehood where the state unit confronts us, as it were, in its physical, corporeal capacity: as an expanse of territory encircled for its identification and its defense by a “hard shell” of fortifications. In this lies what will here be referred to as the “impermeability,” or “impenetrability,” or simply the “territoriality,” of the modern state. The fact that it was surrounded by a hard shell rendered it to some extent secure from foreign penetration, and thus made it an ultimate unit of protection for those within its boundaries. Throughout history, that unit which affords protection and security to human beings has tended to become the basic political unit; people, in the long run, will recognize that authority, any authority, which possesses the power of protection.

Some similarity perhaps prevails between an international structure consisting of impenetrable units with an ensuing measurability of power and comparability of power relations, and the system of classical physics with its measurable forces and the (then) impenetrable atom as its basic unit. And as that system has given way to relativity and to what nuclear science has uncovered, the impenetrability of the political atom, the nation-state, is giving way to a permeability which tends to obliterate the very meaning of unit and unity, power and power relations, sovereignty and independence. The possibility of “hydrogenization” merely represents the culmination of a development which has rendered the traditional defense structure of nations obsolete through the power to by-pass the shell protecting a two-dimensional territory and thus to destroy—vertically, as it were—even the most powerful ones. Paradoxically, utmost strength now coincides in the same unit with utmost vulnerability, absolute power with utter impotence.

This development must inevitably affect traditional power concepts. Considering power units as politically independent and legally sovereign made sense when power, measurable, graded, calculable, served as a standard of comparison between units which, in the sense indicated
above, could be described as impermeable. Under those conditions, then, power indicated the strategic aspect, independence the political aspect, sovereignty the legal aspect of this selfsame impermeability. With the passing of the age of territoriosity, the usefulness of these concepts must now be questioned.

Thus the Great Divide does not separate “international anarchy,” or “balance of power,” or “power politics,” from incipient international interdependence, or from “collective security”; all these remain within the realm of the territorial structure of states and can therefore be considered as trends or stages within the classical system of “hard shell” power units. Rather, the Divide occurs where the basis of territorial power and defensibility vanishes. It is here and now. But in order to understand the present, we must study more closely the origin and nature of the classical system itself.

II. The Rise of the Territorial State

The rise of the modern territorial state meant that, within countries, “feudal anarchy” of jurisdictions yielded to the ordered centralism of the absolute monarchy, which ruled over a pacified area with the aid of a bureaucracy, a professional army, and the power to levy taxes, while in foreign relations, in place of the medieval hierarchy of power and authority, there prevailed insecurity, a disorder only slightly attenuated by a power balance that was forever being threatened, disturbed, and then restored. Such has been the customary interpretation.

It is possible to view developments in a somewhat different light. Instead of contrasting the security of groups and individuals within the sovereign territorial state with conditions of insecurity outside, the establishment of territorial independence can be interpreted as an at least partially successful attempt to render the territorial group secure in its outward relations as well. Especially when contrasted with the age of anarchy and insecurity which immediately preceded it, the age of territoriality appears as one of relative order and safety.

Indeed, the transition from medieval hierarchism to modern compartmentalized sovereignties was neither easy, nor straight, nor short. Modern sovereignty arose out of the triangular struggle among emperors and popes, popes and kings, and kings and emperors. When the lawyers of Philip the Fair propounded the dual maxim according to which the king was to be “emperor in his realm” (rex est imperator in regno suo) and was no longer to “recognize any superior” (superiorem non recognoscent), it was the beginning of a development in the course of which,
in McIlwain’s words, “Independence de facto was ultimately translated into a sovereignty de jure.” But centuries of disturbance and real anarchy ensued during which the problems of rulership and security remained unsettled. The relative protection which the sway of moral standards and the absence of highly destructive weapons had afforded groups and individuals in the earlier Middle Ages gave way to total insecurity when gunpowder was invented and common standards broke down. Out of the internal and external turmoil during the age of religious and civil wars, a “neutralist” central power eventually managed to establish itself in and for each of the different territories like so many rochers de bronze.

The idea that a territorial coexistence of states, based on the power of the territorial princes, might afford a better guarantee of peace than the Holy Roman Empire was already widespread at the height of the Middle Ages when the emperor proved incapable of enforcing the peace. But territoriality could hardly prevail so long as the knight in his castle (that medieval unit of impermeability) was relatively immune from attack, as was the medieval city within its walls. Only with a developing money economy were overlords able to free themselves from dependence on vassals and lay the foundations of their own power by establishing a professional army. Infantry and artillery now proved superior to old-style cavalry, firearms prevailed over the old weapons.

As in all cases of radically new developments in military technology, the “gunpowder revolution” caused a real revolution in the superstructure of economic, social, and political relationships because of its impact on the units of protection and security. A feeling of insecurity swept all Europe. Though a Machiavelli might establish new rules as to how to gain and maintain power, there still followed more than a century of unregulated, ideological “total” wars inside and among

3 Ariosto expressed the feeling of despair which invaded the “old powers” of chivalry when gunpowder destroyed the foundations of their system, in terms reminding one of present-day despair in the face of the destructive forces loosed upon our own world:

“Oh! curs’d device! base implement of death!
Framed in the black Tartarean realms beneath!
By Beelzebub’s malicious art design’d
To ruin all the race of human kind.”

countries until the new units of power were clearly established. Before old or new sovereigns could claim to be recognized as rulers of large areas, it had to be determined how far, on the basis of their new military power, they were able to extend their control geographically.⁴

The large-area state came finally to occupy the place that the castle or fortified town had previously held as a unit of impenetrability. But the new unit could not be considered consolidated until all independent fortifications within it had disappeared and, in their place, fortresses lining the circumference of the country had been built by the new central power and manned by its armed forces.⁵ If we contrast our present system of bases and similar outposts surrounding entire world regions with what are today small-scale nation-states, perhaps we can visualize what the hard shell of frontier fortifications consolidating the then large-scale territorial states meant by way of extending power units in the age of absolutism. They became, in the words of Frederick the Great, “mighty nails which hold a ruler’s provinces together.” There now was peace and protection within. War became a regularized military procedure; only the breaking of the shell permitted interference with what had now become the internal affairs of another country.

In this way was established the basic structure of the territorial state which was to last throughout the classical period of the modern state system. Upon this foundation a new system and new concepts of international relations could arise. And as early as the second half of the seventeenth century a perspicacious observer succeeded in tying up the new concepts with the underlying structure of territorial statehood.

III. The Nature of Territoriality

It was hardly a coincidence that this connection was established shortly after the end of the Thirty Years’ War, when formal sanction had been given to territorial sovereignty in the Westphalian Peace. For here was the turning point, the Great Divide between what were still partially medieval situations reflecting a certain permeability of the rising nation-state (when, for instance, outside powers could still ally themselves with frondes within a country against that country’s sovereign) and the modern era of closed units no longer brooking such interference.⁶

⁵ See Friedrich Meinecke, Die Idee der Staatswaison in der neueren Geschichte, Munich and Berlin, 1925, pp. 241ff.
⁶ The emergence of “non-intervention” as a legal concept illustrates this transition.
The clarification of the nature of territoriality to which we referred above is found in a little and little-known essay by Leibniz, written for an entirely pragmatic purpose—namely, to prove the right of legitimation of the territorial ruler (the Duke of Hanover) in whose service the philosopher then was. Leibniz' problem derived directly from the situation created by the Peace of Westphalia. This settlement, for all practical purposes, had conferred sovereign independence upon those princes who formally were still included in the Empire; yet it had not abolished the long-established, essentially feudal structure of the Empire itself, with its allegiances and jurisdictions, its duties of membership, and even its clumsy and scarcely workable framework of government. Thus some of the factually sovereign territorial rulers in Europe were somehow still under a higher authority. Were they now “sovereign” or not? What accounted for sovereignty?

Leibniz' contemporaries failed to see the problem in this light. The muddled state of affairs was made to order for those jurists and others who argued fine points perennially with the aid of sterile or obsolete concepts. Leibniz, instead, proceeded to study “what actually happens in the world today,” and as a result could boast of being “the first to have found the valid definition of sovereignty.”

As he saw it, the first condition for sovereignty was a minimum size of territory. Minuscule principalities, at that time still abundant, could not claim to be on a par with those that recognized each other as equally sovereign in respect to peace and war, alliances, and the general affairs of Europe, because, not possessing sufficient territory, they could at best, with their garrisons, only maintain internal order. But there remained the chief problem: how to define the status of those rulers who, because of their membership in the Empire, were subjects of the emperor. Could one be “sovereign” and “subject” at the same time? If not, what was the status of these “subject” rulers as compared with that of their

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A complete change in the meaning of the term occurred in the brief period between the time of Grotius and that of Pufendorf. Grotius, writing during the last phase of the pre-modern era of religious and “international civil” wars and still thinking in terms of “just” and “unjust” wars, considered a ruler entitled to intervene in the affairs of another sovereign if it was necessary to defend oppressed subjects of the latter; Pufendorf, barely fifty years later, rejected such interference in the “domestic affairs” of another sovereign as a violation of the sovereign's exclusive jurisdiction over his territory and all it contained. See Walter Schifer, The Legal Community of Mankind, New York, 1954, pp. 34f., 56.

7 “Entretiens de Philarette et d'Eugène sur le droit d'Ambassade”; quoted here from Werke, 1st series, III, Hanover, 1864, pp. 33ff.

8 Ibid., pp. 340, 342.

9 Ibid., p. 349.
“sovereign” European brethren? If so, what did their subjection to the emperor amount to? These questions were further complicated by the fact that at every European court, and in the Empire as well, there were certain high dignitaries, often called “princes,” “dukes,” etc., who customarily held the rank of “sovereign.” It was through this maze of relationships that Leibniz arrived at his definitions.

He elaborated his concept of sovereignty by distinguishing it from “majesty.” Majesty, the authority which the emperor has qua emperor over the Empire’s members, consists of a number of jurisdictions that confer the right to demand obedience and involve duties of fealty, but it is not sovereignty. Why not? Simply because, with all its supreme authority, majesty does not involve an “actual and present power to constrain” subjects on their own territories. Their territory, in other words, is impermeable. The subject, on the other hand, if he is a territorial ruler, is sovereign because he has the power to constrain his subjects, while not being so constrainable by superior power. The decisive criterion thus is actual control of one’s “estates” by one’s military power, which excludes any other power within and without. Contrariwise, the absence of such forces of his own on his subjects’ territories accounts for the absence of “sovereignty” in the emperor’s “majesty.” He can enforce his authority or rights only by applying his own or other sovereigns’ forces from the outside, “by means of war.” But in doing so, his condition is no different from that of any other sovereign vis-à-vis his fellow-rulers, for war is a contest which can be inaugurated not only by majesties but by any sovereign ruler. And force of arms may constrain a sovereign outside the Empire quite as well as one inside; in fact, war constitutes the only way in which even sovereigns can be constrained.10 By perceiving that the emperor’s power to enforce his authority was actually reduced to means of war, Leibniz was in a position to demonstrate that any and all rulers of impermeable territory, whatever their status in regard to imperial authority, were equal in their sovereign status.

This capacity also distinguished them from those dignitaries who were sovereigns in name only. Leibniz, by way of example, referred to the non-sovereign status of certain papal “princes,” contrasting it with that of sovereign princes: “Should His Holiness desire to make . . . [the papal princes] obey, he has merely to send out his ‘sibirros’ [bailiffs],

10 “La souveraineté est un pouvoir légitime et ordinaire de contraindre les sujets à obéir, sans qu’on puisse être contraint soy même si ce n’est par une guerre” (ibid., p. 352).
but in order to constrain . . . [the sovereign princes] he would need an army and cannon.”
Similarly, if the Empire wants to constrain a sovereign member, “what would begin as court procedure in an imperial Tribunal, in execution would amount to a war.”
In the new age of territorality, those superior in law no longer could use the machinery of government (courts, etc.) to enforce claims against territorial rulers.
In more recent times, this has come to be the relationship between sovereign nation-states as members of international organizations (like the League of Nations or the United Nations) and the organizations as such.

IV. THE TERRITORIAL STATE IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

From territorality resulted the concepts and institutions which characterized the interrelations of sovereign units, the modern state system. Modern international law, for instance, could now develop. Like the international system that produced it, international law has often been considered inherently contradictory because of its claim to bind sovereign units. But whether or not we deny to it for this reason the name and character of genuine law, it is important to see it in its connection with the territorial nature of the state system that it served. Only then can it be understood as a system of rules not contrary to, but implementing, the sovereign independence of states. Only to the extent that it reflected their territorality and took into account their sovereignty could international law develop in modern times. For its general rules and principles deal primarily with the delimitation of the jurisdiction of countries. It thus implements the de facto condition of territorial impenetrability by more closely defining unit, area, and conditions of impenetrability. Such a law must reflect, rather than regulate. As one author has rightly remarked, “International law really amounts to laying down the principle of national sovereignty and deducing the consequences.”

\[11\] Ibid., p. 354.
\[12\] Ibid., p. 358.
\[13\] Leibniz’ emphasis on constraint as a primary prerequisite of sovereignty might strike later observers as over-materialistic. But one should remember that the rocher de bronze of sovereignty was only then being established, not only against outside interference but also against still recalcitrant feudal powers within the territorial ruler’s realm, and even in the latter case frequently by force of arms and armed forces which to the defeated may well have appeared as something very much like occupation forces. As a matter of fact, “garrisoning” is a key word in Leibniz’ arguments: “As long as one has the right to be master in one’s own house, and no superior has the right to maintain garrisons there and deprive one of the exercise of one’s right of peace, war, and alliances, one has that independence which sovereignty presupposes (liberté requise à la Souveraineté)” (ibid., p. 356).
\[14\] François Laurent, as quoted by Schiffer, op. cit., p. 157.
ereign units must know in some detail where their jurisdictions end and those of other units begin; without such standards, nations would be involved in constant strife over the implementation of their independence.

But it was not only this mutual legal accommodation which rendered possible a relatively peaceful coexistence of nations. War itself, the very phenomenon which reflected, not the strength, but the limitations of impermeability, was of such a nature as to maintain at least the principle of territoriality. War was limited not only in conduct but also in objectives. It was not a process of physical or political annihilation but a contest of power and will in which the interests, but not the existence, of the contestants were at stake. Now that we approach the era of absolute exposure, without walls or moats, where penetration will mean not mere damage or change but utter annihilation of life and way of life, it may dawn on us that what has vanished with the age of sovereignty and "power politics" was not entirely adverse in nature and effects.

Among other "conservative" features of the classical system, we notice one only in passing: the balance of power. It is only recently that emphasis has shifted from a somewhat one-sided concern with the negative aspects of the balance—its uncertainty, its giving rise to unending conflicts and frequent wars, etc.—to its protective effect of preventing the expansionist capacity of power from destroying other power altogether. But at the time of its perfection in statecraft and diplomacy, there were even theories (not lived up to in practice, of course) about the legal obligations of nations to form barriers against hegemony power in the common interest.

More fundamental to the conservative structure of the old system was its character as a community. Forming a comparatively pacified whole, Europe was set off sharply against the world outside, a world beyond those lines which, by common agreement, separated a community based on territoriality and common heritage from anarchy, where the law of nature reigned and no standards of civilization applied. Only recently have the existence and role of so-called "amity lines" been rediscovered, lines which were drawn in the treaties of the early modern period and which separated European territories, where the rules of war and peace

15 See my Political Realism and Political Idealism, Chicago, 1951, pp. 206-21.
were to prevail, from overseas territories and areas. There was to be “no peace beyond the line”; that is, European powers, although possibly at peace in Europe, continued to be homo homini lupus abroad. This practice made it easier for the European family of nations to observe self-denying standards at home by providing them with an outlet in the vast realm discovered outside Europe. While the practice of drawing amity lines subsequently disappeared, one chief function of overseas expansion remained: a European balance of power could be maintained or adjusted because it was relatively easy to divert European conflicts into overseas directions and adjust them there. Thus the openness of the world contributed to the consolidation of the territorial system. The end of the “world frontier” and the resulting closedness of an interdependent world inevitably affected this system’s effectiveness.

Another characteristic of the old system’s protective nature may be seen in the almost complete absence of instances in which countries were wiped out in the course of wars or as a consequence of other power-political events. This, of course, refers to the territorial units at home only, not to the peoples and state units beyond the pale abroad; and to the complete destruction of a state’s independent existence, not to mere loss of territory or similar changes, which obviously abounded in the age of power politics.

Evidence of this is to be found not only in a legal and political ideology that denied the permissibility of conquest at home while recognizing it as a title for the acquisition of territorial jurisdiction abroad. For such a doctrine had its non-ideological foundation in the actual difference between European and non-European politics so far as their territoriality was concerned. European states were impermeable in the sense here outlined, while most of those overseas were easily penetrable by Europeans. In accordance with these circumstances, international politics in Europe knew only rare and exceptional instances of actual annihilation through conquest or similar forceful means.

Prior to the twentieth century, there were indeed the Napoleonic conquests, but I submit that this is a case where the exception confirms the rule. The Napoleonic system, as a hegemonial one, was devised to de-

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stroy the established system of territoriality and balanced power as such. Consequently, Napoleon and his policies appeared "demonic" to contemporaries, as well as to a nineteenth century which experienced the restoration of the earlier system. During that century occurred Bismarck's annexations of some German units into Prussia in pursuance of German unification. As in Napoleon's case, they appeared abnormal to many of his contemporaries, although the issue of national unification tended to mitigate this impression. Besides these, there was indeed the partition of Poland, and considering the lamentable and lasting impression and the universal bad conscience it produced even among the ruling nations in a century used to quite a bit of international skullduggery, again one may well claim an exceptional character for that event.

What, in particular, accounts for this remarkable stability? Territoriality—the establishment of defensible units, internally pacified and hard-shell rimmed—may be called its foundation. On this foundation, two phenomena permitted the system to become more stable than might otherwise have been the case: the prevalence of the legitimacy principle and, subsequently, nationalism. Legitimacy implied that the dynasties ruling the territorial states of old Europe mutually recognized each other as rightful sovereigns. Depriving one sovereign of his rights by force could not but appear to destroy the very principle on which the rights of all of them rested.

With the rise of nationalism, we witness the personalization of the units as self-determining, national groups. Nationalism now made it appear as abhorrent to deprive a sovereign nation of its independence as to despoil a legitimate ruler had appeared before. States, of course, had first to become "nation-states," considering themselves as representing-specific nationality groups, which explains why in the two regions of Europe where larger numbers of old units stood in the way of national unification their demise encountered little objection. In most instances, however, the rise of nationalism led to the emergence of new states, which split away from multinational or colonial empires. This

19 As witness the impression made on contemporaries by the destruction of the first ancient European unit to fall victim to these policies—Venice.
21 Except for these cases, we find only marginal instances of complete obliteration. The annexation of the Free City of Krakow by Russia eliminated a synthetic creation of the Vienna settlement. British conquest of the Boer Republics, if considered as an instance of annihilation of European polities in view of the European origin of the inhabitants, happened at the very rim of the world, as it were, remote from the continent where the practice of non-annihilation prevailed.
meant the extension of the European principle of "non-obliteration" all over the world. It is perhaps significant that even in our century, and even after the turmoil of attempted world conquest and resulting world wars, a point has been made of restoring the most minute and inconsiderable of sovereignties, down to Luxembourg and Albania. 22

This hypertrophy of nation-states presented new problems—above all, that of an improved system of protection. For by now it had become clear that the protective function of the old system was only a relative blessing after all. Continued existence of states as such was perhaps more or less guaranteed. But power and influence, status, frontiers, economic interests—in short, everything that constituted the life and interests of nations beyond bare existence—were always at the mercy of what power politics wrought. Furthermore, much of the relative stability and political equilibrium of the territorial states had been due to the extension of Western control over the world. When what could be penetrated had been subjugated, assimilated, or established as fellow "sovereign" states, the old units were thrown back upon themselves. Hence the demand for a new system which would offer more security to old and new nations: collective security.

I propose to view collective security not as the extreme opposite of power politics, but as an attempt to maintain, and render more secure, the impermeability of what were still territorial states. To an age which took territoriality for granted, replacing power politics with collective security would indeed appear to be a radical departure. From the vantage point of the nuclear age, however, a plan to protect individual sovereignties by collective guarantees for continuing sovereignty appears questionable not because of its innovating, but because of its conservative, nature. Its conservatism lies in its basic objective: the protection of the hard-shell territorial structure of its members, or, as the core article of the Covenant of the League of Nations put it, its guarantee of their "territorial integrity and political independence" against external aggression. The beginning of air war and the increasing economic interdependence of nations had indicated by the end of World War I that the old-style military barriers might be by-passed. If territorial units were to be preserved in the future, it would be accomplished less by reliance on individual defense potentials than by marshaling collective power in order to preserve individual powers.

22 Cf. also the remarkable stability of state units in the Western Hemisphere qua independent units; unstable as some of them are domestically, their sovereign identity as units appears almost sacrosanct.
But since the idea of organizing a genuine supranational force—an international police force—was rejected, the League had to cling to classical arrangements insofar as the procedures of protection were concerned. The guarantee to the individual states was to be the formation of the “Grand Coalition” of all against the isolated aggressor, which presupposed the maintenance of a certain level of armed strength by the member states. A member without that minimum of military strength would be a liability rather than an asset to the organization—in Geneva parlance, a “consumer” and not a “producer” of security.29 Thus classical concepts (the sovereignty and independence of nation-states) as well as classical institutions (in particular, hard-shell defensibility) were to be maintained under the new system.

Whether there ever was a chance for the system to be effective in practice is beside the point here. It is sufficient to realize how closely it was tied to the underlying structure as well as to the prevailing concepts and policies of the territorial age.

V. THE DECLINE OF THE TERRITORIAL STATE

Beginning with the nineteenth century, certain trends became visible which tended to endanger the functioning of the classical system. Directly or indirectly, all of them had a bearing upon that feature of the territorial state which was the strongest guarantee of its independent coexistence with other states of like nature: its hard shell—that is, its defensibility in case of war.

Naturally, many of these trends concerned war itself and the way in which it was conducted. But they were not related to the shift from the limited, duel-type contests of the eighteenth century to the more or less unlimited wars that developed in the nineteenth century with conscription, “nations in arms,” and increasing destructiveness of weapons. By themselves, these developments were not inconsistent with the classical function of war. Enhancing a nation’s defensive capacity, instituting universal military service, putting the economy on a war footing, and similar measures tended to bolster the territorial state rather than to endanger it.

Total war in a quite different sense is tied up with developments in

29 In League practice, therefore, membership applications of countries without this minimum were rejected (for instance, that of Liechtenstein; cf. Walther Schücking and Hans Webberg, Die Satzung des Völkerbundes, 2nd ed., Berlin, 1924, pp. 252ff.). The decline of genuine collective security in our time is apparent from the fact that, in contrast to this practice, the United Nations pays hardly any attention to the question of defensibility, particularly in connection with membership applications.
warfare which enable the belligerents to overlap or by-pass the traditional hard-shell defense of states. When this happens, the traditional relationship between war, on the one hand, and territorial power and sovereignty, on the other, is altered decisively. Arranged in order of increasing effectiveness, these new factors may be listed under the following headings: (a) possibility of economic blockade; (b) ideological-political penetration; (c) air warfare; and (d) atomic warfare.

(a) Economic warfare. It should be said from the outset that so far economic blockade has never enabled one belligerent to force another into surrender through starvation alone. Although in World War I Germany and her allies were seriously endangered when the Western allies cut them off from overseas supplies, a very real effort was still required to defeat them on the military fronts. The same thing applies to World War II. Blockade was an important contributing factor, however. Its importance for the present analysis lies in its unconventional nature, permitting belligerents to by-pass the hard shell of the enemy. Its effect is due to the changed economic status of industrialized nations.

Prior to the industrial age, the territorial state was largely self-contained economically. Although one of the customary means of conducting limited war was starving fortresses into surrender, this applied merely to these individual portions of the hard shell, and not to entire nations. Attempts to starve a belligerent nation in order to avoid having to breach the shell proved rather ineffective, as witness the Continental Blockade and its counterpart in the Napoleonic era. The Industrial Revolution made countries like Britain and Germany increasingly dependent on imports. In war, this meant that they could survive only by controlling areas larger than their own territory. In peacetime, economic dependency became one of the causes of a phenomenon which itself contributed to the transformation of the old state system: imperialism. Anticipating war, with its new danger of blockade, countries strove to become more self-sufficient through enlargement of their areas of control. To the extent that the industrialized nations lost self-sufficiency, they were driven into expansion in a (futile) effort to regain it. Today, if at all, only control of entire continents enables major nations to survive economically in major wars. This implies that hard-shell military defense must be a matter of defending more than a single nation; it must extend around half the world.

(b) Psychological warfare, the attempt to undermine the morale of an enemy population, or to subvert its loyalty, shares with economic
warfare a by-passing effect on old-style territorial defensibility. It was formerly practiced, and practicable, only under quite exceptional circumstances. Short periods of genuine world revolutionary propaganda, such as the early stages of the French Revolution, 24 scarcely affected a general practice under which dynasties, and later governments, fought each other with little ideological involvement on the part of larger masses or classes. Only in rare cases—for instance, where national groups enclosed in and hostile to multinational empires could be appealed to—was there an opening wedge for “fifth column” strategies.

With the emergence of political belief-systems, however, nations became more susceptible to undermining from within. Although wars have not yet been won solely by subversion of loyalties, the threat involved has affected the inner coherence of the territorial state ever since the rise to power of a regime that claims to represent, not the cause of a particular nation, but that of mankind, or at least of its suppressed and exploited portions. Bolshevism from 1917 on has provided the second instance in modern history of world revolutionary propaganda. Communist penetration tactics subsequently were imitated by the Nazi and Fascist regimes and, eventually, by the democracies. In this way, new lines of division, cutting horizontally through state units instead of leaving them separated vertically from each other at their frontiers, have now become possible.

(c) Air warfare and (d) nuclear warfare. Of all the new developments, air warfare, up to the atomic age, has been the one that affected the territoriality of nations most radically. With its coming, the bottom dropped out—or, rather, the roof blew off—the relative security of the territorial state. True, even this new kind of warfare, up to and including the Second World War, did not by itself account for the defeat of a belligerent, as some of the more enthusiastic prophets of the air age had predicted it would. Undoubtedly, however, it had a massive contributory effect. And this effect was due to strategic action in the hinterland rather than to tactical use at the front. It came at least close to defeating one side by direct action against the “soft” interior of the country, by-passing outer defenses and thus foreshadowing the end of the frontier—that is, the demise of the traditional impermeability of even the militarily most powerful states. Warfare now changed “from a fight to a process of devastation.” 25

25 B. H. Liddell Hart, The Revolution in Warfare, New Haven, Conn., 1947, p. 36. Suspension of what would be in the offing, once man gained the capacity to fly, was
That air warfare was considered as something entirely unconventional is seen from the initial reaction to it. Revolutionary transition from an old to a new system has always affected moral standards. In the classical age of the modern state system, the "new morality" of shooting at human beings from a distance had finally come to be accepted, but the standards of the age clearly distinguished "lawful combatants" at the front or in fortifications from the civilian remainder of the population. When air war came, reactions thus differed significantly in the cases of air fighting at the front and of air war carried behind the front. City bombing was felt to constitute "illegitimate" warfare, and populations were inclined to treat airmen engaging in it as "war criminals."

This feeling continued into World War II, with its large-scale area bombing. Such sentiments reflected the general feeling of helplessness in the face of a war which threatened to render obsolete the concept of territorial power, together with its ancient implication of protection.

The process has now been completed with the advent of nuclear weapons. For it is more than doubtful that the processes of scientific invention and technological discovery, which not only have created and perfected the fission and fusion weapons themselves but have brought in their wake guided missiles with nuclear warheads, jet aircraft with intercontinental range and supersonic speed, and the prospect of nuclear-powered planes or rockets with unlimited range and with automatic guidance to specific targets anywhere in the world, can in any meaningful way be likened to previous new inventions, however revolutionary. These processes add up to an uncanny absoluteness of effect which previous innovations could not achieve. The latter might render power units of a certain type (for instance, castles or cities)

abroad as early as the eighteenth century. Thus Samuel Johnson remarked: "If men were all virtuous, I should with great alacrity teach them all to fly. But what would be the security of the good, if the bad could at pleasure invade them from the sky? Against an army sailing through the clouds, neither walls, nor mountains, nor seas, could afford security" (quoted in J. U. Nef, War and Human Progress, Cambridge, Mass., 1952, p. 198). And Benjamin Franklin, witnessing the first balloon ascension at Paris in 1783, foresaw invasion from the air and wrote: "Convincing Sovereigns of folly of wars may perhaps be one effect of it, since it will be impracticable for the most potent of them to guard his dominions. . . . Where is the Prince who can afford so to cover his country with troops for its defense, as that ten thousand men descending from the clouds, might not in many places do an infinite deal of mischief before a force could be brought together to repel them?" (from a letter to Jan Ingelhouss, reproduced in Life Magazine, January 9, 1956).

obsolete and enlarge the realm of defensible power units from city-state to territorial state or even large-area empire. They might involve destruction, in war, of entire populations. But there still remained the seemingly inexhaustible reservoir of the rest of mankind. Today, when not even two halves of the globe remain impermeable, it can no longer be a question of enlarging an area of protection and of substituting one unit of security for another. Since we are inhabitants of a planet of limited (and, as it now seems, insufficient) size, we have reached the limit within which the effect of the means of destruction has become absolute. Whatever remained of the impermeability of states seems to have gone for good.

What has been lost can be seen from two statements by thinkers separated by thousands of years and half the world; both reflect the condition of territorial security. Mencius, in ancient China, when asked for guidance in matters of defense and foreign policy by the ruler of a small state, is said to have counseled: “Dig deeper your moats; build higher your walls; guard them along with your people.” This remained the classical posture up to our age, when a Western sage, Bertrand Russell, in the interwar period could still define power as something radiating from one center and growing less with distance from that center until it finds an equilibrium with that of similar geographically anchored units. Now that power can destroy power from center to center, everything is different.

VI. Outlook and Conclusion

It is beyond the compass of this article to ask what the change in the statehood of nations implies for present and future world relations; whether, indeed, international relations in the traditional sense of the term, dependent as they have been on a number of basic data (existence of the nation-state, measurable power, etc.) and interpreted as they were with the aid of certain concepts (sovereignty, independence, etc.), can survive at all; and, if not, what might take their place. Suffice it to remark that this question is vastly complex. We cannot even be sure that one and only one set of conclusions derives from what has happened or is in the process of happening. For, in J. Robert Oppenheimer’s words, one of the characteristics of the present is “the prevalence of newness, the changing scale and scope of change itself.

27 Some of the pertinent questions are discussed in a more comprehensive manuscript, “Reflections on International Politics in the Atomic Age,” from whose initial chapters the preceding pages were adapted.
In the field of military policy, this means that since World War II half a dozen military innovations "have followed each other so rapidly that efforts at adaptation are hardly begun before they must be scrapped." The scientific revolution has been "so fast-moving as to make almost impossible the task of military men whose responsibility it is to anticipate the future. Military planning cannot make the facts of this future stay long enough to analyze them."  

If this applies to military planning, it must apply equally to foreign policy planning, and, indeed, the newness of the new is perhaps the most significant and the most exasperating aspect of present world relations. Hardly has a bipolar world replaced the multipower world of classical territoriality than there loom new and unpredictable multipower constellations on the international horizon. However, the possible rise of new powers does not seem to affect bipolarity in the sense of a mere return to traditional multipower relations; since rising powers are likely to be nuclear powers, their effect must be an entirely novel one. What international relations would (or will) look like, once nuclear power is possessed by a larger number of power units, is not only extremely unpleasant to contemplate but almost impossible to anticipate, using any familiar concepts. Or, to use another example: We have hardly drawn the military and political conclusions from the new weapons developments, which at one point seemed to indicate the necessity of basing defense on the formation and maintenance of pacts like NATO and the establishment of a network of bases on allied territory from which to launch nuclear weapons "in case" (or whose existence was to deter the opponent from doing so on his part), and already further scientific and technological developments seem to render entire defense blocs, with all their new "hard shells" of bases and similar installations, obsolete.

To complicate matters even more, the change-over is not even uniform and unilinear. On the contrary, in concepts as well as in policies, we witness the juxtaposition of old and new (or several new) factors, a coexistence in theory and practice of conventional and new concepts, of traditional and new policies. Part of a nation's (or a bloc's) defense policy, then, may proceed on pre-atomic assumptions, while another part is based on the assumption of a preponderantly nuclear contest.

28 The Open Mind, New York, 1955, p. 141.
And a compounding trouble is that the future depends on what the present anticipates, on what powers now think and how they intend to act on the basis of their present thinking; and on the fact that each of the actors on the scene must take into consideration the assumptions of the others.\textsuperscript{21}

There then evolves the necessity of multilevel concepts and of multilevel policies in the new era. In this we have, perhaps, the chief cause of the confusion and bewilderment of countries and publics. A good deal in recent foreign policies, with their violent swings from one extreme to another, from appeasement or apathy to truculence and threats of war, and also much in internal policies, with their suspicions and hysterias, may be reflections of world-political uncertainties. Confusion, despair, or easy optimism have been rampant; desire to give in, keep out, or get it over with underlies advocacy of appeasement, neutralism, or preventive war; mutually exclusive attitudes follow each other in rapid succession.

One radical conclusion to be drawn from the new condition of permeability would seem to be that nothing short of global rule can ultimately satisfy the security interest of any one power, and particularly any superpower. For only through elimination of the single competitor who really counts can one feel safe from the threat of annihilation. And since elimination without war is hardly imaginable, destruction of the other power by preventive war would therefore seem to be the logical objective of each superpower. But—and here the security

\textsuperscript{21} The expectations connected with the situation of nuclear deterrence may serve as an illustration. Each side, so we may assume, wants to act “rationally”—that is, avoid resort to a war which it knows would be suicidal; in this, in fact, is grounded the widespread present belief in the obsolescence of major—i.e., nuclear—war. However, not knowing for sure that the other side can be trusted to behave rationally, each feels that the possibility of irrational behavior by the opponent must be included in its own calculations. For instance, assuming that rationally the United States would not permit itself to be provoked into nuclear action, can it rely on Soviet abstention from nuclear attack for similarly rational reasons? Or can the Soviets, who may actually believe that the “imperialist” powers are ready to inflict the worst on them, rely on Western rationality? And if, knowing that the other side may be swayed by considerations like these, one side takes these amended calculations as yardsticks for its own, what rational considerations remain? Policies then become so dependent on considerations of what you believe the other side believes, etc., ad infinitum, that no sane calculations are any longer feasible. One is caught here in the vicious circle inherent in the problem of the effects of assumptions (in behaviorist parlance, the problem of “anticipated reactions”), of what David Easton has called the possibility of an “infinite regress of effects” (\textit{The Political System}, New York, 1953, p. 27). It may be doubted that even the theory of games as applied to international relations can cope with this one. And suppose that, sometime in the future, more than two major units “play”? In the face of this prospect, as Herbert Butterfield says, “The mind winces and turns to look elsewhere” (\textit{History and Human Relations}, New York, 1952, p. 23).
dilemma encounters the other great dilemma of our time—such an aim is no longer practical. Since thermonuclear war would in all likelihood involve one’s own destruction together with the opponent’s, the means through which the end would have to be attained defeats the end itself. Pursuance of the “logical” security objective would result in mutual annihilation rather than in one unit’s global control of a pacified world.

If this is so, the short-term objective must surely be mutual accommodation, a drawing of demarcation lines, geographical and otherwise, between East and West which would at least serve as a stopgap policy, a holding operation pending the creation of an atmosphere in which, perhaps in consequence of a prolonged period of “cold peace,” tensions may abate and the impact of the ideologies presently dividing the world diminish. May we then expect, or hope, that radically new attitudes, in accordance with a radically transformed structure of nationhood and international relations, may ultimately gain the upper hand over the inherited ones based on familiar concepts of old-style national security, power, and power competition? Until recently, advocacy of policies based on internationalism instead of power politics, on substituting the observance of universal interests for the prevalence of national interests, was considered utopian, and correctly so. National interests were still tied up with nation-states as units of power and with their security as impermeable units; internationalist ideals, while possibly recognized as ethically valid, ran counter to what nations were able to afford if they wanted to survive and prosper. But the dichotomy between “national self-interest” and “internationalist ideals” no longer fits a situation in which sovereignty and ever so absolute power cannot protect nations from annihilation.

What used to be a dichotomy of interests and ideals now emerges as a dichotomy between two sets of interests. For the former ideal has become a compelling interest itself. In former times, the lives of people, their goods and possessions, their hopes and their happiness, were tied up with the affairs of the country in which they lived, and interests thus centered around nation and national issues. Now that destruction threatens everybody, in every one of his most intimate, personal interests, national interests are bound to recede behind—or at least compete with—the common interest of all mankind in sheer survival. And if we add to this the universal interest in the common solution of other great world problems, such as those posed by the population-resources dilemma (exhaustion of vital resources coupled with the “population explosion” throughout the world), or, indeed, that of “peacetime”
planetary pollution through radio-active fallout, it is perhaps not en-
tirely utopian to expect the ultimate spread of an attitude of “universal-
ism” through which a rational approach to world problems would at
last become possible.

It may be fitting to conclude this article by quoting two men, one a
contemporary scientist whose words on nuclear problems may well
apply to other problems of world relations, the second a philosopher
whose statement on the revolutionary impact of attitude changes seems
as valid today as when it was first made: “It is a practical thing to rec-
ognize as a common responsibility, wholly incapable of unilateral solu-
tion, the complete common peril that atomic weapons constitute for the
world, to recognize that only by a community of responsibility is there
any hope of meeting the peril. It would seem to me visionary in the
extreme, and not practical, to hope that methods which have so sadly
failed in the past to avert war will succeed in the face of this far greater
peril. It would in my opinion be most dangerous to regard, in these
shattering times, a radical solution less practical than a conventional
one” (J. Robert Oppenheimer).32 And: “Thought achieves more in the
world than practice; for, once the realm of imagination has been revo-
lutionized, reality cannot resist” (Hegel).

32 “Atomic Weapons,” Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, xc (Janu-
ary 29, 1946), pp. 9f.